

## **Development of Relations Between Canadian and American National Trade Unions Centers – 1886-1925**

## **Développement des relations entre les centrales syndicales nationales canadiennes et américaines**

C. Brian Williams

Volume 20, Number 2, 1965

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/027568ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/027568ar>

[See table of contents](#)

### Publisher(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

### ISSN

0034-379X (print)

1703-8138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

### Cite this article

Williams, C. B. (1965). Development of Relations Between Canadian and American National Trade Unions Centers – 1886-1925. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 20(2), 340–371. <https://doi.org/10.7202/027568ar>

### Article abstract

In this paper, the author explains how the relationships between Canadian and American trade union centers have developed. Up to the year 1897, there was no continuous relation between union organizations of both countries. The new binational policy adopted by the majority of the TLC delegates at its 1902 convention brought-forth the split in the Canadian labor movement.

The unions expelled from the TLC founded the NTLC which became the CFL in 1908. When the latter disappeared in 1927, the French Canadian labor movement was about the only one to maintain its opposition to the American influence.

# Development of Relations between Canadian and American National Trade Union Centers – 1886-1925

C. Brian Williams

*In this paper, the author explains how the relationships between Canadian and American trade union centers have developed. Up to the year 1897, there was no continuous relation between union organizations of both countries. The new binational policy adopted by the majority of the TLC delegates at its 1902 convention brought forth the split in the Canadian labor movement.*

*The unions expelled from the TLC founded the NTLC which became the CFL in 1908. When the latter disappeared in 1927, the French Canadian labor movement was about the only one to maintain its opposition to the American influence.*

In 1900, approximately 90 percent of the more than 100,000 Canadian trade unionists were enrolled in locals of « international » labor unions.<sup>1a</sup> In addition, unionists in most major cities had established city centrals made up of delegates from local unions in the centrals' territorial jurisdiction. The other component of the Canadian trade union structure was the national center — the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada and its subordinate provincial bodies.

WILLIAMS, C. BRIAN, B.Comm. (University of British Columbia); M.B.A. (University of Washington); Ph.D. (Cornell University); Assistant Professor, Industrial Relations, Faculty of Business Administration and Commerce, University of Alberta; formerly Research Assistant and Research Associate, New York State School of Industrial and Labour Relations, Cornell University.

(1a) The Canadian Department of Labor calls a union which charters locals in both countries an « international union ». A « national » union charters locals in one country only. In the opinion of this author, the use of the adjective « international » carries an imprecise meaning. It's proposed to label unions that charter locals in both countries as « binational unions ». Also, the often-used term, « international unionism », will be replaced by « binational unionism ». A union which charters only Canadian locals will be called a « Canadian union ».

## The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada

The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, Canada's first national center, was founded in 1873. The TLC was the direct outgrowth of the work and activities of the Toronto Trades Assembly, founded in 1871, the Nine Hour Leagues, which flourished in many Ontario industrial towns in 1872, and the Ottawa Trades Council which was organized at the end of the same year. The main but not exclusive interest of the TLC has always been the legislative advancement of Canadian labor.

The TLC first met in Toronto on September 23, 1873 under the name of the Canadian Labor Union. According to the convention call which was issued by the Toronto Trades Assembly, the purpose of establishing the new body was to :

...take into consideration the various questions that at present directly affect the interests of labor in this country — such, for instance, as the Trade Union Bill, which the present Administration of the Dominion have signified their willingness to amend, so as to meet the reasonable wishes of trades unionists, . . . the creation of a proper Lien Law, (and) . . . questions bearing on the relation between employers and workmen, that have been so carelessly handled by our legislators of late. <sup>1</sup>

In an editorial, the *Iron Molders Journal* commented :

In another column we published the call for an Industrial Congress of the Trade Unions of Canada. We heartily endorse the call, and hope to see our Canadian Unions all represented. The objects sought can only be obtained by such an organization. The Industrial Congress of the United States would be valueless to our Canada brothers, as most of the wrongs sought to be redressed must be redressed by the Canadian Parliament, and a demand from an Industrial Congress composed largely of delegates from the States would be laughed at by the Parliament; for this reason Canada Trade Unions were not invited to be represented at Cleveland. The two Congresses can and will act in harmony on all questions in which their combined efforts will be mutually advantageous; but upon such questions as Labor Bureaus, apprentice laws, arbitration laws, coolie labor and prison labor, it must be evident that separate action is necessary. <sup>2</sup>

The convention assembled over forty delegates and resolved to form a permanent body. Its constitution provided for annual meetings and set out its objectives as follows.

Its objects shall be to agitate such questions as may be for the benefit of the working classes, in order that we may obtain the enactment of

---

(1) *Ontario Workman* as reported in *Iron Molders Journal*, August 31, 1873, p. 79. Hereafter referred to as *IMJ*.

(2) *IMJ*, August 31, 1873, p. 72.

such measures by the Dominion and Local Legislatures as will be beneficial to us and the repeal of all oppressive laws which now exist.

To use all means consistent with honor and integrity to so correct the abuses under which the working classes are laboring, as to insure to them just rights and privileges.

To use our utmost endeavors to impress upon the laboring classes of this country the necessity of a close and thorough organization, and of forming themselves into subordinate unions wherever practicable. <sup>3</sup>

Other actions taken by the convention included resolutions in favor of a reduction in the hours of labor to nine per day, in favor of sending workmen to Parliament, against the contracting of prison labor in foreign countries at wage rates lower than Canada's, against the use of government agents to make such prison contracts, in favor of a more stringent apprentice law, against the employment of children under ten years of age in factories, and in favor of the formation of a bureau of labor. <sup>4</sup>

In June 1874, the *Iron Molders Journal* took notice of the call for the second meeting of the CLU and added editorially :

... Like their brothers on this side of the line, they find that, to make their power felt, and thus secure by legislation the many rights withheld from them, they must have an organization that will consolidate all the Trade Unions under one head for general purposes, while each Union will retain all its special privileges and do its special work as heretofore, only its power to do so increased by the general Union. <sup>5</sup>

The point made in the above editorial, while innocent enough at first glance, contained the seed which in 1902 produced the binational union conflict in Canada. The writer, as is often done in discussions relating to Canadian trade unionism, failed to realize that the « each union » he referred to was a United States body (binational unions) while the « one head » he referred to was a Canadian body (the CLU). At this time, nearly all local bodies had affiliated with a binational union in the United States. With the establishment of the AFL in 1886, many of these binational unions in turn became AFL affiliates. In addition, the AFL joined with the binational unions and began accepting and organizing local affiliates in Canada. As a result, the CLU found that

(3) *IMJ*, September 30, 1873, p. 114.

(4) *Ibid.*

(5) *IMJ*, June 30, 1874, p. 390.

not only were per capita payments of Canadian locals filling the coffers of the American national center — the AFL, but also both the AFL and binationals were affiliating Canadian locals in direct competition with the CLU. As a result, the CLU found that it could not attract Canadian locals as affiliates and this in turn limited the effectiveness with which it could advance Canadian labor's cause. The basic issue of course was the still undefined relations among Canadian locals, the CLU, the binationals, and the AFL.

At this point it is necessary to go back in time and to note that the CLU held annual meetings until 1877, when it met under the name of the Canadian Labor Union Congress. As a result of the panic of 1873 and the long depression that followed, trade and industry reached a low ebb in the late 1870's. With the decline in business activity, trade unionism almost completely disappeared.

However, with the turn of the decade, business improved throughout the country. In 1881, interest in trade unionism appreciably increased. In 1883, the reorganized Toronto Trades and Labor Council called a national convention of delegates from union organizations throughout Canada. The meeting was held in Toronto under the name of the Canadian Labor Congress. When the Canadian Labor Congress convention of 1883 adjourned, it did so to meet again at the call of the Toronto Trades and Labor Council. The next call went out in 1886. Thereafter, the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada met annually until 1945.<sup>6</sup>

### Conflict Between the TLC and the AFL

Up to the year 1897, the TLC and the AFL carried on their activities independent of each other, and each limited its operations to its own territorial jurisdiction. However, as each body grew in size, and extended its operations to new territories and organizations, it became increasingly necessary to clearly define the heretofore vague and ill-defined relationships between the two bodies. By 1889, both the TLC and the AFL issued charters to federal labor unions and city centrals in Canada. In addition, the small but influential minority in the TLC, led by its president, Ralph Smith of Nanaimo, did not believe Canadian labor should accommodate its structure, government, and policies to the United States

(6) « An Historical Review — The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, 1873-1950 », *The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada*, p. 5.

binational pattern and favored the development of a TLC independent of any American bodies — particularly of the AFL.

