

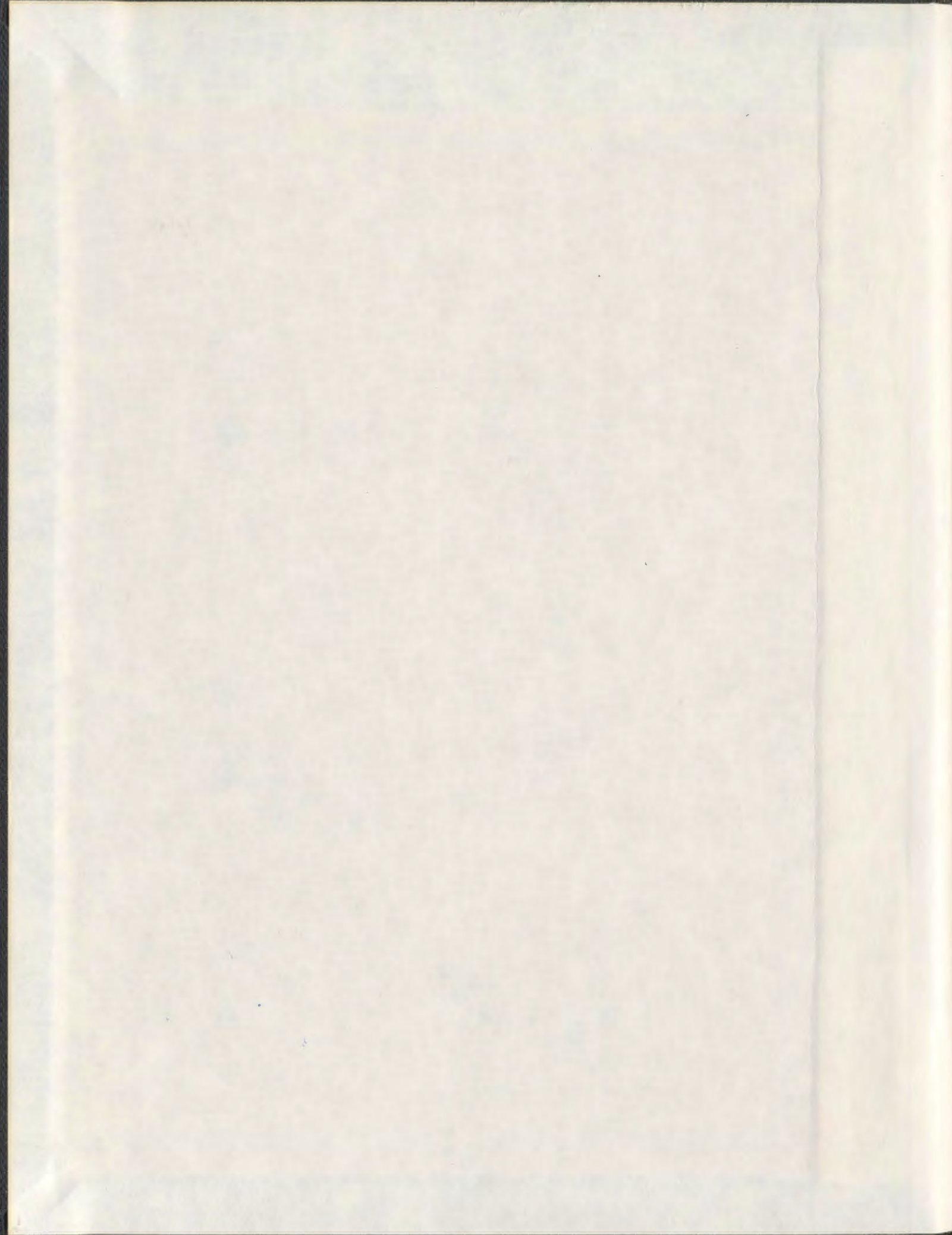
ON THE HOOK:
WELFARE CAPITALISM ON THE VANCOUVER
WATERFRONT, 1919-1939

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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Abstract

In 1923, after nearly three decades of class conflict on the Vancouver waterfront, the Shipping Federation of British Columbia, an umbrella organization of shipping, stevedoring, and warehousing interests, undertook a far-reaching agenda of welfare capitalism. Drawing on wider currents of progressive reform which were cresting in the interwar period, and inspired by the example set by its counterpart in Seattle, the Shipping Federation created new joint political structures, adopted a range of paternalist initiatives, and decasualized the waterfront workplace. From its vantage point, this was a "good citizens" policy, and it was designed to: build bridges across the class divide, gain greater control of the work process, stave off the intervention of unions and the state, and, in the end, mould a more efficient and compliant waterfront workforce. The creation and implementation of this reform agenda, the ways in which white and aboriginal waterfront workers negotiated the politics of paternalism and labour market reform, and the long-term ramifications of this dynamic are at the core of this thesis.

Welfare capitalism shaped patterns of life and labour on the waterfront in significant ways: informal ways of regulating the workplace atrophied; labourism was revived; and some waterfront workers acquired a reasonable standard of living. The trade-off at work, here, was this: only those employees who divested themselves of more radical political sensibilities, and adhered to waterfront employers' broader vision of an efficient, decasualized workplace, could hope to secure a living wage and fulfill their obligations as breadwinners, husbands, and

citizens. For aboriginal longshoremen, most of whom were from the Squamish First Nation, this bargain was especially difficult to negotiate for it came freighted with the additional challenges associated with being "Indian" in a white society. Unlike their white counterparts who passed muster, they were marginalized from the waterfront during this time as decasualization's new time-work discipline conflicted with their more traditional sensibilities and ongoing need to work at a variety of tasks to ensure material and cultural survival.

Straddling labour history, aboriginal history, and the burgeoning literature on law and society, this thesis rejects conventional interpretations of welfare capitalism that conceptualize it as either a failed experiment in industrial democracy, or a drag on the emergence of the welfare state. In doing so, it re-positions welfare capitalism in the context of the wider return to normalcy following the Great War, and the powerful reform impulses that took aim at family, citizen, and nation. Rather than forestalling the welfare state, this citizen-worker complex – which manufactured a new sense of entitlement amongst white waterfront workers – was part of a broader cultural shift that would, after the trials of the Great Depression and challenge posed by the Communist Party of Canada, eventually underwrite the state's very expansion. On a broad level, then, this analysis illustrates how the prevailing liberal-capitalist order was successfully rehabilitated after the Great War and "1919", and how, in the long-term, it successfully contained, by consent and coercion, those forces which were antithetical to the prevailing economic and political status quo.

Acknowledgements

Conceived in Newfoundland, researched and written in British Columbia, and completed in Nova Scotia, this thesis has travelled many miles over the past five years. During this time, I have benefited from the assistance and generosity of many people, and it is with great pleasure that I acknowledge publicly their contribution to this endeavour. At Memorial University, Bill Reeves, Andy den Otter, and Danny Vickers supervised my comprehensive fields. The latter two scholars were also members of my thesis committee. Thanks to all three for their participation in this project. While in Vancouver, researching for months on end, Mark Leier and Annette DeFaveri helped to reproduce my labour power on a daily basis. Thank you both for the three squares, warm bed, and night-time conversation and reading lists, all of which kept this project going when it was unclear to me just what it was, and where it was heading. Financial support for this thesis came from many sources, both private and public, including the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the School of Graduate Studies at Memorial University, the Labour/Le Travail internship programme, and the John S. Ewart Memorial Scholarship fund. My supervisor, Greg Kealey, has been extraordinarily generous with his time, knowledge, and resources, both archival and material; his unwavering support of my work, and the field of labour history generally, made the completion of this thesis possible. My parents and brothers have been especially supportive; thank you all for being there. My deepest gratitude, however, is owed to Jill Perry, who began this process as my friend and completed it as my wife. Thank you for everything.

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Introduction. The Rocky Road to Reform

In the wake of the Great War and the national labour revolt, politicians and reform-minded advocates of all kinds were busy reaffirming what it meant to be Canadian. Drawing on a deep heritage of investigation and intervention pioneered by religious, scientific, and bourgeois crusaders in the late-19th and early-20th century, they turned, increasingly, to the state, which had grown in size, sophistication, and stature after successfully mobilizing the nation for war. But as important as the state was in this process of envisioning and instituting a new morality, weighty non-state actors such as employers were particularly active in this regard as well, pursuing reform agendas on the job that complemented broader state initiatives which took aim at the health and welfare of the family, citizen, and nation. This was precisely the case on the Vancouver waterfront. During the interwar period, waterfront employers, rocked by over twenty years of class conflict, embarked on an ambitious programme to place industrial relations on a more amiable footing, increase the efficiency of the waterfront workplace, and, in the process, re-create and re-moralize longshoremen themselves. The creation and implementation of this far-reaching reform agenda, the ways that white and aboriginal waterfront workers negotiated its politics and possibilities, and the long-term implications of this process are the focus of this thesis.

For Canadian workers, the 1920s were characterized by defeat, disillusionment, and conservatism. The push for industrial unionism had been

beaten back; membership in the mainstream labour movement was on the decline; workplace battles were being lost, if they were being fought at all; and workers' expanded sense of possibility, the wellspring of the labour revolt, was starting to constrict.¹ Perhaps nowhere was this denouement more obvious, more sharp, than on the Vancouver waterfront where waterfront workers had earned a reputation for militancy during the early decades of the 20th century. With the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway to Vancouver in 1887 and the opening of the Panama canal in 1914, the port of Vancouver underwent a dramatic transformation from a small, yet rich, lumber exporting site – "crowded between forest and shore" – to a complex port facility wired into an extensive network of regional, national, and international exchange. Great piers were erected to accommodate the tremendous increase in deep-sea vessels, grain elevators and warehouses were constructed up

¹ The literature on "1919" and its immediate aftermath is extensive. See, for example: David J. Bercuson, Fools and Wisemen: The Rise and Fall of the One Big Union (Toronto 1978); Bercuson, Confrontation at Winnipeg: Labour, Industrial Relations, and the General Strike Second Edition (Montréal 1990); Mary Horodyski, "Women and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919," Manitoba History 11 (1986), 28-37; James R Conley, "Frontier Labourers, Crafts in Crisis, and the Western Labour Revolt: The Case of Vancouver, 1900-1919," Labour/Le Travail 23 (1989), 9-37; Linda Kealey, "No Special Protection – No Sympathy": Women's Activism in the Canadian Labour Revolt of 1919," in Hopkin and Kealey, eds., Class, Community, and the Labour Movement: Wales and Canada, 1850-1930 (St. John's 1989), 134-39; James Naylor, The New Democracy: Challenging the Social Order in Industrial Ontario, 1914-1925 (Toronto 1991); David Bright, The Limits of Labour: Class Formation and the Labour Movement in Calgary, 1883-1929 (Vancouver 1998), part 2, especially chapter 7, "1919: Revolt Reconsidered," 145-161. For a national perspective see Gregory S. Kealey, "1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt," Labour/Le Travail 13 (1984), 11-44; Bryan Palmer, Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991 Second Edition (Toronto 1992), 196-205; 208-213; 214-221; Kealey and Douglas Cruikshank, "Strikes in Canada, 1891-1950," in Kealey, ed., Workers and Canadian History (Montréal and Kingston 1995), 345-418; and the collection of essays in Heron, ed., The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925 (Toronto 1998). Allan Seager and David Roth examine British Columbia in "British Columbia and the Mining West: A Ghost of a Chance," 231-267.

and down Burrard Inlet, and numerous rail lines criss-crossed both the north and south shore (see appendix 1). Like the physical environment of the port, capital was reorganized too. Individually, shipping companies in Vancouver, the majority of which were subsidiaries of larger, trans-national corporations, invested heavily in iron hulls, steam technology, and larger vessels; collectively, shipping, railway, stevedoring, and storage companies banded together to form the Shipping Federation in 1911 to better manage the increase in deep-sea traffic and, in the words of the local labour council, to "establish their ambition in industrial life." By the interwar period, then, the paternalism and single-staple exports of the Hastings Mill era had given way to more sophisticated and extensive economic structures; indeed, as David Montgomery has remarked, "the waterfront of a great port dramatized both the organizational achievements and the social chaos of industrial capitalism."²

² I have used the year 1887 to mark the completion of the CPR to Vancouver because it was in that year, on 23 May, that the first scheduled train from eastern Canada arrived in the newly incorporated city. The transformation of the port of Vancouver is discussed in the following: Saturday Sunset, Annual BC Development Edition (Vancouver 1912); Vancouver Town Planning Commission, A Plan for the City of Vancouver, BC, including Point Grey and South Vancouver and a General Plan of the Region (Vancouver 1929); Sir Alexander Gibb, The Dominion of Canada: National Ports Survey, 1931-32 (Ottawa 1932); Leah Stevens, "Rise of the Port of Vancouver, British Columbia," Economic Geography (January 1936), 61-71; Stevens, "The Grain Trade of the Port of Vancouver, British Columbia," Economic Geography (September 1936), 185-196; F.W. Howay, "Early Shipping in Burrard Inlet: 1863-1870," British Columbia Historical Quarterly 1 (January 1937), 3-20; W Kaye Lamb, "The Pioneer Days of the Trans-Pacific Service, 1887-1891," British Columbia Historical Quarterly 1 (January 1937), 143-164; Charles J. Knox, "The Exportation of Wheat Through the Ports of British Columbia," (Bachelor of Commerce Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1938); W. Kaye Lamb, "Empress to the Orient [Part I]" British Columbia Historical Quarterly 4:1 (January 1940), 29-50; Lamb, "Empress to the Orient [Part II]," British Columbia Historical Quarterly 4:2 (April 1940), 79-110; Lamb, "Empress Odyssey: A History of the Canadian Pacific Service to the Orient, 1913-45," British Columbia Historical Quarterly 12:1 (January 1948), 1-78; J.H. Hamilton, "The 'All-Red Route,' 1893-

For Vancouver's waterfront workers, as for similar segments of the working class the world over, the experience of work was shaped decisively by the toxic combination of a casual labour market and the "shape-up" method of hiring. When ships were in port, men swarmed the dock: there, in a ring around a foreman, cargo hooks in hand, they jostled for position, called out, or flashed signs of recognition in hopes of securing a day's work.³ "[T]he longshore life enfolds us, tho' I don't

1953: A History of the Trans-Pacific Mail Service between British Columbia, Australia, and New Zealand," British Columbia Historical Quarterly 20: 1/ 2 (January/April 1956), 1-125; Alan Morley, Vancouver: From Milltown to Metropolis (Vancouver 1961); C.N. Forward, "The Functional Characteristics of the Geographic Port of Vancouver" in Evenden, ed., Vancouver: Western Metropolis (Victoria 1978), 57-76; Forward, "The Development of Canada's Five Leading National Ports," Urban History Review 10:3 (February 1982), 25-45; Graeme Wynn, "The Rise of Vancouver" in Wynn and Oke, eds., Vancouver and Its Regions (Vancouver 1992), 69-148; Allen Seager, "The resource economy, 1871-1921," in Johnston, ed., The Pacific Province (Vancouver 1996), 205-252; Robert A.J. McDonald, Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863-1913 (Vancouver 1996), 3-32. The best primary source is Harbour and Shipping, which is available at the City of Vancouver Archives. On the formation of the Shipping Federation see Andrew Yarmie, "The Right to Manage: Vancouver Employers' Associations, 1900-1923," BC Studies (Summer 1991), 40-74; the "ambition" quote appears on p.72; Yarmie, "The State and Employers' Associations in British Columbia: 1900-1932," Labour/Le Travail 45 (Spring 2000), 53-101. On the transition from sail to steam in Canada see Eric Sager, Seafaring Labour: The Merchant Marine of Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914 (Montreal 1989). The final quotation is from David Montgomery, The Fall of the House of Labor: The workplace, the state, and American labor activism, 1865-1925 (New York 1987), 97.

³ In the Canadian context see: J.I. Cooper, "The Quebec Ship Labourers' Benevolent Society," Canadian Historical Review 30:4 (December 1949), 336-343; ILWU Pensioners, "Man Along The Shore!": The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront As Told By the Longshoremen Themselves, 1860s-1975 (Vancouver 1975), 8-61; Emil Bjarnason, "Mechanisation and Collective Bargaining in the British Columbia Longshore Industry," (PhD Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1975); Judith Fingard, "The Decline of the Sailor as a Ship Labourer in 19th Century Timber Ports," Labour/Le Travail 2 (1977), 35-53; Catherine Ann Waite, "The Longshoremen of Halifax, 1900-1930: Their Living and Working Conditions," (MA Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1977); Ian McKay, "Class struggle and mercantile capitalism: Craftsmen and labourers on the Halifax waterfront, 1850-1902," in Ommer and Panting, eds., Working Men Who Got Wet (St. John's 1980), 287-321; Fingard, Jack in Port (Toronto 1982), 8-19; 88-107; 242; Robert McDonald and Logan Hovis, "On the Waterfront" in Working Lives Collective, eds., Working Lives (Vancouver 1985), 71-2; John Bellamy Foster, "On the Waterfront: Longshoring in Canada," in Heron and Storey, eds., On the Job: Confronting the Labour Process in Canada (Montreal and Kingston 1986), 281-308; James Conley, "Class Conflict and Collective Action in the Working Class of Vancouver, British Columbia, 1900-1919," (PhD Thesis, Carleton University, 1986), chapter 10, "External Transportation," 465-518; John Stanton, Never Say Die!: The Life and Times of a Pioneer Labour Lawyer (Vancouver 1987), 2-11; 69-95; Robert Babcock, "Saint John

know why it 'olds us, I've gone away but always drifted back," one observer wrote in the early years of the twentieth century. "For my blooming mind kept slipping to the sounds and sights of shipping, So I pulled my freight and 'eaded down the track." Social-gospel minister J.S. Woodsworth knew something about the daily grind of casualism described in this "Longshore Litany" for he went to work on the waterfront shortly after he arrived on the west coast in 1917. Writing for the BC Federationist in 1918, he argued that the "system" was further evidence of the ills of the new industrial society as men who possessed "ability of all kinds, ability and passionate love of farm life; ability and artistic skill in construction; ability in organizing men and handling goods" stood on the street "waiting for a job." In this context, he observed, one populated by men who "have been up against the hard realities of life" and "felt the dead weight of the system," earnings fluctuated drastically, competition for work was intense, and life was hard. Not all longshoremen lived this way, of course, but many, if not most, did. "Unlike the convict, the free worker can quit his job. Oh, but the money stops. He has no free lodging and board as his brother the convict," he concluded in a revised version of his original column, which was later issued as a pamphlet called On the Waterfront.

Longshoremen During the Rise of Canada's Winter Port, 1895-1922," Labour/Le Travail 25 (Spring 1990), 15-46; Jessie Chisholm, "Organizing on the Waterfront: The St. John's Longshoremen's Protective Union (LSPU), 1890-1914," Labour/Le Travail 26 (Fall 1990), 37-59; Peter Delottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-Class Culture and the Tavern, 1860-1889," in Sefton MacDowell and Radforth, eds., Canadian Working-Class History: Selected Readings (Toronto 1992), 246-249.

"So the next morning, seven o'clock, finds the worker standing in the drizzle outside the hall waiting for a possible job."⁴

But the "system" did not affect all waterfront workers in precisely the same way, not at the time Woodsworth was writing, not in the years leading up to his stint on the docks. Vancouver's waterfront workforce was characterized by deep cleavages of skill and specialization: some men worked on ship, others laboured on shore, and within both categories, men stressed differentials in skill or ability in order to carve out a degree of security and status in a extremely competitive labour market. These occupational divisions often mapped divisions of race and ethnicity: aboriginal workers, for example, most of whom were from the Squamish First Nation located on the north shore of Burrard Inlet, monopolized logs and lumber, one of the most arduous and dangerous commodities on the waterfront.⁵ This intersection of

⁴ The "litany" appears in the BC Federationist, 11 February 1916. Its final verse states: "It's off and on employment and you don't get much enjoyment, But there's something keeps us to it just like slaves / It's the bustle and commotion and the smell of mother ocean, Which will chase us from our cradles to our graves." For Woodsworth see BC Federationist, 15 November 1918; On the Waterfront (Vancouver 1919).

⁵ The intersection of race, skill, specialization, and the "system" has been taken up by Eric Arnesen, "Biracial Waterfront Unionism in the Age of Segregation," in Calvin Winslow, ed., Waterfront Workers: New Perspectives on Race and Class (Urbana and Chicago 1998), 19-61; Bruce Nelson, "The 'Lords of the Docks' Reconsidered: Race Relations among West Coast Longshoremen, 1933-61," in Waterfront Workers, 155-192; Calvin Winslow, "'Men of the Lumber Camps Come to Town': New York Longshoremen in the Strike of 1907," in Waterfront Workers, 62-96 and Howard Kimeldorf, "Radical Possibilities? The Rise and Fall of Wobbly Unionism on the Philadelphia Docks," in Waterfront Workers, 97-130. On the making of a racially and ethnically divided working class in British Columbia see Gillian Creese's "Class, Ethnicity, and Conflict: The Case of Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1880-1923," in Warburton and Coburn, eds., Workers, Capital, and the State in British Columbia, 55-85; Rennie Warburton, "Status, Class, and the Politics of Canadian Aboriginal Peoples," Studies in Political Economy 54 (Fall 1997), 119-141; "The Workingmen's Protective Association, Victoria, BC, 1878: Racism, Intersectionality, and Status Politics," Labour/Le Travail 43 (Spring 1999), 105-20.

the “system,” skill, specialization, and race/ethnicity is significant for many reasons, not the least of which is that it shaped waterfront workers’ experience on the job and capacity for collective action in decisive ways. Indeed, as James Conley has illustrated, in the late 19th and early 20th century, when maritime commerce was dominated by the Canadian Pacific Railway and the range and volume of goods flowing in and out of the port was relatively small, white longshoremen successfully organized the Independent Stevedores’ Union in 1888 to restrict competition for work, limit the excesses of particular employers, curb the pressures of casualism, and boost hourly wages. By no means a permanent feature on the waterfront – the organization was broken on several occasions between 1888 and 1901 – its presence, coupled with the persistence of informal means of workplace regulation, afforded longshoremen a place amongst the city’s more respectable and skilled labouring men; indeed, they often referred to themselves as “the Knights of the Hook.” In contrast, dock-side workers, who, according to Conley, were drawn primarily from the city’s large “floating population,” remained more or less unorganized. Living and working on the margins, they bore the brunt of labour market competition and irregular employment that etched all waterfront workers work-a-day world, and they did so for less money than their “skilled” counterparts. “It wasn’t all beer and skittles,” one waterfront worker remarked.⁶

⁶ James Conley, “Class Conflict and Collective Action,” chapter 10, “External Transportation,” 465-518; BC Federationist, 27 December 1912; 16 March 1917; 13 April 1917. For the international context see: Paul Eliel, “Labor Peace in Pacific Ports,” Harvard Business Review XIX (Summer 1941),

In addition to casualism and the shape-up, waterfront workers' experience on the job was shaped significantly by other characteristics as well, including the arduous and dangerous quality of work, strong loyalties within and between waterfront gangs of a similar type, continuous exposure to seafarers, loggers, and other militant workers, and a "decentralized" workplace which allowed for discretion, communication, and self-activity on the job. Taken together, these features produced a highly mixed, roughly hewn, and markedly pugnacious political culture – a bundle of moods, temperaments, instincts, and ideologies that girded waterfront

429-437; Charles Larrowe, Shape-Up and Hiring Hall: A Comparison of Hiring Methods and Labor Relations on the New York and Seattle Waterfronts (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1955); Eric Hobsbawm, "National Unions on the Waterside" in Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour (London 1964); John Lovell, Stevedores and Dockers: A Study of Trade Unionism in the Port of London, 1870-1914 (London 1969); Raymond Charles Miller, "The Dockworker Subculture and Some Problems in Cross-Cultural and Cross-Time Generalizations," Comparative Studies in Society and History 11 (1969), 302-314; William W. Pilcher, The Portland Longshoremen: A Dispersed Urban Community (New York 1972); E.L. Taplin, Liverpool Dockers and Seamen, 1870-1890, (York 1974); Stephen Hill, The Dockers: Class and Tradition in London (London 1976); Ralph Bolton, "Machismo in Motion: The Ethos of Peruvian Truckers," Ethos 7:4 (1979); R. Bean, "Custom, Job Regulation, and Dock Labour in Liverpool, 1911-1939," International Review of Social History XXVII (1982), 271-289; Montgomery, Fall of the House of Labor, 96-111; Malcom Tull, "Blood on the Cargo: Cargo-Handling and Working Conditions on the Waterfront at Fremantle, 1900-1939," Labour History 52 (May 1987), 15-30; Frederick Cooper, On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa (New Haven 1987); William Finlay, Work on the Waterfront: Worker Power and Technological Change in a West Coast Port (Philadelphia 1988); Howard Kimeldorf, Reds or Rackets? The Making of Radical and Conservative Unions on the Waterfront (Berkeley 1988); Bruce Nelson, Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s (Urbana and Chicago 1990); Jonathan Schneer, "London's Docks in 1900: Nexus of Empire," Labour History Review 59:3 (Winter 1994), 20-33; Eric Arnesen, Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923 (Urbana and Chicago 1994); Sam Davies, "Three on the hook and three on the book: Dock Labourers and Unemployment Insurance Between the Wars," Labour History Review 59:3 (Winter 1994), 34-43; David Wellman, The Union Makes Us Strong: Radical Unionism on the San Francisco Waterfront (New York 1995); Tapio Bergholm, "Masculinity, Violence, and Disunity: Waterfront Strikers and Strikebreakers in Finnish Ports in the 1920s and 1930s," International Journal of Maritime History 8:1 (June 1996), 23-42; Winslow, ed., Waterfront Workers.

workers' combative response to the emergence of a new material context.⁷ While the "system" continued to operate in various forms throughout the opening decades of the twentieth century, the number of men employed and looking for work on a daily basis ballooned, the diversity and quantity of goods being moved expanded considerably, and new technologies, such as steam-powered donkey engines, electric cranes, and mechanized conveyor belts were introduced on a wider scale.⁸ "In the sluggish, easy-going days before the Great War, Vancouver seemed to have aeons of time on her hands. She had a destiny. Why worry?" Harbour and Shipping, a local business publication, reported in 1918, only a few years after the Panama Canal was opened. "But now a feverish reconstruction period is upon us, and in the commercial contests already taking shape the prize will be carried off by the swift and the strong."⁹

The "swift" and the "strong" were actually on the waterfront, not in the boardroom, and on a day-to-day basis they still carried, wheeled, and trucked goods

⁷ The emergence of a distinctive – and combative – subculture on the docks is at the heart of every analysis of waterfront workers that I have read. Raymond Charles Miller's, "The Dockworker Subculture and Some Problems in Cross-Cultural and Cross-Time Generalizations," provides an excellent introduction to this debate; see also Hobsbawm's "National Unions."

⁸ See Vancouver Town Planning Commission, A Plan for the City of Vancouver, 142, 156, 158-159, 160, and 162; Gibb, National Ports Survey; Stevens, "Rise of the Port of Vancouver, British Columbia" and "The Grain Trade of the Port of Vancouver, British Columbia"; Conley, "Class Conflict and Collective Action," 465-518; ILWU Pensioners, "Man Along The Shore!"; McDonald and Hovis, "On the Waterfront," 71-2; Foster, "On the Waterfront: Longshoring in Canada," 281-308. The gradual application of new technology on the waterfront – from space saving ways to cut and store mutton to a "new design in hopper-bottom box grain cars" – is described in several issues of Harbour and Shipping. See: November 1918; December 1918; January 1919; December 1919; January 1920; June 1920; August 1920; February 1921.

⁹ Harbour and Shipping, November 1918.

from ship to shore (and back again) in much the same way that waterfront workers had for decades. This time around, however, they did so under greater pressure as the number of steamship lines operating out of Vancouver and the Pacific Northwest expanded and competition intensified, a development made worse by spiralling freight rates and burgeoning business costs (see appendices 2a/2b). That the nature of longshoring was being modified in significant ways by the logic of industrial capitalism is captured by the advertisements placed in Harbour and Shipping by various stevedoring companies. "Most complete equipment to be found on the North Pacific Coast, including electric conveyors and hoists, and every facility for rapid loading and unloading of vessels," one ad, published in 1920, boasted. That new patterns of life and labour were coming into being is captured – more dramatically – by the patterns of unionization and class conflict that emerged on the waterfront during this time.¹⁰

Backstopping these twin developments were a variety of institutions and ideologies that bore the imprint of the complex occupational and cultural milieu from which they emerged. Drawing on the resources associated with being the waterfront's more skilled denizens, longshoremen organized a local of the International Longshoremen's Association around 1902 after the demise of the

¹⁰ The August 1921 edition of Harbour and Shipping indicates that 12 regular steamship ran in and out of Vancouver in 1912; there were 30 by 1921. For ads by Evans, Coleman, Evans stevedoring company and the International Stevedoring Company see Harbour and Shipping, April 1920,

Independent Stevedores' Union; crushed by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1903, the ILA was resurrected in 1912 and remained on the waterfront until 1923. While labourists, and their vision of pure-and-simple unionism, dominated the organization from its inception, radicals of all stripes were also present – the former tendency planting deep roots amongst the longshoremen, the latter, more left-wing political perspectives finding fertile ground within the ranks of the dock-side workers who were organized into a separate auxiliary in 1917. In addition to the ILA, the Industrial Workers of the World were also active on the waterfront. As in other sectors of the economy, the Wobblies appealed to those who did not fit well into the craft or business union structure: the unskilled, the migratory, and the Other. In 1906, aboriginal workers organized IWW Local 526. Known by its nick-name, "the Bows and Arrows," and comprised mostly of Squamish lumber handlers, the local was part of a broader upsurge in support for the IWW taking place amongst loggers, miners, and railroad workers across Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest, and amongst seafarers and waterfront workers in ports across the continent, prior to the Great War. Like many Wobbly outfits, however, its life was short. Local 526 was broken in 1909 after a titanic battle with waterfront employers, a confrontation that was characterized by impressive levels of racial solidarity; four years later its membership joined the more mainstream ILA.¹¹

¹¹ On the ILA see: Conley, "Class Conflict and Collective Action," 465-518; Peter Campbell, "Making Socialists": Bill Pritchard, the SPC, and the Third International," *Labour/Le Travail* 30 (Fall 1992), 45-63; David Akers, "Rebel or Revolutionary? Jack Kavanaugh and the Early Years of the

Reformers, rebels, and revolutionaries – collectively, they were responsible for a level of militancy on the waterfront that was matched by few other occupations, provincially or nationally. Between 1889 and 1923, waterfront workers went on strike at least sixteen times, the largest and most dramatic confrontations taking place in 1909, 1918, 1919, and 1923.¹² As the final three dates suggest, the ILA, which had tacked to the left with the ascendancy of the Socialist Party of Canada, played an important role in creating and sustaining the spirit of working-class militancy which was ushered in by the Great War. It participated in the province-wide protest against the killing of labour leader and draft resister Albert “Ginger” Goodwin, joined the Vancouver General Strike, and backed the One Big Union – a radical alternative to the Trades and Labor Congress founded at the historic Western Labor Conference

Communist Movement in Vancouver, 1920-25,” Labour/Le Travail 30 (Fall 1992), 9-44; University of British Columbia-Special Collections (UBC-SC), Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, Box 52, File 16, “Ambrose Tree.” Ernest Winch, Jack Kavanaugh, and Bill Pritchard are among the most famous lefties on the Vancouver waterfront during this period; see Campbell, Canadian Marxists and the Search for a Third Way (Montreal and Kingston 1999). On the IWW see: Mark Leier, Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia (Vancouver 1990); A. Ross McCormack, “Wobblies and Blanketstiffs: The Constituency of the IWW in Western Canada,” in Cherwinski and Kealey, eds., Lectures in Canadian Labour and Working-Class History (St. John’s 1985); Dan Shoom, “‘A fine, practical internationalism’: The Industrial Workers of the World Confront Asian Exclusion, 1905-1917,” (University of Victoria, LLB honours essay, 1999); Rolf Knight, Indians at Work (Vancouver 1978), 113-130; Jon Bekken, “Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union 510 (IWW): Direct Action Unionism,” Libertarian Labor Review 18 (Summer 1995), 12-25.

¹² In Making Vancouver, McDonald states that longshoremen went on strike “at least ten times between 1889 and 1913”. His calculations are based on an examination of local labour and mainstream newspapers, the Labour Gazette, and strike and lockout files compiled by the federal department of labour. See pages 108 and 114. The data for 1913 to 1923 is culled from: Labour Gazette, volumes 12 to 24; National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 27, Strike and Lockout Files, Volume 307, Strike 116; Volume 314, Strike 190 (A, B, and C); Conley, “Frontier Labourers, Crafts in Crisis,” 19 and 21; Campbell, Marxists of the Third Way, 40-42; 44-45; 58; 85; 96-8. Waterfront workers went on strike in 1912, 1914, 1917, 1918, 1919, and 1923, bringing the overall total to at least sixteen. For national trends during these years see Kealey and Cruikshank, “Strikes in Canada, 1891-1950.”

in Calgary in 1919 – for a short time. “[T]he ‘spirit’ [of] discontent, the mother of progress, is abroad in the land,” the BC Federationist observed in 1917, referring to agitation on the docks.¹³

Echoes of that spirit could be heard six years later during the 1923 waterfront strike, a lengthy, all-or-nothing affair in which the Shipping Federation, feeling the winds of political change at its back, moved decisively to break the union – an objective that waterfront employers from Prince Rupert to San Diego were itching to accomplish. For its part, the ILA, which had returned to the mainstream fold after its dalliance with the OBU, was pushing for a five cent wage increase and, as was often the case in waterfront disputes, greater control of the hiring process through a union-run despatch hall. “Organized labour was in a death struggle,” Bill Pritchard, veteran radical and longshoreman, observed at the time. Unfortunately for him and other waterfront workers, it was a struggle that organized labour ultimately lost. “There are now some eight hundred strike breakers employed on the waterfront,” a representative from the federal department of labour reported late in the confrontation. “[S]ooner or later [they will] be displaced by more experienced workmen among former employees. Preference will be given by the Shipping Federation to married men and residents of Vancouver.”¹⁴ Indeed it was.

¹³ BC Federationist, 15 June 1917.

¹⁴On the 1923 strike see: BC Federationist, 12 October 1923; 19 October 1923; 19 October 1923; 2 November 1923; 9 November 1923; 23 November 1923; 30 November 1923; 7 December 1923; 14 December 1923; NAC, RG 27, Strike and Lockout Files, Volume 332, Strike 95 (II), “Final Report Regarding the Strike of Longshoremen....” filed by F.E. Harrison, 11 December 1923.