Starting in 1896, a number of events took place which eventually led to a clarification of the relations between the three bodies. At the 1896 convention of the AFL, the Toronto Trades and Labor Council forwarded correspondence requesting greater co-operation and co-ordination on the question of Canadian-American immigration.<sup>7</sup>

At the convention of 1897, delegates Larger and Crouchley of the United Garment Workers presented a resolution which urged the executive council to devote special attention to the interests of affiliated unions in Canada and suggested that the executive council and the legislative committees of the AFL co-operate with the TLC in endeavoring to secure the passage of favorable legislation in Canada.<sup>8</sup> Convention action on the resolution was indefinite. It was referred to the committee on the President's Report where it was reported out favorably to the extent that it was compatible with the general recommendations of the committee.<sup>9</sup>

Delegate Peter J. McGuire, vice president of the AFL and president of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, introduced a resolution suggesting that the convention authorize the appointment of a fraternal delegate to the TLC in order « to more closely cement the interests of the trades unions of America. »<sup>10</sup> The resolution was referred to the committee on organization and subsequently reported out favorably by the committee and the convention. Delegate McGuire later explained that the reason he introduced the resolution « was that a number of unions in Canada paid per capita tax to international unions in this country », and he thought that « as we send delegates to England, [ ] we should also send one to Canada. » In the closing hours of the convention, Thomas I. Kidd of the Amalgamated Wood Workers International Union was elected as the first fraternal delegate to the TLC.

The TLC held its 1898 convention at Winnipeg on September 16. At the AFL convention of December 12, 1898, delegate Kidd reported

(7) AFL, *Proceedings*, 1896, p. 53.

(8) AFL, *Proceedings*, 1897, p. 56.

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 88.

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 64.

on the TLC proceedings. The following excerpts from his report are of particular interest.

It may not be inappropriate to here refer to the radical difference between the Labor Congress and the American Federation of Labor. The aims of the two organizations are practically dissimilar. The Congress does not take up grievances of the unions against each other, nor does it care about the limits of jurisdiction claimed by affiliated bodies. Its whole effort seems to be directed towards securing favorable legislation from the Federal and Provincial governments, and organizing the workers of the Dominion wherever it can.

It would be unwise to deny or ignore the fact that a feeling of antagonism obtained among many of the active workers in Canadian labor circles toward the American Federation of Labor. Many believe that it is unfair for the international unions with which they are connected to pay a per capita tax to the Federation on their account, which they claim goes towards the support of the lobby in Washington. They say that the American Federation of Labor seems to be a purely American organization and cares nothing for labor legislation beyond the United States. That some attention should be paid to legislation in Canada they believe, and this legislation can best be secured by assisting the Congress to obtain it. The Labor Congress is essential to Canadians with a legislature distinct from, and institutions that have nothing in common with ours. And, if labor legislation is to be enacted it will have to come through the influence of a powerful Canadian Labor Federation. As nearly all of the unions affiliated with the Labor Congress are likewise affiliated with the AF of L, the former thinks the Federation should aid it in trying to secure remedial legislation.

In his report to the thirteenth annual session of the Trades and Labor Congress which was held fifteen months ago at Hamilton, Ontario, President Carey, referring to an act to restrict the importation and employment of aliens passed by the Federal Parliament of Canada, and which he claimed called for more than mere mention, asserted that the law did not cover the ground, nor did it embody the aim of organized labor, although it appeared to meet with popular favor for the moment. He contended that what the working man wanted was a law with a provision that the term « alien » should apply to any person from outside of Canada. The present law having no practical effect except against persons from the United States, and is thus simply as a retaliatory measure. As the law states, « this act shall apply only to such foreign countries as ever enacted and retained in force, or as enact and retain in force, laws or ordinances applying to Canada of a character similar to this law ». Mr. Carey contended that retaliation is not a dogmatic principle of organized labor in Canada, and the Congress favors the passage of a measure that will refer to all alike. The principal objection to the present immigration law is that it admits to the Dominion many whom the Canadians consider undesirable; and excludes many who are by no means obnoxious.

I think it eminently proper that mention should be made at this time of the loyalty of the Canadian trade unionists to their respective International Unions having headquarters on this side of the line, and the same laudable interest is taken in the growth of our movement upon American soil as well as upon their own.<sup>11</sup>

(11) « Report of Fraternal Delegate to Canada », AFL, *Proceedings*, 1898, pp. 61-62.

On the recommendation of the executive council and the committee on fraternal delegates, the convention agreed « that a sum of not more than \$100 be appropriated annually to aid the efforts of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada. »<sup>12</sup> In 1899, the amount was increased to \$200 for the purposes of « securing legislation in the interests of labor. »<sup>13</sup>

In 1900, president Gompers made reference to the « Canadian situation » in his report to the AFL's twentieth annual convention.

The labor movement in Canada is part of our own; and we have endeavored to encourage our fellow-workers by advice and such practical assistance as was within our power. Not only have a number of officers and representative trade unionists, including the president of the American Federation of Labor, undertaken organizing tours throughout several parts of Canada, but we have made money contributions to aid and encourage the movement there, as well as made the appointment of a permanent organizer for the Dominion, brother John A. Flett, besides the corps of voluntary organizers in the various industrial centers.<sup>14</sup>

The following excerpt from the report of the fraternal delegate from the TLC to the AFL is of particular interest.

The Canadians are a people separate and apart from those of the United States, but through the medium of the trade unions they all are now a united people. The Canadians not only have secured better conditions, such as increases in wages and the shortening of hours, but they have entered into the political field and have secured the establishment of a Bureau of Labor in the person of the minister of labor and have a representative of labor whose duty it was to see that all those who are working on government work receive a fair wage. The memberships of the Trade Unions have increased beyond every expectation during the past year, and it is all due to the fact that the American Federation of Labor placed a Canadian organizer in the field. I understand that the success has been of such a character that the AF of L had instructed him to go forth in the province of Quebec among the French people, and he was of the opinion that the result of his efforts in that province would be greater than that in the province of Ontario. The people of Canada have as great freedom as any other country in the world. I appreciate all that has been done to uplift our people, and they appreciate what has been done for them. It is true that there was a time when there were some who wished to disrupt the International Union, but their efforts resulted in their own stultification and created a stronger bond between the workers.<sup>15</sup>

(12) *Ibid.*, p. 94.

(13) AFL, *Proceedings*, 1899, p. 59.

(14) AFL, *Proceedings*, 1900, p. 28.

(15) *Ibid.*, p. 77. The TLC first sent fraternal delegates to the AFL in 1898.



By 1901, the increased organizational activities of the AFL in Canada and the continued differences between the two bodies over compulsory arbitration, recognition of the Knights of Labor, chartering of local bodies in Canada with jurisdiction conflicting with an established binational, and control over subordinate bodies, brought the issue of relations between the two bodies out into the open.

At the AFL convention of 1901, president Gompers spoke more positively on the Canadian situation.

Much progress is reported in the organization of our fellow-workers of the Dominion of Canada. Our fellow-unionists there are not only growing in number, but are plainly giving evidence of their intense devotion to the trade union movement, and are reaping the benefit of the results of their organization. They recognize, too, that despite geographical division our interests are one and the same, that it is the constant purpose of our International Unions and the American Federation of Labor to render them every financial and moral assistance we do to the workers of the United States, and that we are one and the same in spirit ; in fact, in union ; with one common quality and policy ; with identical principles, hopes and aspirations.<sup>16</sup>

However, Patrick M. Draper, fraternal delegate from the TLC to the AFL, while reviewing the proceedings of the TLC, advised the convention of a growing split in the ranks of the TLC.