After years of industrial strife, waterfront employers embarked on a far-reaching and comprehensive reform agenda, joining a progressive minority of employers across North America who embraced a new industrial philosophy, welfare capitalism. This approach to labour relations was based on a fairly simple idea. By offering their employees more than just a daily wage – a clean bunkhouse, say, or a pension plan – employers hoped to nurture a sense of harmony on the job, gain greater control over the work process, and stave off the intervention of unions and the state.¹⁵ Underpinning this commitment to “industrial democracy” was a belief in both the rationality and authority of “management methods” and an emerging, yet

¹⁵ In the American context see: Daniel Nelson, “The Company Union Movement, 1900-1937: A Re-examination,” Business History Review LVI:3 (Autumn 1982), 335-357; Gerald Zehavi, “Negotiated Loyalty: Welfare Capitalism and the Shoemakers of Endicott Johnson, 1920-1940,” Journal of American History, 70 (1983), 603-620; Elizabeth Cohen, Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939 (Cambridge 1990), chapter 4; Mary Lethert Wingerd, “Rethinking Paternalism: Power and Parochialism in a Southern Mill Village,” Journal of American History 83:3 (December 1996), 872-903; Paul Street, “The Logic and Limits of ‘Plant Loyalty’: Black Workers, White Labor, and Corporate Racial Paternalism in Chicago’s Stockyards, 1916-1940,” Journal of Social History 29:3 (Spring 1996), 659-682; and the entire issue of International Labor and Working-Class History 53 (Spring 1998) edited by David Montgomery, in particular William Littmann, “Designing Obedience: The Architecture and Landscape of Welfare Capitalism, 1880-1930,” 88-114 and Walter Licht, “Fringe Benefits: A Review Essay on the American Workplace,” 164-178; Andrea Tone, The Business of Benevolence: Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America (Ithaca 1997); Sanford M. Jacoby, Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism Since the New Deal (Princeton 1997). In the Canadian context see: Bruce Scott, “A Place in the Sun: The Industrial Council at Massey-Harris, 1919-1929,” Labour/Le Travail 1 (1976), 158-192; Robert Storey, “Unionization versus Corporate Welfare: The Dofasco Way,” Labour/Le Travailleur 12 (1983), 7-42; Neil Tudiver, “Forestalling the Welfare State: The Establishment of Programmes of Corporate Welfare,” in Moscovitch and Albert, eds., The Benevolent State: The Growth of Welfare in Canada (Toronto 1987), 186-202; Richard Rajala, “Bill and the Boss: Labor Protest, Technological Change, and the Transformation of the West Coast Logging Camp, 1890-1930,” Journal of Forest History 33:4 (October 1989), 168-179; Margaret E. McCallum, “Corporate Welfarism in Canada, 1919-1939,” Canadian Historical Review LXXI:1 (1990), 46-74; Joan Sangster, “The Softball Solution: Female Workers, male Managers, and the Operation of Paternalism at Westclox, 1923-60,” Labour/Le Travail, 32 (Fall 1993), 167-99; Hugh Grant, “Solving the Labour Problem at Imperial Oil: Welfare Capitalism in the Canadian Petroleum Industry, 1919-1929,” Labour/Le Travail 41 (Spring 1998), 69-96.

powerful ideal of a modern technocratic utopia.¹⁶ Linked to the emergence of industrial capitalism and the “thrust for efficiency” associated with Taylorism, this historically specific way of seeing, understanding, and organizing the workplace rested on the notion that, left to their own devices, workers were neither willing nor able to use their time on the job productively. For those at the helm of the Shipping Federation, the numerous battles on Vancouver’s docks were evidence of that fact – and, in a wider sense of the pressing need for a new regime of industrial relations. Buoyed by its crushing of the ILA in 1923, and the momentum that accompanied the wider employer and state offensive that beat back the national labour revolt, the Shipping Federation, like its counterparts in other ports on the Pacific Coast, undertook an ambitious reform agenda throughout the 1920s and early 1930s.

Traditional analyses of welfare capitalism have focussed on the manufacturing sector of the North American economy and the experience of skilled workers and factory operatives – and for good reason. Throughout the 1920s, some of the most sophisticated schemes were pioneered by large multi-plant companies such as International Harvester, Massey-Harris, and Imperial Oil. According to historians such as David Brody and Joan Sangster, employers in both the US and Canada combined the carrot of benevolence (factory beautification, employee

¹⁶ On the emergence of this ideal see: Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century (New York 1974), especially part 2, “Science and Mechanization,” 155-250; Cynthia Comacchio, “Mechanomorphosis: Science, Management, and ‘Human Machinery’ in Industrial Canada, 1900-45,” Labour/Le Travail 41 (Spring 1998), 35-67.

pension plans, company sports teams) with the stick of scientific management (simplification of tasks, fragmentation of the work process), to nurture better workplace relations. While these studies have revealed much about the inner-workings of industrial councils, the ideology of company newspapers, and the “negotiated” loyalty of factory workers, the “manufacturing of consent” in non-manufacturing workplaces has been left unexplored.¹⁷ Indeed, on the waterfront, where workers were relatively unskilled, the labour market was a casual affair, and the “workplace” was geographically dispersed, the pursuit of welfare capitalism required not only the creation of a company union and the promotion of a cooperative workplace ethos, but the decasualization of the waterfront labour market itself. While waterfront employers had long resisted any attempt by workers to regulate the often chaotic competition for work on the city’s docks, in the post-1919 period, they saw decasualization as a means to breakdown workers’ customary work practices and oppositional temperament, limit the excesses of particular stevedores and foremen, and promote greater efficiency.

This preoccupation with the manufacturing sector is not the only problem with the existing literature on this subject. For many writers, the rise and fall of welfare capitalism is understood simply as an “institutional link” between the laissez-faire

¹⁷ David Brody, “The Rise and Decline of Welfare Capitalism,” in Workers in Industrial America (New York 1980), 48-81; Joan Sangster, “The Softball Solution,” 167-99. Richard Rajala’s analysis of coastal loggers in the Pacific Northwest in “Bill and the Boss” stands out as an exception to this general trend.

period of labour relations of the early 1900s and the Fordist regime of collective bargaining that emerged in the post-World War II period.¹⁸ But decasualization, and the wider programme of welfare capitalism of which it was a part, was about more than just signing collective agreements on terms that favoured industrial peace. Like their colleagues in the lumber industry, waterfront employers saw labour strife not just in terms of specific workplace grievances, but as a byproduct of a wider social problem: labour turnover. Like loggers, longshoremen were thought to be womanless, voteless, and rootless and, as such, had no stake in civil society. To rectify this condition, the Shipping Federation hoped that by weeding out the foreign-born and the radical, recruiting white married men, and promoting middle-class values of discipline, sobriety, and thrift, it could shape a new, more compliant working-class subjectivity.

This, in the words of one member of the employers' association, was a "good citizen's policy" – and as he (and his colleagues) no doubt understood, it was built on a series of important trade-offs. Indeed, by tying the benefits of welfare capitalism and labour market reform to the promise of industrial peace and stable work, the Shipping Federation offered working men a shot at a living wage and the male breadwinner ideal so long as they agreed to steer clear of both bona fide unions and the increasingly interventionist state. It was a narrow, contractual vision of

¹⁸ The quotation is from Nelson, "The Company Union Movement," 335-357.

citizenship in which men, as sovereign agents of choice operating in the free market, were able to secure their just desserts. It was a gendered and raced vision, too, for key to its realization was not just the construction of an administrative framework capable of separating the "meal ticket artists" from the "respectable citizens," but the construction of a cross-class alliance between white men based on a shared understanding of their entitlements in the home, on the job, and in the country.¹⁹

That the Shipping Federation tapped the political potential of family values is no surprise. Drawing on the rhetoric, ritual, and ideology of 19th-century paternalism, employers throughout North America at this time employed familial metaphors -- "Our big factory family!" -- as a means to blunt class difference and nurture greater consensus on the shop floor.²⁰ But as its specific appeal to

¹⁹ This paragraph draws on the insights of a wide range of writers, including: Joy Parr, "Skilled Immigrant and Her Kin: Gender, Culture, and Labour Recruitment," Canadian Historical Review 68:4 (1987), 529-51; Carole Pateman, "The Patriarchal Welfare State: Women and Democracy," in Gutman, ed., Democracy and the Welfare State (Princeton 1988), 231-60; Ann Shola Orloff, "Gender Relations and Welfare States," American Sociological Review 58 (June 1993), 303-328; Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, "A Genealogy of *Dependency*: Tracing a Keyword of the US Welfare State," Signs (Winter 1994), 309-333; Joan Sangster, Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920-1960 (Toronto 1995); Peter S. McInnis, "Teamwork for Harmony: Labour-Management Production Committees and the Postwar Settlement in Canada," Canadian Historical Review 77:3 (September 1996), 317-352; Louise A. Tilly, "Women, Work, and Citizenship," International Labor and Working-Class History 52 (Fall 1997), 1-26, and replies by Chiara Sarceno, Ann Shola Orloff, Roderick Phillips, and W. Robert Less in the same issue; Alice Kessler-Harris, "In the Nation's Image: The Gendered Limits of Social Citizenship in the Depression Era," The Journal of American History (December 1999), 1251-1279; Cynthia R. Comacchio, The Infinite Bonds of Family: Domesticity in Canada, 1850-1940 (Toronto 1999), especially "Part II: A New Day for Families: Modernizing Domesticity, 1914-1930," 65-112; Nancy Christie, Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada (Toronto 2000); Joan Sangster, "Feminism and the Making of Canadian Working-Class History: Exploring the Past, Present, and Future," Labour/Le Travail 46 (Fall 2000), 127-166.

²⁰ The literature on paternalism in North America is large and eclectic; works by Canadian historians include: Allan Greer, Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes, 1740-1840 (Toronto 1985), chapters 4, "Aristocratic ascendancy," and 5, "The feudal

citizenship indicates, the Shipping Federation's reform agenda owed conceptual debts not just to its pre-industrial antecedents, but to the wider debates associated with post-war reconstruction and the so-called return to normalcy. Spurred on by the dislocation, hardship, and loss of life associated with the Great War, the state, along with other social reform agencies, undertook a variety of campaigns designed to shore up the heterosexual nuclear family. The logic at work, here, was simple: an economically secure, physically fit, and morally pure family was the cornerstone of social stability and, on a broader plain, the long-term health and welfare of future generations. In this important sense, the Shipping Federation's plan to decasualize the waterfront and, as a consequence, deliver a living wage to the most efficient workers complemented the objectives of other reform campaigns well, in this particular context, by bolstering the men's role as breadwinner and head of the household. Wrapped in the rhetoric of citizenship, this pursuit of more "progressive" workplace relations on the waterfront was not simply a prelude to state-sanctioned

burden," 89-139; Sean T. Cadigan, Hope and Deception in Conception Bay: Merchant-Settler Relations in Newfoundland, 1785-1855, especially part three, "Fishing People and Merchants," 83-122; and most recently Edith I. Burley, Servants of the Honourable Company: Work, Discipline, and Conflict in the Hudson's Bay Company, 1770-1879, (Toronto 1997), chapter 2, "The View from the Top," 19-63 and chapter 4, "The View from the Bottom," 109-155. For a general discussion linking the gendered dimensions of 19th-century paternalism and 20th-century welfare capitalism see Sangster, "The Softball Solution," 167-99. The quote is taken from the title of Lisa M. Fine's "'Our Big Factory Family': Masculinity and Paternalism at Reo Motor Car Company of Lansing, Michigan," Labor History (Spring-Summer 1993), 274-291.

collective bargaining, but an important part of a wider project of post-war regeneration and nation formation.²¹

This vision of reform is the focus of Part I, chapter 1. Of particular importance in this opening section is the Shipping Federation's newly appointed labour manager, Major W.C.D. Crombie, for he was responsible for the implementation of this "unusual and unconservative" approach to labour relations on a day-to-day basis. Part II, which consists of chapters 2, 3, and 4, examines the ways in which waterfront workers and their families responded to the ideology and practice of this unfolding worker-citizen complex, and it does so from a variety of perspectives. Chapter 2 takes as its point of departure the important notion that woven into the very fabric of the cross-class alliance between white waterfront workers and their employers was a common belief in the sanctity and desirability of the patriarchal family. Hierarchy on the job was inextricably bound up with hierarchy in the home;

²¹ The literature on moral regulation and the emergence of the welfare state in Canada is extensive. Influential works include: Richard Allan, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1929 (Toronto 1971); Donald Avery, 'Dangerous Foreigners': European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932 (Toronto 1979); Dennis Guest, The Emergence of Social Security in Canada (Vancouver 1980); Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren, The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Policies of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1880-1980 (Toronto 1980); McLaren, Our Own Master Race; Moscovitch and Allen, eds., The 'Benevolent' State: The Growth of Welfare in Canada (Toronto 1987); James Struthers, Through No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914-1941 (Toronto 1983); Margaret McCallum, "Keeping Women in Their Place"; James Snell, In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada, 1900-1939 (Toronto 1991); Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water (Toronto 1991); Jane Ursel, Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 Years of State Intervention in the Family (Toronto 1992); James Struthers, The Limits of Affluence: Welfare in Ontario, 1920-1970 (Toronto 1994); Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange, Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada, 1867-1939 (Toronto 1997); Carolyn Strange, Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930 (Toronto 1995), chapter 7, "Citizens, Workers, and Mothers of the Race," 175-208; Cornacchio, The Infinite Bonds of Family, 65-112.

the construction of one inextricably bound up with the construction of the other.²² In this regard, chapter 2 examines the role that married white working-class women played in translating their husband's earnings into sustenance and shelter – an ongoing process, often fraught with tension, conflict, and inequity, which was pivotal to making ends meet. A wife's success in this endeavour was important for a number of reasons, not the least of which was that the acquisition of such things as a home, or the ability to participate in the nascent consumer economy, helped to underscore the notion that a more moral capitalism, and the partnership between workers and employers that sustained it, was capable of delivering the goods. That the rhythms of working-class family life were calibrated, at least to some degree, by the ebb and flow of waged work is by now common sense; far less understood, though, is the role that family life played in shaping "an individual's perception of the world and the psychic mechanisms by means of which he attempts to deal with it." Chapter 2 examines both sides of this important equation, and it does so against the backdrop of the waterfront's evolving citizen-worker complex.²³

²² Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950 (Toronto 1990), chapter 2, "The politics of protection," 34-58.

²³ The quotation is from Christopher Lasch, Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged (New York 1977), 160. This paragraph was influenced by Cohen, Making a New Deal; Alice Kessler-Harris, "Treating the Male as 'Other': Redefining the Parameters of Labor History," Labor History, 190-204; Dana Frank, Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement (New York 1994); Suzanne Morton, Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working-Class Suburb in the 1920s (Toronto 1995).

Chapter 3 picks up there, and it analyses the extent to which the reforms undertaken by the Shipping Federation secured labour peace, boosted efficiency, and cultivated a wider appreciation for its sense of appropriate workplace relations. Key to this chapter is this idea: throughout the 1920s waterfront workers spoke most often of “securing a square deal,” a set of values, assumptions, and prerogatives about their rightful place in the home and the docks that provided a lens through which they evaluated waterfront employers’ actions on a day-to-day basis. The ideal of citizenship, and all that it entailed, was a source of ongoing disagreement on the job – disagreements that were, however, rooted in deep seated labourist sensibilities and thus easily sublimated within the structures and practices of co-operation that came with welfare capitalism. Chapter 4, the last chapter of Part II, examines the impact of the Shipping Federation’s reform initiatives from an entirely different perspective, that of aboriginal workers from the north shore, most of whom were Squamish. To this end, it takes a long view, and analyses the twin processes of racialization and proletarianization that accompanied the Squamish’s adaptation to life and labour in the context of industrial capitalism. Hamstrung by the widespread inequality that affected all aboriginal people, and the persistence of a racially segmented labour market on the waterfront, Squamish workers were marginalized from the docks during the 1920s, the very logic of decasualization

conflicting with more traditional aboriginal economic, political, and cultural practices.²⁴

Part III, the final section of the thesis, examines the collapse of the post-war consensus, the emergence of a radical opposition, and the momentary eclipse of welfare capitalism during the early years of the Great Depression. After almost a decade of paternalist labour relations, white waterfront workers had come to expect certain things from waterfront employers, not the least of which was a guarantee of a "little independence." With the onset of the Depression, however, the Shipping Federation was no longer able to make good on that fundamental guarantee. As

²⁴ For the debate about aboriginal people and wage labour in BC see: Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890 Second Edition (Vancouver 1992), xi-xxiv at xix-xx; 210-11; Rolf Knight, Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia, 1858-1930 Second Edition (Vancouver 1996); Stuart Philpott, "Trade Unionism and Acculturation: A Comparative Study of Urban Indians and Immigrant Italians," (MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1963); Martin Robin, The Rush For Spoils: The Company Province, 1871-1933 (Toronto 1972), 3; Richard S. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour, and Company Capital: The Economy of Vancouver Island, 1849-1858," (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1984); Rennie Warburton and Stephen Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia," Canadian Journal of Native Studies 5:1 (1985); James Burrows, "A Much Needed Class of Labour: The Economy and Income of the Southern Interior Plateau Indians, 1897-1910," BCS 71 (Autumn 1986), 27-46; John Lutz, "After the Fur Trade: The Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-1890," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association (1992), 69-94; "Work, Wages, and Welfare in Aboriginal -Non-Aboriginal Relations, British Columbia, 1849-1970," (PhD, University of Ottawa, 1994); "Gender and Work in Lekwammen Families, 1843 to 1970," in Gendered Pasts, 80-105; Dianne Newell, Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries (Toronto 1993); Alicja Muszynski, Cheap Wage Labour: Race and Gender in the Fisheries in British Columbia (Montreal and Kingston 1996); Cole Harris, "The Making of the Lower Mainland," and "A Population Geography of British Columbia in 1881," in The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonisation and Geographical Change (Vancouver 1997), 68-102 and 137-160. Steven High provides a useful introduction to this debate in "Native Wage Labour and Independent Production during the 'Era of Irrelevance,'" Labour/Le Travail, 37 (Spring 1996), 243-64. Sarah Carter examines the capacity of Prairie Aboriginal peoples to adapt to the economics of settler society in Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy (Montreal and Kingston 1990). The Australasian literature is particularly well-developed; see Ann McGrath and Kay Saunders, "Working for White People: An Historiographic Essay on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands Labour" in the special issue of Labour History 69:95 (1995) entitled "Aboriginal Workers."

chapter 5 illustrates, into the breach stepped the Communist Party of Canada – its cadres of activists, many of whom were former supporters of the company union, articulating a heady message of virility, militancy, power, and restoration. Within months the waterfront was engulfed in its first large-scale confrontation since 1923; chapter 6 examines this battle in detail, placing particular emphasis on the constant campaign of repression waged by capital and the state, the rise-and-fall of the communist-led opposition, and waterfront workers' expanded sense of both what it meant to be a citizen and what it took to secure that highly prized status.²⁵ The Shipping Federation's reform agenda, and the policies and mind set that it helped bring into being, contained the very ideals that would, in time, be used to combat it. Understanding that dialectic – its origins, development, undoing, and implications – is at the core of this thesis.²⁶

²⁵ For the Canadian context see John Manley's recent publications: "Does the International Labour Movement Need Salvaging? Communism, Labourism, and the Canadian Trade Unions, 1921-1928," Labour/Le Travail 41 (Spring 1998), 147-80; "'Starve, Be Damned!' Communists and Canada's Urban Unemployed, 1929-39," Canadian Historical Review 79:3 (September 1998), 466-491; "Canadian Communism, Revolutionary Unionism, and the 'Third Period': The Workers' Unity League, 1929-35," Journal of the Canadian Historical Association Volume 5 (1987), 167-94. Other important studies include: Bruce Nelson, "Unions and the Popular Front: The West Coast Waterfront in the 1930s," International Labor and Working-Class History 30 (Fall 1986), 59-78; Robin Kelley, Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communist During the Great Depression; Eric Hobsbawm, The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991 (New York 1996), chapters 3-5, 85-177.

²⁶ On this notion see Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (New York 1983), especially the preface and chapter 2, "Cultural Roots," 9-36.

Part I: Reform

Chapter 1. Making Workers, Making Citizens: Welfare Capitalism on the Waterfront, 1923-1930

When members of the Shipping Federation gathered in late 1923 to discuss how to bring about greater harmony on the waterfront, they did not have to look very far for inspiration. In the forest industry, large coastal operators on both sides of the border were moving to curb worker militancy by building better camps and permanent and semi-permanent logging communities, complete with company reading rooms, schools, and stores. More importantly, up and down the Pacific Coast, waterfront employers, fresh from their own battles with organized labour, were experimenting with various workplace innovations. In Seattle, a city rocked by its own general strike during the war years, an elaborate programme of welfare capitalism had been in place since 1921 – and the results looked promising. Inspired by President Wilson's Second Industrial Conference, the "Seattle plan," as it came to be known by shipping and stevedoring interests, consisted of several "joint committees" where both boss and worker had an "equal voice" in the day-to-day running of the waterfront. In addition to looking after wages and working conditions, these committees also looked after the decasualization of the waterfront labour force. By applying "stringent tests" that looked at workers' "family status, length of service, and skill," employers successfully pared away undesirable "surplus men." Although some members of the Shipping Federation were skeptical of *any* move to share power with workers, data compiled by their US counterparts that showed that "two

thirds" of Seattle waterfront workers were "married," "four-fifths [were] citizens," and "one-quarter own[ed] homes" suggested the potential long-term benefits to be derived from the Seattle plan, both at work and in society more generally.²⁷

But selecting the right plan for workplace reform was one thing, putting it in to practice was quite another. "On the part of the management we think it quite possible that the policy of Seattle in handling labor problems is the ultimate solution for labor trouble, but also realize that no new institution can take root unless it receive the psychology of approval of the masses," a waterfront employer from Tacoma, WA, remarked, his last seven words indicating a familiarity with the use of medical knowledge to understand workplace issues. This notion that workers' different "psychology" stood in the way of a smooth transition from class conflict to class harmony was shared by members of the Shipping Federation. "[O]ne of the greatest difficulties we are going to have in getting down to regular longshore conditions is the fact that the bigger proportion of men have been educated and have brains; both qualities are not only unusual but are considered unnecessary in longshore work," one employer remarked. "[T]he stevedoring companies cannot divorce ... [the workers'] minds entirely from their customs and experiences of the

²⁷ Labour Gazette, 20 (April 1920), 425; 24 (April 1924), 280; 34a (January 1934), 38; City of Vancouver Archives (CVA), British Columbia Shipping Federation, (BCSF), Add.Mss 279, Box 46, File 6, F.P. Foisie, Northwest Shipping Association, to H.C. Cantelow, President, Waterfront Employers Association of San Francisco, 23 November 1923; Box 62, File 2, Secretary and Manager, Shipping Federation of British Columbia, to "Dear Sir," Vancouver and Victoria Stevedoring, 29 April 1924.

past 8 or 9 years," remarked another.²⁸ Bringing about a new time-work discipline on the waterfront, then, required not only new institutional structures but, more importantly, substantial ideological work as well. Indeed, long-term co-operation on the docks would not come through prohibition of this or that activity, but, as David Montgomery has written, only by putting the manager's brain under the workman's cap.²⁹ The ways in which the Shipping Federation went about pulling off that important feat, and the political vision that sustained that process on a daily basis, are at the core of this chapter.

* * *

Major W.C.D. Crombie was the Shipping Federation's labour manager. A one-time farmer from Saskatchewan and veteran of World War I, Crombie was hired by the Shipping Federation in the immediate post-war period to look after "protection and protective measures" during the heady days of the national labour revolt. During the 1923 strike, he was the personal driver and bodyguard for several

²⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box X, File Y, Chief Despatcher, Shipping Federation of British Columbia, to Major B.J. Vine, Secretary-Treasurer, VDWWA, 22 December 1923; Major W.C.D. Crombie to K.A. McLennan, Terminal Dock and Warehouse Co., 15 November 1932.

²⁹ Montgomery, The Fall of the House of Labor, chapter one, "The manager's brain under the workman's cap," 9-57. On welfare capitalism in the American context see: Nelson, "The Company Union Movement," 335-357; Zahavi, "Negotiated Loyalty," 603-620; Cohen, Making a New Deal, chapter 4; entire issue of International Labor and Working-Class History 53 (Spring 1998), in particular Littmann, "Designing Obedience," 88-114 and Licht, "Fringe Benefits," 164-178; Tone, The Business of Benevolence; Jacoby, Modern Manors. In the Canadian context see: Scott, "A Place in the Sun," 158-192; Storey, "Unionization versus Corporate Welfare," 7-42; Tudiver, "Forestalling the Welfare State," in Moscovitch and Albert, eds., The Benevolent State, 186-202; Rajala, "Bill and the Boss," 168-179; McCallum, "Corporate Welfarism in Canada," 46-74; Sangster, "The Softball Solution," 167-99; Grant, "Solving the Labour Problem at Imperial Oil," 69-96.

members of the Shipping Federation and, at the tail end of the 53-day conflict, "took over the employment end of the game" as despatcher. A year later he was promoted to labour manager, a position that paid approximately \$350 per month, about three times what the highest earning longshoreman earned. "Industrially the Federation is attempting to work along new lines and I must give the members of the Federation all credit in backing up my proposals and schemes in many cases," Crombie wrote to a friend in Regina shortly after assuming his new job, "[cases] which may appear to some of the old employers of labor unusual and unconservative."³⁰ Although the composition of the Shipping Federation's board of directors changed constantly over the course of the 1920s and 1930s, Crombie remained labour manager throughout this entire period and, as a consequence, played a pivotal role on a day-to-day basis in the organization's shift to welfare capitalism. Some considered him the "King Bee of the Waterfront," a nickname that captured both his heightened stature on the job, the declining importance of dockside foremen, and the role that longshoremen themselves, the waterfront's worker bees, were expected to play.³¹

Significantly, Crombie's sense for what was "unusual and unconservative" was informed by a range of political currents associated with the broader post-war search for social order. Like other men who served in the Great War, Crombie was

³⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 24, File 11, Crombie to F.G. Bagshaw, 8 April 1924.

³¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 30, File 10, Crombie to "Furness at Pacific Limited," 8 February 1929; Box 24, File 9, J.D. Rolandson to Crombie, 13 February 1924.

deeply involved in veteran's affairs; he was an "Officer in the Reserve Battalion of the 1st Regiment" in Vancouver and, as such, helped to organize socials, banquets -- complete with "real typical and topical trench menu[s]" -- and other ceremonial events for soldiers both active and retired. "We are putting on on the day of the reunion dinner the trooping of the old colour and are religiously rehearsing the ceremonial for this and are managing under all kinds of difficulties," Crombie reported to another veteran. "[Y]ou know what these are when it comes to asking a lot of old war hardened veterans to get keen on brass hat matters."³² Part myth-making, part nostalgia, events like these were carried on across the country, and with their appeals to God, King, and country were one of the cornerstones of English Canadian nationalism. In this regard, to honour the memory of the Great War was, in the words of one post-war patriot, to "man the outposts of Canadian nationality" -- and there were few better ways to do that than to reform the foreign-born and the working class.³³

This particular sense of nationalism and the reformist impulse that came with it was, in Crombie's case, bolstered by his active support of the Salvation Army. Writing to Crombie in 1929, Charles T. Rich, commissioner of the local Salvation Army, expressed his desire to "meet [Crombie] personally" and express his

³² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 24, File 11, Crombie to F.G. Bagshaw, 8 April 1924.

³³ Jonathan F. Vance, Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War (Vancouver 1997), chapter eight, "To Found a Country," 226-256 at 241-2; for politics of demobilization more generally see Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright, Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930 (Toronto 1987).

"personal appreciation for all that [he had] helped [them] to do," as the "work was never ... more prosperous than now."³⁴ In the late 19th century, the Salvation Army was primarily an evangelical religious organization. With its militaristic style, unorthodox recruiting methods, and other unconventional practices it thumbed its nose at the more sedate, established churches -- both Protestant and Catholic -- and, in the process, attracted a largely working-class following. But by the turn of the century, as reform movements of all stripes confronted the urban consequences of industrialization, the Salvation Army became increasingly middle class and preoccupied with the "city as a moral problem."³⁵ In Vancouver, as in other locales, the Sally Ann was particularly active in the waterfront district, rescuing "fallen" women, preaching on street corners, and running a shelter for itinerant working-class men -- some of whom were casual longshoremen and veterans of the Great War. Although it is unclear whether Crombie was a Salvationist, as labour manager he took an active interest in the morality of waterfront workers, stressing, as the Salvation Army did, the respectable, manly virtues of sobriety and self-discipline, not to mention the perils that came with joining radical labour organizations. To put it

³⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 24, File 9, Chas. T. Rich, Commissioner, Salvation Army, to Crombie, 7 June 1929.

³⁵ Lynne Marks, Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario (Toronto 1996), chapter 6, "The Salvation Army and the Knights of Labor: Religion and Working-Class Culture", 140-168; Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water, chapter 6, "The City as Moral Problem," 129-154." For the Salvation Army on the waterfront see DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal," 245-268.

colloquially, when it came to making better workers and better citizens, they sang from the same hymn book.

But it was in the context of workplace reform that the process of making new citizens took on the trappings of bureaucratic rationality and scientific authority. For Crombie, as for others enlisted in the managerial revolution, knowledge of the burgeoning field of industrial relations was one of the touchstones of power and legitimacy on the job. On a day-to-day basis, Crombie kept abreast of economic and workplace developments by reading the Labour Gazette, Harbour and Shipping, economic and financial reports, and the daily newspapers. But his most important resource was Frank Foisie who, as labour manager in Seattle, helped to devise and implement the highly acclaimed "Seattle plan" and, during the tumultuous days of the Depression, was a key player in co-ordinating a coast-wide employers' response to the "syndicalist renaissance."³⁶ As such, Foisie was hardwired into national networks of industrial relations experts and reform-minded researchers and often sent the fruits of his detailed inquiries into bargaining strategies, human resources theory, and the cost of living to Crombie. "Employers must voluntarily do more to improve the conditions for the men than unions have done," Foisie once remarked, underscoring the basis of welfare capitalism. "[If this is done then] there will be nothing to fear." The key, he often argued, was not to "thwart" workers' ambitions,

³⁶ For details of Foisie's career see Otilie Markholt, Maritime Solidarity (Tacoma 1998), 21-25; 234-35; the quote is from Nelson, Workers on the Waterfront, 156.

but, through a firm grasp of the politics and possibilities of modern management methods, to merely "influence" them.³⁷

Produced through a specific set of institutional and social practices, the overlapping discourses of nationalism, moral reform, science, and managerial authority provided Crombie with a warehouse of ideas, images, and categories through which he understood and attempted to reform waterfront workers. Like labour managers in other sectors of the North American economy, Crombie's vision for a new waterfront work force was marked by Taylorist and Fordist ideas, a narrow world view that measured a worker's value based on his/her "capacity to transform bodily energy into material output."³⁸ Defined by Harbour and Shipping as the "ratio between the useful work performed by a prime mover and the energy used in producing it," efficiency was the leitmotif of Crombie's paeans to decasualization: "efficiency can and must be the one and only condition which is allowed to govern employment on this waterfront."³⁹ By registering only the most efficient waterfront workers, Crombie hoped to eliminate old loyalties and work habits and, in the process, build up gangs that were "capable of doing any and all work required of them," gangs that were, in a word, "interchangeable." Organized on this basis, the waterfront would operate like a finely tuned machine. Those who could not measure

³⁷ Quoted in Markholt, Maritime Solidarity, 25, 234.

³⁸ Comacchio, "Mechanomorphosis," 35-67 at 41.

³⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 2, Crombie to Monk, 10 March 1924.

up – the “bad,” “indifferent,” and “unfit” – would look for other jobs, and the foremen, once infamous for discriminating between gangs and cultivating favours, would no longer have any justification for such practices.

This vision of waterfront workers as efficient, frictionless, and almost machine-like, and the wider “industrial ethic” of which it was a part, is captured in a 45-minute film entitled “To the Ports of the World” produced by the Vancouver Harbor Commission, the state agency that looked after port development, and the Shipping Federation. Shot in the 1920s and released in 1932, the film was made – as the title implies – to promote Vancouver as Western Canada’s gateway to the global economy. What is significant about the film, though, is not just its intended message, but, more importantly, what the picture suggests about how workers and the work process were viewed by employers. Blending animation, black-and-white footage, and subtitles, the film traces the journey of a wide variety of commodities from their origins in the natural world to the port of Vancouver where they are loaded on ships and delivered to market. The structure of the film is simple, but suggestive: it is built on the dichotomy between the “raw” (nature) and the “cooked” (commodities) – the transformation of the former into the latter made possible through the application of technology and represented, here, as the hallmark of progress.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ On this point see Keith Walden, “Speaking Modern: Language, Culture, and Hegemony in Grocery Window Displays, 1887-1920,” Canadian Historical Review, LXX:3 (1989), 285-310; Mike Davis, Ecology of Fear (New York 1998). On modernity see Marshall Berman, All That Is Solid Melts

The centrality of technology to this vision of modern life is made clear by numerous shots of large saws, whirling gears, active conveyor belts, "electrically driven cranes," and other machines, the expectation, presumably, that the viewer would immediately recognize these images as evidence of the speed, accuracy, and precision of modern industry. Not surprisingly, when workers appear in this narrative they are shown -- more often than not -- operating machines or simply tending to them. In a segment on Vancouver, for example, the film pans from the city skyline, complete with smokestack, to the interior of a factory. In these frames, the camera's gaze is trained on massive gears that wind cable into wire rope while a worker, obviously the operative, stands off to the side, partially obscured, permitting the film maker a clear shot of what is really impressive here, the machine, not the man. In sum, "To the Ports of the World" articulates what Jackson Lears has called a "narrative of adjustment," a fable in which the natural world and, perhaps more importantly for my purposes, the working class are merged into a "single efficient system" of capitalist production, distribution, and consumption.⁴¹ And in this particular context, what one subtitle in the film identified as "one co-ordinated unified project," workers were expected to possess the quality valued most in machines and, increasingly, in other realms of life too: efficiency.

Into Air (New York 1988).

⁴¹ Jackson Lears, Fables of Abundance (New York 1994), 12.

Significantly, the pursuit of efficiency on the job was tied to a wider vision of a creating “new citizens.” Drawing on a range of metaphors and categories associated with the social purity and eugenics movement, Crombie at times framed his vision of workplace reform in terms of biology. The best men on the waterfront – those with skill, strength, and speed – possessed the right “blood”; conversely, workers who lagged behind were referred to simply as “the inefficients,” a noun that, given the interwar context, was the workplace equivalent of being “feeble minded.” But the “new blood” that the Shipping Federation desired did not belong to just anybody.⁴² Indeed, it coursed through the veins of, in Crombie’s words, “married men[,] residents of this City, tax-payers and property holders, and mature men of good physique....”⁴³ These were his model citizens, the Shipping Federation’s own master race. By “carefull[y] selecti[ing] only efficient and suitable men” it was hoped that earnings would rise, “living conditions” and “well-being” would improve, and “feelings of security and contentment” would prevail both on the waterfront and in society more generally.⁴⁴

Clearly, Crombie’s vision for a new waterfront workforce traded heavily on the class, gender, and racial politics associated with the post-war period. When he

⁴² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 6, File 7, Crombie to K.J. Burns, 8 May 1929; Box 18, File 9, CWWA to the Shipping Federation of British Columbia, undated.

⁴³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 6, Secretary, Labour Committee to VDWWA, 8 January 1926.

⁴⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 7, Crombie to “President and Directors of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia,” 7 October 1932.

spoke of the need for “honest, hard working” men who were “loyal to [them]selves and [their] families” to “co-operate” with the Shipping Federation, Crombie laid bare the links between workplace harmony and the heterosexual nuclear family, the success of the former inextricably tied to the presence of gender hierarchy in the latter.⁴⁵ In this formulation, the perfect worker demonstrated self-discipline at work, rationality and moderation in politics, and devotion to hearth and home, masculine qualities that were both good for the waterfront and good for the nation as well. In this regard, decasualization, and the wider project of welfare capitalism of which it was a part, was not simply an alliance between boss and worker, but, as Crombie’s vision for the waterfront illustrates, between specific types of men as well.

No doubt Crombie considered himself something of an expert in the realm of industrial relations, someone capable of pulling waterfront work from the darkness of the shape-up and picking system to the light of organization and efficiency. But Crombie, like doctors, child welfare experts, and social workers, swam amidst the many reform currents that were cresting in the interwar period, believing, as many others did, in the need to reform the workplace, maintain the nuclear family, and, in the process, strengthen notions of citizenship and nationalism. To single out Crombie in this way is not to suggest that he was solely responsible for welfare capitalism on the waterfront, though he was, by virtue of his position and longevity

⁴⁵ See Sangster, “The Softball Solution” and Fine, “Our Big Factory Family,” on this specific point.

on the job, influential. ("[The waterfront is under the] management of one man," Shipping Federation President K.A. McLennan wrote in 1930.)⁴⁶ Ultimately, his position of power rested on the political and economic might of the Shipping Federation whose members, for the most part, shared his belief that "the system" -- the toxic combination of casualism and the shape-up method of hiring -- was to blame for labour unrest. Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of the 1923 strike when its uses and abuses were being debated amongst waterfront employers up and down the coast, Crombie urged his bosses to adopt a version of the Seattle plan, a model they were by now familiar with. Although levels of support for the plan varied considerably between shipping and stevedoring interests, on the whole, Shipping Federation members agreed with the general approach that their Puget Sound counterparts were taking to decasualize the Seattle waterfront. As a result, they asked Crombie to work out a scheme in conjunction with the employer's Labor Committee, chaired by CPR President F.W. Peters, and representatives of the waterfront workers.

In its most basic form, decasualization was about changing the ways in which men were hired on the waterfront and how work was distributed amongst them, or, in Crombie's words, it was a "carefully propounded scheme overlining a new understanding between employers and men."⁴⁷ A casual labour market was

⁴⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 50, File 10, K.A. McLennan to "All Federation Members," 24 November 1930.

⁴⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 46, File 9, undated memo.

defined by a large pool of labourers, limited and intermittent work opportunities, and, as a consequence, powerful dockside foremen notorious for "preferential employment [practices], favouritism, and discrimination."⁴⁸ Reforming this state of affairs required usurping the power of individual companies and their dockside representatives to hire and fire as they wished and investing that authority in the hands of a labour manager. Furthermore, it was necessary to assemble, evaluate, discipline, and despatch a pool of workers on an ongoing basis, a process that was key to the legitimacy of this "unusual and unconservative" approach to labour relations. In short, for the Shipping Federation, decasualization was about internalizing the labour market itself, about replacing the invisible hand of supply and demand with the visible, co-ordinating hand of management. The institutional lynchpin of this reform agenda was the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers Association, a company union created by the Shipping Federation to replace the ILA after the 1923 strike.

The role and function of the "Association" was defined by a five-year pact that the two organizations inked in 1924. Under the terms of the agreement, the Association was guaranteed 60 per cent of all waterfront work "so long as members,...capable of doing a fair day's work, [were] available." The remaining 40 per cent was to be given to experienced former employees that no longer posed a

⁴⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 7, Crombie to "The President and Directors of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia," 7 October 1932.

political risk; over time, it was hoped, these men would be folded into the company association. In exchange, the Shipping Federation reserved the right to determine the membership of the union in "consultation" with its duly elected leaders, maintained control over despatching, and forbade Association members from refusing to work a particular cargo, going on strike, or participating in a "sympathetic strike." In this context, all disputes between the two parties were to be taken up with the labour manager and, "if not settled, at once be set down for hearing before the [newly created] Grievance Committee," one of the many joint bodies charged with resolving workplace issues.⁴⁹ The *quid pro quo*, here, was obvious: the Association would have access to the lion's share of waterfront work so long as it operated within an extremely narrow institutional and political bandwidth. It was a notion laid bare in the Association's newly minted constitution: "[waterfront workers must] support the existing form of Government in Canada and resist all revolutionary movements."⁵⁰

Setting political limits was one thing, ensuring long-term compliance was quite another; indeed, in Crombie's opinion it was doubtful that waterfront workers would back an organization that was merely a puppet of more powerful political

⁴⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 3, "Agreement made this Second Day of December, 1924, Between the Shipping federation of British Columbia and Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers Association."

⁵⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 42, File 2, "Memorandum Dealing with the Vancouver and Deapsea Longshoring Industry," undated, likely 1935 or 1936. The VDWWA constitution is quoted in this memo.

masters. In this regard, it was important that the Shipping Federation retain or, at the very least, be seen to retain some distance from the Association but, at the same time, cultivate a managerial instinct amongst its elected leaders and executive. "[I] feel that we must be very careful in regard to how much leeway or latitude we give the men," Crombie told the head of the Vancouver and Victoria Stevedoring Company in 1924. The politics of legitimacy are captured by the Shipping Federation's approach to ensuring that union leaders were drawn from, what Crombie often called, "the respectable" and "saner elements of longshore labor."⁵¹ On the one hand, the Association was permitted to elect its own leaders and executive by majority vote, but on the other hand, the Shipping Federation insisted that elections take place on a regular bi-annual basis in order to ensure that "minority control" of the union was avoided.⁵² It was an approach to the question of leadership that came with a radical pedigree; in the case of the Wobblies, for example, limiting terms in office was part of a wider critique of union bureaucracy and a way to maintain rank-and-file democracy to further more militant ends. But in this context, the opposite was true; rotating the Association's leadership and executive was – waterfront employers hoped – about ensuring that the right union

⁵¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 50, File 7, Crombie to F.H. Clendenning, 2 May 1928.

⁵² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 4, VDWWA to Crombie, 16 July 1928. The "minority control" quotation is from Box 32, File 12, "Memo: Suggestions for a New Agreement with VDWWA," undated.

bureaucrats were elected and making it impossible for any oppositional movement to seize the reigns of power for an extended period of time.

That the Association's "relative autonomy" was closely linked to its support for the Shipping Federation's agenda of class harmony is illustrated further by Crombie's decision to assist the union's elected business agent in gaining access to the waterfront. Writing to the BC Sugar Refinery in December 1923, Crombie asked the company to break with its established policy of running union men off the docks and to make an "especial [sic] consideration" to permit "Mr. Conway of the VDWWA on the premises." "It might bring good results," Crombie speculated, "[as] he is attempting to produce efficiency in the gangs on this waterfront."⁵³ Like other union officials, the business agent was free to carry out the affairs of the organization, even to speak with men on the job, so long as he ensured that members honoured the terms of the agreement, disciplined those who stepped out of line, and promoted greater productivity. "I have repeatedly in the past and would once again like to go on record that as representing the Shipping Federation, I am willing at any time to co-operate with your association, yourself, and your Business Agent," Crombie told the secretary-treasurer of the company union in the first clause of a run-on sentence,

⁵³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 24, File 9, Crombie to BC Sugar Refinery, 31 December 1923; Box 43, File 7. Crombie "to whom it may concern [dock operators]," 17 September 1928.

and will be glad at all times to...consider any matters which are brought to my attention and which are of a constructive nature ... [and] at the same time being of real benefit to the majority of the men and just and fair and in no way detrimental to the reasonable interests of the Employers.⁵⁴

For the Shipping Federation, the benefits of this strategy were obvious: not only did it promote the Association as a responsible labour organization but, more importantly, it helped to strengthen the broader notion that the only legitimate role for a trade union was to negotiate collective agreements and police its own members, not to promote the interests of the working class as a whole.

This notion was reinforced further by the creation of an elaborate committee structure charged with looking after a variety of issues, from the programme for the joint Shipping Federation-Association Christmas party to who should receive a union card. Considered by employers throughout North America as the cornerstone of industrial democracy, for the Shipping Federation, the committees served a very practical purpose: to ensure that "irregularities" on the job were "handled and amicably and finally settled to the mutual benefit of all concerned."⁵⁵ At the same time, according to the labour manager, proper use of the committees would allow waterfront employers to both respond to "each and every outstanding issue" as "quickly as possible" and to be "perfectly frank and above board with them in

⁵⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 3, Crombie to Secretary-Treasurer, VDWWA, 24 March 1928.

⁵⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 9, Secretary [Crombie] to "Dear Sirs" [VDWWA], 8 April 1924.

whatever we do," two qualities at the heart of sound modern management.⁵⁶ "[O]nly by a determined policy of tolerant consideration of all questions and an impartial handling of any or all vexatious problems ... [will] the old belief that anything which was good for the Employer was bad for the men" be broken down, Crombie wrote to a Vancouver stevedore, highlighting the importance of noblesse oblige, expert opinion, and "full and frank discussion" in facilitating class harmony.

For the Shipping Federation, the benefits of this strategy were obvious; in addition to the practical, day-to-day payoff of dispute resolution was the educational value of the process itself. Indeed, the very existence of joint committees, coupled with the politically restrictive clauses of the Association's agreement, nurtured the notion that the only legitimate method to resolve workplace disputes was through "due [process] and proper consideration," not collective struggle, the well-spring of union militancy. "When the representatives of the men agree to the rulings, they [the rulings] at once become the recognized procedure which is to be followed under similar circumstances in the future," read a memo issued by Shipping Federation in 1931, highlighting the central role of the union leadership in this bureaucratic context and the didactic quality of joint committee work. It was a notion supported by Crombie who saw the committees as providing "frequent opportunities" for the "scheme [to be] properly presented to the men and their representatives both

⁵⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 50, File X, Crombie to Irons, 9 September 1926; Box 22, File 11, Crombie to F.H. Clendenning, 12 February 1931.

verbally and in writing."⁵⁷ In sum, the company union and joint committee structure that tied it so closely to the Shipping Federation were important to the decasualization of the waterfront not only because they set institutional, or formal limits on political activity, but, perhaps more importantly, because they shaped longshoremen's sense of "which courses of action [were] realistic and which utopian."⁵⁸ Indeed, it was within this restricted context, the Shipping federation hoped, that a co-operative, managerial temperament would take root amongst the Association's leadership, a way of seeing and understanding the role of a union that was crucial to assembling a new, more compliant workforce.

* * *

In addition to establishing the formal and informal mechanisms in and through which the company union and joint committees operated, Crombie was faced with the challenge of co-ordinating this new supply of men with waterfront employers' daily demands for labour. In the wake of the 1923 strike, the despatching of many longshoremen, including former ILA members who were allowed back "on the hook," took place through the Dominion Employment Service offices on Powell Street. Under the auspices of J.H. McVety, a former socialist who prided himself on being able to screen out Wobblies and other undesirables, the office sent eligible men to the waterfront to be picked at the ship's side. In 1924, the Shipping Federation

⁵⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 46, File 9, undated memo.

⁵⁸ David Montgomery, Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market during the Nineteenth Century (New York 1993), 9-10.

withdrew its support for the short-lived state solution and, with the Seattle plan in mind, opted to create its own facilities. But relieving McVety of his waterfront duties was but a prelude to a wider process of centralization, of shifting the locus of power from the dockside foremen to a manager capable of co-ordinating the waterfront labour market on a day-to-day basis.⁵⁹

Like social workers and other reformers who, by the 1920s, thought of themselves as objective social scientists, Crombie spoke often of being a "neutral party" with an "impersonal point of view" on waterfront matters, of being in "a better position than anyone else to know existing conditions and difficulties ... and the possibilities for overcoming such difficulties."⁶⁰ But for Crombie, the need to operate "with the cold light of reason" did not mean being detached or removed from the work-a-day world of the waterfront: to be an "authority [on] every question appertaining [sic] to longshoring and longshore work" required "intimate and personal knowledge of the men."⁶¹ Indeed, for him, expert knowledge of both the men and the waterfront workplace -- "fully indexed and annotated" -- was crucial to assessing workers' efficiency on an ongoing basis, executing his duties as labour manager, and, on a wider plain, extending the ambit of managerial control over the

⁵⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 13, File 3, Secretary of the Shipping Federation of BC to A.M. Manson, Minister of Labor, 11 December 1923; Box 23, File 4, Secretary and Manager to F.W. Peters, General Superintendent, CPR, 1 April 1924.

⁶⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 2, Crombie to Monk, 10 March 1924; Box 2, File 6, Crombie to Secretary, VDWWA, 4 May 1926; Box 32, File X, Crombie to J.E. Hall, 20 May 1935;

⁶¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 32, File X, Crombie to J.E. Hall, 20 May 1935;

vagaries of the waterfront labour market.⁶² Central to the working, identity, and power of the modest bureaucracy necessary for this purpose was the accumulation of knowledge.

Crombie assembled his archives from many sources, both mundane and extraordinary. Those who wanted a new card were asked by Crombie to register with the Shipping Federation; to do so they filled out a simple application form that asked for personal information including, significantly, marital status, number of dependents, and nationality. Compiled into a master list, the names were circulated amongst members of the Shipping Federation who evaluated each worker the way a teacher might evaluate a student; they awarded an "A," "B," or "C" for particular skill sets, assigned an overall grade, and provided explanatory comments such as "doubtful" or "2nd class worker." In particular cases, these reports were supplemented by a medical examination conducted by the Shipping Federation's newly appointed "Medical Adviser"; general appearance ("Looks older than his age"), teeth ("Poor, mostly out"), and heart condition ("No murmurs"), among other physical characteristics, were used to evaluate a worker's fitness. The results of these tests, coupled with the above information, were passed on to the labour manager to be used in deliberations between the Shipping Federation and the Association as to who in particular should receive a union card. Application forms

⁶² The "information" quote is from CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 11, Crombie to "All Dock Operators," 14 August 1930; the "indexed" quote is from Box 50, File 6, Crombie to Irons, 19 March 1926.

and medical reports were supplemented by ongoing evaluations of individual workers' and gangs' performance conducted by company foremen. On standardized forms that set out the potential grounds for complaint -- "inefficiency or insubordination; continued inattention to work; refusal to obey foreman's instruction; unable to keep up with his gang" -- many obliged, providing Crombie with a profile of workers' political, moral, and workplace habits. "Inclined to agitation" and "does not seem to understand what he is told," one foreman wrote; "lazy and a gambler," "lacking pep," and "[wearing] a lounge suit, white collar," reported another.⁶³

In addition, Crombie employed other methods to gain "intimate" and "personal" knowledge of waterfront workers. Chief among them was a system whereby Crombie (and his staff) calculated the average monthly and yearly income of a particular gang and ranked each gang based on its earnings over a specific period of time. For the labour manager, this comprehensive listing was a guide to workers' efficiency. A gang that routinely appeared at the top was, obviously, in high demand by stevedoring companies, an indication of just how productive it was on a daily basis. For members of the Shipping Federation, the allure of such statistics was obvious; not only did they promote competition between individuals, but they provided the labour manager with the rationale for, in Crombie's words,

⁶³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 43, File 5, "Application for Registration"; Box 5, File 7, "Employer evaluations"; Box 6, File 11, "Physical Examination"; Box 2, File 5, "Foreman's Reports"; Box 18, File 2, Crombie to Peters, 14 May 1924.

"reconstructing" or "remaking" specific gangs. Armed with such "indisputable ... facts and figures," Crombie was able to track workers' performance on the job and, in today's business parlance, manage for productivity, an ongoing process that bolstered his stature as an expert and, as a result, facilitated the centralization of power in the despatch office.

But Crombie's sources were not limited to "efficiency reports"; indeed, over time, he established a large network of informants within the leadership of the Association, the waterfront workforce, and the wider community that, in his words, "continually furnished ... authentic and reliable information."⁶⁴ Some of these people appeared on a list compiled by Crombie in the 1930s that ranked each one on the basis of whether they would "react to [his] propaganda or proposals which may be advanced to them."⁶⁵ While it is impossible to know how many spies were working for Crombie, internal correspondence between him and labour committee chair F.W. Peters makes clear that operatives were present at high-level meetings of the company union, gatherings of dissident longshoremen in the waterfront district, and on the docks themselves. One such informant was W.J. Smith. Recommended by an inspector in the Canadian Pacific Railway police and introduced to Crombie by the president of the Association, Smith was hired in 1924 to monitor workers on the

⁶⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 18, File 2, F.W. Peters, General Superintendent, CPR, to Crombie, 15 January 1925; the quote is from Crombie to Peters, 27 January 1925.

⁶⁵ The quote is from CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 53, File 6, Crombie to J.E. Hall, President of the Shipping Federation, 1 May 1935; see also "Memo Re: Albert Hill" in the same box and file.

job; or, as Smith himself put it, to “produce the goods.” Although Smith was “physically and constitutionally unable to perform efficient longshoring work,” the Shipping Federation agreed to “turn as much work his way” and to top up his monthly earnings if he was unable to earn a living wage, “this being necessary to cover his investigating work.” Unfortunately for Crombie, the only thing that this particular informant produced after about three months on the job was a lawsuit against the Shipping Federation for unpaid wages.

Although Smith never did “produce the goods,” many others certainly did. Among them were the Pratt Secret Service and Thiel private detective firms. On the Shipping Federation’s payroll since the labour revolt, over the course of the 1920s and 1930s, both companies employed detectives and informants on the waterfront -- surveilling Wobblies, former ILAers, and, once the Depression hit, the Communist Party of Canada. By 1935, C.E. Pratt, president of Pratt Secret Service and former Thiel manager, boasted to Crombie that “our operative is now one of those appointed to the negotiating committee representing [the Association].” Detective agencies were also useful in linking the Shipping Federation to other organizations interested in tracking radical activity. In 1928, when Crombie wanted more information on one M.D. “Happy” Rogers, a suspected Wobbly, Pratt tapped many sources, including “an ex-operative of the Thiel service,” the RCMP, and the BC Loggers’ Association -- the last two organizations busy in the interwar period updating their own files on suspected agitators. When private detective firms acted

as a conduit between the Shipping Federation and other waterfront employers' associations on the Pacific Coast the circles of repression were widened even further.⁶⁶

Reports filed by loyal workers or professional detectives served an obvious purpose: to weed out trouble makers, strengthen the company union, and assemble a workforce made up of politically acceptable men. "I know [J.C.] Martin personally and he is very plausible to speak to[,] but from information I have and which I think is reliable, he is distinctly RED and I am given to understand is very sympathetic if not actually a member of the IWW," Crombie told the head of the Canadian Australasian Royal Mail Line in 1925.⁶⁷ Like grades issued by foremen or the payroll data compiled by Crombie, spy reports were also part and parcel of the Shipping Federation's pursuit of efficiency, both in the immediate sense that the absence of opposition made pushing men harder and faster an easier task, and in the wider sense that the accumulation of knowledge about politically suspect workers was linked to the overarching process cementing the hegemony of the despatch office, a process that was the heart and lungs of decasualization.

Perhaps it is the image and impact of the "Kardex Man" -- the icon of the Rand Kardex Service Organization, purveyors of the Kardex system of office

⁶⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 46, File 14, Crombie to F.P. Foisie, 7 December 1939; 8 December 1939; 25 January 1940.

⁶⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 17, File 12, Secretary of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia [Crombie] to J.C. Irons, 2 June 1925.

management -- that captures this dynamic best (see appendix 3). Dressed in a fedora, single-breasted jacket, and flannel pants, the "Kardex Man" cut an impressive figure. Indeed, unlike his competitors who "appl[ied] high pressure selling methods and push[ed] ... some ready-made plan," the Kardex Man was scientifically trained, backed by a "vast organization dedicated to Modern Business," and understood, intuitively, the connection between organization, efficiency, and profit. For him, the secret to success was a well-designed, colour-coded, record system -- "whether...a small index, a large listing, or a comprehensive plan of management control" -- that allowed managers to "graphically chart and clearly picturize [sic] conditions." Based on the "scientific fact" that "the eye is ten times quicker than the hand," the Kardex system united "speed, simplicity, and accuracy" to produce "the most rapid devices ever perfected for handling of single line, double line, or triple line reference data." Clearly, the 1920s was the "Age of Action," a time to "stop hunting through hidden books" and wasting precious time -- and to "start a new era of Profits" through "greater record control" and "more effective management." To get in on this workplace revolution was easy, the Kardex Man assured potential clients, just "Have a Talk with the Kardex Man" because, in "nine cases out of ten, the recommendations he presents have such self-evident value that his selling work is done before it is started."⁶⁸

⁶⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 39, File 6, Kardex Company of British Columbia to Major W.C.D. Crombie, Labour Manager, 14 May 1927; 19 August 1929; "You Can See '99'; But How Soon Can You Find '97'," Kardex pamphlet, 1925. For more on the "aesthetic of bureaucratic rationality"

Crombie was certainly impressed with this sales pitch; keeping track of the hundreds of waterfront workers "on the beach" -- their skills, earnings, and efficiency -- and the arrival and departure of vessels was no easy task. For years, the names and serial numbers of registered longshoremen were "typewritten on a number of foolscap sheets posted on cardboard," Crombie told the office management company in 1927, but with all the recent changes, here, they have been "continually retyped and rearranged [and were now] unsightly and dirty looking."⁶⁹ With the same "sincere spirit of helpfulness" that revolutionized offices in other sectors of the North American economy, the Kardex Man -- or at least his BC-based equivalent -- surveyed the situation at Crombie's Dunlevy Street office and recommended that he purchase the Guardian Desk Rack; it had room for 1200 names, was fully upgradeable, and came in a nice simulated oak finish. Crombie and his bosses on the Shipping Federation's finance committee agreed. To co-ordinate labour demand with labour supply more efficiently, and to keep track of those men who were "habitually careless" on the job, it was crucial to place the despatcher's office on a more scientific footing. It was, after all, in keeping with a new approach to "the labour problem" that they had been pursuing for the better part of a decade.

that dominated advertising in this period see Jackson Lears, Fables of Abundance and Thomas Frank, The Conquest of Cool (Chicago 1997); Comacchio, "Mechanomorphosis," 35-67.

⁶⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 3, Crombie to F.H. Clendenning, 8 June 1927.

Symbolically, with his steely-eyed confidence in science and unshakeable hope for the future, the Kardex Man embodied the ethos of expertise, bureaucratic rationality, and modernity that informed, to a large degree, the practices of new company managers like Crombie. Practically, the labour manager's use of the Rand Kardex Company's various systems of office management -- later enhanced by the purchase of a Telechron Electric Clock ("Exact Observatory Time Every Second of the Year!") -- was testimony not only to the amount of material he was amassing but the need to have it properly "indexed and annotated" to carry out effectively his duties as a expert in industrial relations. "[To] build up, standardize, and maintain [efficient men] I must be in the position of having necessary information given to me and I shall therefore need to be furnished with information in writing which I can act upon," Crombie informed dock operators in 1930.⁷⁰ He might have added that such information was necessary to the centralization of control in the despatch office, the internalization of the labour market, and, by extension, the legitimacy of the wider project of welfare capitalism. It was the key to making better workers and making better citizens.

* * *

Waterfront employers' repertoire was not limited to labour market reform; indeed, the objectives of decasualization, and the moral values that the Shipping

⁷⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss, 279, Box 4, File 11, Crombie to Dock operators, 14 August 1930.

Federation hoped to inculcate in its new workforce, were bolstered by other, somewhat "softer" initiatives such as workplace safety. "Nearly everyone has heard of longshoremen, but few people realize that longshoring has a reputation of being one of the most hazardous occupations in the world, or why this should be so," the secretary of the Shipping Federation wrote in the Journal of Commerce in 1925.⁷¹ According to Crombie, this "was so" not just because the waterfront was home to machines, heavy cargo, unpredictable working conditions, and tight sailing schedules but, more significantly, because waterfront workers were careless on the job. In this regard, shortly after the formation of the VDWWA, the Shipping Federation created a safety department and appointed Major S.F.C. Sweeney, former safety engineer at Granby Consolidated Mining and Smelting in Fernie, BC, to "[get] personally acquainted with the men, [obtain] their confidence, and [have] them realise that they are the sufferers when any undue chances are taken on the waterfront."⁷² Sweeney's role on the waterfront, then, was both administrative and educational. In the case of the former, it was his responsibility to report unsafe work practices, track accidents and deaths, and assist the labour manager with other safety related matters such as coroner's inquests; in the case of the latter, it was up

⁷¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 55, File 2, "Shipping Federation of BC and Safety Work," Journal of Commerce, undated, likely 1925.

⁷² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 55, File 2, "Memo for the Executive of the BCSF," undated, likely 1924; Box 28, File 1, Crombie to H.A. Stevenson, Dingwall, Cotts, and Co., 21 April 1924; Box 55, File 1, "Report of Special Committee Appointed by the Shipping Federation to Investigate the Suggestion Made by the Safety First Engineer in his Report to the Shipping Federation Dated April 11th 1924."

to him to “create considerable interest and enthusiasm” around safety issues by speaking at union meetings, initiating safety campaigns (“A Week With No Compensable Accidents!”), and sponsoring other events designed to, in Crombie’s words, “continual[ly] enforc[e]” the “belief into the minds of the men” that reckless workers are a “menace” and should, ideally, be identified and disciplined “by the men themselves”⁷³ It was a message that, despite the trappings of a new, modernized safety department, harkened back to the “ideology of accident interpretation” that shaped debates associated with “administering danger in the workplace” in the 19th and early 20th century: workers assumed certain risks when they took a job on the waterfront; accidents and deaths on the job were the product of their own carelessness; and, as a consequence, employers were not responsible.⁷⁴

Like employers in other sectors of the North American economy, the Shipping Federation’s “safety first” policy was motivated by a range of factors. Unsafe work practices, accidents, and deaths on the job were costly. Not only did they translate into extremely high Workman’s Compensation Board premiums -- in 1924, for

⁷³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 50, File X, Crombie to Irons, 3 August 1926.

⁷⁴ The question of liability and the formation of workers’ compensation regimes is taken up further in the following: John Thomas Keelor, “The Price of Lives and Limbs Lost at Work: The Development of No-Fault Workers’ Compensation Legislation in British Columbia,” (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1996); Eric Tucker, Administering Danger in the Workplace: The Law and Politics of Occupational Health and Safety Regulation in Ontario (Toronto 1990); and, in the American context, David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz, eds., Dying For Work: Workers’ Safety and Health in Twentieth Century America (Indianapolis 1987). For a snappy introduction to this debate see Mark Leier, Rebel Life: The Life and Times of Robert Gosden (Vancouver 1999), 47-50, sidebar “Workers’ Compensation.” The “ideology” quote is from Keelor, 20-1; the “administering” is lifted from Tucker.

example, the Shipping Federation paid at a rate of 6.5 percent of its total payroll, one of the highest levels of contribution amongst employers in the province -- but, in the longer term, reduced profit margins by cutting into the overall efficiency of the waterfront.⁷⁵ In short, as a pamphlet issued by the National Safety Council, a US-based organization that promoted industrial safety, stated: "Accident Prevention Saves Men and Money."⁷⁶ But waterfront employers hoped that the creation of a safety department would pay dividends in the realm of labour relations as well. Indeed, as the secretary of the Shipping Federation noted in 1925, occupational safety provided an issue that required "organization and whole-hearted co-operation" between the Association and Shipping Federation to solve; like the creation of the company union, waterfront employers' safety agenda provided an additional bridge over the class divide.⁷⁷ Indeed, by reducing the causes of on-the-job accidents and deaths to workers' individual fecklessness while simultaneously promoting "whole-hearted" co-operation, the Shipping Federation closed off questions related to its own culpability in this regard and, by implication, bolstered its benevolent image. In short: it was part of the solution, not part of the problem.

⁷⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 28, File 1, Crombie to H.A. Stevenson, 21 April 1924. The WCB assessment can be found in Box 55, File 2, "Shipping Federation of BC and Safety Work," Journal of Commerce, undated, likely 1925.

⁷⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 54, File 10, "Accident Prevention Saves Men and Money," pamphlet published by National Safety Council, undated, likely mid-1920s.

⁷⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 55, File 2, "Shipping Federation of BC and Safety Work," Journal of Commerce, undated, likely 1925.

Significantly, this "safety first" initiative -- and the message of class collaboration that underpinned it -- made an explicit appeal to longshoremen's gender politics as well; to be a co-operative and careful worker was to be a good husband and father, a status which, in the words of the safety engineer, prevented "distress in the working man's home" and, by extension, anchored a strong and healthy nation.⁷⁸ Posters supplied to the Shipping Federation by the National Safety Council reproduced this message inside the despatch hall, deploying contrasting images of masculinity to demarcate the safe from the unsafe worker. The former was usually represented as a thoughtful, experienced worker -- his hat, work clothes, and rolled-up sleeves emphasizing his manliness and stature on the job. Typically, the latter was drawn as an effete, cartoon-like character who was equipped with a slim build, ill-fitting or tacky clothes, and, presumably, little intelligence.⁷⁹ The message, here, was obvious: to put safety first and endorse the wider co-operative ethos of which this initiative was a part was to be both a better employee and a better man.

But as other posters made clear, the better man was to be found not only on the job, but in the home as well, assuming his rightful place as father and husband, a notion made clear in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. The working men depicted in

⁷⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 55, File 1, "Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Superintendent's and Foreman's Safety Committee ... July 3rd 1925." Similarly, the breadwinner norm was part of the debate surrounding no-fault workers' compensation and minimum wage; see Keelor, 20, 39-40; Tucker, 8.

⁷⁹ The posters are contained in CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 54, File 10.

the “Shop Shots” poster series, for example, did not speak explicitly about safety or other workplace concerns but about the trials of domestic life; “No, sir, my kids never hear the wife and I quarrel. Whenever we start an argument th’ kids are sent out to play,” a man says to his friend on the way to work, filling the role of the straight man in this comic exchange. “I spose all that fresh air does’ em a lot of good,” his mate replies, exhaling pipe smoke as he delivers the punch line. What is significant, here, is not the dialogue itself, but its role in the operation of the broader reform discourse. Indeed, when placed in the context of welfare capitalism, this cartoon complements the wider notion that both capital and labour occupied common ground, only here it was not issues related to safety or efficiency that united men across class divisions, but the shared bemusement/humour linked to the trials of family life. Both bosses and workers were in on the joke.

Appeals to the class and gender politics of domestic life were made in more direct ways as well. Some posters combined simple safety slogans (“Let’s Be More Careful”) with dire warnings about the domestic consequences of careless work habits (“Good Bye Daddy, Come Home Safe!”; “Lucky Boy, His Dad Is A Safe Worker”) – the former accompanied by an image of longshoreman being crushed by a sling load, the latter embellished by pictures of small children, one hugging her father after he returns home from work, the other facing the audience and smiling a broad, toothless grin. In this formulation, compliance with the Shipping Federation’s initiative is linked, symbolically, to a man’s ability to carry out his role

as husband and father and, by implication, the stability of the heterosexual family. Clearly, collaboration on this issue was a small price to pay. Other material, such as pay cheque enclosures and the "annual safety calender," brought this reform message directly into the home itself, a place where, one promotional pamphlet from the National Safety Council argued, "the worker," and presumably his wife, "[was] in his most receptive frame of mind" – receptive to the message of occupational safety, workplace and domestic harmony, and employer benevolence.⁸⁰

The Shipping Federation tapped the didactic qualities of architecture as well, most notably in the new Shipping Federation despatch hall. Situated on Dunlevy Avenue in the heart of the downtown working-class district, it was built in 1924 to house the labour manager, his staff, and the company union, and to provide a space for waterfront workers to congregate until they were sent out to work. "This building is, of course, quite well known to shipping men, but ... probably not one in a hundred citizens of this port have ever seen it, let alone become familiar with its interior and what it stands for," began an editorial in Harbour and Shipping, hinting at the building's wider significance. "That is a pity, because if there is anything calculated to demonstrate in concrete form the whole-hearted and efficient manner in which the Federation have [sic] tackled this somewhat intricate problem of waterfront labour, and the goodwill and fine spirit they have put into it from the human point of view,

⁸⁰ All of this material is contained in CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 54, File 10.

this building most assuredly will do it.”⁸¹ More than simply the administrative nerve centre for a decasualized labour market – what one member of the Shipping Federation called “the medium through which [all men] obtain their work” – the despatch hall was an expression of both waterfront employers’ commitment to welfare capitalism and a certain faith in the transformative potential of the built environment.⁸²

The Shipping Federation was by no means alone in this endeavour. Drawing on a long tradition that linked architecture with morality, other North American employers such as Cadbury’s, General Electric, and International Harvester were experimenting with new workplace designs; by encouraging their employees to appreciate “upper- and middle-class architectural forms, furnishings, and modes of behaviour during leisure activities at the plant,” managers hoped to induce greater respect for the finer, more respectable things in life, including, of course, one’s boss.⁸³ Waterfront employers certainly shared this general belief, but given the unique character of the waterfront workplace, their approach was slightly different. Unlike factory operatives, waterfront workers spent their work day not under one roof, but on different ships and docks scattered across the Burrard Inlet; in this regard, the Shipping Federation’s options were limited to the despatch hall, the one

⁸¹ “What Is The Shipping Federation: An Endeavour to Correct Some Misapprehensions Which Appear To Exist, Owing to Misrepresentation and lack of Information,” Harbour and Shipping, (February 1937); reprinted as a pamphlet.

⁸² Littmann, “Designing Obedience,” 88-114.

⁸³ Littmann, “Designing Obedience,” 88.

place where many longshoremen waited for work. It is perhaps for this reason that waterfront employers, in contrast to their counterparts in manufacturing who built neo-classical facades and manicured gardens, did not use an elaborate design. Indeed, the despatch hall was a simple box-like two-storey structure; its aesthetic was function, not fashion, and thus was in keeping with the working-class cultural and architectural milieu that surrounded it. Whereas other architectural designs embellished class difference to inspire more respectable workplace behaviour, here the built environment stressed common context and shared purpose, the underlying values of welfare capitalism.

This notion was reproduced inside the despatch hall as well. As a place where men were expected to wait for work, it was Crombie's hope, and that of the Association's hall committee, to "[make] the quarters ... as pleasant as possible for the men to congregate."⁸⁴ To this end, at "considerable cost" the Shipping Federation outfitted the building with the "latest facilities." As the editor at Harbour and Shipping noted enthusiastically: "The assembly hall, in which the men wait their call, the pool and locker room, adjoining which are modern, clean, and ample hot and cold showers, and a comfortable and cheap restaurant are remarkable features of this commodious and comfortable Longshoremen's Hall."⁸⁵ But commodious and

⁸⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 4, Crombie to the Secretary, VDWWA, 21 February 1925.