... Through the instrumentality of the American Federation of Labor, Mr. John A. Flett, General Organizer, has done good work, and I would request that he be continued in his capacity until these Provinces are in a fairly organized condition. I desire to state that a very strong feeling is growing in Canada in favor of National Unions arising out of the criticisms of our opponents, who say that Yankee labor leaders are responsible for many strikes in Canada. Mr. Ralph Smith, president of the Canadian Trades Congress, in his address to the last convention, advocating the organization of the Canadian Federation of Labor said : « I think it is of vast importance that this Congress should adopt some method of increasing its own usefulness. There ought to be a Canadian Federation, for, while I believe that unionism ought to be international in its methods to meet the necessity of combatting common foes, this usefulness is only assured by the strength of national unions. A federation of American unions represented by a national union and a federation of Canadian unions represented by a national union, each working with the other in special cases, would be a great advantage over having local unions in Canada connected with the national unions of America. I think the greater success would be accomplished in the settlement of disputes in each country if the leaders of each were the representatives of their own national grievances. I do not reflect on any American officials who have handled our labor troubles in Canada, but I am certain of this, that there are such distinctive differences in the condition of each that a presentment of Canada matters by Canadian

(16) AFL, *Proceedings*, 1901, p. 21.

leaders and vice versa by American leaders would lead to a greater success and would not in any way prevent a Federation of the National Bodies. I just mention this, however, as the preliminary to a complete reconstruction of the constitution and powers of this Congress, and will be pleased and satisfied if a condition of greater usefulness can be provided in the machinery of our Congress. This is the most important Congress in point of numbers and also in matters for consideration and settlement that has convened so far ».<sup>17</sup>

The convention voted to increase the annual appropriation to the TLC to \$300 and, upon the recommendation of the executive committee, authorized the executive committee to « meet with representatives of the organizations [opposed to the AFL] with a view of bringing about the unity so essential to the toilers of America. »<sup>18</sup> The committee on the presidents' report commented :

It is to be regretted that our fellow-workers organized as the Western Federation of Miners and Western Labor Union still hold aloof from the general movement and that there seems to be a tendency towards severance among our Canadian brothers. Movements of this character not only vitiate labor's forces but cause general confusion, friction, and sometimes bitter antagonisms — all resulting in injury to the cause and danger to our integrity . . .<sup>19</sup>

In September 1902, the TLC met at Berlin (now Kitchener), Ontario in what was to be the most important session of its history. Credentials were accepted from delegates from 102 organizations made up of 18 city centrals, 10 Knights of Labor assemblies, 6 federal labor unions, and 68 locals of binational and Canadian unions. This convention laid the ground work for future relations between the TLC and the AFL and sparked the move which ultimately left the Canadian labor movement divided between those who supported binational unionism and those who supported Canadian unionism.

Early in the sessions, the President, Ralph Smith, ordered the eight member credentials committee to review the constitution and bring recommended changes to the convention floor. As a result of recommendations made by the committee, the convention, through a constitutional amendment, voted to expel delegates representing Knights of Labor assemblies and bodies not affiliated with the binational having

(17) *Ibid.*, p. 116. The committee of the president's address and the Congress rejected the portions of Smith's report dealing favorably with compulsory arbitration and the formation of a Canadian Federation of Labor. See « Report of Fraternal Delegate to TLC », AFL, *Proceedings*, 1901, p. 216.

(18) *Ibid.*, pp. 167 and 184.

(19) « Report of Committee on President's Report », *Ibid.*, p. 184.

jurisdiction of the trade or industry. The expulsion cost the convention 23 organizations, 3,340 members, and about 25 percent of its revenue from per capita taxes.<sup>20</sup> The convention also went on record as favoring only one city central in any one locality. The constitutional amendment adopted by the Congress after a full day's debate was as follows :

(The TLC) shall form organizations in localities where none at present exist into local unions, but in no case shall any body of workmen belonging to any trade or calling at present having an international or national union be granted a charter. In the event of the formation of an international or national union of the trade or calling of the unions so chartered being formed, it shall be the duty of the proper officer of the Congress to see that the said union becomes a member of said international or national union. Provided, that no national union be recognized, where an international union exists.

The Congress shall be composed of delegates duly elected and accredited from trade councils, trade unions, federal labor unions and national trade unions in the Dominion of Canada. But in no case shall there be more than one central body at any city or town, such central body to be chartered by the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.<sup>21</sup>

After passing the above declaration on representation, the Congress adopted a resolution which clarified the position of the Congress on binational unionism and TLC jurisdiction.

Resolved, that as the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada has placed itself squarely in accord with the principles of international trade unionism, and as such action will reveal the loss of revenues from former affiliated bodies debarred from membership under the amended constitution, it is the opinion of this Congress that, being the national legislative organization of labor in the Dominion of Canada, all federal labor unions and central trades and labor councils should be under the jurisdiction and control of the Congress ; and the incoming executive is hereby instructed to take immediate steps to make such arrangements with the American Federation of Labor looking to the consummation of this object. It is the opinion of this Congress that the existence of dual federal labor unions, holding charters from the Congress and the American Federation of Labor, is not conducive to the solidity and effectiveness of the labor movement in Canada.<sup>22</sup>

As if the position of the TLC on binational unionism was not already sufficiently clear, the convention proceeded to elect John A. Flett, a Canadian organizer for the AFL, as its president.<sup>23</sup>

(20) « Report of Fraternal Delegate to TLC », AFL, *Proceedings*, 1903, p. 65.

(21) *Labor Gazette* (Canada), Vol. 4, No. 5, November, 1903, p. 421. Hereafter referred to as LG ; « Report of Fraternal Delegate to Canada », AFL, *Proceedings*, 1902, p. 232 ; and « Report of Canadian Labor Congress », *American Federationist*, Vol. 9, No. 12, December, 1902, p. 960.

(22) LG, Vol. 3, No. 4, October 1902, p. 229 ; and « Report of Canadian Labor Congress », *American Federationist*, Vol. 9, No. 12, December 1902, p. 960.

(23) Flett was vice president of the TLC from 1897-1901.

At the AFL convention of November 1902, President Gompers offered the following comments on the « movement in Canada. »

For the past few years, notwithstanding our most strenuous and continued efforts, some of our fellow-workers of Canada have endeavored to divide the labor movement of the Dominion from the rest of our continent. I am gratified to report to you that at the last Congress of the Dominion Trades and Labor Union of Canada, the largest and most representative of any held theretofore, a clear-cut declaration was made and inserted in the constitution of the organization in favor of the closest bonds of unity and fraternity with us. The future is, therefore, assured that no schism or geographical line of demarcation will enter into the labor movement of the United States and Canada. We should continue to render every aid within our power to our Canadian fellow-wage workers, not only to build up and strengthen their organizations and to help them in securing the legislative relief which they may deem essential for their welfare, but our national and international unions should also supplement this work, by direct efforts of their own in their respective crafts.<sup>24</sup>

President Gompers also noted with satisfaction that the 1902 TLC convention had rejected compulsory arbitration and suggested that the TLC resolution regarding jurisdiction be referred to a special committee.<sup>25</sup>

John H. Kennedy, fraternal delegate to the AFL, underscored the allegiance of the Canadian movement to binational unionism and the value of the TLC in pressing legislative matters.

I am pleased to be able to say to this Federation that in the aggregate the utmost unity prevails in our organizations in their relations to the international heads. The assurance of the utility and value of the broader international connection in comparison to the local organization has long since dispelled all speculation and doubt on this question; but while this is true, there is a strong feeling of the legislative value of our Dominion Trades Congress. That its value has also been recognized for your body is evidenced by your repeated financial assistance. I trust you will not doubt our gratitude and appreciation if we, like Oliver, « ask for more ». Rather would we have you regard it as a weaker brother appealing to the stronger.

We trust you will not lag in your interest towards us. We would have you still continue in maintaining and keeping in the Canadian field organizer John A. Flett, a gentleman eminently fitted for the work, and one who enjoys the confidence of the Canadian workmen, evidenced by his election to the highest honor in their gift, the presidency of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. We would have the many international organizations whose representatives are here at present, remember our geographical situation, the character of our people being largely agricultural, necessarily will mean that our unions will be sparse and fragmentary. We look to our stronger unions

(24) « The Movement in Canada », AFL, *Proceedings*, 1902, p. 14.

(25) *Ibid.*, p. 183.

to aid us. We know that there is still much to do to gather the many to our fold, which, in our weakness, we are unable to accomplish—hence our plea to the heads of the international organizations.<sup>26</sup>

As a result of President Gompers' suggestion an eleven men committee was appointed to study and report on the TLC's jurisdiction recommendation. The committee filed the following report.

We concur in the report of the president of the American Federation of Labor regarding the movement in Canada, and recognize the wonderful progress in organization and labor legislation. We also congratulate the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress in their clear-cut declaration along the lines of international organization, and hope that no geographical lines may ever separate the close fraternal feelings that now exist in the North American continent. We recommend that the American Federation of Labor continue to maintain the services of a general organizer and to secure as many volunteer organizers as may be determined by the president of the American Federation of Labor. We highly commend the action of the Canadian Labor Congress in their declarations against compulsory arbitration.

We your committee, after careful consideration, believe that the granting of charters by the Labor Congress of Canada to federal labor unions would have a tendency to divide the labor movement of the United States and Canada, and possibly retard the formation of national or international organization. Realizing the per capita derived from the federal labor unions of Canada, we still believe that the present form of organizing and legislating of the American Federation of Labor reimburses the Canadian Labor Congress, and, with these facts in view, we recommend that the American Federation of Labor appropriate the sum of \$500 to the Canadian Labor Congress for legislative purposes.<sup>27</sup>

The convention subsequently adopted an amended report which directed that the portion of the committee's report referring to the issuance of charters by the TLC be referred to the executive council.