⁸⁵ "What Is The Shipping Federation," Harbour and Shipping (February 1937); see also the Shipping Federation's advertisement in the confederation edition of the Vancouver Sun (1927) in CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 11, File 1, "Advertising."

comfortable did not mean bourgeois. Indeed, to help the men feel “at home,” the new restaurant was patterned after lunch counters found throughout the waterfront district, even to the extent that it employed only white help. That Crombie was concerned with establishing the building's credibility is underscored further by his decision to install pool tables and a concession stand in the basement; not only were these amenities that working-class men needed, but, by hiring an “old time longshoremen of the right type” to look after things, he hoped to boost the initiative's legitimacy amongst waterfront workers, to imbue it, one might say, with a certain working-class caché.

Ensuring that the despatch hall was well-equipped and a “pleasant” place to “congregate” was an important objective for several reasons. It was an obvious manifestation of the bosses' benevolence and, given that the Association's offices were in the same building, their desire to close the gap between labour and capital. At the same time, it provided workers with an alternative to the lounges and bars where many of them waited for the daily “call.” (During the ILA period, for example, the assembly hall was sandwiched between the union offices and a blind pig, an unlawful drinking establishment where patrons obtained alcohol from bootleggers.) In this regard, by offering them a place “equipped along club lines” that was “managed for [workers'] best interests, convenience, and comfort” the Shipping Federation hoped that the new facilities would encourage more responsible use of leisure time, a concern of employers stretching back at least half a century.

To this moral end, Crombie banned "gambling, drinking, [and] rowdyism" in the hall and enlisted the assistance of the VDWWA in handing out fines and suspensions for breaking the house rules.⁸⁶ As well, he excluded "casual men" from the premises and encouraged the Association to use the facilities for meetings "of both social and business nature." Over the course of the mid-to-late 1920s, the company union, in co-operation with the Shipping Federation, hosted smoking concerts, wrestling and boxing cards, and an annual family Christmas party, complete with a prominent waterfront employer as master of ceremonies and a shared Christmas tree. "I am particularly anxious that the men will not feel that I am staying away [from the smoker] intentionally," K.J. Burns, member of the Shipping Federation's executive, wrote to Crombie in 1929, hinting at the wider political significance of the event.⁸⁷ He really did not have to worry about snubbing the men; after all, it was likely that he would rub shoulders with the union's executive at the Shipping Federation's own exclusive banquet held in a swanky downtown hotel ballroom.⁸⁸

To be sure, Crombie's interest in placing limits on appropriate social behaviour was tied to the Shipping Federation's quest for efficiency; but,

⁸⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 3, Crombie to VDWWA, undated, likely mid-1920s.

⁸⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 4, Crombie to the Secretary, VDWWA, 21 February 1925; Box 2, File 6, Crombie to Secretary, VDWWA, 4 May 1926; Box 3, File 2, VDWWA to Crombie, 14 December 1927; Box 50, File 7, Clendenning to Crombie, 28 December 1928; Box 50, File 9, K.J. Burns to Crombie, 21 February 1929; Box 3, File 1, Allan L. Walker to Crombie, 13 February 1929.

⁸⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Allan Walker to Crombie, 18 January 1929.

significantly, he also understood that excessive gambling, drinking, and fraternizing had implications for the home as well as the workplace: wages squandered on beer and poker never made it to a man's wife; drinking led some men to treat their spouses in, what he called, an "irresponsible" manner. For Crombie, as for other moral reformers, policing class boundaries meant policing gender ones as well, in this particular case, delimiting between honourable and dishonourable forms of manhood, a distinction that pivoted on the importance of self-control both on and off the job. Although Crombie took an interest in these issues, and on some occasions threatened to expel workers due to their "domestic troubles," he was under no illusions that the despatch hall would become an island of middle-class respectability in an otherwise rough proletarian context.⁸⁹ But, at the very least, he thought that by offering "commodious and comfortable" facilities and embracing particular dimensions of working-class life, he might have the opportunity to reform those aspects that he -- and his bosses -- found problematic; it was, after all, an approach that worked for the Salvation Army.

But the Shipping Federation's interest in the political payoffs of organized leisure was by no means tied exclusively to the despatch hall; indeed, one of the most important welfarist innovations during this period was the establishment of the Waterfront Amateur Athletic Association and the annual Longshoreman's Family

⁸⁹ According to Littman, managers at General Electric hoped that their new workplace designs would stand out as "oases of culture and beauty in a dangerous urban environment"; see "Designing Obedience," 93.

Picnic. Like other initiatives on the waterfront, the Athletic Association was a co-operative affair, a status symbolized by the union's appointment of several members of the Shipping Federation as honorary executives of the new organization. Over the course of the late 1920s and 1930s, the Athletic Association organized lacrosse, softball, basketball, football, and five-pin bowling teams that played in both waterfront and city-wide competitions. But perhaps it is the longshoremen's hockey team – the Maple Leaf Hockey Club – that best captures the politics at work here. Proposed by a member of the Association in 1929, the hockey club, like other athletic initiatives, was considered by the Shipping Federation to be a "good clean sport" and thus "a strong factor in creating good feeling between the Employer and Employee."⁹⁰ It was a notion shared by executive members of the Athletic Association: "I believe that it [the organization] will eventually have the effect we started out to produce, namely a better and more contented feeling amounh [sic] the men. If our teams were winning all along the line then we would be top hole"⁹¹ But in the opinion of F.H. Clendenning, head of the Empire Shipping Company and president of the Shipping Federation, it was not enough to put just any old team on the ice, especially if the organization was going to play in the Vancouver Senior Hockey League. "We [the Shipping Federation] appreciate to start out with a team that did not have any possible chance against other teams in the league, there

⁹⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 6, File 3, Crombie to "All Members," 15 October 1931.

⁹¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 6, File 3, WAAA to Crombie, 25 November 1929.

would only be one ending and that is interest would be lost and the whole thing would be failure," he wrote to Crombie.⁹² Then, as now, being part of losing team, either as a player or a spectator, was bad for morale. But on the waterfront in the late 1920s, it was not civic pride, but class harmony that was at stake.

In this regard, Clendenning backed plans by the Athletic Association to create two hockey teams, one for league play, the other for players to hone their skills: "I feel in order to give Mr. Harley [of the Athletic Association] and his associates an opportunity of developing his players so that within the next year or two they will have an exclusive Association team or teams, or a least made up from employees of Federation members, that support should be given this year." Furthermore, the Shipping Federation president agreed with an additional proposal that he and two others from the Shipping Federation should sit on the executive of the hockey team to offer "advice"; "[It is a] good thing as it will bring employers much closer to their employees," he wrote to Crombie in 1931,"and this is always a great benefit to both parties."⁹³ That waterfront employers were serious about reaping the workplace benefits of dressing a competitive hockey team is captured by its enthusiastic endorsement of its new head coach Fred "Cyclone" Taylor, the Wayne Gretzky of professional hockey in the early decades of the 20th century. Well-known for his stellar play, on-ice antics, and high salary, Taylor skated for many teams in central

⁹² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 6, File 3, F.H. Clendenning to Crombie, 21 October 1931.

⁹³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 6, File 3, F.H. Clendenning to Crombie, 21 October 1931.

and western Canada, playing out the final eleven years of his career with the Vancouver Millionaires of the Pacific Coast Hockey Association. To members of the Shipping Federation, though, Taylor was well known as a senior Immigration Inspector on the waterfront, a position he received in 1912 after the owner of the Millionaires called on Premier McBride to assist in signing the hockey star.⁹⁴ In this regard, not only was Taylor a good bet to make the longshoremen's team a winner, he was, by dint of his position and links with the government, politically acceptable as well.

Like the new despatch hall, organized sports were bound up in the Shipping Federation's wider objective of nurturing workplace harmony. Not only were the teams, matches, and thrill of competition tangible examples of waterfront employers' good will towards its workers, but the games themselves provided a context within which the values of welfare capitalism were legitimized and reproduced. Like middle-class reformers in the late 19th and early 20th century who viewed sport as a bulwark against "crime, rowdiness, and class hatred," the Shipping Federation endorsed the activities of the Waterfront Amateur Athletic Association because they embodied the virtues of "courage, strength, teamwork, decision making, and foresight" -- characteristics that made one a better waterfront worker, husband, and,

⁹⁴ See Eric Whitehead, Cyclone Taylor: A Hockey Legend (Toronto 1970); Denny Boyd, A History of Hockey in BC: From the Denman Arena to the Pacific Coliseum (Vancouver 1970). The hockey star was one of the inspectors who handled the *Komagata Maru* incident. See Hugh Johnston, The Voyage of the Momagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar (Oxford 1979).

by extension, a better citizen. In this important sense, organized sports, like other forms of public spectacle, were a celebration of the Shipping Federation's vision of appropriate workplace and social relations. Indeed, when a member of the Shipping Federation attended a smoker as a "special guest," awarded the championship trophy to the best five-pin bowling team, or dropped the ceremonial first puck at a hockey game, he reproduced, at least symbolically, the notion that with benevolence came hierarchy, that all people were welcome to attend the game, but some people were entitled to front row seats, both in the arena and in life more generally.⁹⁵

In addition to organized sports, the Shipping Federation, in conjunction with the Association, also sponsored an annual family picnic. Held each summer on one of the gulf islands, this event was pitched to the Shipping Federation by union leaders in 1925 as a surefire way to erase any lingering doubt amongst rank-and-file workers that co-operation, not confrontation was the way forward. Writing to F.H. Clendenning in 1928, the year the first picnic was held, Crombie stressed the benefits derived from such a celebration: "it is thought that a visible and personal active co-operation on the part of the Federation would very materially benefit matters." It was a sentiment echoed by Allan Walker, executive member of the Association, who framed his support for the idea in terms of workplace efficiency: "[I] feel sure that the outing will have very beneficial effect on the members of the

⁹⁵ For the awarding of the bowling cup see CVA, Add.Mss 332, Volume 1, Minutes of CWWA [?], 26 May 1938; see also clipping from the Vancouver Province (1 January 1939) in Add.Mss 279, Box 60, File 5.

Association, and that they will come back in a splendid frame of mind, and be worth half as much again when returning to work."⁹⁶ To facilitate the event, the Shipping Federation gave longshoremen the day off, arranged for special rates on the ferry, and contributed assistance both in cash and in kind. For waterfront workers, the cost for each adult was \$1, a modest price that included a program, free refreshment tickets -- including "pop, milk, and ice cream" -- and a discount on lunch on the ferry or at the picnic itself. "Let'er Go -- Whoppee" was the slogan in 1929; "Get Acquainted, Everybody!" was the order several years later.

The picnic was often held on Bowen Island. There waterfront workers, families, and children participated in sack and three-legged races, team sports such as football and softball, and group sing-songs. With events such as these on the schedule it is not surprising that the secretary of the Association, Allan Walker, dubbed the annual waterfront workers' shindig "the greatest harmony builder we have."⁹⁷ While organized hockey appealed to, and helped to reproduce, those masculine traits associated directly with individual fitness and workplace performance, here the accent was clearly on manliness in the context of family life. This notion was reinforced by the stark contrast between the urban milieu of the downtown waterfront district and the pastoral, Eden-like setting of Bowen Island, the former associated with drinking, gambling, and fraternizing, the latter a place for

⁹⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 48, File 14, Crombie to F.H. Clendenning, 23 May 1928; Allan Walker to Crombie, 4 July 1929.

⁹⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 10, Allan Walker to Crombie, 18 July 1931.

"pop," "wholesome fun," and "community singing." Like the family itself, the family picnic and, by extension, welfare capitalism was a haven in a heartless world.

* * *

Unlike other sectors of the North American industrial economy where the principles of scientific management revolutionized the work process itself, on the waterfront, where work was largely a "bull" affair, the push for efficiency was focussed on the labour market: its size, its composition, and its fitness. Decasualization pivoted on the labour manager's ability to direct, evaluate, and discipline waterfront workers. In this regard, it was not technical control but managerial control that was the order of the day, the former associated with the fragmentation and standardization of work tasks, the latter linked directly to the erosion of what Daniel Nelson called "the foreman's empire."⁹⁸ More than a vision of workplace efficiency, however, decasualization -- and the other schemes that accentuated its underlying values -- provided the context in and through which the Shipping Federation hoped to shape a new economic, political, and moral subjectivity amongst its employees. In this important sense, workplace reforms on the docks played a crucial role in the wider search for order in the interwar period, both in terms of its own specific objectives and the ways in which it complemented the goals of other reform movements that took aim at marriage, family, and

⁹⁸ Daniel Nelson, Managers and Workers: Origins of the New Factory System in the United States, 1880-1920 (Madison 1975).

citizenship: they were about making better workers and making better citizens. Or, as one writer at Port of Vancouver News, a publication of the Vancouver Harbour Commission, put it in an article entitled "Harmony Prevails on the Waterfront": "The manhood of the port ranks second to none."⁹⁹

The benefits of its citizen-worker policy were anchored securely in the bedrock of the patriarchal family. The Shipping Federation offered working men the prospect of dominance in the home, achieved through decasualization and a living wage, if only they relinquished power and remained submissive on the job. In this important sense, welfare capitalism was both an elaborate system of workplace reform and, simultaneously, a marker of a powerful gender ideology: the maintenance of hierarchy on the job was inextricably tied to its reconstruction in the home. This image of family life was by no means new. As many labour and working-class historians have illustrated, its structural and ideological roots stretch back to the transition from a pre-industrial to industrial society in the 19th century, a period of profound upheaval in which waged work became detached from the home, craft and industrial unions sought better wages, working conditions, and control over the work process, and a working man's economic independence came eventually "to encompass the ideal of earning a family wage -- a wage sufficient to maintain a household and support a dependent wife and children." While organized workers

⁹⁹ Port of Vancouver News, 2:1 (July 1929).

had long tapped the ideological and emotive power that accompanied the notion of a living or family wage as a means to pressure employers for a better deal, on the waterfront in the interwar period, it formed the basis for class collaboration, not class conflict.¹⁰⁰ The following chapter examines the ideal of a living wage, the lived reality of a labouring life, and the important role that married working-class women played in making ends meet.

¹⁰⁰ Palmer, A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1914 (Montreal and Kingston 1979) and Gregory S. Kealey, Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism (Toronto 1980), among others, examine the transition to an industrial society. Palmer provides an overview of the emergence of the "family wage" in Working-Class Experience, 98-102. The quotation is from Gordon and Fraser, "Genealogy," 316.

Part II: Response

Chapter 2. Men, Women, Work, and Family: The Gendered Limits of Welfare Capitalism

When seventeen-year-old Alfredo Scoppa left Civitanova, Italy, in 1913 and emigrated to British Columbia, he arrived in a province at the tail end of a significant period of transformation, one which was spurred on by the completion of the CPR, a national immigration policy dedicated to settling the west, and the emergence of industrial capitalism. Like other men of his age, class, and ethnicity, Scoppa worked periodically as a manual labourer, not in Cumberland, Powell River, or Trail where continental Europeans, including Italians, worked in the mills and mines, but in Vancouver, where he laboured building roads and, eventually, loading ships. By 1918, he was employed on a somewhat regular basis by the Union Steamship Company -- coaling its coastal vessels with other Italian men, some of whom were from his home village on the Adriatic Sea -- and, after five years on the docks, was admitted into the company union shortly after it was founded in 1923 -- a status he would retain until 1940. In the mid-to-late 1920s Scoppa, then in his twenties, married a "native-born Canadian woman" named Margaret and, buoyed by the Lower Mainland's vibrant interwar economy, built a home at 2769 Kitchener Street in the emerging blue-collar suburb of Grandview on Vancouver's east side. "[A]

modest home, it is true," his friend Angelo Branca, remarked, "but [a] home that belong[s] to him."¹⁰¹

This brief sketch of Alfredo's early life is significant for several reasons, not the least of which is that it captures two important trends that were remaking the waterfront working class during this period. According to the 1901 federal census, in turn-of-the-century Vancouver, about 60 per cent of longshoremen were single men; by the early 1930s, however, company payroll records indicate that the proportion of single men on the docks had dropped considerably as married men now made up about 70 percent of the waterfront workforce. "When we started we had great trouble to get men to do this work. We had to go to the Salvation Army and get any old bum who would work," a member of the Shipping Federation told a colleague in 1929. "Now there are a great number following the wheat. These men have stayed with it and do not try to do any other work." This demographic shift was accompanied by an equally important geographic transformation as longshoremen,

¹⁰¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 11, File 7, list of "Enemy Aliens" compiled by the Shipping Federation, 1939; Box 11, File 8, Angelo Branca to the Shipping Federation, 20 July 1940; Margaret Scoppa to Major H. Brown, 14 June 1940. The general information on this period is taken from Jean Barman, The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia (Vancouver 1996), 129-146; Marlett and Itter, eds., Opening Doors: Vancouver's East End (Victoria 1979); and Gabrielle Scardellato, "Italian Immigrant Workers in Powell River, BC: A Case Study of Settlement Before World War Two," Labour/Le Travail 16 (Fall 1985), 145-163. See also: Bruno Ramirez, On the Move: French-Canadian and Italian Migrants in the North Atlantic Economy, 1860-1914 (Toronto 1991), 50-74, 93-110; Robert Harney, "Men Without Women: Italian Migrants in Canada, 1885-1930," in Iacovetta, ed. A Nation of Immigrants, 206-230; Iacovetta Such Hard Working People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto (Toronto 1992); Donna Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta, "Women, Work, and Protest in the Italian Diaspora: An International Research Agenda," Labour/Le Travail 42 (Fall 1998), 161-81.

once resident in the rooming houses and hotels that clustered in the city's skidroad district, moved to outlying areas such as Mount Pleasant and South Vancouver. "[The men] have become home owners or are making payments toward that end," a Federation report concluded in 1932. "They have accepted the responsibilities of worthy citizens." It was an observation confirmed by a survey of 259 longshoremen conducted by the Communist Party three years later. It indicated that 95 per cent of the men had been in the city for at least a decade; 79 percent had worked on the docks for a similar period; and 40 percent were homeowners – a statistic likely skewed by the economic context within which the poll was taken. As one docker remarked bluntly, "The longshoreman is no longer a transient."¹⁰²

That many waterfront workers were able to rent or own a home in the city's outlying areas is not a surprise. Indeed, as geographer Deryck Holdsworth has illustrated, Vancouver, unlike Toronto and Montréal, was "emphatically a suburban city," a place where "home ownership levels were high" and "urban residential

¹⁰² The 1901 figures do not represent the total number of men working on the docks at that time – only those who were enumerated. Given the transiency of the waterfront working class in this early period, it is likely that many men were never counted. What is more, the categories that workers used to describe their occupation were not always consistent. How many of the men listed as labourers in the census were also longshoremen? The demographic and geographical information for the early 1930s is taken from the Shipping Federation's lists of employees that contain a workers' names, addresses, marital status, and job classification. See CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, Number 5, "Membership Lists – VDWWA"; Box 6, File 7, "Membership Lists." The quotations are from CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, "Transcript of Negotiations, 13 November 1929"; Box 5, File 6, "Comparison of Longshore Wages and Conditions To-Day with that of 1924," 17 March 1932; "Minutes of an extraordinary general meeting of Shipping Federation of British Columbia, 23rd September 1933." See also Add.Mss 279, 33-B-5, File 8, "Vancouver Waterfront Labor Situation." The survey can be found in Box 21, File 2.

densities exceptionally low." While Holdsworth's study has been challenged by many historians, most notably by Jill Wade who argues convincingly that he underestimated the rate of tenancy in the city and neglected to study the persistence of more marginal forms of housing such as hotels, boarding houses, and jungles, no-one disputes his basic conclusion: by the 1920s the single-family "cottage" dominated the urban landscape. Low land costs, the availability of cheap construction materials such as pre-fabricated designs, mortgage financing, and the construction of an elaborate street car system linking neighbourhoods and municipalities made this development possible.¹⁰³ Of course not all waterfront workers shared in this process to the same extent, but the general trend here is obvious: what to Alfredo and Margaret Scoppa were simply the milestones of everyday life were, on a broader canvas, part of significant social and cultural reorientation amongst the waterfront working class.

¹⁰³ Deryck Holdsworth, "Cottages and Castles for Vancouver Home-Seekers," BC Studies (Spring-Summer 1986), 11-32. In chapter 1 of Houses for All: The Struggle for Social Housing in Vancouver, 191-1950 (Vancouver 1994) Jill Wade provides the most sustained critique of Holdsworth; see also Donna McCririck, "Opportunity and the Workingman: A Study of Land Accessibility and the Growth of Blue-Collar Suburbs in Early Vancouver," MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1981. McDonald, Making Vancouver, 191-194, and Barman, "Knowledge is essential for universal progress but fatal to class privilege: Working People and Schools in Vancouver During the 1920s," Labour/Le Travail (Fall 1988), 9-66, take up the "geography of working people" as well. See Rolf Knight, Along the No.20 Line: Reminiscences of the Vancouver Waterfront (Vancouver 1980) and Doucet and Weaver, "Material Culture and the North American house: The Era of the Common Man, 1870-1920," Journal of American History 72:3 (December 1991), 560-587 on the impact of the street car. The question of rent is spoken about in CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, "Transcript of Negotiations," 13 November 1929."

But as waterfront workers and their families knew well, the gap between the ideal of a living wage and the lived reality of a labouring life was often large. Indeed, the emergence of a decasualized waterfront did not necessarily translate into remuneration sufficient enough to support a family. Except for a handful of “highballers” -- longshoremen who worked consistently on the waterfront and, as a result, were able to secure high monthly earnings -- most waterfront workers during the interwar period routinely faced stretches of under- and unemployment, irregular earnings, and the need to complement work on the waterfront with work at other occupations. This material reality, coupled with the prevailing assumption that women’s domesticity was both natural and appropriate, presented waterfront workers’ wives with the ongoing challenge of turning cash into sustenance and shelter. It is precisely this phenomenon, the reciprocal and changing relationship between the workplace and the home against the backdrop of an emerging regime of welfare capitalism, that is the focus of this analysis. How the rhythms of the waterfront workplace influenced family life, the strategies that families developed in order to make ends meet, and the ways in which working-class women, in particular, coped with the loss of a breadwinner are of particular importance. On a day-to-day basis, the ebb and flow of waterfront work, as well as the demands and privileges of longshoremen themselves, shaped both the dynamics of daily survival and the lives of working-class women. Welfare capitalism was indeed changing the face of labour relations on the docks, and married women’s success at managing the

domestic sphere helped to reinforce the wider notion that a reformed capitalism was capable of delivering the goods, at least to some extent; gender relations in the home, however, remained remarkably the same.¹⁰⁴

* * *

The labouring families that became established during this period were characterized by a gendered division of labour: for the most part, men were responsible for earning wages while women, bound by the structural limitations of a segmented labour market and the expectations attached to being a working man's wife, worked at home converting cash into the material of daily survival. Indeed, for many women, marriage, and the heavy domestic responsibilities that came with it, meant leaving the paid labour force for full-time work in the home. Harriet Lumley, like many waterfront workers' wives, understood this dynamic well. Born in British Columbia in 1898, Harriet spent the early years of her life in Moodyville, the small, yet ethnically diverse settlement that emerged around Sewell Moody's sawmill on the north shore of Burrard Inlet in the mid-to-late 19th century. (Her father, Mark

¹⁰⁴ On the family economy see: Marilyn Porter, "'She Was Skipper of the Shore-Crew': Notes on the History of the Sexual Division of Labour in Newfoundland," Labour/Le Travail 15 (Spring 1985), 105-23; John Bullen, "Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth Century Urban Ontario," Labour/Le Travail 18 (1986), 163-188; Mark Rosenfeld, "'It was a hard life': Class and Gender in the Work and Family Rhythms of a Railway Town, 1920-1950," Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers (1988), 237-79; Marjorie Griffen Cohen, Women's Work, Markets, and Economic Development in Nineteenth Century Ontario (Toronto 1988); Bettina Bradbury, Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal (Toronto 1993); "The Home as Workplace," in Craven, ed., Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto 1995), 412-475; Nancy M. Forestall, "The Miner's Wife: Working-Class Femininity in a Masculine Context, 1920-1950," in McPherson, Morgan, and Forestall, eds., Gendered Pasts: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada (Toronto 1999), 139-158

Lumley, worked for the Moodyville mill and, later, for its competitor on the south shore, Hasting's Mill.) When she was a young woman, Harriet moved to Vancouver to live with relatives and apprenticed in a millinery shop on Granville Street "making fine hats for all the rich ladies living in Shaunessey Heights." Her time in the paid labour force came to an end four years later after she married Benjamin Cordocedo, a longshoreman, and moved back to North Vancouver to start a family. "We had seven children. Five girls and two boys," Harriet recalled years later. "Ben was a longshoreman for many years. He worked in the hatch, also on the booms, loading logs on ships [and] then he started driving winches."¹⁰⁵ Whether or not Harriet returned to wage labour is unclear; if she did, it was likely in the event of financial crisis or high male unemployment. What is obvious, though, is that given the size of her family, domestic labour – cooking, cleaning, mending, budgeting, and parenting, a complex and ongoing process of merging market and non-market activities -- formed the basis of her working life.¹⁰⁶

A woman's ability to carry out these tasks depended on myriad factors. The size and composition of the family and its particular stage in the life-cycle determined, to a large degree, how many mouths there were to feed, who required

¹⁰⁵ Man Along The Shore!, 14-15, 29-30; UBC-SC, ILWU Oral History Collection, Tape 17:31, interview with Harriet Cordocedo.

¹⁰⁶ On this point see Bradbury, "The Home as Workplace" in Labouring Lives, 412-475; Gillian Creese, "The politics of Dependence: Women, Work, and Unemployment in the Vancouver Labour Movement before World War II," in Creese and Strong-Boag, eds., British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women (Vancouver 1992), 364-390; and Veronica Strong-Boag, "The Girl of the New Day: Canadian Working Women in the 1920s," Labour/Le Travail 4 (1979), 131-64.

what kind of attention, and whether or not children could take part in domestic labour. As Veronica Strong-Boag has noted, the availability of new household technologies such as refrigerators, oil or electric stoves, and washing machines also affected the amount of time and effort needed to complete a day's household work. Such labour saving devices were not widely available to most working-class women in British Columbia until the 1940s and, when they were used, often had the paradoxical affect of raising expectations as to what could reasonably be accomplished in a day.¹⁰⁷ But perhaps the most important factor in this regard was the working life of a woman's husband: his working conditions, hours of work, and level of remuneration. As a working man in a patriarchal society, his earning capacity was far greater than that available to his wife or children; what he earned, then, was indispensable, and it went a long way to setting the parameters for his family's standard of living.

In the Shipping Federation's vision of reform, decasualization, efficiency, and remuneration were inextricably linked. Only by reducing the number of men eligible for work, extending the reach of the labour manager over the labour market, and cultivating a culture of class co-operation, so the argument went, would it be possible to boost productivity and, in the process, deliver on the promise of higher

¹⁰⁷ Strong-Boag, "Society in the Twentieth Century," in The Pacific Province, 288-294. See also Bradbury, "Women's Workplaces: The Impact of Technological Change on Working-Class Women in the Home and in the Workplace in Nineteenth-Century Montreal," in Kobayashi, ed. Women, Work, and Place (Montreal and Kingston 1994), 27-44.

and steadier earnings. Decasualization, and the thrust for managerial expertise that underpinned it, represented a significant alteration of waterfront labour relations, but its break from the era of the shape-up was not total. Indeed, the Shipping Federation's closed shop agreement with the Association was not about ensuring equal access to work opportunities; rather, it was about creating the conditions within which competition for work could take place more efficiently. And in this environment, as in the past, a man's status on the beach determined, to a large extent, how much money he pocketed at the end of the week. "If it's the only thing I ever do, I'm gonna get back on the waterfront and I'm gonna get back in a steady gang," one waterfront worker who worked on the docks in 1920s informed his wife, underscoring the links between status, income, and domestic well-being.

A longshoreman's status on the job was the product of many forces, the most important of which was job classification. Under the auspices of the labour manager's reform initiative, workers were designated either "ship," "dock," or "wheat" men and, within each category, were further classified as "regular," "casual," or "spare," each sub-category, like the initial decision to place a man on ship or shore, marking off reduced access to work opportunities. (It was for this reason that the casual and spare boards were called the "Ouija" board and "No man's land," respectively.) The base wage rate for ship men (\$.85 per hour) was greater than that for dock men (\$.81 per hour), a differential that was closed by the ILA during its socialist moment but re-imposed by the Shipping Federation in the wake of the 1923

strike on the grounds that the so-called unskilled workers should be paid less. "The [ship] gang are [sic] assured of so much a week, whereas spare man has to take a chance of getting an odd job," longshoreman C.A. McDougal told the labour manager in 1929, highlighting the link between status and earning ability. "Spare board man can get a job for two hours or so. Some work for 2 or 3 days and others sit in the Hall doing nothing."¹⁰⁸

As McDougal likely understood, even within the most privileged tier of waterfront workers, the regular ship gangs, interlocking hierarchies of work opportunities and remuneration existed -- tied, more often than not, to the question of efficiency. Throughout this period, the labour manager and his staff tracked productivity using workers' average monthly earnings and efficiency reports filed by dockside foremen -- reports that were as likely to be about a man's politics and morality as his workplace performance. That a specific gang consistently earned top dollar was evidence of its efficiency, Crombie reasoned, why else would a stevedoring company request its services? High ranking gangs were rewarded with additional work opportunities, a dynamic that the Shipping Federation hoped would inspire the men to work harder and faster. "If you were in a gang, and the foreman would come along and he'd say to you fellas, 'If you guys want to get number two

¹⁰⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, "Transcript of Negotiations, 13 November 1929." See also: Box 3, File 2, Labour Manager to Secretary, VDWWA, 27 October 1927; Box 23, File 12, "Transcript of Negotiations, 12 November 1929"; and Box 30, File 5, Charles Lowgood to Crombie, undated, likely mid-1920s.

hatch, you'd better speed'er up a little. See what I mean?," one longshoreman recalled years later. "They worked one gang against the other and 'high rollers' got the over time. If you wasn't really on the ball and cut the mustard, you were in a low-earning gang."¹⁰⁹

In addition to job classification and efficiency, a longshoreman's status on the job was shaped by other more intangible or personal factors as well. A worker's own initiative, abilities, politics, and reputation mattered; so, too, did his personal relationship with gang leaders, despatchers, and foremen. "If you got a reputation with all the foremen, you were never without a job. You could go from one ship to another," Sam Engler, a longshoreman in the 1920s and 30s, recollected. "But if you were a guy who didn't suit the foreman, you never got the same opportunity as the man who got the preference."¹¹⁰ What was more, given the nature of the longshoring work, a man's age and bodily strength also loomed large in this regard. "The position of the wage earner who has passed the zenith of his physical power is not a very reassuring one," a waterfront worker wrote in 1923. "In Vancouver there are a certain number of longshoremen who have toiled on our docks and ships for many

¹⁰⁹ The conclusions about efficiency and the ranking of longshoremen are drawn from the voluminous payroll data in CVA BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 2; Box 6, File 2. The final quotation is taken from BCARS, Howie Smith Oral History Collection, Tape 3944:71-72, Interview with Sam Engler by Howie Smith. Sam's recollections are also contained in Man Along the Shore! and Fighting For Labour: Four Decades of Work in BC (Victoria 1978), 29-41.

¹¹⁰ BCARS, Howie Smith Oral History Collection, Tape 3944:71-72, Interview with Sam Engler by Howie Smith.

long weary years and have passed the meridian of their earning power."¹¹¹ Writing ten years later, Mrs Nemo, a longshoreman's wife, agreed: "Before I married [my husband] I was [a] servant to a missionary lady in China. There they don't get rid of the extra men. They begin at the other end and get rid of the young ones. They drown the girls. Which of the two is the better way?" R. McKinnon, a veteran docker and father of six, was one of those men who, after many years on the waterfront, was no longer able to get steady work; according to the labour manager, McKinnon's reduced activity was due to his "C" rating on the Shipping Federation's master list, a designation that had everything to do with his "age," not his "behaviour and leanings" which were "perfectly orthodox."¹¹² As this response suggests, the calculus affecting a worker's status on the beach was often complex; here the labour manager combined formal (job classification and efficiency rating) with informal (age and politics) factors to produce a specific rating ("C"). The upshot of this state of affairs, though, was relatively simple: deep divisions of opportunity and income, both between and within categories of workers persisted and, as a result, for many longshoremen a living wage proved illusory.

To make this claim it is necessary to compare a waterfront workers' income to the cost of living in Vancouver. Company payroll records indicate that from 1924

¹¹¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 37, File X, ILA Strike Bulletin, 1923.

¹¹² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 18, File 1, R. Beaumont, CN Steamships, to Crombie, 23 December 1935. See also Box 30, File 5, F.W. Buckley to Crombie, 10 January 1927; Box 3, File 1, Arthur Hargreaves to Dear Sir, 25 June 1932; Box 12, File 4, H.J. Augustine to Crombie, 27 January 1932; Box 17, File 4, Cargo Hook 2 April 1936; Heavy Lift 31 December 1933, letter from Mrs Nemo.

to 1931, on average, a man labouring on a ship gang earned about \$145 per month. Within the ranks of the ship men there was considerable variation: the highest earning hatch tender, for example, earned \$162 per month over this seven year period; the lowest took home \$129 or \$33 less per month. Dock labourers and wheat trimmers earned substantially less on a monthly basis. "I enclose for your information J. Furneaux's earnings for 11 months from November 1926, which you will realize cover wheat trimming and casual work and which shew [sic] an average of \$44.22 per month," Crombie wrote to the secretary of the VDWWA. "His longest individual job during this period was in July when he worked 31 hours straight time and 3½ hours overtime for the Empire Shipping Company ... during a peak load when no other men were available."¹¹³ Like J. Furneaux, Charles Lowgood was assigned to the casual board, a location on the waterfront characterized by low and irregular earnings, little access to work opportunities, and a marginal existence. "I just managed to keep going all Summer by denying myself[.] I [need?] now again to hold on, getting casual jobs now & again," Lowgood wrote in the mid-1920s.

I was forced this winter to go Something & tried hard.... My weekly cheque last week was \$6.30 & that about our average & this week I have earned all told \$4.85. ... I hope to come around when hall's busy & compete for job. I hope I wont be [?] a casual job when busy. There are others like myself & its distressing to see so much unemployment all around. Last winter I went for weeks without work[.] ... I had to

¹¹³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 2, Labour Manager to Secretary, VDWWA, 27 October 1927.

move to East End being near broke. Still that's nothing to do with your management & others are & may be worse.¹¹⁴

In 1931, the year for which reliable figures exist, dock labourers, who were temporarily organized into gangs at that time, earned on average \$79 per month. Like the ship men, there was a considerable gap between the highest and lowest earning man -- \$92 to \$62. When the earnings of ship and dock men are compared, it is clear that hatch tenders earned much more than truckers and pilers; in 1931 the former earned approximately 30 per cent more per month than the latter.¹¹⁵

According to the federal department of labour, the cost of living for a family of five in Vancouver between 1924 and 1931 was approximately \$135 per month, a conservative estimate based on the average retail prices of household staples save for clothing, insurance, and other miscellaneous items. Although inflation was virtually non-existent during this period, a respite from the dramatic surge in the cost of living that had eaten away at purchasing power during and immediately after the Great War, it is clear that when judged against even this modest budgetary yardstick, the great majority of waterfront workers were unable or just barely able to cover the cost of basic amenities based on income derived from longshoring

¹¹⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 5, C. Lowgood to Crombie, undated, likely between 1923 and 1925.

¹¹⁵ The numbers in this paragraph are drawn from company payroll records. These documents include calculations of average earnings for ship and shore workers. See CVA, Add.Mss 279, Volume 5, Number 6, "Gang Earnings -- May 1924 to April 1931"; "Dock Gang Earnings to December 1931."

alone.¹¹⁶ Some critics of the department of labour's statistics suggested that the budget required to maintain the "minimum health and decency" of a family of five was actually closer to \$185 per month, underscoring just how precarious waterfront workers' financial situation really was – and just how hard their wives would have to work in order to make ends meet.¹¹⁷

* * *

Men's daily work schedules heavily influenced their wives' domestic routines – but when that work day began and when it ended was anyone's guess. Although decasualization and the introduction of set picking times brought a degree of regularity to the daily process of selecting men for work, it could not provide the regimentation and predictability that marked the work day in other realms of employment like mining or manufacturing: work, after all, was still tied to the ebb and flow of marine traffic. "[The] clearance of grain ships depends to a great extent upon the certainty of procuring the services of a wheat trimmer at any and all times of the day and night, at odd times and usually without long or definite notice before hand,"

¹¹⁶ As Suzanne Morton has observed in Ideal Surroundings the easing of inflationary pressures in the interwar period did not necessarily translate into a better standard of living because "the greatest drop in prices came in areas other than food, rent, and fuel. In other words, those who benefited most from the decline in prices were those who had money to spend beyond basic necessities." See Morton, Ideal Surroundings, 114. On the relative stability of the cost of living in Vancouver in the 1920s see Vancouver Sun, 22 April 1931; Province 14 June 1931; 28 February 1932 and 12 March 1933; Eleanor Bartlett, "Real Wages and the Standard of Living in Vancouver, 1901-1939," BC Studies 51 (Autumn 1981), 3-61.

¹¹⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 6, "Cost Per Week of A Family Budget of Staple Foods, Fuel and Lighting and Rent, In Terms of the Average Retail Prices in Vancouver. The final line is a reference to the budget prepared by the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees in 1925. On this point see Morton, Ideal Surroundings, 114.

the labour manager wrote in 1924. In addition to a ships' tight, yet erratic schedule and its particular location on the waterfront, the start of the work day was shaped by how far a waterfront worker had to commute and his mode of transportation. "You have to get up one-half to three quarters [of an] hour earlier in the morning to go to North Vancouver than to any other dock," C.A. McDougal observed in 1929; "I have to get up at 5 to get [the] 10 to 6 car to get to Fraser Mills [in New Westminster] for 7 [am]," echoed fellow Association member William Hart. If the job started before seven -- before the earliest tram made its rounds -- it was not uncommon for a waterfront worker to take "the latest train on Sunday evening" and wait downtown overnight for the job to begin "at 5:30 on Monday morning." Then, as now, getting to work on time was much easier by car. "I don't know what the hell these guys did. You know, I drove a car and not all of them had cars," one waterfront worker recalled years later, perhaps thinking of those men who stayed up all night in order to be in the despatch hall on time early the next morning.¹¹⁸

The duration of a particular job was often unpredictable. For a longshoreman despatched to Chemainus on Vancouver Island, Dollarton on the North Shore, or Port Moody at the head of Burrard Inlet, it might last several days. As Grace Allen,

¹¹⁸ This paragraph is drawn from the following: CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 62, File 12, Labour Manager to Mr. K.J. Burns, Vancouver Harbour Commission, 28 October 1924; Box 3, File 1, Secretary-Treasurer, VDWWA, to Crombie, 5 April 1927; Box 23, File 12, "Transcript of Negotiations, 19 November 1929"; Box 3, File 10, VDWWA to Crombie, 30 September 1931; Box 3, File 4, Walker to Crombie, 1 April 1929; UBC-SC, ILWU Oral History Collection, interview with Paddy McDonough, Tape 17:4 and 17:36.

the daughter of a long-time waterfront worker, recalled: "I can remember how he'd charge out sometimes in the morning about 5 or 5:30 and he went up to Port Moody....[H]e used to go way out there. He was doing that even when he was 75. He was a very hard worker. I think the hours were so long that he seemed to be away a quite a fair bit." Whether at an outlying port or on the Vancouver docks, it was not uncommon for waterfront workers to work more than ten hours a day. "[W]hen they work 13 hours they feel they have done too much," an Association member stated in 1929. "By the time they get home and get cleaned, they have no time for anything else, except get a little rest and go back to work again." Depending on the cargo to be worked, the size of the vessel, and the demands of a specific foreman, a lengthy day on the beach could easily be cut short; indeed, reporting to the despatch hall, whether as a casual or regular Association member, was no guarantee of employment of any kind. As Charles Law, company union president in 1928, 1929, and 1930, lamented: "The gang is ordered into Hall at 7:30 [am]. The ship doesn't come in. 9:15 up goes the gang again. Ship not in. Gang put up for 12:15. Gang [is] around all day until 5:00. Gang [is] waiting here hour after hour and getting no pay."¹¹⁹ Given the irregularity of work and wages, it is perhaps not a

¹¹⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, "Transcript of Negotiations, 12 November 1929; 13 November 1929"; UBC-SC, ILWU Oral History Collection, interview with Grace Allen, Tape 17:22 and Paddy Coyle, Tape 17:8. In this interview with Coyle, conducted by fellow ILWU pensioner Sam Engler, most of the evidence is actually provided by Coyle's wife who, clearly of sounder mind, fills in many of the details that her husband is no longer able to remember.

surprise that one waterfront worker's wife "tucked a few dollars away" each week in order to tide the family over when her husband was between jobs.¹²⁰

For women like Mrs Coyle, who's husband, Paddy, started on the docks in 1909 and worked throughout the interwar period, the work day often began with a phone call from a stevedoring company or despatcher ordering her husband's gang to the waterfront. "I used to phone the gang members all the time," she recollected years later. "[My friend] Mary used to too." In addition to contacting other waterfront workers -- "I remember he had Johnny Remple, Van Vender, [and] Eddie Nunn" -- Mrs Coyle, like other married women, likely prepared her husband's breakfast, packed his lunch, and filled his thermos with tea or coffee in preparation for work, the exact moment varying with the time he was expected on the job and the distance to the dock. If there were other wage earners in the family, perhaps a son with a different work schedule, this process of preparation might have taken place several times over the course of the morning, afternoon, or evening. With the wage-earner(s) at work, married women likely turned their attention to the needs of their children and other domestic chores, taking advantage of the time freed up by the absence of their husbands. "Mother had all the planning and supervision of the household to do [after father went to work]," Grace MacInnis observed, recalling the days when her father, J.S. Woodsworth, was working on the Vancouver

¹²⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 24, File 11, Crombie to Donald Bellow, Department of Public Works, 6 April 1925.

waterfront.¹²¹ Whether or not this pattern was repeated in the same way, day in and day out, depended on many things, not the least of which was the availability of work on the waterfront and the specific nature of the job. Indeed, it was not uncommon for men who lived close to the waterfront or who possessed a car to work a ship in the morning, return home in the middle of the day, and return to the waterfront to be despatched for an evening job, a dynamic that likely forced their spouses to limit household tasks to those that could be done quietly and to keep children from making too much noise. "By the time we got home and had a bath, you know, and a bite to eat and went to bed, you'd only roll over twice and then you'd have to get up again to get back over there," Paddy McDonaugh, a married waterfront worker who started on the docks in 1910, recollected.¹²²

For the wives of those men who had limited employment opportunities on the docks and in the city more generally, and thus had to look further afield for work, the arrival and departure of a spouse took place on a weekly or monthly basis or, as in the case of men who "followed the wheat," on a seasonal basis. The wife of "B. Plecos" knew this to be true; she and six children lived in downtown Vancouver while her husband worked at various jobs on Vancouver Island – factory worker,

¹²¹ Grace MacInnis, *J.S. Woodsworth: A Man To Remember* (Toronto 1953).

¹²² This section draws on the insights of several labour working-class historians who have discussed this dynamic in other contexts, including Rosenfeld, "It was a hard life"; Bradbury, "The Home as Workplace"; Forestall, "The Miner's Wife." The empirical evidence is culled from: CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 1, Secretary, VDWWA, to Crombie, 5 April 1927; Box 23, File 2, "Transcript of Negotiations, 19 November 1929"; UBC-SC, ILWU Oral History Collection, interview with Paddy Coyle, Tape 17:8; interview with Paddy McDonaugh, Tape 17:4 and 17:36.

miner, and labourer – from 1910 to 1925, sometimes steadily, other times “only 2 or 3 days [a] week” or not at all. Being away for such long periods of time was hard on the family, Mr Plecos intimated in a letter to the labour manager in 1925 in which he appealed for steady work on the waterfront, and costly too, “as that means practically keeping two homes in place of one.” Whether or not the entire burden of domestic labour and the children fell to Mrs Plecos alone is unclear; as other labour and working-class historians have noted, in such circumstances, housewives usually drew on friends, neighbours, and kin for assistance.¹²³ Indeed, this was precisely the case in Grace Allen’s family; when her father was away for a period of time working at other ports, her uncle, an employee with the Empire Stevedoring Company, stepped in to help her mother out. “[He] used to say to me, ‘I don’t have to be a superintendent or boss to you, I’ve got to be a father,’” Allen recalled, her memory of her uncle’s speech illustrating how work and everyday life were so intimately bound up. “And he would straighten me out. He took the part of a father. He was that kind.”¹²⁴ Clearly, the absence of a spouse (or a father) created its own (un)certainities and own family dynamics; domestic labour, to borrow from Bettina Bradbury, had to be “fitted...into and around the rhythms of other people’s labour

¹²³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 5, B. Plecos to W.C.D. Crombie, 10 August 1925. On the second point see Joy Parr, “Rethinking Work and Kinship in a Canadian Hosiery Town, 1919-1950,” in Bradbury, ed., Canadian Family History: Selected readings (Toronto 1992), 220-240.

¹²⁴ UBC-SC, ILWU Oral History Collection, interview with Grace Allen, Tape 17:22.

and wages."¹²⁵ In short, it was an ongoing process of adjusting and readjusting daily life to the irregularities of waterfront work.

Consider the case of Linda Winch, wife of longshoreman and labourer Ernest Winch. For many students of Canadian labour history, the name Ernest Winch is a familiar one; as a prominent socialist in BC during the 1919 labour revolt, his life, like that of One Big Union luminaries Jack Kavanagh and Bill Pritchard, has come to symbolize the spirit of labour militancy that characterized the immediate post-war period. In this formulation, his experiences as a dock worker and labourer are important to consider because they help to explain his radical politics. But the glimpses into Linda's life during this period contained in Dorothy Steeves' biography of Ernest -- The Compassionate Rebel -- suggests that there is another dimension to be explored here. From his earliest days in Western Canada as a young, single man to the period after 1912 when Linda and their two children arrived from England, finding full-time work was a constant struggle for Ernest. According to Steeves, this period, approximately 1912 to 1925, was punctuated by chronic unemployment and underemployment. On many occasions this condition forced the Winchs to seek cheaper, and usually smaller, accommodations. After the 1923 waterfront strike, for example, Ernest was blacklisted; as a consequence, the family was forced to move from what appears to have been a modest home to an attic

¹²⁵ Bradbury, "The Home as Workplace," 431.

above a shoeshine factory owned by an "old-time socialist." The family lived in this cramped space for the better part of two years. There were no walls, just cords and sheets separating one "room" from the other. It was only with the financial assistance of Ernest's brother that they were able to move to a better place.

To be sure, loss of income ate into the family's savings quickly and forced it to adapt in other ways. On some mornings Ernest would go to the fish docks to "sweep up" and sometimes returned with fish and fish heads for soup. Linda worked hard scrounging food for the family. At the butcher's, cheap cuts of meat like sheep heads or hearts were bought at discounted prices. Stew or mush was served often in order to stretch what food the family did have over a longer period of time. Shopping and preparing food were just some of the tasks that made up Linda's routine. She "patched, mended, and mad[e] over the clothes" at night. Washing was done by hand "in the morning" and bread was made at other times during the day, though the practice of baking bread at home would diminish in the coming decades with the availability of cheaper, store bought foodstuffs. Life, of course, involved much more than simply work, but the impression left by Steeve's portrait is one of an ongoing struggle to make ends meet. Indeed, it was only when Ernest was out of the labour movement and able to spend more time at home with the children that Linda was able to develop her own personal interest in "spiritualism." Perhaps it, like

Ernest's socialism, was one way to handle the daily hardships of life dependent on the wages of a waterfront worker.¹²⁶

As Linda's experience suggests, a family's ability to maintain a modest standard of living was dependent on a woman's ability to budget well and stretch every dollar -- ideas and skills that a wife likely learned as a young girl assisting her own mother in the home. Since household staples were one of the largest monthly expenditures for a working-class family, this was particularly true when it came to shopping -- an area where knowledge about food and careful purchasing practices enabled a wife to save money and feed more people on less resources. During periods of reduced earnings, women opted for bargains when shopping for food, and men, when on the job, either patronized less expensive cafes or, in the words of the labour manager, "resort[ed] more and more to home made lunches or to buying less and cheaper food." Looking back on the 1920s, longshoreman Sam Engler marvelled at his wife's skills as a domestic manager, stating: "I will never know to this day how [she] could manage to keep things going. We had three boys then. It was a real scramble until '28 or '29."

This short statement speaks to many things. That Mrs Engler's household routine remained somewhat of a mystery to Sam illustrates just how strong the gendered division of labour in the household really was -- a notion underscored by

¹²⁶ The information in this paragraph is taken from Dorothy Steeves, The Compassionate Rebel: Ernest E. Winch and His Times (Vancouver 1960), chapter five, "The Winch Family."

Sam's use of the word "mother" when referring to, or addressing, his wife. What is more, his recollection sheds light on the ways in which the irregularity of longshore work, coupled with the demands of a young family, shaped everyday life – turning several years into a "scramble." The notion that the housewife played a crucial role in "keeping things going" was echoed by Charles Lowgood, a casual waterfront worker in the 1920s. When his close friend, Newcombe, also a longshoreman, passed away in 1923 he attributed his death to "loss of work during the strike & two weeks after his wife deserted him & health gone away" In Lowgood's eyes, the loss of both work and a wife led to "privation," lack of the comforts and necessities of life. R. Burn would have agreed with the general thrust of Lowgood's assessment. When his wife became ill with the flu, he was forced to "hire a woman to look after [his] two children age 8 and 10," and "what with the Doctor's expenses," was "down to [his] last dollar."¹²⁷

Strategies such as managing and stretching household resources were often augmented by the use of credit. "Idleness affects most those who have the mouths, several new ones, to feed," the BC Federationist reported in 1917. "But all are subject to it and instead of rolling in wealth with a \$10 bill in the pocket, seek where credit may be found." For longshoring families, as for other working people, special arrangements could be negotiated at local businesses such as the Holly Lodge

¹²⁷ Engler's material is found in Smith, ed., Fighting For Labour, 36; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 5, Charles Lowgood to W.C.D. Crombie, undated, likely 1924 or 1925; R. Burn to Crombie, 4 March 1931.

Grocery ("Fresh Fruits, Vegetables, and Tobaccos"), the Little Brick Dining Room ("Working Men's Meals at All Hours"), and the Busy Bee Cafe ("Busy Bee As A Bee -- There's A Reason"), located on Cordova Street, a stone's throw from the waterfront. Alternatively a family might be tided over by the generosity of friends who often provided additional groceries, clothes for children, or cash when income was scarce. Both men and women negotiated these informal transactions; the former more likely to look to his colleagues on the job for assistance, the latter tapping networks of female friends in the neighbourhood. "[If] a guy got into trouble or his wife was sick or something happened in the family the men would get to know about it and they would take up a collection to help the guy out," Paddy McDonagh stated, looking back on his days on the docks before World War II. "I can remember giving a guy \$5 to get married on. He was expecting some money on the Frisco boat and he was going to get married that Saturday night but the boat didn't come in so I gave him \$5 to get married." For her part, Paddy's wife recalled "the days when you might work a week and be off two" when it was not uncommon to bargain with a landlord when the rent was late or lend money to friends -- like Irene "who worked at the phone company" -- when they were short of money.¹²⁸

¹²⁸The credit material is drawn from: BC Federationist, 23 March 1917; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 37, ILA Strike Bulletin, 1923; Box 32, File 7, J.F. Newson, Manager, Hudson's Bay Company, to Mr. K. Burns, 6 February 1929; Holly Lodge Grocery to Shipping Federation, 2 December 1939; Box 13, File 7, Busy Bee Cafe to F.H. Clendenning, 3 February 1936; Box 16, File X, Crombie to Finance Committee, 22 April 1932; UBC-SC, ILWU Oral History Collection, Interview with Paddy McDonagh, Tape 17:4 and 17:36, and Ed Nahinee, Tape 17:9; Man Along the Shore!, 142; Steeves, The Compassionate Rebel, chapter five; MacInnis, J.S. Woodsworth.

The ways in which a family augmented its income were not restricted to bargain hunting or securing credit during times of need; gardens and other backyard endeavours were also part of the survival strategy. Writing in On the Waterfront, one-time longshoreman J.S. Woodsworth spoke of the men who, after “unsuccessfully trying this, that, and the other thing,” settled down to “casual work as dockers with a little garden and a few hens in Burnaby or South Vancouver.” Michael Piroshco was one of those people; a longshoremen in the 1920s and early 1930s, he and his wife and children lived in Burnaby where, according to police informant curious about his Russian heritage, he “own[ed] land” and tended his gardens. Italian families, many of whom lived on the east side of the city and laboured on the city’s docks, were particularly prodigious in this regard, tending to large backyard vegetable gardens as well as chickens and cows – the bovines grazing on unoccupied land by Seymour School and the False Creek flats. Thomas Burns, a waterfront worker from 1914 to 1939, and his family also understood the role of land in the family economy. They lived in a “splendid location” in Kitsilano on Vancouver’s moderately well-to-do west side and “received a little revenue” by renting out small portions of their property, presumably for the purposes of cultivation.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ J.S. Woodsworth, On the Waterfront, 5; BCARS, GR 1323, B2301, File 1-125-1933, “Unemployed Part 2,” Report of the Criminal Investigation Branch of the British Columbia Provincial Police, “Re: Piroshco, Michael Proshco – Enquiries – 12-10-33”; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 13, Number 7, Elizabeth Burns to President of the Shipping federation,” 9 August 1939; Marlatt and Itter, Opening Doors.

A "little revenue" could be generated by taking in boarders as well. According to the 1901 federal census, approximately 30 percent of families headed by longshoremen had roomers or members of their extended family living under a single roof. Fragmentary evidence suggests that this practice persisted in the years leading up to World War II. "The struggle to make end meet is becoming keener," the BC Federationist reported in 1912. "The father works steadily when he has a job. The mother slaves from early morn till late at night, cooking, cleaning, patching, washing, worrying; probably keeps a roomer or two; boards a slave or two, in an endeavour to help out." A. Dotto, a waterfront worker in the 1920s and 30s, owned a rooming house and laundry in the downtown core. Mrs Hovi, the wife of a longshoreman who plied his trade at the same time, took in boarders, mostly Scandinavian men who came to Vancouver from the sawmills and camps that dotted the province's coast. "My mother was a kind of businesswoman," Ted Hovi recalled years later. "[The loggers] were quite a rough bunch, you know. They'd go out in the woods and probably stay 3, 4 months, maybe some would stay longer, and as soon as they'd come to town -- liquor store. And they'd drink sometimes for 2, 3 weeks, possibly a month. Straight! Then they'd go back in the woods." Whether or not Mrs Hovi tolerated drinking and, what her son called, "raising hell and all this stuff," is unclear. What is obvious, though, is that the boarders, and the extra work that came with them, were primarily her responsibility: she was the "businesswoman." Of course with any business venture, no matter how small, there

was risk. Just ask Mrs L.J. Rae. Writing to Major Crombie in 1924 or 1925, she complained that her boarder, a "bad ruffian from Ocean Falls," had skipped town without paying her. "We are hard up and my hubby is out of work. We have four children," she said. "He owes me \$35 and he took some of my good books to read but never returned them yet. ... We need money for Xmas badly." With these two short sentences, Mrs Rae laid bare a material reality that she, and other working women, knew intimately: the employment options available to her were limited and, as a consequence, replacing her husband's earnings was no easy task.¹³⁰

Making ends meet also necessitated expanding and/or adjusting the pool of wage earners in the family. For husbands this meant combining work on the waterfront with other occupations on an ongoing basis, a practice that was widespread at the turn of the century and persisted throughout the interwar period. S.H. Discey, a longshoreman in the 1920s, supplemented his stints on the waterfront with long stretches of employment as a coal miner. "I should like to mention...that I have no connection with the ILA or with any of its members of that Association. Neither am I a Stool Pigeon," he told the labour manager in 1924 or 1925, making a pitch for increased work opportunities on the docks. "Only a working

¹³⁰ The statistical evidence is based on the returns of the 1901 federal census for the city of Vancouver; BC Federationist, 29 November 1912. For Dotto see: CVA, Series 200, 75-E-5, File 10, report by Detective George Lefler to H. Darling, CID, 16 July 1935. The Hovi story is contained in Marlatt and Itter, eds., Opening Doors, 76; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 53, File 13, Mrs L.J. Rae to Crombie, 1924 or 1925 and Box 3, File 1, Crombie to Walker, 12 April 1929 provide evidence of men skipping out without paying their bills.

man who seeks honest work to support himself and his family." Discey was by no means the only man who combined time on the hook with other occupations such as logger, fisherman, sailor, and manual labour to earn a decent income. "Owing to slack work a certain number [of men] no doubt pick up odd jobs and stay away for a time without us knowing anything about it," a letter from the company union to waterfront employers stated in 1924. An internal Shipping Federation memo written four years later echoed the Association's observation: "it has been noticed that a large number of men are being carried by the Association who absent themselves from work for periods of three or four months to take up work which they find to be more remunerative and remain at this work until such time as longshore work increases." For men like Antonio Pastro and Barro Moses, tapping additional revenue streams was pivotal to making a family wage. Writing to the Shipping Federation in 1933, the year the Depression hit rock bottom, the two coal heavers asked for more hours, not because the economic calamity had curtailed opportunities on the Empress ships, but because it had effectively eliminated supplementary forms of income, making it, in their words, "very difficult to make ends meet." Working more than one job was certainly good for the wallet, but it could be hard on the body, especially for older waterfront workers. "There have been quite a few cases where men have been trying to burn the candle at both

ends," Crombie once observed. "[T]heir working capacity has been lessened thereby."¹³¹

Children, too, were important contributors to the collective family income. In 1901, in families headed by longshoremen, approximately 80 percent of boys over 12 years of age left school and sought paid employment; their ages ranged from 11 to 24 and they worked in a wide variety of occupations, including bell hop, clerk, butcher, blacksmith, and longshoreman. (Throughout the interwar period, it was not uncommon for waterfront workers to use their contacts on the job to secure work for their sons.) The pattern for young girls, however, was different; in the census returns, the columns for work and wages beside their names were left blank, suggesting that they either were not enumerated or worked in the home with their mothers. "At the age of fourteen in the life of the average son of working class parents, their economic status has a very important bearing upon his future. In most cases -- and especially where there are several other children growing up -- the strain upon the family income which has not cash reserve at the back of it, does not permit of him staying at school," the BC Federationist observed in 1914, underscoring the links between economic status, gender, and age. "He has to turn

¹³¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 3, Currie to Crombie, 8 July 1924; Box 23, File 12, "Memo for Negotiations Committee," 23 October 1928; Box 30, File 5, S.H. Discey to "Dear Sir," undated, likely 1923 or 1924 and Discey to "Dear Sir," undated, likely 1924 or 1925; Box 18, File 3, Marine Superintendent, CP Steamships, to Crombie, 3 August 1933; Box 4, File 1, Crombie to VDWWA, 8 May 1933. According to the 1901 federal census, nearly half of the city's longshoremen workers fewer than twelve months on the waterfront, suggesting that they combined their work "on the hook" with other forms of employment.

out to work, and in nine cases out of every ten, probably drifts into the numberless army of human automata which supplies the factories and industries." Twenty years later, a family's need for additional wage earners persisted; in 1921 and 1931, in families headed by a longshoreman, about 70 percent of children over the age of 15 left school to take up paid work on a more permanent basis, contributing approximately 20 percent of the family's total income in both census years. Given that women's workforce participation rates steadily increased throughout the 1920s, it is likely that, unlike at the turn of the century, a portion of that additional income was generated by girls as well as boys. "Most of the kids stopped [school] at 14 or 15," Grace Allen, a longshoreman's daughter, recollected. "They had to. They had to go to work. The families were big. There wasn't that kind of money around."¹³²

To be sure, making ends meet required the mobilization of a wide range of resources and the participation of all family members who were old enough to help at home or earn a wage. But a family's collective need did not always translate into collective agreement amongst its members. Indeed, the smooth transfer of earnings from husband to wife, from breadwinner to household manager, necessitated many

¹³² The 1901 figures are derived from the federal census for Vancouver; the 1921 and 1931 statistics regarding child labour are taken from Sixth Census of Canada 1921 (Ottawa 1927), Volume III, 528-9, Table 41, "Statistics of families of wage-earners, showing population, earnings, ... 1921" and [Reference for 1931 figures]. See also BC Federationist, 2 October 1914. That children stayed in school longer in 1931 than they did in 1901 was the result of many factors, including the expansion of public schools, compulsory school legislation, and changing attitudes toward child labour. See Strong-Boag, "Society in the Twentieth Century," 294-295. See also CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 18, File 1, I.L. Boomer to Crombie, 17 August 1936; the final quotation is from UBC-SC, ILWU Oral History Collection, Interview with Grace Allen, Tape 17:22.

things, not the least of which was a shared understanding and acceptance of the household's financial priorities. That kind of unanimity, however, did not always exist and, as a consequence, this process was often fraught with tension and conflict. In Mrs Schultz's household, the financial needs of the family were often at odds with her husband's desire to spend money drinking alcohol and playing cards. "I certainly do not wish to cut off any sport of the men[.] Good clean sport never hurt anyone but I certainly cannot see that card playing when it is taking food from children & wives and not only food but decent homes for them to live in and the bare necessities, I say again I cannot see why steps should not be taken to put an immediate stop to such," she told the labour manager, laying bare the gender-specific roles that informed the daily negotiations associated with turning cash into sustenance and shelter. "I am not speaking from hearsay[.] I am speaking from my own home and the condition it is bringing in a home that was certainly not what it is to-day." Mrs Schultz was by no means the only one caught between the rock of conflicting priorities and the hard place of limited financial resources. "For over two years now I have periodically been approached to do something to this man which would make him support his Wife. [I] have been given to understand that he spends most of his earnings in dissipation in some form or another," Crombie stated in 1929, referring to a longshoreman with Association card number 1126A; "I am...informed that very

little of his earnings reach his wife," he wrote years later, evaluating another docker."¹³³

For Mrs M., as for other waterfront workers' wives, conflict over financial priorities was often bound up with issues of domestic violence. "I am very sorry to trouble you but would you kindly speak to my husband as he is working for nothing [?] and not bringing his money home and when he does get his money he usually spends it and I am not well," Mrs M. wrote in 1924. "Many people would be glad to have the money he spends on bad company to buy food[.] The last boat he worked I never got one sent to help the house[.] [E]very night since...he could hardly make the way home [because of his drunkenness], and when he does come home he ill treats me."¹³⁴ To be ill-treated was to be physically and/or sexually assaulted, and as Mrs M.'s letter suggests, the toxic combination of unemployment, irregular earnings, and alcohol, in particular, loomed large.

During the interwar period, bars and taverns -- and the masculine associational culture associated with them -- remained an important component of waterfront workers' work-a-day world. According to one waterfront newspaper, it was possible to mark off "the six ages of men" in "bottles": "1. milk. 2. ginger ale. 3. beer. 4. wine. 5. medicine. 6. hot water." The labour manager no doubt understood

¹³³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 54, File 7, Mrs A.J. Schultz to Crombie, 6 June 1929; Box 3, File 5, Crombie to Allan L. Walker, VDWWA, 12 April 1929; Crombie to The Relief Officer, Municipality of Burnaby, 19 October 1932.

¹³⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 43, File 7, Mrs M. To "Dear Sir," undated, likely 1923 or 1924; see also N.M. to Crombie, undated, likely 1924.

the joke at work here, but he likely did not find it funny. “[I]t is, of course, well known that Cordova, Powell, and Water Streets contain many Blind Pigs. ... [I]t is quite possible ... that Foremen, looking for certain men, may go there in order to get in touch with them,” he observed in 1924. One of Crombie's chief despatchers agreed; writing two years later, he complained that on many occasions there were few men in the hall ready for work, forcing him to hire “scouts” to visit the “saloons” in search of those biding their time with a drink, looking for an outlet from the daily monotony of stowing, trucking, and piling, or seeking refuge from the Shipping Federation's sweeping managerial offensive.¹³⁵ But as Linda Gordon has argued in another context, it was precisely this “saloon camaraderie” -- which celebrated a man's entitlement to leisure in exchange for suffering the rigours of work as well as his place as the undisputed master of the household -- that was responsible, at least in part, for domestic trouble. Not only did drinking cut deeply into the family's income, prompting tension and conflict over the allocation of scarce resources, but the manly values that it cultivated fed into wider patriarchal norms about proper relations between men and women -- norms that set the context within which women faced economic vulnerability and the potential for physical and/or sexual violence.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 17, File 4, Cargo Hook, 2 April 1936; Box 52, File X, Crombie to Captain R.G. Parkhurst, 2 May 1924; Box 24, File 7, Maurice Marsden to Crombie, 7 March 1926.

¹³⁶ The literature on violence against women in historical perspective is extensive. See Karen Dubinsky, Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario, 1880-1929 (Chicago

Yet Mrs Schultz and Mrs M. were no means passive victims in this regard; indeed, both women demanded that the labour manager do something about the gambling and drinking that was so much a part of the waterfront workplace. Other women asked for weekly or monthly breakdowns of their husbands' earnings, sometimes by mail, other times in person, information that was crucial to tracking money earned and money spent or, perhaps, to filing for municipal relief, spousal support under the Deserted Wives' Maintenance Act, or divorce.¹³⁷ "Owing to the fact that I cannot trust Mr Krause, [my husband], to tell me the truth about either his work or the money he makes, as he is a profound liar, I have to take to these measures to find out just what's what," Mrs Krause wrote in 1938, her situation no doubt worsened by the economic calamity of the 1930s. "What I wish to know is how much work has Mr. Krause had, and how much money he made since November 20th. ... I would appreciate, Mr Crombie, if you kept this information confidential." In

1993); Judith Fingard, "The Prevention of Cruelty, Marriage Breakdown, and the Rights of Wives in Nova Scotia, 1880-1900," *Acadiensis* 22:2 (Spring 1993), 84-101; Terry Chapman, "'Til Death do us Part': Wife Beating in Alberta, 1905-1920," *Alberta History* 36:4 (Autumn 1988), 13-22. In the American context, see Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, eds., *Passion and Power* (Philadelphia 1989); Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (New York 1988); Pat Ayers and Jan Lambertz, "Marriage Relations, Money, and Domestic Violence in Working-Class Liverpool, 1919-1939," in Lewis, ed., *Labour and Love* (London 1987), 196-219; Carol Vance, ed., *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality* (Boston 1984); Ellen Ross, "Fierce Questions and Taunts': Married Life in Working-Class London, 1870-1914," *Feminist Studies* 8:3 (Fall 1982), 575-602; Nancy Tomes, "A Torrent of Abuse: Crimes of Violence Between Working-Class Men and Women in London, 1840-1875," *Journal of Social History* 11:3 (Spring 1978), 328-345. The "saloon" quote is from Gordon, 265. Kathryn Harvey's critique of Montreal's Joe Beef's canteen in "To Love Honour and Obey': Wife-battering in Working-Class Montreal, 1869-79," *Urban History Review* 19:2 (October 1990), 128-39, was particularly informative.

¹³⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 6, Crombie to Mrs Dill, 19 November 1929. "I hope this will give you the information which you require," the labour manager wrote. See also Box 16, File 9, Crombie to the Relief Officer, Municipality of Burnaby, 19 October 1932.

this situation, as in others, the labour manager obliged, sending Mrs Krause a full account of her spouse's payroll statistics and promising to pressure him to improve his behaviour: "[Your husband] is unreliable and irresponsible and unless he changes his ways, he is liable to find himself removed from the registration of men working on the Vancouver Waterfront." Advising waterfront workers -- either directly or indirectly through the Association -- that it was in their best interest to "make an effort to straighten up...in connection with domestic troubles" was but one of Crombie's tactics in this regard. He banned excessive gambling from the despatch hall and, in one case, arranged to have a man's pay cheque sent directly to his wife. "I, Lyle Poulin, do hereby give my wife, Jean Poulin, permission to collect all my future cheques and earnings. Signed, Lyle Elwin Poulin," read an agreement brokered by the labour manager.¹³⁸

Crombie's willingness to assist in this regard flowed not just from a genuine concern for the women involved, but also from a desire to cultivate better, more productive leisure habits amongst the waterfront working class, promote himself as a man who had only the workers' best interests at heart, and maintain welfare

¹³⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 39, File 5, Mrs W. Krause to Crombie, 2 February 1938; Crombie to Mrs Krause, 9 February 1938; Box 2, File 3, Grant Currie, VDWWA, to Crombie, 30 August 1924; Crombie to Secretary, VDWWA, 2 September 1924; Box 3, File 5, Crombie to Allan Walker, 12 April 1929; Crombie to VDWWA, 12 April 1929; Crombie to VDWWA, 8 May 1929. See also: Box 21, File 3, Relief Officer, Employment and Relief Department, to Crombie, 14 April 1928; Crombie to City Relief Officer, 18 April 1928; City Relief Officer to Crombie, 22 June 1938; Box 3, File 6, Crombie to Mrs. Dill, 19 November 1929; Box 54, File 7, R.R. Smith to Shipping Federation, 22 April 1929; Box 46, File 14, Lyle Poulin to Crombie, 20 April 1938; Box 40, File 3, James Leslie to Crombie, 24 July 1941

capitalism's positive image. "[It makes for] very poor publicity" for the "Association" and for the "waterfront in general if women go around saying they can't make ends meet," he once told the company union. That Mrs Krause, among others, contacted Crombie for assistance is not a surprise. As in industrializing Montreal, where the married working-class women studied by Kathryn Harvey looked to bourgeois agencies for assistance, waterfront workers' wives also looked to a middle-class reformer with a reputation for being sympathetic to their plight; by virtue of his position in the Shipping Federation, and the wider workplace reforms that centralized his control over the waterfront labour market, the labour manager possessed the authority and practical information that women required to help settle "domestic troubles." In this important respect, Crombie was but one resource amongst many that waterfront workers' wives utilized to ensure they received the income required to run a household and, in some cases, avoid emotional, physical, or sexual violence.