On April 25, 1903, the executive council of the AFL met with president Flett and secretary Draper of the TLC at Toronto to discuss the TLC's 1902 resolution and to settle other outstanding issues dealing with relations between the two bodies. The executive council's minutes outlined the agreement.

President Flett and secretary Draper, of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, appeared before the E.C. in the interests of the Canadian Labor Congress.

President Flett and secretary Draper said they were willing to concede the issuance of charters of federal labor unions to the AF of L, as they realized that the AF of L, on account of the defence fund, was in a better position to support their members in case of strike or

(26) « Report of Fraternal Delegate to AFL », *Ibid.*, p. 138.

(27) « Report of Special Committee on Canadian Affairs », *Ibid.*, p. 225.

lockout, and held that inasmuch as central labor unions were legislative bodies, they should be affiliated to the Congress; and that the AF of L should require central bodies to be affiliated with the Congress as one of the conditions requisite to their receiving charters from the AF of L.

They both urged the waiving of the 50 cents dues required by the constitution of the AF of L from trade and federal labor unions if they desire to receive assistance from the defence fund. They held that it was almost impossible to have the members pay 50 cents dues, and urged the E.C. to recommend to the next convention that the provision in regard to the dues be eliminated from the constitution.

In the matter of the resolution adopted by the Trades and Labor Congress in Canada, held at Berlin, to submit to the AF of L the advisability of the Congress chartering central trades and labor councils of Canada for distinctly legislative purposes, and also for the chartering of federal labor unions, a conference was held with the president and secretary of the Congress and the request for the chartering of federal labor unions was withdrawn. The E.C. therefore declared as follows :

1. That the AF of L will make it a qualification of issuing charters to trades and labor councils in Canada, that they will affiliate with the Trades and Labor Congress, and central bodies throughout the Dominion now holding AF of L charters will be instructed to take similar action.
2. That trade affairs in the central trades and labor council in question shall be transacted as heretofore along the lines of international trade unionism.
3. That all local unions in the Dominion of Canada affiliated through international unions or holding charters direct from the AF of L be notified to become affiliated with the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada for the purpose of making it a more potent factor to secure the adoption of favorable legislation for the members by the federal and provincial parliaments.<sup>28</sup>

At the AFL convention in November 1903, president Gompers commented on the Toronto treaty.

During the session of the executive council held at Toronto, Canada, and having in mind the conclusion reached by the New Orleans convention regarding the relations of the Canadian labor movement to that of the remainder of the American continent, we had two conferences with the officers of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress for the furtherance of the best interests of the working people of both countries. It was decided that all Canadian local central bodies affiliated to the American Federation of Labor should be attached to the Congress, and that a prerequisite to the issuance of a charter to any central body in Canada should be its attachment to the Dominion Congress.<sup>29</sup>

The action of the executive council was subsequently endorsed by the convention with the understanding that the Canadian locals would

(28) « Minutes of Executive Council », *American Federationist*, Vol. 10, No. 6, June 1903, p. 506.

(29) « Labor Movement in Canada », AFL, *Proceedings*, 1903, p. 21.

pay defence fund assessments as a condition of receiving assistance from the fund.<sup>30</sup>

At the same session, the convention adopted a resolution, introduced by George Sangster of the Journeymen Tailors' Union of America, which urged the executive council of the AFL to take steps to force all binational unions having locals in Canada to affiliate these locals with the TLC.

Whereas, there is a movement in Canada by the employers' and manufacturers' association to foster and aid an organization known as the « National Trades and Labor Congress », which was organized in Berlin, Ontario, in September 1902, as a protest to an amendment to the constitution of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, excluding dual organizations, known as Independent Canadian Unions and local assemblies of the Knights of Labor, which were organized in opposition to the legitimate international trade union movement and are at the present time operating a policy diametrically opposed to the principles of trade autonomy, by issuing charters to all tradesmen in Canada as well as placing upon the market a label consisting of a maple leaf surrounded with the following words « Canada for the Canadians », as a substitute for the union label of the various trades, thereby seeking to disrupt and destroy the international labor movement in Canada, and having in mind the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada has placed itself squarely on record in favor of the operation of the trade union movement along international lines and with a view of strengthening the congress, as their legislative mouthpiece of the legitimate international organized wage workers of Canada before the Dominion and Provincial governments of Canada, thereby making it a more powerful factor for legislative purposes in the interests of the wage earners of that country; it is resolved, that the executive council of the American Federation of Labor take the necessary steps after the adjournment of this convention to have all international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor insist upon their local unions in Canada affiliating with the Trades and Labor Congress in Canada with the least possible delay.<sup>31</sup>

### Formation of the National Trades and Labor Congress

As a result of the Berlin declaration in favor of binational unionism, the leadership of the expelled groups immediately met in convention at Berlin and moved to form a second national center based on « principles of Canadian Unionism. »<sup>32</sup> In February 1903, the executive issued an address to organized labor in Canada urging it to join with it in advancing the interests of Canadian labor.<sup>33</sup>

(30) *Ibid.*, p. 252.

(31) « Resolution No. 280 », *Ibid.*, pp. 154-159.

(32) *LG*, Vol. 3, No. 4, October 1902, p. 238.

(33) *LG*, Vol. 3, No. 9, March 1903, p. 639.

At the NTLC's first annual convention, held at Quebec City on September 15, 1903, President Omer Brunet, addressed the forty or more assembled delegates.

For a long time past the necessity of a national union has been felt, and in order to prove it we have only to quote here the words of an eminent man who possesses we may say, a true insight into the future and who is an ardent as well as enlightened patriot, Mr. Ralph Smith. In his address to the delegates of the Congress of Canada during its session of 1899, he expressed himself as follows: « The necessity for a national union, even for an international one, is urgent ».

Well, is not your presence here in the opening of the first session of the National Congress of Trades and Labor of Canada, the realization of that great idea expressed by the eminent and distinguished compatriot?

It should be well understood, that in refusing to accept the flag of the American Federation, we had no desire to issue an ultimatum or to make a declaration of war. What we did desire, and what we still desire was to affirm our national autonomy, not to change our allegiance, though keeping for our brother workmen on the other side of the line all the sympathies they deserve, and according to them on this side all the advantages which we consider as prejudicial to the interests of Canada.

Do not forget it, many before us have said and repeated it: It is only by a reform of our laws, and in no other way, that we will be able to improve our conditions. And in order to obtain that end, we can not do better than unite ourselves closely under the protection of the national flag of which the motto is and must remain « Canada for Canadians ». <sup>34</sup>

The convention adopted resolutions approving the recently passed Railway Disputes Act, which provided for compulsory investigation of railway disputes, urging the federal government to recognize only one national center, the NTLC, and recommending that the federal government undertake a thorough revision of the tariff, « with the object of safeguarding and forwarding Canada's interests. » A resolution inviting locals of binational unions to affiliate with the Congress was defeated after a lengthy and stormy debate.

From September 1903, the English-speaking Canadian labor movement had two national centers. The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada continued without interruption up to the merger with the Canadian Congress of Labor in 1956. In 1908, the NTLC changed its name and its platform, to some degree, and became the Canadian Federation

(34) « National Trades and Labor Congress of Canada — First Annual Convention », *LG*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1903, p. 331.



of Labor. In 1927, the CFL split, and together with a number of « industrial » minded organizations, such as the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees and the OBU, formed the All Canadian Congress of Labor. In 1939, the TLC followed the AFL lead and expelled Canadian counterparts of the CIO. The expelled organizations subsequently united with the All Canadian Congress of Labor to form the Canadian Congress of Labor. In 1956, in line with development in the United States, the TLC and the CCL were merged into the Canadian Labor Congress.

### Major Issues in the Canadian versus Binational Union Controversy

In 1903, the split in the Canadian labor movement, as a result of the Berlin declaration and the unusually heavy labor unrest experienced in that year, particularly among coal miners in the west, propelled the controversy over American participation in Canadian labor into the forefront of the Canadian national scene. The opponents of binational unions, led by the Canadian employers, their associations, a number of legislative representatives, and a number of Canadian labor leaders, singled out two main targets for attack: the extension of binational policies to Canadian locals, and the participation of American leadership in Canadian labor affairs. The character of the opposition was subsequently ably described in the pages of the *Queen's Quarterly*, a journal not particularly noted for its liberal position in labor matters.