* * *

The loss of a male breadwinner's income was often devastating for a family, and, not surprisingly, it forced an adjustment of the roles commonly assumed by both husband and wife. For married waterfront workers, as for other working men with a spouse, the experience of unemployment was not just about the combined material/emotional wallop of declining earning capacity, enforced idleness, and reduced self-esteem, but perhaps more importantly, about the personal anxiety

associated with being unable to fulfill their role as providers. "In four months and half I work 2 weeks and I am the father of five children and wife. And the work I only follow is the waterfront for the last 29 years," longshoreman Joe Rivera wrote to the labour manager in 1925. "I can not support my family when there is [no] work down on the waterfront. And I like to know what wrong I have done for you. I have tried to speak to you personally but they won't let me see you so I have to speak to you by mail." Waterfront worker Robert George Hall was equally adamant about the ways in which unemployment threatened his position as both a husband and father, asking Crombie, "Why is it I am being treated like this viz., Discriminated against and stopped from getting a living on the Waterfront. Remember I have got a living to make and wife to keep and I am up against it I have got to live as well as other people."¹³⁹

Clearly, being "up against it" was a question of both class and gender, but whether or not unemployment induced a crisis of masculinity like that articulated by Rivera and Hall depended on the context. W.A. Byron's stint off the job was not the product of the labour manager's capriciousness, but of failing health and personal injuries related, it appears, to working on the docks. "For the past few years I have been having real bad luck with sickness[.] First my Wife and then myself[.] I got into a very run down condition and did feel I could [not?] hold my end up in a gang," he

¹³⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 24, File 1, Rivera to "Dear Sir," 9 April 1925; Hall to Crombie, 7 December 1925.

told the Shipping Federation in 1932. "Therefore, as health comes first with me I have been lax in working. ... I am now fit and I am sure I can compete with any of the Boys and hold my own in any Gang." Here the emphasis is not on the rights and responsibilities of a male breadwinner, and the ways in which joblessness undermined them, but the relationship between a man's physical prowess and his standing in the masculine pecking order of the waterfront labour force. The distinction between Byron's response, and those expressed by Rivera and Hall, is subtle, but important. As Nancy Forestall has argued, while sick or disabled men "no longer retained their position as the family provider, they remained, at least symbolically, the heads of their households" because their diminished role in the home was the product of long hours on the job and dangerous working conditions -- the unavoidable health hazards that all workers faced on a daily basis.¹⁴⁰

In the absence of a male breadwinner, the boundaries of a married woman's role in the household, like that of her husband's, were readjusted too as the need to replace lost income induced a variety of responses and strategies -- some subtle, some dramatic, depending on the family's specific circumstances. Mrs Lewis, Mrs King, and Mrs Bruce took it upon themselves to lobby the Shipping Federation on behalf of their husbands in hopes of securing a more permanent place for them on the docks. "Necessity forces me to write you this letter asking that you do what you

¹⁴⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 6, File 2, W.A. Byron to the Shipping Federation, 31 August 1932; Forestall, "The Miner's Wife," 148-9.

can to hasten things in order that my husband George...may get back to work. It has been heartbreaking enough to see my children in clothes that were discards and shoes that are not shoes anymore, but to face the bitter fact that on top of that they will also have to go hungry is quite a bit too much for me," Mrs Bruce wrote, detailing her family's dire straits in an attempt to shame those who were responsible for her husband's joblessness. "Really, you understand the position I'm in and why I'm begging you to explain to whom ever it needs explaining to, that we are in dire need and George Bruce simply has to get back to work."¹⁴¹ Getting a spouse back on the job was the surest -- and quickest way -- to head off a financial crisis; until that happened, however, or, in the event that a man never returned to work due to permanent disability or death, both of which were common on the waterfront, women often returned to paid work themselves to make up for a shortfall in income. Women's employment options, however, were limited to those low-status, low-skill, poorly paid jobs deemed suitable for the "weaker sex." Anna K., whose story will be discussed in greater detail later, returned to paid work as a domestic, waitress, cook, and laundry worker, occupations that were an extension of her skills as a mother and a wife, after she separated from her husband Peter in 1917 or 1918. The loss of a breadwinner placed additional pressure on the economic role of children as well: Anna K's eldest son, Ivan, knew this; so, too, did one waterfront

¹⁴¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 30, File 5, F.W. Peters to Crombie, re: Thomas Lewis, 12 April 1924; Box 6, File 2, A. King to Crombie, 27 January 1933; Box 65, File 3, Mrs Bruce to Mr. Burgess, 9 November 1940

worker who informed the labour manager that "Since the death of my Father, whom I have replaced[,] I have the family depending on me."¹⁴²

Making up for the loss of a man's income was no easy task. In the fall of 1920, Elers Campo, a long-time longshoreman, injured his back lifting a "100 lbs keg of nails"; as a result, he spent considerable amount of time in the hospital and was unable to work for about eight months. During this period, "his wife and two children and his mother-in-law with eight children" lived on the "good will" of the International Longshoreman's Association. In the wake of the ILA's demise, the company union and Shipping Federation sponsored a Longshoreman's Sick Benefit Fund and a Christmas Fund for "members who have been sick or in need of assistance at this time of year" -- welfare-capitalism-inspired charity schemes that some married women turned to in times of financial need. Community organizations, church-sponsored benevolent societies, and other relief associations, all of which experienced tremendous growth after the Great War, also provided support in this regard. So, too, did the nascent welfare state which, by the late 1920s, offered a hodge-podge of services, including municipal relief, workman's compensation, and pensions to "indigent mothers with one or more children under sixteen, who were

¹⁴²Creese, "The Politics of Unemployment," 364-390; Strong-Boag, "Women of the New Day"; Barman, "Knowledge is essential"; Bullen, "Hidden Workers"; G.J. Band to Crombie, 21 January 1941.

either widowed or deserted, or whose husbands were disabled or detained in a prison or mental institution."¹⁴³

Mrs McLean was one of those women who, after separating from her husband, a wheat trimmer, in the mid-1920s, turned to government agencies -- Vancouver's employment and relief department and the Children's Aid Society -- to ensure that her spouse "ma[de] adequate provision for his children." Mrs Erickson was an "indigent" mother; after the death of her husband, a waterfront worker, she applied for and received support from the WCB, the government agency that administered mothers' pensions. Its meagre allowance of \$42.50 per month plus \$7.50 for each additional child under sixteen, however, was not enough to live on, prompting Mrs Erickson to convert her Burnaby home into a boarding house. Interestingly, by the mid-1930s, her house was a hub of radical labour politics as several of her tenants were involved in the "Communist Movement" and held political meetings there on a routine basis, especially around the time of the longshore strike of 1935.¹⁴⁴ Taken together, the actions of Mrs Bruce, Campo,

¹⁴³ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B222, W-263-26, "Campo," ILA to Honourable J.W. Farris, Attorney General, 28 April 1921; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 2, VDWWA to Crombie, 14 December 1927; Box 23, File 1, "Agenda...executive committee of the Shipping Federation...10 March 1929"; Box 18, File 9a, Cargo Hook 1:1, February 1936; ILWU, Add.Mss 332, Volume 1, Minutes, 2 January 1936, "advance to Mrs. E. Ledgerwood upon the death of her husband." On the final point see Allan Irving, "The Development of a Provincial Welfare State: British Columbia 1900-1939," in Moscovitch and Albert, eds., The Benevolent State, 154-171.

¹⁴⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 3, Relief Officer, Employment and Relief Department, to W.C.D. Crombie, 14 April 1928; Box 50, Number 2, "Report by Operator #3," 15 August 1934; BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B2301, F 1-125-1, "Memorandum for the Honourable Minister of Labour," 3 January 1935."

McLean, and Erickson reveal that replacing the earnings of a male breadwinner was often difficult; indeed, the loss of a male provider laid bare both a woman's dependence on her husband and, more broadly, the precariousness of the family economy. Both notions are illustrated further by the experiences of Mrs Anna K and Elizabeth Burns.

It was in late June of 1921 when Anna received word that her eldest son Ivan had died while working as a logger in Comox on Vancouver Island. He was nineteen years old at the time of his death and had been working for the company for only a few months. When he was away at a logging camp he often wrote to his mother; his letters included details of life at the camps or messages for his younger brother and sister, but perhaps most importantly, they also contained his wages. "I cannot make any more here, I made \$21 clear for March after paying for board, doctor \$1.00 [and] compensation 30¢," he wrote just a few weeks before his death. "The Campbell River Company is only 14 miles from us and I might go over there as soon as it is open. The pay is more there." Working for wages was nothing new to Ivan, nor was turning his pay cheque over to his mother. At the age of sixteen he left school and started work as a messenger; a year later he got a job at the shipyards in Vancouver where he worked for two years; at nineteen he started going away to the logging camps. During this period, he gave his mother as much as \$25 per week, and when he was not working for wages he often assisted her with some of the more arduous chores at home such as chopping wood. That Ivan played such

a large role in this regard is not a surprise; sending a child out to work was just one of many strategies used by working-class families to make ends meet. But for Anna, the wages Ivan earned were especially important because she was separated from her husband, Peter, and as a result, her eldest son was the family's principal breadwinner.¹⁴⁵

Peter was Russian-Ukrainian. He was an unskilled worker and fragmentary evidence suggests that he was rarely employed on a full-time basis. Although it is unclear whether or not Peter worked on the docks, the K. family is pertinent to this discussion because its story sheds light on those unskilled workers and their families on the margins of both the labour movement and society in general, a complex and often itinerant mass of people from which casual longshoremen were usually drawn. Anna, Peter, and young Ivan came to Vancouver from Calgary in 1911. Shortly after arriving, Anna gave birth to another son and three years later to a daughter. Both of the children were born at home with the assistance of a midwife -- the family could not afford the services of a doctor -- and were baptized in a Roman Catholic church. During this time, the family lived on Cordova Street in the city's downtown and, in later years, spent some time in Burnaby. That Peter was often without work made life difficult for the young family; it was a situation made worse by his heavy

¹⁴⁵ This entire section is taken from British Columbia Archives and Records Services (BCARS), Records of the Attorney General (RAG), GR 1323, B2222, W-263-1, Israel I. Rabinowitz to A.M. Manson, Attorney General, January 1922. Given the nature of this evidence, and the rules governing its usage laid down by BCARS's Access to Information and Privacy Commissioner, the names of the people involved have been removed to ensure anonymity.

drinking. He frequented the restaurants and bars in the waterfront district, the stomping ground for loggers in from the camps or longshoremen waiting for work. "He often did not work on account of his drunken habits and whatever he did earn he would spend in drink," Anna remarked. Unemployment and excessive use of alcohol cut deeply into the family's income; but the availability of both work and resources was not Anna's sole concern. When Peter drank he was violent: "He did not give me any reason for beating me such as jealousy or anything like that, it was just a habit when he came home drunk." It was in this context of unemployment, alcoholism, and violence that the eldest son was forced to assume responsibility as a breadwinner alongside his mother and that Anna separated from her husband around 1917 or 1918. "Penniless" and without means of support, her two youngest children, at the insistence of the state, remained in the custody of her husband and Ivan, it appears, stayed with her.¹⁴⁶

During this period, Anna worked outside the home in order to make up for the earnings lost due to Peter's drinking, unemployment, and, eventual departure. For a time it was as a waitress and cook at the Melbourne Hotel on Main Street, a place that, in the words of a government liquor inspector, "cater[ed] largely to the longshore trade and fishermen"; at one point she tried to run a lunch counter on

¹⁴⁶ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B2222, W-263-1.

Carrall Street.¹⁴⁷ "I used to send to the two children ... groceries. The children would come down to the restaurant and spend time with me there and in the evening they would go home again. Owing to my not being able to afford it we could not live together," she recounted. Anna also took in a boarder or two, though this practice appears to have been limited to the time before she and her husband separated. In addition to cooking and waitressing, Anna worked "doing housework in different houses for six or seven months" and often did other people's laundry. When Ivan was without work, he often assisted his mother by picking up the bundles of laundry, lugging them home, then returning them to customers when they were clean. By this time Ivan was working at the logging camps outside the city, leaving sometime in early spring and, depending on conditions and rates of pay, he would travel from company to company looking for the best deal. In March 1921 when Ivan left for Vancouver Island, Anna had been unemployed for several months; as a result, it appears that her eldest son was the sole wage-earner in the family. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that in a letter home, Ivan struck a fatherly tone when speaking to his younger brother: "I won't buy you a skooter, you leave the stealing alone and in two weeks I will send you the money to buy the skooter." It was shortly after writing this note that Ivan died. In the wake of his death, Anna applied for assistance from the provincial government, claiming that, although Ivan was just her son, he was her

¹⁴⁷ The inspector is quoted in R.A. Campbell, "Managing the Marginal: Regulating and Negotiating Decency in Vancouver's Beer Parlours, 1925-54," *Labour/Le Travail* 44 (Fall 1999), 109-127.

sole source of income; thus, as a dependent, she was entitled to some kind of support. Whether or not her application was successful is unclear because the documentation of the proceedings ends there, and with it the story of the K. family.¹⁴⁸

This glimpse into the complex lives of one family in Vancouver during the late 1910s and early 20s brings the vulnerability of a single mother into sharp focus. In this particular case, Anna lost a breadwinner twice over: her husband was unable and/or unwilling to work and provide for the family; her eldest son, like many men who went to the logging camps throughout this period, died while on the job. Significantly, the ways in which Anna sought to re-establish the family economy were an extension of her skills as a mother and as housekeeper: she cooked and she cleaned for money. In a society where work at home and work for wages were defined, at least in part, by a gendered division of labour her options were severely limited. Furthermore, as Ivan's actions indicate, the absence of a male breadwinner imposed additional pressures and responsibilities on children as well. His importance, though, was not limited to the wages that he earned as he also assisted his mother with both the household chores and her work outside the home. That the family was a site of "working-class adaptation and survival" is clear; but, as the gender conflicts within the K family indicate, the imperative of collective effort

¹⁴⁸ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B2222, W-263-1.

required to survive on the wages of a male breadwinner did not bring with it "universal agreement and harmony."¹⁴⁹

To be sure, the loss of a male breadwinner left a family "up against it"; but its response varied according to factors such as the size and composition of the family and the availability of resources such as savings or assets. When Elizabeth Burns's father "practically collapsed on the job" in 1939, leaving her and her sister "practically penniless," she sold off her family's property and moved to the east side of the city, presumably to find less expensive accommodation. "It was a blow to us," she wrote to the Shipping Federation. Without question, Elizabeth's life was difficult during this period; indeed, her ability to "eke out an existence" was circumscribed by a house fire in which she "lost everything," the absence of an immediate or extended family to provide a support network (there is no mention of her mother in any of her letters), and the added responsibility of looking after her younger sister. "I have none of my own kin in this country, I have cousins in Ireland but none here," Elizabeth confessed. "I had no relative to relieve me & as a result my own health was greatly impaired."¹⁵⁰ That Elizabeth was unable to fully replace her father's earnings was a material reality that she shared with other working-class women; that she had the option to liquidate her father's assets set her apart.

¹⁴⁹ Palmer, *Working-Class Experience*, 101.

¹⁵⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Volume 13, Number 7. (Miss) Elizabeth Burns to "The President of the Shipping Federation," 9 August 1939; Burns to Mr. C.W. Train, 19 December 1940; Burns to Captain Donnelly, 26 May 1953.

This distinction hints at the cleavages of income and culture that separated those who belonged to permanent gangs and thus followed the “beach” on a full-time basis and those confined to the basement of the despatch hall – the spare and casual board men, the wheat trimmers, and those unskilled workers who combined the occasional shift on the docks with other forms of employment. Elizabeth Burns’s father worked on the waterfront for twenty-five years both in Vancouver and in Victoria; he was also involved with the company union and worked for the Harbour Board. He had property, a mortgage, and lived in the Point Grey area of the city, an enclave more “respectable” than the skid road district of downtown or the working-class suburbs of Strathcona, Grandview, Mount Pleasant, or South Vancouver. It was a reality that stood in stark contrast to that of the K. family where life on the margins was less secure and day-to-day survival more precarious. Clearly, the waterfront working class, like the working class in general, was not an undifferentiated mass; indeed, even within the context of welfare capitalism and a decasualized waterfront workplace, it was fraught with deep divisions based on income and access to work – divisions that shaped both the ongoing process of turning available resources into sustenance and shelter and how women handled the loss of a male breadwinner.

* * *

From the Shipping Federation’s perspective, the 1920s, unlike the economically dismal years preceding the Great War, were a “boom[ing]” and

"prosperous" time on the Vancouver waterfront, an era in which the potential of the Panama Canal was finally realized. For its many employees, this surge in international trade, coupled with a reduction in the number of men competing for work on a daily basis, translated into increased work opportunities and the potential -- provided one possessed the right level of efficiency, as well as orthodox political beliefs -- to earn a living on the waterfront. Looking back on these heady, profitable days from the vantage point of the Great Depression, a report completed by the Shipping Federation marvelled at the significant changes wrought since the end of the 1923 strike by both a buoyant economy and a new workplace philosophy. "The majority of the men were experienced and competent and their earnings sufficient to the extent to permit the maintenance of comfortable homes and a reasonable standard of living," the report concluded. It was a sentiment echoed by the Association: "The longshoreman is no longer a transient, he is now a home owner, or making payments and interest on such." Here, as in the wider debates raging in social reform and government circles about the links between healthy families and a healthy nation, the ability to acquire a home was a sign of sober and industrious work habits, political moderation, and consent to the stabilizing influences of family. In the judgement of both employer and union, a significant social and cultural reorientation, an emerging home centredness, had taken place amongst the waterfront working class as men who were once single, itinerant, and socialist-

minded were now married, settled, and, in the words of one sympathetic docker, "sane thinking." Some were even members of local ratepayers' associations.¹⁵¹

But obtaining a home was not the only sign that waterfront workers had become "reputable citizens." Throughout the 1920s, more labouring families had disposable income and, as many scholars have illustrated, they spent it on an increasingly wide array of consumer goods. Fragmentary, yet suggestive evidence hints that this was the case for many waterfront workers. Automobiles – Studebakers, Pontiacs, Fords, Oldsmobiles, and Plymouths – were ubiquitous in and around the despatch hall and various docks, so much so that organizers of the annual family picnic had to make special arrangements for parking on that popular day and the event's programme sometimes contained ads for car repair services. Aided by new forms of financing and affordable prices, the purchase of an automobile, as Bryan Palmer has noted, reshaped the nature of workers' lives in important ways as labour and leisure, to take but one example, were compartmentalized in a more decisive way. Paddy McDonough, a waterfront worker and car owner in the interwar period, knew that: looking back on his time on the beach he recalled the freedom that came with not having to rely on the tram's schedule and being able to go home between jobs instead of staying downtown until

¹⁵¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, 33-B-5, File 8, "Vancouver Waterfront Situation"; Box 5, File 6, "Comparison of Longshore Wages and Conditions To-Day with That of 1924," 17 March 1932; "Minutes of an extraordinary general meeting of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia," 1933; Series 197, 75-E-7, File 12, "Report from Car #2," 16 July 1935.

the next ship came in. In addition to automobiles, waterfront workers, like other working-class people, spent money on new forms of fun and entertainment. "As occurs in all labor organizations, the satisfied working man is not given to attending meetings," one Shipping Federation member remarked. "[P]articularly so in a place like Vancouver, where he has so many ways of employing his leisure other than going to meetings."¹⁵²

But the acquisition of both adequate homes and a reasonable standard of living – the cornerstones of a "happy and contented" citizenry – was not just a function of a buoyant post-war economy, increased marine traffic, and a longshoreman's earning capacity. Indeed, as this analysis illustrates, the labour that waterfront workers' wives performed in the home on a daily basis was pivotal to this transformation. Working-class families during this period, like their late nineteenth century counterparts, were defined, in part, by asymmetrical power relations and a gendered division of labour: husbands, for the most, assumed responsibility for earning the lion's share of the family's income and women, in their role as domestic managers, converted cash into the material goods necessary for the daily replenishment of the primary wage earner and, of course, the rest of the family. Given that interlocking hierarchies of job classification, work opportunities, and

¹⁵² CVA, Series 197, 75-E-7, File 12, W.J. Devitt to Col. W.W. Foster, 10 June 1935, "Car Numbers Used by Longshoremen Roughs"; BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 48, File 14, various picnic programmes; "Memorandum of Labor Situation at Vancouver," 23 May 1935; Palmer, Working-Class Experience, 333.

income remained a defining feature of the waterfront labour market, and, as a consequence few longshoremen were able to earn a "living wage," waterfront workers' wives also tapped the earning abilities of their children and, under specific circumstances, sometimes returned to waged labour themselves, temporarily redrawing the boundaries that demarcated the roles and responsibilities of husbands and wives. Women such as Margaret Scoppa no doubt took pride in their day-to-day accomplishments in the home and understood, intuitively, that it was tied to the maintenance of a modest standard of living. "For twelve years we have lived in an unfurnished home," she wrote in 1940, looking back on the time when she and her husband marked the important personal milestones of marriage and home ownership. "This year in January we got a government loan to finish our home. All of my husband's earnings have gone into this home...." So, too, she might have added, had all of her domestic labour. While not all longshoremen participated in this process to the same extent, and, as the experiences of some families suggests, the material foundations upon which others built their modest life were often shaky, there is no mistaking that much had changed for the waterfront working class since the Great War.

It was precisely this kind of development, the Scoppa's move to 2769 Kitchener Street on the east side of Vancouver in the mid-to-late 1920s, that both the Shipping Federation and the Association had in mind when they concluded that "the longshoreman [was] no longer a transient." But by unpacking the dynamics of

the family economy, and the patriarchal and hierarchical relations between men and women that underpinned it, another, equally important dimension of this process is revealed: the gendered nature of citizenship. Bound up in the idea of being a "reputable citizen" were the important, ostensibly manly virtues of security, independence, and authority associated with both the ability to earn a living and be head of the family, the underside of which, however, was female subordination and economic dependence. On the waterfront -- as in other realms of politics, where the perspectives of middle-class reformers, labour organizations, and the government about a woman's natural role as a wife and mother converged to produce protective legislation -- the Shipping Federation and Association both agreed that only men possessed the ability, the right, to be citizens in the fullest sense of the word, a common understanding that guaranteed male control over the household and undergirded their shared faith in decasualization as a means to this end. To waterfront workers, this bundle of values, assumptions, and prerogatives about a man's place on the job and in the home was often referred to as a "square deal," and it constituted the lens through which they negotiated the pith and substance of the Shipping Federation's reform agenda. That specific dynamic is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Securing a Square Deal: The Politics and Possibilities of Decasualization, 1923-1929

To assess waterfront workers' on-the-job response to welfare capitalism, it is crucial to answer one simple, but thorny, question. To what extent did the workplace reforms initiated by the Shipping Federation achieve their intended objectives of boosting efficiency, securing labour peace, and nurturing greater support for the company's wider vision of proper social relations? Addressing the question of "workers' response" in other contexts, historians have responded in one of two ways. Early work by David Brody emphasized the success of welfare capitalism in incorporating workers; indeed, in his opinion, if it had not been for the economic calamity of the 1930s, welfare capitalism might have survived as the dominant and most desirable model of human resources management. In contrast, Gerald Zehavi, Liz Cohen, and, most recently, Walter Licht have rejected the notion that workers were completely pacified by company-sponsored reading rooms and sports teams. Undergirding this perspective is a sensitivity to the limited capacity of workplace reforms to bevel the hard edges of class difference on the job and, to put it simply, a belief that working people were not so easily bought off by the promise and practice of industrial democracy. The accent, here, is clearly on the ways in which workers -- in the words of Zehavi -- "expressed their autonomy and independence in a variety of ways, some of which exploited the corporate ideology for their own

ends."¹⁵³ In short, workers' loyalty was a "contested" loyalty, one that was shaped by an ongoing, on-the-job struggle over the pith and substance of welfare capitalist schemes and, given how hard employers had to work to keep workers in line, one that certainly had its limits. In a general sense, this was the case on the Vancouver docks. There, as in other workplaces, waterfront workers, both at the leadership and rank-and-file level, responded to the Shipping Federation's "better workers, better citizens" policy in a variety of ways, mixing formal and informal tactics to ensure that waterfront employers honoured their obligations. Indeed, if Crombie thought that the Association would fall into line easily, he was sadly mistaken.

The constitution of the VDWWA was written with one objective in mind: to ensure that the company union did not fall victim to "minority control," a fate which, in the opinion of the Shipping Federation, was responsible for the ILA's turn to the left and the disastrous 1923 strike. To this end, waterfront employers insisted on annual, and in some cases, biannual elections to the executive of the VDWWA. But much to the Shipping Federation's chagrin, from 1923 to 1929 the leadership of the company union was dominated by a loose collection of men who, while possessing a general disdain for radical working-class politics, staked out a critical, less compliant stance when it came to the politics of welfare capitalism; their acceptance of, and participation in, the company union did not necessarily translate into

¹⁵³ The literature referred to in this paragraph includes: Brody, "The Rise and Decline of Welfare Capitalism"; Liz Cohen, Making a New Deal, chapter four, "Contested Loyalty at the Workplace"; Walter Licht, "Fringe Benefits." The quotation is from Zehavi, "Negotiated Loyalty," 610.

universal harmony and agreement. In this important sense, the temperament that informed the affairs of the union was most often represented by two words: "square deal." Bound up in this simple phrase was a complex bundle of values that combined both class and gender politics -- that, as a working-class man, especially one who helped beat back the socialist tide, one was entitled to fairness, respect, and due process on the job and, in the wider community, the independence that came with a living wage.

This sensibility informed more specific political positions as well. For example, in the immediate aftermath of the 1923 strike, G.H. Monk and F.H. Poole, newly elected members of the union's executive, railed against the unequal relationship that existed between the Association and the Shipping Federation. Monk, in particular, spoke often of the failure of waterfront employers to deliver a "square deal," the desirability of a union-run despatch hall, and made other, more general statements that, in the opinion of one more moderate rank and filer, "appeared ... to be ... detrimental to the best interests of the Shipping Federation."¹⁵⁴ This general demand for equality was shared by H.F. Lumsden, Association president in 1924 and 1926 and executive member in 1929, who argued that if the

¹⁵⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 50, File 4, Crombie to B.C. Keeley, President, Shipping Federation of British Columbia, 16 January 1924; Box 2, File 2, G.H. Monk to the "Chairman," 14 February 1924; F. Tremblay to Crombie, 15 February 1924; G.H. Monk to Crombie, 18 February 1924; W.L. Lawlor to Crombie. 29 February 1924.

longshoremen were not granted a greater say in "labour and [working] conditions" they ought to consider membership in the Trades and Labour Congress.¹⁵⁵

C.J. Wilson supported this position. As an executive member in 1924 and secretary treasurer from 1925 to 1927, he took stands in favour of a closed shop, the right "to say who works and who does not," and, in later years, the amalgamation of all waterfront workers into one organization.¹⁵⁶ "This is our union and its a square deal that we want," Wilson told Crombie in 1926.¹⁵⁷ For him, as for many others, a more equitable distribution of power was simply a question of "fairness," a position which distinguished the Association from the aggressive and destructive politics of socialism and, at the same time, the type of men who would prefer to scrap with employers, instead of negotiate with them. Overall, the emphasis, here, was on the independence of the Association and, by extension, working men, a notion illustrated by Wilson's use of the pronoun "our" to modify the noun "union" -- an otherwise innocuous sentence construction except for the fact that its author was describing an organization which was, at least formally, a *company* union.

¹⁵⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 50, File 6, Crombie to J.C. Irons, 19 March 1926.

¹⁵⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, Crombie to Captain D. Baird, 3 November 1924.

¹⁵⁷ Other references to a "square deal" can be found in: CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Volume 24, File 7, D. Whittet to Major Vine, 17 December 1923; R.H. Box 24, File 7, Conway to Crombie, undated, likely 1924.

Significantly, though, these political positions were usually accompanied by strong appeals to the mutual obligations and common objectives that employers and employees shared -- the values that underpinned welfare capitalism. That union leaders would dip into this discourse of reform is not surprising. It was, after all, the most readily available ideological resource, a fact that sheds some light on the more subtle dimensions of corporate hegemony. But at the same time, it is clear that Association members saw in welfare capitalism a means to advance their own agenda. Indeed, if the Shipping Federation was serious about co-operation, about a partnership that was dedicated to ensuring that the working man held a respected place at home, on the job, and in the community at large, than the Association would do all it could to facilitate this goal, to secure, in a phrase, a square deal. If it stood in the way of that objective, however, then it deserved to be criticized and, in some cases, opposed. Clearly, welfare capitalism, in all its guises, was changing workers' experience on the job, but prickly, labourist sensibilities, which were tied to a specific sense of class and gender politics, were still present, providing the cultural residue upon which a moderate challenge to the Federation's power would be mounted.¹⁵⁸

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¹⁵⁸ In a general sense, this paragraph draws on the insights of David Montgomery's Citizen Worker, in particular his discussion of Raymond Williams; my reading of labourism is indebted to Craig Heron, "Labourism and the Canadian Working Class," in Sefton MacDowell and Radforth, eds., Canadian Working-Class History, 355-3 82.

This was particularly evident when it came to handling the all important question of promoting and policing efficiency -- the Association's responsibility as a party to the welfare capitalist bargain. Only the most efficient, citizen-like workers should be members of the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers Association. That was Crombie's mantra, a vision of reform that was at the heart of decasualization. In the aftermath of the 1923 strike, it was estimated that there were approximately 2,900 men on the waterfront, about 1,500 of them were former ILA members and the remainder were replacement workers.¹⁵⁹ Given that the number of men needed to meet the average daily demand for labour on the waterfront -- what Crombie called the "Balance of Power" -- was between 800 to 1,000 men, only a select few from the ranks of the strikebreakers and former ILAers would be allowed back on the hook. "The one and only principle underlying...Federation organization must be an endeavour to build up, control and maintain the 'Balance of Power' in the hands of the Federation," the labour manager told F.W. Peters, chairman of the Shipping Federation's labour committee.¹⁶⁰ Decasualization was a numbers game, but it was also about ensuring that all new men were able to "hold their end up" and that former employees, hired back at the insistence of the stevedoring companies, were not followers of "messrs Pritchard and Kavanagh." To

¹⁵⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 32, File 5, Crombie to Joe Webber, Griffiths Stevedoring Company, 2 October 1925; Box 23, file 4, Crombie to F.W. Peters, Chair, Labor Committee, 17 December 1923.

¹⁶⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 4, Crombie to F.W. Peters, 17 December 1923.

facilitate this process, Crombie, backed by waterfront employers, imposed a favourable collective agreement, created a company union and committee structure, and promoted a co-operative, efficiency-oriented workplace ethos. But as the labour manager no doubt understood, the success of decasualization depended on many factors, not the least of which was the ability of those elected to positions of authority in the Association to carry out their obligations: to provide, in the words of the collective agreement, "members capable of doing a fair day's work" and to discipline those who could not.

As with other issues of mutual concern, the question of efficiency, both the admission of new waterfront workers and the disciplining of wayward ones, was handled by a series of committees and joint committees. Within the union itself, an "investigating body" composed of executive members vetted applications for employment and considered other evaluations, like a doctor's or foreman's report, that were passed along by the labour manager. The "short list" that emerged from this process was then sent to Crombie for his consideration. In the event that a dispute over a potential member emerged, the name was sent to a joint Shipping Federation-Association body charged with bringing about a resolution. When it came to disciplining union members who were judged to be inefficient – by Crombie, company foreman, and, in extremely rare occasions, other waterfront workers – a somewhat similar process took place. The "offender" was brought before an Association committee and, if the claim was judged to be valid, the appropriate

punishment, such as expulsion or suspension, was meted out. In the interests of "fair play," the accused was permitted to argue his case before the union committee and, in the event of a negative judgement, appeal the Association's decision to yet another joint employer-employee body, though the latter procedure was administered on, what appears to be, a rather ad hoc basis.¹⁶¹

These committees and joint committees were kept busy because on the job, older, customary forms of resistance persisted throughout the 1920s. Indeed, on a day-to-day basis, waterfront workers used a wide range of strategies, both on an individual and collective basis, to limit the authority of specific foremen, exert greater control over the pacing of work, and, on a wider canvas, blunt the managerial offensive at the heart of decasualization. One such tactic was the time-honoured practice of picking one's job regardless of the instructions issued by the despatcher. Writing to the Association in 1925, Crombie expressed his frustration with a longshoreman named Wilson who, it appears, was particularly adept at such tactics. "I hardly need comment upon the undesirability of allowing actions such as Wilson's to pass unnoticed," the labour manager began

especially in view of the fact of what you know of this man's previous record of picking and choosing his work, registering with gangs, leaving gangs for the casual board and re-registering with some other

¹⁶¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 3, Crombie to VDWWA, 17 October 1924; Box 2, File 4, Crombie to F.W. Cowperthwaite, 12 June 1925; Box 23, File 8, "Motion ... Joint Adjustment Committee," 22 March 1927.

gang which he believes might suit his personal views better than the one he is actually registered on.¹⁶²

As Crombie's remarks suggest, refusing to "answer the bell" involved a set of calculations that included the type of commodity being loaded or unloaded, duration of the job, condition of the ship, composition of the gang, and the foreman on duty. In some instances, though, the decision to "hang back" was based on factors not tied so directly to the economics and politics of the job. When, on a spring day in 1926, an Association gang refused to travel from Vancouver to Dollarton, located on the north shore of Burrard Inlet, to load logs and lumber, a union official, writing on behalf of the workers, explained that: "[they] feel that they cannot stay from there home [sic] and families overnight."¹⁶³

For many waterfront workers, choosing not to work a specific cargo or ship was but one dimension of a wider strategy of occupational pluralism, a practice with deep roots on the waterfront which persisted throughout the welfare capitalist period. "It has been noticed that a large number of men are being carried by the Association who absent themselves from work for periods of three or more months," a memo prepared by the Shipping Federation in 1928 read. "[They] take up work which they find to be more remunerative and remain at this work until such time as longshore work increase." Not surprisingly, Crombie viewed this kind of behaviour

¹⁶² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 5, Crombie to VDWWA, 1925. For other examples see: Box 2, File 1, Chief Despatcher to Major Vine, 22 December 1923; Box 23, File 8, "For the Agenda for the Joint Adjustment Committee Meeting, 29 March 1927"; and various reports in Box 52.