In certain interested quarters the interference of American agitators, so called, in Canadian labor disputes is much deplored or denounced according to whether the critic be of the Flavius or Marullus type — hypocritical or irascible. These protests come from three main sources. Capital itself, the most international thing in the world, is very fond of advising labor to be patriotic and national, and of declaring sometimes more in sorrow than in anger that there would be no labor disputes if mischievous and meddling agitators from the other side of the line did not stir up strife between masters and men. The government officials are, from the nature of the case, patriotic. Their position requires them to be so. What politician or official would not oppose, for example, annexation to the United States if for no other reason than that his importance would be less in the larger whole. Politicians and officials, of course, favor national labor organization as a less uncertain, more easily controlled factor in politics. Local labor leaders, again, similarly fear extinction in the larger international organizations and, in losing influence, would fear to lose also the chance of a good government position which in so many cases has been the reward of delivering the labor vote or a goodly portion of it.<sup>35</sup>

---

(35) « National or International Labor Organizations », *Queen's Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 2, October, November, December 1909, p. 172.

The beginning of the controversy had its roots in the report of the royal commission appointed to investigate the 1903 coal miners strike. It will be recalled that the commission concluded that the strikes called by the Western Federation of Miners were part of a conspiracy to aid its brother union, the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees, in its strike with the Canadian Pacific Railway. Portions of the commission's recommendations dealt with the application of binational union policies to Canadian locals and the activities of American labor leaders in Canadian labor. The list of policies receiving comment, and in most cases condemnation, included use of sympathetic strikes, issuance of « incendiary and scurrilous literature », distribution of « unfair » or « scab » lists, boycotting, intimidation and picketing, violations of contract, and blacklisting.<sup>36</sup> However, the commission's conclusions regarding the activities of the American labor leaders in Canadian labor affairs were of particular importance :

As will be seen by the evidence already detailed, the question of how far there should be legislation directed against foreign interference with Canadian workmen comes up squarely for consideration.

The evidence presents two classes of interference : one, that of procuring and inciting to quit work by the foreign agitator in person ; and the other, the case of officials of international or other organizations who remain in the foreign country, but who procure and incite by means of other officials within Canada, and who assume the control and direction of Canadian workmen until the termination of the dispute.

As has already been said, it should not be tolerated that Canadian industries should be subject to dictation of foreigners who know no law, so far as such industries are concerned, but their own desires, and whose business and avowed object is to keep up unceasing friction between the employer and employed and who are not trade unionists, but socialist agitators of the most bigotted and ignorant type. We therefore think that it is necessary for parliament to interfere in the direction of making it an offence, punishable in minor cases, on summary conviction before a county judge or police or stipendiary magistrate, by fine or imprisonment, and in graver cases, on conviction by indictment, by imprisonment only, for any person not a British subject, who has not been residing in the province for at least one year, to procure or incite any employee or employees in Canada to quit the employment without the consent of the employers ; or for any person within Canada to exhibit or publish, or any way communicate to any employee or employees the contents of any order, request, suggestion, or recommendation, (or any document purporting to be a copy thereof), by any person or persons ordinarily resident without Canada, that he or they quit the employment as aforesaid, whether such order, request, suggestion, or recommendation, or copy thereof is signed, or purports to be signed by such person or persons

---

(36) *Report of Royal Commission on Industrial Disputes in the Province of British Columbia*, pp. 64-72.

on his or their own behalf or on behalf on any other person, or of any association of persons, whether incorporated or not.<sup>37</sup>

As a result of the committee's conclusions, Senator Lougheed introduced the following bill to the Dominion Senate.

1. The *Criminal Code*, 1892, is hereby amended by adding thereto the following as section 52A :

52A. Everyone is guilty of an indictable offense and liable to two years' imprisonment who, being a person not a British subject, whether residing in or out of Canada does in Canada incite, urge or induce workmen, by any act or means whatsoever, to quit any employment in which they may be engaged, or to enter upon any strike with the object of enforcing additional wages or terms of employment from their employer.<sup>38</sup>

The introduction of the Lougheed bill signalled the start of a full scale debate on the relations of Canadian-American labor bodies and brought the issues into full view of a heretofore uninformed Canadian public. The position of the AFL was enunciated by President Gompers at its 1903 Boston convention.

[At the meeting of the executive council held in Toronto], it was learned that a bill had been introduced in the Canadian parliament making it a penal offense for anyone not a British subject to enter Canada and advise or counsel with Canadian workmen to seek an increase in their wages. This was clearly aimed at American trade unionism under the misapprehension or misrepresentation that American trade unionists provoke strikes of Canadian workmen. The situation was made clear in a statement issued at Toronto and in addresses at public meetings. It will be observed that the proposed law makes no provision prohibiting employers or representatives of employers' associations from helping employers in Canada defeating Canadian workmen in any effort to protect their rights or interests.

.....

In our movement it is well known that no strikes are ordered in one country to occur in another; they are not provoked, are not even counselled or advised. When strikes occur on the part of members or any *bona fide* trade union affiliated to the American Federation of Labor, either in the United States or Canada, the initiative must be taken by those workmen who desire to strike, and the only participation of other members in the organization is either to veto the application to strike or to approve it, and in the latter event, to contribute financially towards sustaining the men engaged in a controversy.

The Dominion government some months ago appointed a commission to investigate a number of strikes which had occurred in the far west. From the commission's investigation and report, reflection is made upon some, but we can proudly declare that not one scintilla

(37) *Ibid.*, p. 76.

(38) « The American Labor Movement is Continental Not Local », *American Federationist*, Vol. 10, No. 6, June 1903, p. 469.

or shadow could be thrown reflecting upon the honor, integrity and faithfulness of any organization affiliated to the American Federation of Labor or upon any of its men. Recently I had an interesting conversation with the Hon. Mackenzie King, chief of the bureau of labor for Canada, a member of the commission, and he substantially repeated this to me.

We have the right, then, to insist that the *bona fide* labor movement and its men shall not be ostracized or outlawed, particularly when it is the aim and work of the American-Canadian trade unionists of Canada and the remainder of the American continent to make for the well being, the good citizenship, loyalty and the fraternity of all.<sup>39</sup>

During May, labor and employer representatives presented their views on the bill before a sub-committee of the senate committee on banking and commerce. Labor's representatives included president John A. Flett of the TLC and several executive officers of the five binational railroad brotherhoods operating in Canada. Employer interests were represented by officials of the Employer's Association, Toronto, the Canadian Manufacturers Association, the Montreal Board of Trade, and the Montreal Chambre de Commerce.<sup>40</sup>

By and large, the statements and arguments presented to this committee were representative of the subsequent discussions on the subject which appeared in the labor and public press and within the ranks of Canadian Labor. In the main, supporters of Canadian unionism [the NTLC] supported the employers position.<sup>41</sup>

#### LABORS' POSITION<sup>42</sup>

(1) The binational unions « manifest in their constitutions the logical development of the recognized and legitimate movement of the age towards unions. This movement was first exhibited by the trend of capital to unite with capital without regard to geographical, political or other boundaries, and the world-wide expansion of trade has not only invited, but demanded the extension of ties that heretofore have been local... »

(39) « President Compers' Report », AFL, *Proceedings*, 1903, pp. 21-22.

(40) *Toiler*, Vol. 3, No. 32, p. 4, July 17, 1903. A complete transcript of the hearings was published in the *Toiler* commencing with Vol. 3, No. 27, June 12, 1903, p. 1.

(41) « Loughheed Bill », (continued), *Toiler*, Vol. 3, No. 35, August 7, 1903, p. 4. In 1910, the CFL endorsed a similar bill, see Logan, *Trade Union Organization in Canada op. cit.*, p. 269.

(42) The following points are taken from « Labors' Statement to the Senators », *Toiler*, Vol. 3, No. 27, June 12, 1903, p. 1, and subsequent issues reporting under the same title.

(2) The law recognizes binational organizations in religious, fraternal, social, industrial, and educational circles.

(3) Canadians have property rights invested in binational unions (such as pensions and sick benefit funds). It is an accepted principle in law that such rights must be protected.

(4) Binational unions are responsible organizations with a responsible leadership. They seek « to maintain the integrity of the social fabric, the existence of which is the best guarantee of their position. » The Western Federation of Miners and other organizations affiliated with the American Labor Unions are not representative of the main stream of binational unionism.

(5) Canadian employers are free to participate in binational associations (United Typothetae of America, International Metal Trades Association, and National Founders Assn.) and to select their own leaders. Canadian labor demands the same right. « Among employers, ability is sought for regardless of political boundaries . . . why should the workmen be discriminated against when he [sic] seeks to follow the same course? »

(6) The bill assumes that binational officers come from the United States and cause disturbances in Canadian labor — that « strikes are declared from Washington. » The fact is that under the constitutions of most binationals no binational officer or officers can order a strike in Canada. All the binational officers can do is to sanction or refuse to sanction a strike already decided upon by Canadians.

(7) Canadian locals of binationals are supreme within their own jurisdiction. If they are bound by any laws, they are laws to which they have given enlightened assent.

(8) « Officers of the international organizations [come] to Canada at the request of Canadian members, but their influence [is] exerted to prevent rather than promote strikes. Many a threatened strike [has] been avoided due to the intervention of these so-called walking delegates . . . International officers only [come] to Canada upon invitation, and then only to restore harmony whenever possible.

#### EMPLOYERS' POSITION

(1) « The walking delegates [of binational unions] receive large pay, and must do something to show that they earn [it] by coming to

Canada, without being called upon by the union here, where the men are contented, are stirring up discontent so as to induce these men to make exacting demands . . . » Binational representatives, « assemble [the] men together and make inflammatory speeches, or else they go into the factory and lead the men to believe they have not been properly treated. »

(2) The bill is directed only at aliens who perform certain acts in Canada. The bill should be amended so that « no British subject or those representing an alien organization should be allowed to perform acts which the bill seeks to prohibit. »

(3) In 1897, labor asked parliament to pass the Alien Labor Law, which prohibited employers from bringing labor from the United States to Canada. The bill is a necessary compliment to that act. « If an employer is prohibited from getting a person to perform labor, why should not these gentlemen [binational representatives] be prevented from coming here to incite our peaceable workmen . . . » <sup>43</sup>

(4) Binational unions operate in Canada in order to control Canadian industry to the benefit of American industry.

(5) « Canadians are able to handle their own affairs. That is what we want. »

(6) « The object of this legislation is to prevent obstacles being put in the way of maintaining good relations between employers and employees; the object is to prevent the intervention and interference of foreigners who have no interest upon the subject matter. »

(7) « . . . the chief and most serious difficulties that have arisen in this country have been promoted by foreign representatives. (Employers' spokesman cited the miners' strikes in western Canada and other eastern strikes as examples.) We know this fact, that in all these strikes that have been prosecuted and maintained, financial assistance has come to this country from the American federation of unions from the other side. That is of itself a material act of interference as between the people who make their contract. »

(8) American labor leaders and American labor organizations are not amenable to the laws of Canada.

---

(43) The spokesman was in error. Labor did not ask for the Alien Labor Law of 1897. The law was a retaliatory government measure against a similar bill previously enacted in the United States.

(9) « . . . this act is no more than a confirmation of the National Policy of this country. It means no more or less than Canada for Canadians, just the same as the spirit of the Empire is now being promoted throughout the Empire. »

(10) « . . . foreign interference [is] an insult both to capital and labor, and I think myself that we have brains enough here to do as well, if not better, than foreigners. »

(11) « . . . there is a national organization of workmen with headquarters in Quebec . . . which has been organized simply because the men do not wish to accept the dictates of foreign agitators coming across the line. »

After hearings closed on June 16, 1903, the bill was referred to a subcommittee of the senate banking and commerce committee. The subcommittee subsequently reported favorably on the following amended bill.

Redraft of Bill H, as to labor agitators, as amended by the subcommittee on the committee on banking and commerce, June 17, 1903.

524A. Everyone is guilty of an indictable offense and liable to two years' imprisonment who, not being a British subject, or who, being a British subject and not having been continuously domiciled and resident in Canada during one year next before the commission of the act complained of, does in Canada counsel, incite, urge or induce any strike or any lockout, or the countenance of any strike or any lockout.

2. This section shall not apply to any person who, being a duly accredited officer of any international organization, comes in to Canada to bring about a settlement of any strike or any lockout.

3. In any proceeding under this section the burden of proof as to nationality, domicile and residence shall be upon the person accused.<sup>44</sup>

On referral to the full committee, a motion to strike clause 2 was passed 14 to 3. Subsequently, the committee favorably reported the amended bill to the senate. The measure was passed by the senate on July 22 and was subsequently delivered to the House of Commons for its sanction.

The Lougheed Bill was easily defeated in the hands of the Canadian House of Commons. In 1907, Senator McMullen introduced a bill similar

---

(44) As reported in « Lougheed Bill » (continued) *Toller*, Vol. 3, No. 35, August 7, 1903, p. 4.

to the Lougheed Bill of 1903. He proposed to make it a criminal offence for international officers to intervene in any way in industrial disputes in Canada. However, the majority of the senators had changed their minds with respect to the question of binationalism, probably because of the correction of misunderstandings during the discussion on the Lougheed measure. As a result, the McMullen Bill was soon given a « six months hoist. »

Notwithstanding these defeats, the efforts of the enemies of binationalism continued. Senator McMullen made a second unsuccessful attempt during the parliamentary session, 1908-1909. The bill was introduced as an amendment to the Conciliation and Labor Act and was essentially the same as his earlier measure in its intended results.

The next threat came through the instigation of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. At its meeting in Hamilton in September, 1909, the CMA passed a unanimous resolution requesting the federal government to enact legislation forbidding American labor leaders from operating in Canada or in any way interfering with Canadian labor. During the 1910 parliamentary session, Senator Belcourt brought in a bill which proposed, through an amendment of section 497 of the Criminal Code of Canada, to declare every trade union whose members were not all British subjects an illegal conspiracy in restraint of trade. However, in the case of this bill, as with its predecessor, the parliamentary solicitor of the TLC obtained interviews with various senators, and as a result of his efforts, together with protests coming in from various parts of the country in response to a circular issued from TLC headquarters, the author of the measure asked leave to withdraw it.<sup>45</sup>

The executive council of the TLC stated in its report to the 1910 convention that it felt safe in saying that the antagonisms towards binational trade unionism which were formerly manifested by the senate, had passed away, and that any lingering traces were to be found only in a few prejudiced individuals.

So far as involving any direct legislative attacks upon the activities of the binationals and their leadership, this prophecy proved to be correct. However, other forces within both labor and capital continued their efforts to bring about the destruction of binational unionism at the earliest opportunity. The leadership of this movement within capital

---

(45) *Eastern Labour News*, Vol. 2, No. 9, April 2, 1910, p. 4.



was spearheaded by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and certain members of the federal and Quebec legislatures. Leadership within the ranks of labor was provided by the National Trades and Labor Congress and its successor, the Canadian Federation of Labor.

### Canadian Unionism — the NTLC and CFL

Protest and conflict over American participation in Canadian labor commenced shortly after Canadian unionists first participated in American national unions. The National Trades and Labor Congress of Canada (1903-1908) and its successor the Canadian Federation of Labor (1908-1927) were both direct outgrowths of this conflict. With the collapse of the CFL, Canadian unionism based on protest against American influence and the notion of « Canada for Canadians » (motto of the CFL), was largely bankrupt, except for French-Canadian unionism.<sup>46</sup>

However, the Canadian labor movement continued to have three national centers — the TLC, CNTU, and the All-Canadian Congress of Labor. In 1927, the ACCL was formed by bringing together the remains of the CFL (9,424 members) and a group of industrial-type Canadian unions such as the One Big Union (18,665 members), the Canadian Brotherhood of Railroad Employees (14,500 members), and the Mine Workers' Union of Canada (4,036 members). In the preamble to its constitution, the ACCL, while stressing that the body would be composed solely of Canadian unions and independent locals, declared its purpose to be the freeing of Canadian labor « from the reactionary influence of the American-controlled unions. »<sup>47</sup> In 1940, the ACCL merged with Canadian-led elements of the CIO to form the Canadian Congress of Labor.

In both the ACCL and the CCL, protest against American labor influence in Canada was directed at the form of this influence rather than simply the influence itself. They were both movements against the AFL-TLC form of binational unionism as opposed to the NTLC-CFL movement which was based simply on American participation. In this respect they differed little from the ALU and CIO movements of the United States. Consequently, the following review of Canadian unionism will be limited to the NTLC and the CFL.

(46) *LG*, Vol. 16, No. 5, November 1915, p. 614.

(47) *LG*, Vol. 27, No. 4, April 1927, p. 406.