¹⁶³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 6, C.J. Wilson to Crombie, 26 February 1926.

with utter contempt; it was a sign that a man was not serious about being a full-time waterfront worker and thus was not serious about being efficient. Moreover, it was a clear indication that the Association was neglecting its commitment to remove the so-called deadwood from its ranks. But from the perspective of longshoremen themselves, the logic at work here was altogether different. On the one hand, the pursuit of additional work reflected an ongoing need to cobble together multiple sources of income to make ends meet, a process which was more difficult for family men. It was born, to a large degree, of necessity. On the other hand, and more germane to the argument being made here, occupational pluralism also helped to reduce waterfront workers' dependence on a single employer; it was, at least in part, about flexibility, about being able to "absent" oneself from a job now characterized by a managerial offensive of unprecedented size and scope.¹⁶⁴

Once on the job, waterfront workers confronted the Shipping Federation's power in a variety of ways. On a collective basis, it was common for gang members to work together to slow down the pace of work, limit the excesses of a specific foreman, or to enforce a particular way of moving cargo. Indeed, when several gangs walked off the job one afternoon in late December, 1923, they did so to protest the foreman's insistence that he assist the men in "taking off [the] beams" -- the workers' objecting to his direct involvement in the work process and the

¹⁶⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 2, C.G. Evans to Crombie, 22 April 1924; Crombie to VDWWA, 26 April 1924; Box 2, File 3, Currie to Crombie, 8 July 1924; Box 23, File 12, "Memo for Negotiations Committee ... 23 October 1928."

likelihood of a speed-up.¹⁶⁵ Similar battles between gangs and foremen were repeated throughout the decade, up and down Burrard Inlet. In March 1928, for example, two gangs despatched from the North Shore locked horns with the Griffith Stevedoring Company after it refused to employ each and every gang member. As a consequence, the men decided not to work at all, opting to forego any earnings in order to protect the unity and integrity of the gangs themselves. A year or two later, a group of gang leaders mounted a similar challenge on behalf of their members. This time around, however, they put their concerns in writing and took a decidedly less confrontational approach: "It is the sincere desire of the undersigned who are the gang leaders of the Empire dock gangs and who find the sincere wish of the members of their gangs to have the three or four lowest earning gangs (as the demand maybe) despatched to Empire boats for loading or as far as possible divide the work at the Empire as even as reasonably possible."¹⁶⁶

But not all acts of resistance were carried out on a collective basis. Individually, waterfront workers flouted the boss' power by sabotaging company property ("[H]e threw rope slings from [the] scow into the water, some being lost"), pilfering cargo ("Youre the buggar I want, youre the man thats got the whiskey"), showing up to work under the influence of alcohol ("[T]hese two men were

¹⁶⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 1, Chief Despatcher to Major Vine, 22 December 1923.

¹⁶⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 32, File 5, R. Montgomery to Crombie, 28 March 1928, Box 4, File 11, "Undersigned Gang Leaders to WCD Crombie, undated, likely late 1920s, early 1930s.

hopelessly drunk and incapable of standing or climbing”), and fighting with foremen, both with words and with fists (“How would you like to be in the drink this fine day?”).¹⁶⁷ One day in late September 1927, longshoreman Jack Hughes took things into his own hands. When the mate on the *Talthebius*, the vessel Hughes was working on, instructed the stevedoring foreman to ask him to put his cigarette out and get back to work, the longshoreman “then ran over to the midshipman and knocked him down.”¹⁶⁸ Taken together, these individual and collective actions, steeped in the masculine milieu of the waterfront, stand in contrast to the wider vision of reform articulated by the labour manager and his supporters. Indeed, in the face of an emergent Taylorist paradigm, waterfront workers drew on residual customs of control to blunt the push for stricter discipline and greater efficiency. It was a day-to-day struggle that Crombie, backed by the full weight of the Shipping Federation, expected the Association to help him solve.

The committees and joint-committees charged with the responsibility of handling such examples of “inefficiency” met on countless occasions. “You will find I have shown their earnings under 14 months and 10 months, and their total earnings over two years. I do not need to point out to you that these men cannot live

¹⁶⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 2, Crombie to VDWWA, 30 May 1924; Box 2, File 5, Despatcher to Crombie, 10 September 1925; Box 2, File 6, William Dollar to Crombie, 17 March 1926; Box 32, File 5, R. Montgomery to Crombie, 28 March 1928; Box 3, File 4, VDWWA to Crombie, 12 July 1928.

¹⁶⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 12, “Extract of the Minutes of a Joint Meeting” 21 October 1927.

on these earnings, and it is quite evident that they are not efficient or ever likely to be," Crombie explained in a typical report to the VDWWA, urging the union's business agent to deal with an obvious drifter. "[I]mpaired the efficiency of the gang by talking too much. No good for this class of work," read a like-minded foreman's complaint. Significantly, union leaders and rank-and-file members of the Association were also involved in monitoring workers' workplace performance. "[H]is stowing has to be done over by others when he is supposed to be a side runner [and he possesses a] decidedly 'red' tendency," H.F. Lumsden informed the labour manager in the summer of 1924. "As he is a Countryman of Hatchtender Ricci's I do not want to have Ricci feel I am bucking him in any way but am passing this information to you confidentially for your own and Mr. Cook's [the despatcher] information." That such profiles of workers' behaviour on the job were available to both the labour manager and the union leadership was evidence that Crombie's infrastructure, established for the sole purpose of tracking a worker's productivity and facilitating the decasualization of the waterfront, was operational. Indeed, the reams of reports, payroll statistics, and other data generated for this purpose formed the basis of the committees' deliberations, a development which highlights the successful intervention of bureaucratic power into workers' lives and the power of the Shipping Federation to shape the terms and conditions of the debate.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ See various reports in CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 52, File X; Box 2, File 3, Crombie to Secretary, VDWWA, 21 July 1924; Lumsden to Crombie, 6 August 1924; Box 3, File 11, Crombie to Secretary, VDWWA, 10 May 1932. On the uses and abuses of case files more generally see

But not completely. In this context, the Association staked out a political “zone of toleration”: it accepted its responsibility in this regard but asserted some limits on the Shipping Federation’s propensity to push the union to move more aggressively against the “inefficients.”¹⁷⁰ Within the narrow ideological and institutional context laid down by waterfront employers, labourist sensibilities, in particular the notion that a union must be able to look after its own internal affairs, especially in the realm of discipline and punishment, came to the fore. As the president of the Association argued in the early 1920s, in order to ensure a smooth transition to a decasualized environment, it was crucial that the Shipping Federation’s relationship with the Association “be in keeping with the spirit of fair play that should and does, I think, rule Canadian labour.”¹⁷¹ As this quotation indicates, the notion of protecting the union’s autonomy was bound up with the values associated with securing a square deal – a linkage laid bare by the president’s appeal to reasonableness and pragmatism, qualities he associated with the mainstream, not the radical labour movement. It was an assertion that mapped an additional, equally important, dichotomy: the former was populated by Canadian-born men who valued the rationality and political integrity of negotiation, the latter

Iacovetta and Mitchinson, eds., On the Case: Explorations in Social History (Toronto 1998), introduction, “Social History and Case Files Research,” 3-21.

¹⁷⁰ The “zone of toleration” is borrowed from Eric Tucker’s “‘That Indefinite Are of Toleration’: Criminal Conspiracy and Trade unions in Ontario, 1837-1877,” Labour/Le Travail 27 (Spring 1991), 15-54.

¹⁷¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 5, President, VDWWA to Crombie, 17 July 1925.

was the home of foreign-born workers who embraced the irrationality of strikes and confrontation. But appeals to the "spirit of fair play" were not the only rhetorical tactics that the Association leaders employed to defend, what Crombie once called, the union's "interior economy." Writing to the labour manager in 1924, executive member H.F. Lumsden linked the importance of respecting the Association's independence to the leadership's ability to do its job properly. "This is the only means by which we can exercise any control over our own members," he said. "[O]f course, we will work in co-operation with your office to avoid any delays to ships in this connection."¹⁷² Exercising control, though, did not always mean accepting a complaint by a foreman or the actions of the labour manager as a foregone conclusion.

On a day-to-day basis, this general sensibility backstopped the union's opposition to unreasonable allegations of inefficiency, allegations which, according to executive members, violated notions of fair play. On several occasions, charges of absenteeism, insubordination, and "falling down on the job" leveled against waterfront workers were challenged by the Association. In some instances, this was accomplished in passive ways with the Association failing to report questionable men, dragging its feet in dealing with a worker accused of being inefficient, or neglecting to provide the labour manager with a "final, reliable, accurate, complete

¹⁷² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 2, H.F. Lumsden to Crombie, 7 June 1924.

list of the membership" with which to keep track of specific men.¹⁷³ More direct, immediate challenges were offered as well.¹⁷⁴ On one occasion, when a longshoreman was accused of being drunk on the job, the union rejected the Shipping Federation's demand for disciplinary action, arguing that, despite his poor behaviour, he was a "worthy citizen" and, as such, deserved a second chance. Significantly, in this example, the union executive tapped the language of welfare capitalism, in particular the favourable class, gender, and ethnic assumptions which were bound up in the notion of citizenship, to reject the labour manager's demands.¹⁷⁵

This approach was not uncommon. In response to the Shipping Federation's insistence that the Association take on two additional members -- "Piro and Bennett" -- the union accused Crombie of violating one of the underlying principles of labour reform, that only "men who are looking forward to mak[ing] their livelihood [sic] at this class of employment" should be admitted. In the end, Piro and Bennett were finally accepted in to the union "for harmony[']s sake," but not before the executive registered its wider objection, one that blended a concern for due process with a belief that the Shipping Federation's behaviour was an insult to the real working men who earned their positions on the docks: "What we want are men who can speak for

¹⁷³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 4, Crombie to Chairman, Labor Committee, 11 February 1924; Box 23, File 12, Crombie to Clendenning, 10 October 1927.

¹⁷⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 3, Currie to Crombie, 8 July 1924; Box 3, File 4, Walker to Crombie, 9 August 1928

¹⁷⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 4, VDWWA to Crombie, 12 July 1928.

themselves, and there [sic] work on the waterfront will do that, if they know how."¹⁷⁶

But the Association's opposition only went so far; indeed, as the above examples indicate, it was not arguing against labour market reform, but about it, challenging the handling of specific cases, not the Shipping Federation's overall "better workers, better citizens" agenda. On a structural/institutional level, the union had few real options; as per its collective agreement, it was required to provide efficient men and to take care of those who did not measure up. By failing to live up to this responsibility, the union ran the risk of losing its claim to the lion's share of waterfront work. On an ideological level, there was much in the reform vision that appealed to both the union leadership and most rank-and-file workers, as longshoremen and as men: anti-radicalism, steady work, and a living wage. Clearly, the Association was willing to give its members a wide berth when it came to specific indiscretions -- an approach which infuriated the labour manager -- but in the end, to achieve this highly-prized objective, some amount of discipline and punishment was necessary and to some extent desirable, especially when it came to workers suspected of radicalism or serious workplace violations. "Mr Coyle was very active in trying to re-organize the ILA about a year ago, and that he solicited members of this association, for there [sic] signatures for a Document, for that purpose with the intention of disrupting this association and causing strife on the waterfront," the

¹⁷⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 3, VDWWA to Crombie [?], undated, likely 1928 or 1929.

secretary-treasurer wrote to the labour manager in 1927, outlining the union's case against a suspected radical. "[T]he Association agree[s] with the Federation statements that F. Saunders No. 1173 is inefficient and should be stricken from the Association roll and given no further employment by the Federation and the Association be so advised," stated a typical motion passed by the "Joint Adjustment Committee" in 1927, zeroing in on inefficiency, not radicalism, as cause for dismissal.¹⁷⁷

For men like "Mr Coyle" and "F. Saunders," those that did not "know how" to work efficiently, the penalties meted out by the Association and the Shipping Federation – ranging from suspensions to outright expulsions – were a difficult pill to swallow, and not surprisingly, they were often contested. "I don't think that I have been given a square deal," C.P. Perry, an expelled longshoreman, wrote to Crombie. "Now every man likes a fair trial which I am ready to meet any time. ... [I] have always been able to hold my end up on any job and have nev[e]r been turned off one yet. I have a family & a sick wife to look after" As this excerpt suggests, for Perry, as for other working men who were sent packing, to be dismissed in such a perfunctory way was a violation of common sense notions of due process and, perhaps more importantly, a severe indictment of his masculinity, both as a worker

¹⁷⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 2, Wilson to Crombie, 19 July 1927; Box 23, File 8, "Motion ... Joint Adjustment Committee," 22 March 1927.

and as a breadwinner.¹⁷⁸ Similar notions underpinned the accusations of James E. Stott, a veteran longshoremen and sailor who joined the VDWWA during the 1923 strike only to be sacked for inefficiency early in 1924. "I am telling you this [my work history] to prove to you that I am not ignorant of ships. I am not a shirker either," he wrote. "I am a taxpayer in this town and I want to work on the water front and get back in the n[e]w Waterfront Workers Association[.] ... I do think we should have been heard before work was took of us. We were not asked."¹⁷⁹

For Stott, being a "taxpayer in this town" was about as strong and definitive a claim that he could make. No doubt he understood the rhetorical force behind this single word: to be a taxpayer was to own property, be respectable, politically moderate, hard working, and have a wife -- precisely the qualities that the labour manager, like other social and labour reformers, wanted to cultivate. Stott's underlying message, then, was simple: I have done my part to fulfill my obligations, now it's time for the Shipping Federation to do the same. This theme was echoed by another longshoreman, W.A. Smith, who, in a long and chatty letter to Crombie, objected to his regular gang being broken up and its members reassigned to "No mans Land," a war-inspired metaphor used to describe the Association's list of

¹⁷⁸ The quote is from CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 3, C.P. Perry to "Dear Sir," undated, likely 1924. See also Box 24, File 7, A. Salvio [?] to "Dear Sir," 28 October 1924; Box 2, File 3, unsigned, undated letters, likely 1924-1925, to Crombie.

¹⁷⁹ The quote is from CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 30, File 5, James T. Stott to "the Shipping Federation," 2 February 1924; 18 February 1924. See also Box 30, File 5, C. Toogood [?] to Crombie, undated, likely 1926-27.

casual members. Like the other men discussed here, Smith stressed his long history on the waterfront ("Part of a lifetime"), familial obligations, and, in particular, his political values: "I am a former member of that defunked & also rotten to the core organization with its gangs of Cananaugh and Pritchard etc etc who I may say believed in tearing down society instead of building it up." But more to the point, Smith's argument hinged on one idea: that as an "Englishman" he deserved "fair play & justice," a simple request which, in this context, meant that the Shipping Federation must fulfill its obligations to one of its most loyal employees. "I am requesting my little Kick as one will say," he stated. To this end, he demanded that work be shared more evenly and that the "Cool headed men ... who did there damdest to stop Red ideas from running rampant" be given a "fighting chance to say the least."¹⁸⁰ Crombie expressed his sympathy for the man's situation, but added that given that such decisions were made jointly between the VDWWA and the Federation, there was nothing he could do. "[I]f I were a fighting man & knocked that man on the ground I do not think that I would Kick him & put the boots to him whilst he was down," Smith shot back, underscoring the class and gender issues at play. "[A]pparently the Federation won't even let some of us get up upon our knees."

Smith's assertions, like those of other men who were disciplined or expelled from the waterfront, rested on a series of important distinctions: violence versus

¹⁸⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 30, File 5, W.A. Smith to Crombie, January 1925, 31 January 1925.

cool-headedness; socialism versus fair play and justice; foreign origins versus British roots. The significant point here is not simply that notions of class, gender, and ethnicity were woven into his experience, but, more importantly, that the qualities he identified in order to articulate his claim were those the Shipping Federation and other reformers linked to being a citizen. In this regard, not only does Smith's opposition underscore the extent to which the Association was carrying out its obligations as a manager of discontent and the internal conflict within the union that that position generated, but it suggests that amongst waterfront workers a new set of expectations, succored to the notion of citizenship, was developing, one which placed greater emphasis on the reciprocal obligations between boss and worker. As these examples illustrate, when those obligations were not met, the response from workers was both immediate and sharp. To be sure, the promise of welfare capitalism ended early for Smith, but the feelings and desires that he expressed were shared by others still on the job, and when the economic calamity of the 1930s arrived, this dynamic would come to the fore again, only on a wider scale, with greater force, and with ties to an insurgent communist movement.

Whether or not Crombie grasped the importance of these subtle cultural shifts is unclear; but what is obvious is that as early as 1925, not quite two years after the Shipping Federation undertook its programme of decasualization, he generally liked what he saw: "the general condition along the beach is one pointing to quiet and I

believe that consistent weeding-out of undesirable and inefficient men will keep conditions improving as they have done in the last twenty-two months." According to his statistics, by the mid-1920s, the total number of men on the beach had dropped -- "by natural and unnatural elimination" -- from about "2,900 odd men" to approximately 1,300 men, a reduction of over 50 per cent from the immediate post-strike period. At the same time the percentage of work handed over to the VDWWA was slowly rising and men's average monthly earnings, spurred on by labour market reform and improved "shipping conditions," were inching upward, all signs that the men were overall "becoming more efficient as time passes."¹⁸¹ As for the Association itself, Crombie had mixed feelings. Old, maddening work practices were still present amongst the membership, and union leaders, although not shirking their duties entirely, were taking full advantage of any opportunity "for lobbying, covering up and jockeying" on behalf of "inefficient members" and "allowing" improper practices such as job picking "to go on knowing as they do that all these things are prevalent."¹⁸² Despite these misgivings, however, he was confident that the "Balance of Power" was moving in the right direction, but perhaps not as quickly or as frictionless as he would have liked.

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¹⁸¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 32, File 5, Crombie to Joe Webber, Griffiths Stevedoring Company, 2 October 1925.

¹⁸² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, Crombie to Clendenning, 10 October 1927.

The Association's overall compliance in this regard did come with some important strings attached. Indeed, as union officials understood well, underpinning the welfare capitalist bargain was a simple, but very important, trade off. In exchange for "maintain[ing] within its membership only workmen capable of doing a fair day's work and ... eliminating the workman or workmen guilty of abus[ing] the security of the job," the Association was entitled, with few exceptions, to all of the wheat and dock work and, most importantly given its status and level of remuneration, the majority of the ship work as well. "In the ordering of gangs for ship work, three-fifths of such ship work will be given to the Association," read clause 4 of the union's 1924 agreement, "such three-fifths to be computed on the basis of gross earnings as well as on the number of men employed, and this ratio is to be observed and performed by each and every member of the Federation."¹⁸³ It was an important guarantee for many reasons, not the least of which was that it, and the collective agreement more generally, provided the Association with the means to push the Shipping Federation to uphold its end of the deal -- a deal that promised both steady work and a living wage.

The question of waterfront employers' compliance with the terms and conditions of the agreement was raised by union officials just months after the deal itself was signed. First by G.H. Monk, then, more forcefully, by F.H. Lumsden. "At

¹⁸³ CVA, Add.Mss 279, BCSF, Box 4, File 3, "Shipping Federation of British Columbia and VDWWA, Agreement made this 2nd Day of December 1924."

the present time this Association feels very strongly that your Federation has not kept faith with them," Lumsden wrote in the spring of 1924. The president was particularly irked by indications that foremen were bypassing the despatch hall and the Association, the two pillars of labour reform, and "working in their own friends." G. Fraser, a longshoreman, certainly understood what Lumsden was talking about. While working on the Balfour Guthrie wharf earlier that year, he watched as foremen routinely discriminated against VDWWA men. "When they [stevedoring companies] order men from your hall to work a ship they work them about half a day or more & send them home & when ship has worked about a day your men is about all sent back to hall & nearly all ex ILA Men taken on to finish," Fraser wrote to the labour manager. "I noticed the same on ... all ships & you can say the Ex ILA men have the most of the work at the Ballantyne Pier again."¹⁸⁴ It was precisely this fact, that the former members of the ILA were receiving preferential treatment, not just on a single pier, but up and down the waterfront, that prompted Lumsden's letter. "This Association stands ready to assist in promoting the greatest possible efficiency on the waterfront in every way feasible," the union president concluded, "but to do this our men must receive the consideration to which they are entitled."¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 30, File 7, G. Fraser to "Shipping Federation," 2 December 1924.

¹⁸⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 2, Lumsden to Crombie, 27 May 1924; 30 May 1924.

Here, in one short sentence, was the essence of the bargain: the "greatest possible efficiency" in exchange for proper "consideration" of Association members. This was the leitmotif of Lumsden's protest to the labour manager, one that stressed the reciprocal obligations that faced both organizations: "I believe that we can together work out a plan which will not interfere with efficiency, will be within the terms of your agreement and also put this Association in a position to properly perform the functions for which it was founded." But it was not the only theme; indeed, at times Lumsden shelved the language of co-operation and mutual objectives and offered a blunt assessment of the possible consequences in store for the Shipping Federation if it did not follow through on the agreement. "[T]here is considerable influence being circulated among the rank and file to induce them to leave our organization and throw in their lot under one head with a new Association to include every one employed on the beach," he wrote, highlighting the importance of a trustworthy union leadership, the contingent nature of workers' loyalties, and the spectre of a united, more aggressive union capable of holding the Federation's feet to the fire in one sentence.¹⁸⁶ But this was not just empty rhetoric; indeed, in late 1924, the Association's executive passed a series of resolutions which, according

¹⁸⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 2, Lumsden to Crombie, 27 and 30 May 1924; 7 June 1924.

to the labour manager, endorsed the "equivalent of a closed shop -- the worst evil under such an agreement, which the employer of labor has to contend with."¹⁸⁷

Lumsden's complaints were echoed by many others, both at the leadership and rank-and-file level of the union, over the course of the 1920s, and for the most part, their target was the same: the foremen and despatchers who still possessed considerable discretionary power, despite the creation of a centralized, expert-run despatching hall. "The writer is an old ILA man and has now a blue Federation card so has no kick on that score," M. Drayton wrote to the labour manager in 1925. "He wishes to call your attention to the fact that lots of men who never worked on the waterfront previous to the end of the strike are now being recommended for steady employment....It is common rumour that ... new applicants are bribing foremen to push their way."¹⁸⁸ Bribery was just one dimension of a wider pattern of discrimination against VDWWA men that included hiring men without union cards, picking men at the ship's side, and opting for specific workers when other, equally qualified, men were available. "I feel that we have lots of good Canadian workmen making their homes in Vancouver who should be taken care of first," executive member A.M. Currie wrote, playing the citizen card to make his point.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, Crombie to Captain D. Baird, 3 November 1924.

¹⁸⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 24, File 15, M. Drayton to "Dear Sir," undated, likely 1924 or 1925.

¹⁸⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 3, Curries to Crombie, 3 December 1924. Other complaints can be found in: Box 2, File 2, Crombie to Secretary, VDWWA, 10 June 1924 and 21 July 1924; Box 2, File 4, Crombie to Secretary, 10 March 1925; Box 2, File 7, C.J. Wilson to Crombie, 9

But such practices were not limited to the foremen; indeed, inside the Shipping Federation's hall, the showpiece of its new progressive view of labour relations, various despatchers were accused of similar infractions. Writing to the labour manager in the fall of 1927, union secretary C.J. Wilson argued that, judging by his recent behaviour, the despatcher had clearly "taken the law unto himself" and was "not living up to the rules and regulations as laid down for his guidance," a way of conducting business which was made worse by his "almighty, [I'm] always right" attitude.¹⁹⁰ The upshot, Wilson argued on behalf of the union executive, was "dissension" in the ranks and, on a wider plain, a yawning gap between the highest and lowest income earners, a trend which resonated with waterfront workers in a way that specific violations of the collective agreement perhaps did not.¹⁹¹

Wilson might have had the case of longshoreman Alfred Mount in mind when he sent his letter. In the fall of 1925, Mount was bumped from his regular gang by Crombie, presumably for reasons of inefficiency, and assigned a more casual status on the waterfront. At the time he was "pretty sore" about having to "give up [his] gang," but thought that he might be able to combine his smaller earnings on the

December 1926; Box 3, File 5, various reports, 1929; Box 22, File 11, "Minutes of a meeting of the Shipping Federation Advisory Committee," 13 October 1931 and "Memo re: Stevedoring Irregularities," 27 April 1932.

¹⁹⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 2, C.J. Wilson to Crombie, 25 October 1927. For another example see Box 50, File 9, Crombie to Burns, 17 June 1929; Box 6, File 11, unsigned to Crombie, 26 April 1934 [?].

¹⁹¹ On income disparities see, for example, CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 1, C.J. Wilson to Crombie, 26 February 1927

beach with work as a sailor, his old occupation, to make ends meet. No doubt he was angered by his reduced work opportunities, but what made this debacle particularly galling was the role that dirty, behind-the-scenes politics played: “[W]hat I don’t like is the discrimination, I have all ways done my work below or aloft & can do-it yet, but where it comes to a man to have to buy his job it is not playing the game. ... I am not begging any favours only looking for a square deal which I don’t think I am getting”

As this quotation indicates, discrimination on the job was an affront to Mount’s sensibilities on several levels. Not only did it violate his belief that respectable men, especially veterans of the Great War like himself and Major Crombie, “Play the Games” fairly and honestly, but it insulted the pride he attached to working hard and working well. “I done what I could for the gang & in fact made them what they was,” Mount told the labour manager, “for they knew nothing outside the Empress [ships] when I got them. & in the first place I told Cook [the despatcher] I didn’t want the gang, but he said take it, so [I] done the best I could.” What was more, by undercutting his ability to work, foul play in the despatch hall undercut his ability to secure a living wage and support his wife. “I find that through being so long away from that kind of job and jobs in ships being scarce I am out,” he wrote in 1925. “I have earned 25\$ in 11 weeks so that dont look like much of a xmas for my wife or myself.” Refracted through the lenses of class, gender, and ethnicity, Mount’s response illustrates a simple, but compelling point: more than just a

violation of the letter of the collective agreement, the actions of foremen and despatchers in this regard were also a violation of its spirit, its implicit guarantee that under this new, more progressive labour relations regime, discrimination, favouritism, and meagre wages -- the hallmarks of the old picking system -- would be eliminated.¹⁹²

* * *

This ongoing informal pressure, emanating from both the leadership and rank and file of the union, for a square deal was often combined with more formal, political strategies as well. Consider the Association's response to the Shipping Federation's "safety first" initiative, an undertaking dedicated to reducing accidents and deaths on the job and nurturing a greater sense of co-operation between the union and waterfront employers. By the mid-to-late 1920s, it had failed on both accounts. According to employers, the signs of this turn of events were unmistakable. Attendance at "safety first" smokers ("Come and Spend an Interesting and Enjoyable Evening!") was lacklustre and the meetings of the joint safety committee, if they were held at all, were ineffective; as a consequence, Crombie claimed, it had developed "no way of driving [its] work into the men's heads" -- and what methods it did possess were just not working.¹⁹³ "Quite a sum of money was expended in large posters appealing to the men to reduce accidents," the head of

¹⁹² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 43, File 7, Alfred Mount to Crombie, 15 December 1925. See also Box 24, File 15. M. Drayton to Crombie, 20 February, likely 1924 or 1925.

¹⁹³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 50, File X, Crombie to Irons, 3 August 1926.

one shipping company wrote in 1926, "they had no effect whatever [sic], and the Finance Committee are [sic] of [the] opinion that expenditures on such items as these posters is [sic] a sheer waste of money."¹⁹⁴ More damning than workers' passive rejection of safety rallies, though, was the evidence compiled by the safety department and WCB that indicated that the waterfront was no safer in the late 1920s than it was when the "safety first" initiative began. According to the former source, for example, between 1924 and 1926 the number of days lost due to accident and death on the job jumped from 14,735 to 18,693, or 21%. This sharp rise was due to a 150% increase in workplace fatalities over the same period (from 2 to 5), tragedies which, in the morbid calculus of the safety department, were considered as the "equivalent" of 1866 days lost.¹⁹⁵ "We have certainly not improved one bit in this feature since we first took up accident prevention," Crombie remarked in 1929 after reviewing the WCB material.¹⁹⁶ To be sure, it was an assessment that the Association certainly shared; but, as its response to the "safety first" initiatives suggests, it disagreed sharply over the causes of accidents and how best to prevent

¹⁹⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 3, "Memo for the Secretary, Shipping Federation of BC," 20 April 1926.

¹⁹⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 54, File 8, Safety Engineer to Secretary, Shipping Federation, 3 February 1927. This figure does not account for the 16% increase in men despatched during this period (1924: 149,153; 1926: 177,797); when the "days lost" figure is adjusted, the increase is smaller, but no less shocking, about 6.7%. According to the VTLC between 1912 and 1923, the ILA period, eight men were killed on the docks and from 1923 to 1926, the first three years of the VDWWA, nineteen men were killed. See Box 3, Number 2, "Big Battle on the Waterfront," leaflet, undated, likely 1927.

¹⁹⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 54, File 8, Crombie to K.J. Burns, President, BCSF, 6 July 1929.

them. Waterfront workers' loyalty was certainly a contested one, and in this context, as in other realms of waterfront politics, it was the identifications and expectations associated with securing a square deal which anchored their position.

From the Shipping Federation's point of view, there was plenty of blame to go around for the failure of the "safety first" programme. The safety manager, for example, was accused of being too "theor[etical]" and, as a result, not possessing the "practical," "first hand knowledge of ship's gear, rigging of same, loading and stowing cargo" necessary to "gain or hold the interest" of waterfront workers and other "various parties interested in longshoring."¹⁹⁷ But as ineffective as Sweeney was, the real culprits in all of this were the employees. "[W]e are told that 69% of all accidents are due to the fault of the men," a memo to the executive of the Shipping Federation from its own safety committee stated, "but we have taken no steps to [en]force this fact upon the men themselves, nor taken any drastic steps to overcome this condition by enforcing safe practices with the[ir] co-operation...." It was a position that Crombie shared, only with a slight twist; perhaps it would be better to shed all pretenses of co-operation, he opined in 1929, and "penalize men who through their own carelessness have become injured."¹⁹⁸ Taken together, these

¹⁹⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 55, File 2, "Memorandum for the Executive of the Shipping Federation": "Suggestion in Connection With Safety Work and Accident Prevention," undated, likely 1926.

¹⁹⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 55, File 2, "Suggestion in Connection With Safety Work and Accident Prevention," undated, likely 1926. See also Box 54, File 8, Crombie to K.J. Burns, 6 July 1929.

statements lay bare a perspective that an employer in the 19th century would have recognized and certainly endorsed, one which attributed accidents and deaths on the job to unavoidable conditions of employment, placed exclusive emphasis on the choices made by individual workers, and, as a consequence, shifted both blame and culpability from master to servant.¹⁹⁹

The Association rejected this position and offered, instead, a critique of the “safety first” programme that highlighted one of the contradictions at the heart of the Shipping Federation’s wider welfare capitalist agenda: at the same time as waterfront employers were placing great emphasis on safety issues they were pushing for increased efficiency on the waterfront which, like speed-ups in other sectors of the economy, only served to heighten the likelihood of accident and death.²⁰⁰ In response to the sharp increase in fatalities in 1926, the Association issued instructions to its business agent, Joe “Milk-and-pop-man” Boyes, “that if at any time he sees a condition that endangers the safety of the men working that he is to draw the attention of the Superintendent or Foreman” and, “if necessary, to take our men off the job under such circumstances.”²⁰¹ It was a provocative move; not only did it place the ineffectiveness of the safety engineer in bold relief, but it marked a reversal of the business agent’s initial role on the waterfront, one that was

¹⁹⁹ See Keelor, 45.

²⁰⁰ See Robert Asher’s “The Limits of Big Business Paternalism: Relief for Injured Workers in the Years Before Workmen’s Compensation,” in Rosner and Markowitz, eds., Dying For Work, 30, on this point.

²⁰¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 2, File 7, C.J. Wilson to W.C.D. Crombie, 3 August 1926.

endorsed by Crombie shortly after the 1923 strike: to promote efficiency. What was more, given Boyes's specific instructions to challenge the boss's authority, it laid bare the Association's understanding that it was inequality on the job, not workers' individual carelessness, that was at the root of the safety problem. "The anxiety of some of the foremen to speed up seems to interfere with reasonable consideration for what a good average man can stand," secretary Allan Walker told Crombie in 1928.²⁰²

This perspective formed the basis of the Association's subsequent campaign for better compensation for injured workers and their dependents, tougher safety standards, and a government-appointed gear inspector – a campaign waged with the support of the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, Workman's Compensation Board, and labour-friendly politicians Angus MacInnis, J.S. Woodsworth, and A.W. Neill. Not surprisingly, the Federation and the Vancouver Harbour Commissioners were steadfastly opposed to any government involvement in labour relations, insisting that the "exercise of such powers would cause delay in the despatch of vessels," "diminish the commercial attractiveness of the port," and "tend to the disadvantage of men depending for a living on the prosperity of shipping."²⁰³ But within a year, the harbour commissioners had changed their

²⁰² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 4, Walker to Crombie, 9 August 1928.

²⁰³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 56, File 3, W.D. Harvie, Secretary, Vancouver Harbour Commissioners to G.B. Macaulay, Secretary-Treasurer, Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, 11 December 1929.

position, the combined impact of stiff opposition from the WCB, a recommendation made by the conciliation board handling the 1930 re-negotiation of the Association-Federation collective agreement, and wider trends toward accident prevention, as evidenced by Ottawa's support for an International Labor Organization agreement on marine safety, pushing it to draft a set of tough safety by-laws.²⁰⁴ As a consequence, the Shipping Federation turned its sights on the Ministry of Marine in Ottawa and lobbied, with the support of the Board of Trade, Merchants' Exchange, BC Loggers Association, Shipping Federation of Canada, and Liberal MPs from BC, to have the by-laws declared unconstitutional on the grounds that they were beyond the scope of the harbour commissioners' authority. It was successful in this endeavour; clearly, welfare capitalism was as much about fending off the encroachment of the state as it was about beating back bona fide trade unions.

In the wake of this conflict, the Shipping Federation moved to shore up its safety programme by giving its engineer the power to stop work, improving its own safety code, and offering an eight-point plan to forge stronger links between the harbour board and waterfront employers to implement "regulations that will be mutually agreeable."²⁰⁵ "There is no question, however, but the agitation will be continued and every effort should be made to educate the foremen stevedore and

²⁰⁴ See the correspondence between the Shipping Federation, WCB, and VHC in BCARS, RAG, GR1323, W-278-3, "Opinions," B-2370, specifically frames 117 through 153. For more on the ILO declaration see reports in the Labour Gazette July 1929.

²⁰⁵ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, W-278-3, "Opinions," B-2370, Crombie to W.D. Harvie, Secretary, Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, 25 June 1931.

the men to use more caution," one waterfront employer remarked afterward. As this analysis illustrates, however, waterfront workers placed little faith in the educational, or "soft," dimensions of the safety first initiative -- the rhetoric of co-operation and common objectives standing in stark contrast to the grim reality that it was workers (and, by extension, their families), not bosses, who suffered the physical, psychological, and financial repercussions associated with a "strained back," "fractured arm," or "serious head injury -- fatal." In short, not only was the Shipping Federation politically and morally responsible for compensating waterfront workers who were injured on the job, but by pushing its employees too hard, then failing to look after them adequately once they became incapacitated, it undermined their ability to both earn a living wage and provide for their families -- values at the core of the welfarist consensus. As important as it is to foreground the persistence of class conflict, though, it is equally significant that the company union, when faced with the challenge of enforcing better safety standards, was unable (or unwilling) to advance its position through collective struggle and solidarity with other maritime unions, opting instead for a more moderate, gradualist approach -- one of the hallmarks of labourism, not radicalism.