Prior to the Berlin Declaration of 1903, and except for the case of the PWA, Canadian unionism consisted of little more than isolated local bodies. Some of these locals were former binational affiliates which had seceded from the binational. As noted earlier, a group of Toronto molders attempted to secede in 1884. In other locals, the question of affiliation with a central body had not arisen. In some trades and industries there was no central body with which to affiliate. In still other locals, the locals had faced the question of affiliation, but chose to remain independent. For example, prior to 1901 the Boot and Shoe Workers of Montreal were organized into four independent local bodies. In 1901, the binational Boot and Shoe Workers Union established a local in Montreal. Shortly after, the four independent locals came together in the Canadian Federation of Shoemakers in order to more effectively resist the binational's invasion. By 1902, the binational had organized four locals and by 1903 it had organized six locals. Attempts to destroy the four independents proved futile and they continued their separate existence.<sup>48</sup>

The Berlin Declaration brought together the isolated islands of Canadian unionism into a united front against American influence in Canadian labor. Typically, the structure of Canadian unionism consisted of a national center and its affiliated local bodies. Except for notable exceptions such as the PWA, the CBRE, and the French-Canadian federations, Canadian unionism has not been able to set up and sustain central bodies of locals in a trade or industry. In this respect, the Canadian union movement stands in sharp contrast to the American movement. In the light of the revealed objectives and the philosophy of Canadian unionism, its small membership, its weak financial structure, and the minor role played by collective bargaining to attain its ends, there is considerable evidence to support the position that central bodies in a trade or industry were of secondary importance. The most important structural component was the national center. Whereas the binational movement organized from the « bottom up », the NTLC and the CFL (and what Canadian unions they had) planned to organize from the « top down. »<sup>49</sup>

---

(48) THEODORE W. GLOCKER, *The Government of American Trade Unions*, pp. 80-81.

(49) These two organizations will be referred to simply as the CFL. In 1904, the president of the NTLC proposed the name Canadian Federation of Labor, but nothing came of the idea until 1908.

## The Outlook of Canadian Unionism

At its first annual convention held in Quebec City during September 1903, president Omer Brunet outlined the purposes of the newly formed Canadian Federation of Labor.

If we give a glance behind us, we will be easily convinced that Canadian workmen were awaiting only a favorable opportunity to unite themselves more closely in order to obtain by way of legislation the improvement of the social and financial condition.

Do not forget it, many before us have said and repeated it : it is only by a reform of our laws, and in no other way, that we will be able to improve our condition. And in order to obtain that end, we cannot do better than unite ourselves closely under the protection of the national flag of which the motto is and must remain « Canada for Canadians ». <sup>50</sup>

Unlike binational unionists, the CFL and presumably its subordinate bodies, rejected the view that binational solidarity of capital had to be answered by binational solidarity of labor. To Canadian union supporters :

The threat to the Canadian laborer comes not only from the capitalists of Canada, but also from the foreign capitalists and the foreign labor, who respectedly seek to exploit and replace him in the production activities which should be his. Especially is it necessary, when he seeks to enlist the services of the various governments of the country in his protection, that he not be handicapped by having to appeal to them as a member of an organization largely foreign in character. The emphasis is placed on political boundaries, and the purpose and the capacity of a nation's institutions to furnish protection to its own. <sup>51</sup>

In line with this purpose, the CFL repeatedly urged the federal government to close off Canada from foreign influences. In this endeavor the CFL stands in marked contrast to the TLC. In the conventions of 1903-1907, an unusually large amount of time was spent discussing proposed tariff and immigration legislation. In 1903 and again in 1905, the executive of the federation urged the federal government to generally revise tariffs upward. <sup>52</sup> A 1904 resolution called for an increased tariff on barrels from the United States and tweeds from Eng-

(50) *LG*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1903, p. 331.

(51) LOGAN, *The History of Trade Union Organization in Canada*, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-310.

(52) *LG.*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1904, p. 332 and Vol. 4, No. 5, November 1904, p. 420.

land.<sup>53</sup> A second resolution urged the government « to take steps to prevent the influx of indigent immigrants and skilled labor men into this country. »<sup>54</sup> A 1906 resolution demanded increased tariffs on shoes. In 1907, a resolution urged a tariff on American motor vehicles on the grounds that « the vehicles were sold in Canada to the detriment of the Canadian wagon builder. »<sup>55</sup> In 1906, the federation urged the federal government to aid Canadian ship-building by granting a bounty on all tonnage launched.<sup>56</sup> The 1909 convention requested the federal government to amend the Alien Labor Law so « as to prohibit the performance of labor in the Dominion by foreign employees or foreign firms or corporations when such labor can be performed by Canadian citizens. » The same convention endorsed the « methods » used by the PWA in the Glace Bay strike and disapproved of the actions of the UMW.<sup>57</sup>

A 1911 resolution demanded that « American trade unions offering sick or death benefits to their members be prevented from doing so until they have obtained a license from the government and given necessary guarantees. »<sup>58</sup> At the federation's 1913 convention, president

John Moffatt commented :

The chief note of last year's convention was that of spreading and deepening Canadian sentiment and Canadian patriotism with the purpose of infusing into the industrial life of Canada new, strong, healthy blood which would build up her institutions, her industries, and her trade... What we claim to have accomplished is that we have gathered into one Labor Federation a strong band of determined and aggressive union men who stand for Canadian ideals and Canadian interests.<sup>59</sup>

A resolution passed at the same convention endorsed the IDI Act of 1907 as « a good means of settling labor disputes. »<sup>60</sup>

A resolution passed by the 1915 convention ordered the executive to inform the government that American contractors were securing contracts in Canada and refused to employ Canadian labor. It further

(53) *LG*, Vol. 4, No. 5, October 1904, pp. 363-364.

(54) *Ibid.*, p. 363.

(55) *LG*, Vol. 8, No. 4, October 1907, p. 435.

(56) *LG*, Vol. 7, No. 4, October 1906, p. 405

(57) *LG*, Vol. 10, No. 4, October 1909, p. 473.

(58) *LG*, Vol. 12, No. 5, December 1911, p. 594.

(59) *LG*, Vol. 14, No. 5, November 1913, p. 583.

(60) *Ibid.*, p. 586.

requested the government to pass legislation ordering contractors to fill at least 50 percent of their labor needs with Canadian labor.<sup>61</sup> The federation supported the Laurier policy for an independent Canadian navy provided the ships were built in Canadian yards. In the case of coal duties, the interests of Nova Scotia producers (high tariff) and the Quebec consumer (low tariff) conflicted and no action was taken. As noted earlier, the federation supported the various senate bills designed to keep American labor leaders out of Canada. In 1921, the federation protested against the union security provisions granted by Alberta and B.C. coal producers to the UMW.<sup>62</sup> On numerous occasions, the federation insisted upon rigid enforcement of the Alien Labor Law, particularly against the employment of American workers by American capitalists in Canada. At the 1925 convention resolutions urged the government to « pass a law forbidding working men to send funds to labor unions in the United States, or to draw upon funds from there », and to « show preference to CFL affiliates in executing public works. »<sup>63</sup>

In the area of labor dispute settlement, the federation repeatedly endorsed the IDI Act of 1907 and urged its application in more industries. In 1908, the federation urged strikers to take their dispute with the CPR to arbitration. In 1918, the federation's president, Charles Pepper, urged affiliates to use every means provided by law for settling disputes and emphasized that the federation had always believed in mediation and arbitration. According to Professor Logan :

A year later he referred again to the accomplishments in wages and hours secured to member unions by such means, but admitted that the limit of endurance was almost reached, and legislation must be had to remedy the causes of the increasing cost of living.<sup>64</sup>

In only one instance did the federation extend financial aid to strikers — the Toronto boilermakers' strike of 1913.

### Membership and Representation in Canadian Unionism

Support for the federation in terms of numbers, location, and trades represented varied greatly throughout its history. In 1903, its membership totalled approximately 7,000 in thirty locals.<sup>65</sup> Its peak member-

(61) *LG*, Vol. 16, No. 5, November 1915, p. 615.

(62) *LG*, Vol. 21, No. 10, October 1921, p. 1261.

(63) *LG*, Vol. 25, No. 10, October 1925, p. 998.

(64) LOGAN, *The History of the Trade-Union Organization in Canada*, *op. cit.*, pp. 313-314.

(65) *LG*, Vol. 4, No. 4, October 1903, p. 332.

ship of 17,500 was reached in 1923. When the CFL was dissolved in 1926 in favor of the ACCL, its membership stood at about 9,500.

Up to 1921, and the formation of the Confederation of Catholic Workers of Canada, the main support for the federation was drawn from Quebec. In 1905, the federation claimed a membership of 10,435. Quebec membership totalled 9,000, of which 5,000 were in Quebec City. Subordinate bodies included one Canadian union, the Canadian Federation of Shoemakers, 43 local bodies, and city centrals in Montreal, Ottawa, and Quebec City.<sup>66</sup> For a number of years, the main strength of the federation was concentrated in these three cities.

By and large, support for the federation centered in local bodies. The federation was generally unsuccessful in either establishing Canadian unions or attracting and holding the few existing Canadian unions. From 1903 to 1911, the federation had the support of the Canadian Federation of Shoemakers. From 1910 to 1918, the PWA, the Canadian Union of Steam and Operating Engineers and the Canadian Section of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers were affiliated.<sup>67</sup> In 1914, the federation formed the Canadian Federation of Printing Trades by bringing together the Canadian Typographical Union No. 1 of Ottawa, the Printing and Pressman's local of Toronto, the Printing and Pressman's Assistants local of Toronto, and the Canadian Bookbinder's Union of Toronto.<sup>68</sup> The Canadian Electrical Trade Union and the Canadian Federation of Bricklayers and Masons affiliated in 1923. The last Canadian union to affiliate was the Amalgamated Carpenters of Canada in 1925. In 1922, after the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees was expelled from the TLC on the grounds of dual unionism, the federation extended it an invitation to affiliate but it chose to remain independent. However, the CBRE sent a fraternal delegate to the CFL's convention.<sup>69</sup>

Outside of Canadian union support, the locals affiliated with the federation included the Boot and Shoe Workers of Quebec City, long-shoremen of Quebec City and textile workers and bricklayers, masons and carpenters of Montreal. In 1910, the executive revealed plans for

---

(66) *LG*, Vol. 5, No. 4, October 1904, p. 364.

(67) *LG*, Vol. 8, No. 4, October 1907, pp. 436-437 and Vol. 10, No. 4, October 1909, p. 472.

(68) *LG*, Vol. 15, No. 4, October 1914, p. 490.

(69) *LG*, Vol. 22, No. 10, October 1922, p. 1102.

the gathering together of the local affiliates into four industrial federations — the Shoe Workers and Allied Leather Trades Federation, a national union of coal miners to be accomplished by extending the territorial jurisdiction of the PWA, a building trades union, and a printing trades federation.<sup>70</sup>

In 1911, the federation lost the support of the boot and shoe workers and many of the Quebec unionists, particularly in Montreal. In the main, this support was lost to the rapidly developing French-Canadian labor movement. In 1910, the convention was made up of sixty-two delegates. In 1911, representation had dropped to « between thirty to forty. »<sup>71</sup> At the 1912 convention at Three Rivers, representation was made up of five delegates from the Toronto printers, 14 delegates from the PWA, one delegate from Montreal, and 19 delegates from Quebec City. As a result of this change in representation, the leadership of the federation changed from Quebec unionists to the PWA and its secretary, John Moffatt.

In 1917, the PWA was lost to the UMW.<sup>72</sup> By 1919, the federation had only twelve affiliates, all of which were local bodies — eleven in Ontario and one in Alberta.<sup>73</sup> However, the federation regained some of its losses with the affiliation of the Canadian Electrical Trade Union and the Canadian Federation of Bricklayers and Masons Union in 1923.

Despite the added support given by these two bodies, overall support for the federation began to decline in late 1923. Earlier, at the federation's 1922 convention, J.R. Mosher, fraternal delegate from the CBRE, hinted at the reason for this lack of support: « . . . workers of Canada should be organized on both national and international lines, having their own national organization as a basis, while being able to affiliate internationally with other organizations of workers. »<sup>74</sup> By 1926, the federation had very nearly ceased to function.

The CFL was a protest movement against American activities in Canadian labor. The loss of support from Quebec was a near fatal blow. Elsewhere, fears of the American domination of Canadian labor

(70) *LG*, Vol. 11, No. 4, October 1910, pp. 440-441.

(71) *LG*, Vol. 12, No. 6, December 1911, p. 593.

(72) *LG*, Vol. 18, No. 4, October 1917, p. 861.

(73) *LG*, Vol. 19, No. 12, December 1919, p. 1468.

(74) *LG*, Vol. 22, No. 10, October 1922, p. 1102.

became less of an issue and consequently the patriotic platform of the federation lost its appeal. The collapse of the CFL pretty well saw the end of an aggressive Canadian union movement based on protest against American participation in Canadian labor affairs. Although anti-American sentiment was present in succeeding Canadian national centers such as the ACCL and the CCL, the intensity of this feeling was considerably decreased and the issue became secondary to the issues which were common to both the Canadian and American labor movements.<sup>75</sup>

### DÉVELOPPEMENT DES RELATIONS ENTRE LES CENTRALES SYNDICALES NATIONALES CANADIENNES ET AMÉRICAINES

Jusqu'en 1897, le C.M.T.C. et la F.A.T. menaient leurs activités indépendamment l'un de l'autre et chacun de ces deux organismes limitait ses opérations à son propre territoire juridique. Mais à la suite de son congrès de cette année-là, la F.A.T. nomma un délégué auprès du C.M.T.C. afin de cimenter plus solidement les intérêts des syndicats ouvriers d'Amérique.

De son côté, le C.M.T.C. établit les bases de ses relations futures avec la F.A.T., au cours de son congrès tenu à Berlin (aujourd'hui Kitchener) en septembre 1902. D'ailleurs, à cette dernière occasion, John A. Flett, organisateur canadien de la F.A.T., fut élu président du C.M.T.C., ce qui confirmait la position de cette dernière centrale sur le syndicalisme binational. Les dirigeants de ces deux centrales conclurent même une entente, le 25 avril 1903.

Cependant, lors de son congrès de Berlin, le C.M.T.C. expulsa 23 organisations qui s'opposaient au syndicalisme binational. Les chefs de ces organisations expulsées, qui comptaient 3,340 membres, se réunirent immédiatement à Berlin afin de fonder une deuxième centrale nationale basée sur les principes du syndicalisme national. Ainsi naissait le C.N.M.T. qui tint son premier congrès annuel à Québec, en septembre 1903, sous la présidence de Omer Brunet.

A la suite du rapport de la Commission royale chargée d'enquêter sur la grève de 1903 des mineurs de charbon, le sénateur Lougheed présenta un projet de loi qui marqua le commencement d'un grand débat sur les relations entre les centrales syndicales canadiennes et américaines et qui porta le sujet à l'attention du public canadien. Le Sénat forma un sous-comité pour étudier cette question; les travailleurs et les employeurs firent connaître leurs opinions respectives.

Finalement, le projet de loi du sénateur Lougheed fut défait à la Chambre des Communes. Mais en 1907, le sénateur McMullen présenta un projet de loi semblable au précédent, dans lequel il proposait de considérer comme offense criminelle toute intervention d'officiers internationaux dans les conflits de travail

(75) For details of the structure, government and attitudes of the ACCL and the CCL, see LOGAN, *Trade Unions in Canada*, *op. cit.*, pp. 379-398.



au Canada. Cette tentative du sénateur McMullen de même qu'une autre qu'il fit pendant la session 1908-1909 échouèrent toutes les deux. Pendant ce temps, l'Association des Manufacturiers canadiens (C.M.A.) faisait des efforts dans le même sens.

L'exécutif du C.M.T.C. déclarait dans son rapport présenté au Congrès de 1910, que les antagonismes envers le syndicalisme binational qui s'étaient manifestés auparavant au Sénat étaient maintenant disparus. Cette prophétie s'avéra correcte. En effet, avec la disparition de la Fédération canadienne du Travail en 1927 (qui avait succédé au C.N.M.T. en 1908), le syndicalisme qui protestait contre l'influence américaine fit largement faillite, à l'exception du syndicalisme canadien-français. De fait, l'opposition du Congrès pan-canadien du Travail et de la Fédération canadienne du Travail en était une de forme plutôt que de fond.

### *OFFRE EXCEPTIONNELLE*

Il nous reste encore un certain nombre de volumes des années antérieures de la revue

### **RELATIONS INDUSTRIELLES**

Vous pouvez vous les procurer en vous adressant aux

**LES PRESSES DE L'UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL**

C.P. 2447, Québec 2, Qué.

Tél.: 681-9611

### *NOUVELLE PUBLICATION*

## **LES COMPORTEMENTS ÉCONOMIQUES DE LA FAMILLE SALARIÉE DU QUÉBEC**

par Marc-Adélar Tremblay et Gérald Fortin

La première enquête sociologique menée à l'échelle de la province de Québec parmi les familles salariées canadiennes-françaises. Cette étude, qui a duré six ans (1957 à 1963), analyse l'ensemble des facteurs économiques, sociaux et culturels qui influencent la famille salariée du Québec dans la définition de ses besoins et de ses aspirations, ainsi que dans ses comportements de consommation, d'épargne et d'endettement.

7 x 10 - 405 pages - broché - 1965 - prix \$5.00

**LES PRESSES DE L'UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL**

C.P. 2447, Québec 2, Qué.

Tél.: 681-9611