* * *

At the same time as the Association contested the Shipping Federation's position on occupational safety, it tapped the more formal, structured channels of negotiation as provided by the collective agreement to push the Shipping Federation

to "play the game" in the realm of remuneration: provide a working man with a fair chance to earn a wage sufficient to support himself and, if he was married, his family as well. The question of earnings, like the issue of worker discipline, was handled by a special Association-Federation joint committee which met once a year in October to determine an annual increase or decrease in wages. Its proceeding were guided by clause 14 of the collective agreement which held that "[w]ages are to be raised and lowered as conditions at the time of the [wage] conference compare with conditions at the time of signing this Agreement."²⁰⁶ In this context, "conditions" referred to the cost of living in Vancouver. Calculated by the labour manager based on the annual reports contained in the federal Department of Labour's Labour Gazette, it was the final word on wage rates: if it increased, waterfront workers were entitled to a pay hike, if it declined, waterfront employers were well within their rights to rollback wages.²⁰⁷ For the Shipping Federation, it was an arrangement that brought predictability, rationality, and an air of scientific certainty to the bargaining process, qualities which, in its opinion, defined more progressive industrial relations regimes.²⁰⁸ But the cost-of-living clause was potentially beneficial in other ways too.

²⁰⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 3, "Agreement Made This 2nd Day of December, 1924"

²⁰⁷ The Shipping Federation was not the only body to see the potential of a cost of living clause in bringing about labour peace. A similar arrangement was introduced by a Dominion board of arbitration after the Vancouver Island coal miners strike of 1912-14. See Eleanor Bartlett's "Real Wages and Standards of Living in Vancouver, 1901-1929," 3-63 at 22 and 29-30. See Margaret E. McCallum, "Keeping Women in Their Place: The Minimum Wage in Canada, 1920-1925," in Radforth and MacDowell, ed., Canadian Working Class History, 432-457.

²⁰⁸ Crombie was certainly aware of this fact, corresponding with Frank Foisie, the industrial relations manager in Seattle, on the debates raging in reform circles about the uses and abuses of

Unpopular decisions such as wage freezes or cuts were easily attributed to impersonal market forces; in contrast, any move to increase workers' earnings, especially if there was no "justifiable grounds," could appear as an act of sheer benevolence.²⁰⁹ Indeed, tempering severity with mercy to nurture greater compliance to the status quo was a tactic as old as paternalism itself, an act which made something a gift that should have been a right.²¹⁰

This was certainly the case just a year after the original deal was inked. In 1925, the joint Association-Federation committee agreed to give ship workers a raise from \$.80 to \$.84 per hour, a boost of nearly 5 per cent, at a time when the cost of living, according to Crombie's calculations, had increased only 1 per cent.²¹¹ Although the precise reasons for this decision are unclear, it appears that, in the wake of the 1923 strike and the signing of the VDWWA's first collective agreement in 1924, waterfront employers wanted to make good on their promise of being a more enlightened employer, in particular, their belief that "an underpaid employee is a liability rather than an asset in any business."²¹² But between 1925 and 1928,

this measurement in labour relations. See CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box X, File X, F.P. Foisie, Industrial Relations Manager, Waterfront Employers of Seattle to Crombie, 25 April 1935.

²⁰⁹ The quote is from CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 2, Crombie to Emery, 29 November 1927.

²¹⁰ See McCallum, "Corporate Welfare," 50.

²¹¹ Under the collective agreement, \$.80 per hour was the base wage rate for both ship and dock work and \$21.91, the cost of living in Vancouver for a week in 1924, was established as the base cost of living figure. See CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 62, File 6, Crombie to K.A. McLennan, 18 June 1931. Under the 1925 resolution, wages for dock workers were not changed.

²¹² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 33-B-5, File 8. "Waterfront Labor Situation," 15 March 1935.

no additional wage increases were secured, the vice-president of the Shipping Federation claiming that there was simply no need: fewer men on the docks, coupled with an increase in port traffic, resulted in "steady employment" and, despite no hourly wage hike, a "satisfactory increase" in overall earnings.²¹³ To the leadership of the Association, this turn of events was particularly galling given the union's ongoing commitment to the general terms of the welfare capitalist bargain, despite the favouritism, discrimination, and unequal distribution of income rampant on the beach. As a result, in October 1926, the Association refused to accept the Shipping Federation's decision to maintain current wage levels, prompting a lengthy battle over the meaning of clause 14 and, by extension, the balance of power on the waterfront.

With the Association's rejection of the Shipping Federation's wage offer, the negotiations shifted from the joint committee process to an arbitration board consisting of F.H. Clendenning, executive member of the Shipping Federation, H.F. Lumsden, former union leader, and J.S. MacKay, arbitrator. The hearings began with a motion from the union, represented by MP and lawyer George Black, to have the dispute handled under provincial or federal labour laws. After a short debate, MacKay and Clendenning ruled against the motion, holding that the drafters of the collective agreement intended the panel to operate under the auspices of the

²¹³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 12, File 5, Vice President to Wendell B. Farris, 18 March 1927.

Shipping Federation, not the government. Although the motion failed, that it was brought forth at all suggests that the Association was skeptical of its ability to receive a fair hearing -- a square deal -- and thus was willing to utilize other resources at its disposal. Clendenning understood the union's strategy well, remarking later that any government involvement "would have made possible the subpoenaing of witnesses, the producing of records, as well as the upsetting of the award for the slightest reason."²¹⁴ Here, as in the realm of safety, the legitimacy of this industrial relations regime depended, at least in part, on the exclusion of the state.

The union's case for higher wages was based on one simple contention: that the word "conditions" as contained in clause 14 did not mean just the cost of living, but, given the agreement's lack of precision, also included the conditions on the waterfront more generally. In this regard, Black argued, the Association had the right to base its claim on other factors, not the least of which was the "increased efficiency" of the Association itself. Indeed, efficiency was the reason the company union was created, the collective agreement signed, and the decasualization of the waterfront undertaken in the first place; in short, given its centrality to labour-capital relations on the waterfront, it was absurd to suggest, based on an extremely narrow reading of the clause, that it should not be taken into account. It was a strong

²¹⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, F.H. Clendenning, "Memorandum to the Executive and Members of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia," 17 February 1927.

argument, one which attempted to use the language of Taylorism to the union's advantage. For its part, the Shipping Federation, represented by lawyer Fred Lucas, contended that "conditions" simply referred to the cost of living index in the city, and since it had not increased since 1925, there was no legal justification for a wage hike of any kind.²¹⁵

The interpretation of clause 14 prompted a "long and lengthy discussion" between the arbitrators. Not surprisingly, Lumsden supported the call for a broader interpretation and Clendenning opposed such a move. In the end, MacKay agreed with the union that the clause was sufficiently vague that a more inclusive reading was possible, but he added an important rider to this position, one that Clendenning demanded and, evidently, received: "a MARKED increase in efficiency would have to be shown before ... the Association members were entitled to any increase in wages."²¹⁶ Not surprisingly, although both the Association and Federation "stated positively that the men were more efficient," there was no agreement on whether or not there was a "marked" increase in this regard. In the end, waterfront employers, backed by the expert testimony of the labour manager and a half dozen members of the Shipping Federation's executive, armed with many "exhibits" and "clear cut evidence," were able to convince MacKay that a small percentage of workers, most

²¹⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12. F.H. Clendenning, "Memorandum to the Executive and Members of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia," 17 February 1927.

²¹⁶ "It was clearly proven that the Federation did not desire, nor did they approve of the men taking undue risks," Clendenning wrote to his political masters, commenting specifically on the union's claim that work was more deadly. "I was, therefore, able to satisfy Mr. MacKay in this connection."

of them non-VDWWA members, were responsible for whatever efficiency gains were realized on the waterfront and that, overall, "the men were not handling more cargo per gang today than in 1924."²¹⁷ As a result, the Association's demand for a wage increase was refused.

The Shipping Federation was not impressed by such activism. Following the board's recommendation that it tighten up the collective agreement, it presented a "Memorandum" to the union which, in five short, yet aggressive paragraphs, accused the Association of being woefully inefficient, refusing to provide "practical or constructive" advice to improve labour relations, and engaging in repeated "objections against the employment by the Shipping Federation of recognizedley [sic] efficient longshoremen" As a consequence, waterfront employers sought, "particularly in view of the request for an increase in wages," a "wider" interpretation of the agreement which would "guarantee to [employers] the privilege of securing, maintaining, and employing for the future only efficient workmen." As this sentence suggests, and the legal brief affixed to the memo confirms, there was nothing "wider" about the Shipping Federation's new interpretation, at least not from the Association's point of view. Indeed, the brief sought, among other things, to close loopholes in the agreement (clause 14), curtail the amount of consultation required to admit or dismiss members of the union (clause 5), and reaffirm the dominant

²¹⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, F.H. Clendenning, "Memorandum to the Executive and Members of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia," 17 February 1927.

position of the Shipping Federation, a status which, judging by the recent wage debate and other conflicts with the Association, was being challenged.²¹⁸ Only by endorsing this memo, a letter addressed to Association President Ivan Emery began, would the Shipping Federation consider the union's renewed demand for an additional six cents per hour for both ship and dock work at a time when the cost of living, as in previous years, showed little increase.²¹⁹

After several weeks of negotiation, the offer was put to a vote amongst the union membership and was defeated by a margin of 273 to 38 (with two spoiled ballots), the Association leadership maintaining that the memo represented an unjustified limitation of its role on the beach and that its wage demands were legitimate: production on the waterfront was higher, wages in other ports and industries were better, and, significantly, the "cost of maintaining a family of five," the basis of the Labour Gazette's cost of living index, was far greater than the labour manager was willing to admit. Thus, without any agreement on the question of wages, the hourly rate for 1927, as in 1926, remained the same, and the struggle

²¹⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 8, "Suggestions Re: Wider Interpretation of Agreement" and "Memorandum of Agreement between the Shipping Federation of British Columbia and The Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers Association," undated, likely 1927 or 1928. One specific proposal in which gang leaders would receive a special wage incentive if they took greater control of their gangs captures this dynamic well. By turning the gang leader into a "sub-foremen," Crombie reasoned, the "weaknesses in control under Clause 5," which stipulated that all decisions related to the "personnel" of gangs must be made jointly, would be "off-set." See Box 23, File 8, Crombie to F.H. Clendenning, 10 October 1927.

²¹⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 8, "Suggestions Re: Wider Interpretation of Agreement" and "Memorandum of Agreement....," 1927; Box 3, File 2, Crombie to Ivan A. Emery, 29 November 1927.

between the Shipping Federation and the Association over specific, though conflicting visions of welfare capitalism was carried on over a different, though certainly related, issue.²²⁰

* * *

Running parallel to the union's call for a wage hike was a provocative call for rotation despatch, a way of divvying up available work which had its roots in the ILA days and had been percolating within the Association for several years. From the union's perspective, the logic underlying this position was straightforward. To resolve the issue of discrimination on the job and close the gap between the highest and lowest income earners in the union, it was necessary to place limits on the discretionary power of both despatchers and foremen, limits which were far greater than those set out in the existing collective agreement. By forcing the stevedoring companies to hire gangs or individual men in strict rotation, this system promised to do just that -- and, in the process, distribute earnings more equally. "At our last Adjustment Committee Meeting in discussing the matter [of rotation despatch, the labour manager] made the statement that there was on the average only a difference of \$35 between the first 16 gangs," the union's secretary treasurer wrote in 1927. "This on a monthly average which is what I believe [he] mean[s] would amount to \$420 per year which is a very considerable amount."

²²⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, Chairman, Negotiation Committee, to the president of the Shipping Federation, 16 December 1927.

No doubt the men pushing this scheme, H.F. Lumsden, C.J. Wilson, Joe Boyes, I.A. Emery, and John Hughes, understood what was at stake here. Not only was this position an attempt to extend the reach of the Association into the sacred realm of despatching, but, in a wider sense, it was a challenge to the cardinal rules of welfare capitalism as laid out by waterfront employers: efficiency "can and must be the only condition which is allowed to govern employment of labor," competition between gangs was the only way to ensure men worked productively, and labour -- as Crombie once put it in a letter to an employer -- was "in [no] position to propose working conditions to the Federation."²²¹ Like the push for increased wages, this conflict was about securing a square deal, only here, it was access to work, not remuneration per se, that was at stake. It is perhaps not a surprise, then, that the Association's initial 1926 proposal was modest, suggesting that rotation despatch be introduced only amongst the casual board men, those waterfront workers with the slimmest work opportunities and, as a consequence, the lowest wages.²²² Later -- in 1928 and 1929 -- it would suggest that such a system be introduced amongst the more prestigious and higher-earning ship gangs. "Under this system all gangs must be kept up to a high state of efficiency or they would not be despatched," the union executive reassured the labour manager. "[I]t is also equally fair to all

²²¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, Crombie to Captain Baird, 2 November 1924.

²²² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 1, Secretary, VDWWA, to Crombie, 16 April 1926.

Stevedoring Com[p]anies, not allowing one to get the best of it by monopolizing any certain gangs."²²³

Crombie was not impressed, not by the ongoing complaints about wages, despatchers, and company foremen and even less so by the Association's proposals. "The present method of despatching casual men is...based upon the one important point, and which is agreed to by your Association, that upon the relative capabilities of the individual men on the casual board must depend his chance of being despatched, " he wrote in a long-winded riposte. "I cannot agree to, nor can I see any advantage or common sense in allowing inefficient or incapable men to foster the belief that they are entitled to demand employment...." In Crombie's opinion, the problem on the waterfront was not the indiscretion of this or that foreman -- "the natural result of human frailty" -- but the inefficiency of the union, and until its men were uniformly productive, employers would seek out the best men, regardless of their institutional affiliation. This notion was given a fuller elaboration in his rejection of the Association's more ambitious aim of introducing rotation despatch into the ranks of the ship gangs. Not only was it questionable whether or not the Association leadership actually represented the true interests of the majority of union members, he told the president of the Shipping Federation in 1929, but "[f]rankly speaking, the remedy is not in changing the ordering or despatching of

²²³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 1, Secretary-Treasurer to Crombie, 26 February 1927.

gangs, but in organizing control of the personnel of the gangs."²²⁴ In short, rotation despatch, in any form, was not "practical," but "mythical" and "theoretical" – epithets he routinely employed to describe ILA-like behaviour – and as such must be opposed; it was a position shared by members of the Shipping Federation.²²⁵

But as resolute as Crombie was in his defense of efficiency as "the only condition which is allowed to govern employment," he also understood the potential for such complaints, however unjustified or ridiculous, to undermine the spirit of co-operation that he was attempting to cultivate. In this regard, as the Association continued to push for change, he worked to bolster both the existing procedures and the institutional context that kept the Association in check. To this end, he admonished some employers for their more flagrant violations of the "written regulations" that governed employment on the beach. Discrimination and favouritism "leave[s] the men sore" and "make[s] it difficult for me and my staff to prove that there is any advantage in changing from the old established picking system, and in this instance makes an absolute farce of my written regulations," he told one Vancouver Harbour Commissioner in 1927.²²⁶ It was a warning he issued to K.J. Burns, a member of the Shipping Federation's executive, in 1929: "The factor of the unknown transactions which almost hourly take place with the Employers of labour

²²⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 6, File 2, Crombie to Burns, 8 May 1929.

²²⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 32, File 5, Weber to Crombie, 24 February 1925.

²²⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 11, Crombie to John McLeod, VHC, 2 July 1927; see also Box 50, File 9, Crombie to Burns, 17 June 1929.

inside the despatching Office, lend a continual air of mystery and suspicion to the work of the Despatchers and is an irritant to the minds of the class of men who are susceptible to that kind of thing."

Furthermore, in the spirit of co-operation -- and to help clear the air of "mystery and suspicion" -- he placed a counter offer before the Association, one that took aim not at reforming the despatch, but, not surprisingly, the "class of men available." Only by reclassifying, re-registering, and, in the process, "dispos[ing] of the inefficient and physically unfit men in some way or another" from the casual board -- and in the Association more generally -- will this "continual cause of friction" between the Association and the Shipping Federation be eliminated. To this end, he encouraged the Association to bring all its complaints and, more importantly, opinions of his proposals before the appropriate joint committee for a full and frank discussion.²²⁷ Discussions regarding the casual board took place before the joint adjustment committee in late 1926 and early 1927; the question of altering the ship gang system moved from the informal realm of discussion to the more structured, formal channels of collective bargaining in 1929-1930, when the Shipping Federation's 1923 pact with the Association was up for renewal. (The latter will be analyzed in a subsequent chapter as part of a wider discussion of the impact of the Depression on welfare capitalism.)

²²⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 1, Crombie to "The Secretary," 5 May 1926. For a similar response see Box 2, File 2, Crombie to Monk, 10 March 1924.

For Crombie, that rotation despatch was even on the agenda suggested to him that the Association was -- once again -- overstepping its bounds, encroaching on matters that belonged to waterfront employers, not to workers. Writing to the president of the Shipping Federation, Major R.G. Parkhurst, in 1927, shortly after the joint adjustment committee completed its hearings on reforming the casual board -- hearings which zeroed in on how best to categorize casual workers, define efficiency, and improve the procedures for removing ineffective men -- Crombie laid bare this position. "[T]he opportunity which will be presented by a new classification of the men [must] be taken full advantage," he advised Parkhurst, "and whatever suggestions they bring forward should cover definite instructions for the future guidance of myself, and particularly that the V&DWWA be distinctly told that they have no authority to interfere with the methods or the policy which the Shipping Federation decide to put into effect." In short, Crombie concluded, the Association had "grown up" and "through one cause or another during the last few years" it appears "to believe that [it has] as much jurisdiction in the matter of despatching" as the Shipping Federation, and that was simply unacceptable.²²⁸ The most revealing phrase in this excerpt is "grown up" -- a metaphor which underscores Crombie's sense that, with the push for rotation despatch, the hierarchical, paternalist relationship between the two organizations had been breeched. Indeed, that he was

²²⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 1, Crombie to Parkhurst, 10 March 1927.

irked by the Association's maturity suggests that, from his perspective, proper class relations on the waterfront required a company union that was, to extend the metaphor, more dependent and more childlike. Restoring this (im)balance of power, then, was at the heart of this dispute.

Given the Shipping Federation's steadfast rejection of rotation despatch, it is perhaps not a surprise that the Association's proposals, like its wage demands, were never implemented. In late February, 1927, the union's business agent, Joe Boyes, and Crombie signed off on a joint report that proposed a reorganization of the casual board that took aim at the quality of the men available, not the procedures that governed their access to work. In particular, the report recommended that a special sub-committee of the joint adjustment committee be appointed to "segregate the men on the casual Boards" into five different classifications -- spare ship men, lumber and general cargo men, general cargo men, regular truckers, and casual truckers -- each designation marking off descending levels of "fitness" and, as a consequence, descending access to work. As well, the report planned for additional joint sub-committees to look after any grievances that reclassified workers were likely to have; ordinary "efficient" longshoremen and the despatchers would be included to help eliminate "suspicion" in the despatch hall. In short, by creating more accurate categories of men and the additional bureaucratic infrastructure to monitor and manage them, it would be possible to improve the productivity of the casual board and in the process eliminate

the constant "friction" between bosses, workers, and despatchers. The "Boyes-Crombie report," as it became known in Shipping Federation circles, said nothing of rotation despatch, not in passing, not even in critique.

This is not to say that the Association was not able to secure modest concessions; indeed, traces of its more ambitious proposal are evident in the reports' definition of efficiency -- a hybrid of economic, political, and personal variables to be used by the special sub-committee to classify casual workers. In addition to "personality," "physical make-up," and "reports, habits, characteristics, etc.," the definition included other criteria such as "earning ability," "regular employment," and "opportunities for employment," three notions which suggest that, although rotation despatch was a non-starter, how often and how much a worker made would be considered. As well, the report went some way to strengthening the Association's claim that any dismissals carried out under this arrangement, and on the waterfront in general, must pass through the union's own internal review process, as per the existing collective agreement, an exercise that Crombie often found frustrating and slow. But clearly, the union's agenda, both its desire for higher wages and rotation despatch, had withered substantially, a development which illustrates the power of the labour manager, backed by the authority of the Shipping Federation and the apparatus of welfare capitalism, to set limits as to what was "practical" and "business-like" and therefore worthy of consideration and what, in his opinion, was "theoretical" and, as such, not on the agenda at all. In this context,

class conflict was not read as the inevitable by product of deep-seated, structural inequality between bosses and workers, but as "friction," a condition which could be ameliorated by the proper application of better information, organization, and managerial technique.

* * *

For both the Shipping Federation and the Association, the conflict over safety, wages, and rotation despatch were not simply about the day-to-day mechanics of labour reform, as important as they were, but, on a wider plain, about the distribution of power. Those at the helm of the union and those leading the Shipping Federation shared a disdain for radical politics, but, clearly, disliking socialists did not translate into a uniform understanding of the pith and substance of welfare capitalism. Within a narrow institutional and political context, the Association leaders, drawing on a set of labourist sensibilities that persisted throughout this period, sought, what they called, a "square deal," an orientation shared by many rank and filers as well. Girding the union's perspective was a strong sense that the union had, to this point, fulfilled its obligations by providing men, as the agreement stated, "capable of a fair's day work," a process which was the cornerstone of decasualization. Where, it was asking, was the fair day's pay?

It is no surprise that the union's assertion of its right to a square deal was tied so directly to the question of access to work and levels of remuneration. Indeed, as its challenge to the use of the Labour Gazette's statistics and desire for a more

equitable distribution of earnings suggest, more than just a concrete measurement of a standard of living, the ideal of a living wage was linked to a man's ability to assume his rightful place as a husband, father, and citizen. Woven into the politics of welfare capitalism, then, was a specific set of gender politics as well; not only did Association leaders distinguish themselves, both implicitly and explicitly, from the class politics and masculinity of radical working-class men but, at the same, by embracing the notion of a living wage, they incorporated a vision of gender hierarchy within the family as well -- a male breadwinner and a dependent wife -- and pressed it into service to challenge the Shipping Federation.²²⁹ It was this notion, a square deal, that oriented the Association's struggle on the job and formed the backbone of an emerging set of expectations as to what an employer owed its employees, expectations which would be hard to meet in the 1930s.

But as crucial as it is to draw out the negotiated dynamics of welfare capitalism, it is important not to soft-peddle the material and ideological leverage that the Shipping Federation possessed. While the impact of non-wage incentives such as the "safety first" initiative was minimal, the combined impact of company unionism and decasualization, though contested, was extensive. This notion is perhaps best represented by the prominence of the labour manager himself. Indeed,

²²⁹ See Todd McCallum, "'Not A Sex Question'?: The One Big Union and the Politics of Radical manhood," *Labour/Le Travail* 42 (Fall 1998), 15-54; Stephen Penfold, "'Have You No Manhood in You'?: Gender and Class in the Cape Breton Coal Towns, 1920-1926," *Acadiensis* 23:2 (Spring 1994), 21-44.

it was his presence on the waterfront as an expert in labour relations and the mountains of statistics prepared by him and his department that both framed the issues and, in the end, proved decisive in settling one of the most contentious questions: efficiency. Knowledge, Crombie no doubt understood, was indeed power, a notion underscored by a letter he wrote to members of the Shipping Federation as both the wage and rotation despatch debates -- which pivoted on the question of efficiency -- heated up. "[The data] should be furnished in such a form as to prove that the tonnage handled in 1926 per hour is no greater than, or less than, that handled in 1924," he said.²³⁰ That the union possessed no equivalent, independent means of assembling this kind of material and, by implication, was forced to make its case based on Crombie's statistics, evidence crafted to support the bosses' position, only underscores the Shipping Federation's advantage. It is perhaps not a surprise, then, that throughout this period it was only the efficiency of workers, not the profitability of waterfront employers -- the best indication of how hard waterfront workers had been labouring -- that was under scrutiny. Indeed, after nearly a decade of reform, the policies, procedures, and rhetoric associated with Taylorism constituted the political and, to a large degree, the ideological terrain upon which the battle between labour and capital on the beach took place. To be sure, the accommodation between the Shipping Federation and its employees was an

²³⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, Crombie to Members of the British Columbia Shipping Federation, 19 January 1927.

uneasy and negotiated one, but it was one that was ultimately settled on terms favoured by the bosses, not the workers. Only with the onset of the Great Depression would a more radical challenge to welfare capitalism, one which drew on the existing tensions between the Association and Shipping Federation, be mounted.

But all of this -- the politics and possibilities of securing a square deal, the rising expectations that accompanied this dynamic, and the connection between the moderate struggles of 1920s and the more aggressive challenges put forth in the early 1930s -- looked very different from the perspective of aboriginal waterfront workers. It is to their experience that we now turn.

Chapter 4. “The best men that ever worked the lumber”: The Rise and Fall of Aboriginal Longshoremen

Veteran, taxpayer, worker, breadwinner, father: taken together, these words capture the identifications and expectations that oriented white waterfront workers' struggle for a square deal. It was, to be sure, a multilayered package of rights and responsibilities, one which anchored an emerging set of expectations as to what an employer owed its employees and where, in the broader scheme of things, waterfront workers fit in. At the same time, securing a square deal was about marking off boundaries of inclusion and exclusion; indeed, at its core, decasualization rested on a series of oppositions that blended moral, political, and economic considerations: full-time, politically moderate, and efficient men were, both literally and metaphorically, permitted inside the despatch hall whereas casual, politically suspect, and inefficient men were not. Key to this process of discrimination were the techniques, structures, and objectives of modern management – held together by a co-operative/paternalistic ethos that both the Shipping Federation and the company union could understand: making better workers and making better citizens was, after all, in everyone's best interest. Those workers who did not conform to the new, more desirable definition of waterfront worker – of citizen – and the new time-work discipline of which it was a part were screened out by a meticulous application process, sacked for inefficiency by the labour manager, or fired for insubordination after being reported by a foreman or

company informant. Others, like those workers enrolled in the smaller, subordinate organization of ex-ILA men, were slowly weaned off the waterfront as more and more of the available work went to the company union. Throughout the 1920s, hundreds of men were pared away, and among them were aboriginal waterfront workers, the vast majority of whom were from the Squamish First Nation and resided on the north shore of Burrard Inlet. Understanding how and why this process of marginalization took place is the focus of this chapter.

To this end, it consists of three parts. The economic basis of Squamish society during the fur trade and early settlement period is the focus of the first section. It is followed by an examination of the ways in which the Squamish incorporated paid labour into a wider pattern of occupational pluralism and traditional economic and cultural practices. Taken together, parts one and two lay bare the twin dynamics of racialization and proletarianization that were at the core of the transition to industrial capitalism in British Columbia. From the mid-19th century to the opening decades of the 20th century, Squamish men and women, like other aboriginal people in the province, were remade as “Indians” and “workers” simultaneously – the former status, conferred by the state, intersecting with the latter, material condition, to produce widespread patterns of exclusion and subordination. Because of this unequal distribution of economic, political, and cultural resources, the waterfront labour market, like labour markets in other sectors of the industrial economy, was marked by deep cleavages of race and skill, with

aboriginal longshoremen monopolizing logs and lumber, the most onerous and difficult commodity, while their white counterparts specialized in general cargo, which was more lucrative and less dangerous than “working the lumber.”

By taking the long view, parts one and two underscore the ways in which the Squamish, equipped with a vibrant and versatile culture, adjusted to successive phases of colonial and later capitalist incursion; and how they, despite this striking capacity to adapt, came to occupy an increasingly disadvantaged political and economic position in the province. The opening sections of this chapter, then, lay bare the eventuation of this broader context of inequality; in doing so, they set up the final part which explores the ways in which aboriginal workers' negotiated the politics of race and class on the waterfront, in the union hall, and on the reserve. Of particular concern, here, is the period following the 1923 strike. As the Shipping Federation and the company union undertook the decasualization of the waterfront, aboriginal workers, whose options on the beach were circumscribed to loading and unloading a single commodity, also sought a square deal, albeit one which sought to preserve the important link between casual employment and other, more traditional practices such as hunting and fishing. Unlike their white counterparts, however, they were unsuccessful in this endeavour as the very logic of the Shipping Federation's reform agenda, coupled with the ongoing pressure from the company union for its just desserts as citizens, undercut the status of the casual

longshoreman, and with it, the presence of aboriginal men on the Vancouver docks.²³¹

* * *

Chief "Che-ack-mus" Tom was angry. "[F]or many years after, our people could and did gain a living suitable for our wants from the forest and the sea," he stated in a letter written between 1913 and 1915 and addressed to the "Honourable Gentlemen" of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs. "The different tribes or bands had their own territory in which they fished and hunted, and over which they had control. But when the White man came he was allowed to go where he pleased to hunt, trap, or fish. Then our troubles began." Chief Che-ack-mus Tom was writing on behalf of those Squamish people who had ties to hundreds of acres of land on the banks of the Squamish River known to him and others in his tribal group as "Cheakamus" and to the federal Department of Indian Affairs as "Reserve No.11." But the sentiments he expressed, as the commissioners no doubt understood, echoed the position of other Squamish chiefs who represented men, women, and

²³¹ See Fisher, Contact and Conflict, xi-xxiv at xix-xx; 210-11; Philpott, "Trade Unionism and Acculturation"; Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour, and Company Capital"; Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia"; Burrows, "A Much Needed Class of Labour," 27-46; Lutz, "After the Fur Trade," 69-94; "Work, Wages, and Welfare"; "Gender and Work in Lekwammen Families"; Newell, Tangled Webs of History; Muszynski, Cheap Wage Labour; Roine, "The Squamish Aboriginal Economy"; Harris, "The Making of the Lower Mainland," and "A Population Geography of British Columbia in 1881," 68-102 and 137-160. For the American context see Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack, "Native American Labor: Retrieving History, Rethinking Theory" and Patricia C. Albers, "From Legend to Land to Labor: Changing Perspectives on Native American Work," in Littlefield and Knack, eds., Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives (Norman and London 1998), 3-44 and 245-273 respectively.

children who possessed an interest in the clutch of reserves laid out in and around Howe Sound and in the larger, more populous settlements on the north shore of Burrard Inlet. "The White man thought we ate too much fish, too much game, and passed laws to prevent our people from killing game or fishing except for a short time each year," he continued. "They wanted the fish for canners, the game for the sportsman who kills for sport, not for food." Undergirding this critique of the conflicts generated by competition over resources was a palpable sense of enclosure, an understanding that relations between natives and newcomers had passed through distinct phases. "I and some of our old men remember when there was no Indian agent here," the letter concluded, laying bare this historical sensibility. "If you hedge us about with White man's civilization, help us to acquire it and be part of it....The White Man in British Columbia owes us at least that much."²³² From Chief Che-ack-mus Tom's vantage point, the first moment was characterized by aboriginal control over resources ("territory": "forest"; "sea"); in contrast, the second and more problematic time was shaped decisively by settlement pressures ("White man"), industrial capitalism ("canners"), and the state ("laws"). Consider the former phase, roughly from the early 1820s to the late 1850s, first.

²³² BCARS, RG10, V11021, File 520c, "Squamish and Royal Commission," Chief Che-ack-mus (Tom) to Honourable Gentlemen of the Commission on Indian Affairs," undated, likely between 1912 and 1914. RG10 is the voluminous collection of documents generated by the federal department of Indian affairs; material related to BC is housed at the BC archives. For this reason, the above citation lists BCARS followed by the National Archives of Canada record group, volume, and file number.

As colonial administrators, fur traders, and early settlers understood well, the aboriginal population of BC was marked by an extraordinary cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity. Located across a vast and varied landscape, it was made up of ten different cultural groups, including the Haida, Tsimshian, and Nuuchah'nulth (Nootka) to name but three, who spoke distinct languages and dialects.²³³ The Squamish belonged to the Coast Salish cultural group which, according to anthropologist Wayne Suttles, historically occupied territory in the "lower valley of the Fraser River, the southern shores of Georgia Strait, and the northern shores of the Strait of Juan de Fuca in southwestern British Columbia and northwestern Washington" (see appendices 4a/b). Within this broad geographical context, the Squamish, whose name denotes a linguistic subdivision of the Coast Salish, used territory in and around the Squamish, Cheakamus and Mamquam Rivers, Howe Sound, the north and south shores of Burrard Inlet, and, possibly, near the mouth of the Fraser River.²³⁴ Whether or not the Squamish had established a permanent

²³³ This statement is based on the method of classification first utilized by Duff (Indian History of British Columbia, 13-15) and subsequently employed by Fisher (Contact and Conflict) and Lutz ("After the Fur Trade"). I have updated some of the names to reflect current usage. Of course, no method of classification is completely accurate. As Tennant has pointed, "Tsimshian can...be a source of confusion, since anthropologists use it to refer collectively to the Nisga'a, Gitksan, and Tsimshian tribal groups, who have closely related language. The three groups, however, do not regard themselves as one people." See his Aboriginal Peoples and Politics, 4-6.

²³⁴ Wayne Suttles, "The Persistence of Intervillage Ties Among the Coast Salish," in Coast Salish Essays (Vancouver and Seattle 1987), 210 (This essay was originally published in Ethnology 2 [1963], 512-25); Harris, "The Making of the Lower Mainland," 72; Charles Hill-Tout, "Notes on the Skqomic of British Columbia, A Branch of the Great Salish Stock of North America," in Maud, ed., The Salish People: The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume 2 (Vancouver 1978), 27-29 (This essay was originally published in Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science [1900], 472-550). See also Homer Barnett, The Coast Salish of British Columbia (Westport, CT 1975).

presence in Burrard Inlet prior to the late 1850s and early 1860s, the period in which Sewell Moody and Edward Stamp constructed the first sawmills in the area, remains unclear. Historian Robert A.J. McDonald and geographer Cole Harris argue that it was unlikely. This conclusion is based, in large part, on the findings of Gilbert Malcolm Sproat, Indian Reserve Commissioner in the late 1870s, who visited the "Skwawmish" at Burrard Inlet in 1876 and concluded that the tribe's claim to land in the area was not based on "recent occupancy at all." Sproat's assessment was reiterated almost thirty years later by Charles Hill-Tout, former theology student at Oxford, head of an Anglican college in Vancouver, and anthropologist, who observed in his "Notes on the Skqomic of British Columbia," that "[a]ccording to one of my informants the Indian village that used to exist on English Bay, Burrard Inlet, and False Creek were not originally true Squamish." Similar observations were recorded by highly regarded anthropologist Homer Barnett in 1955.

However, fragmentary yet suggestive evidence suggests that a different conclusion is also imaginable. Members of Captain Vancouver's crew, for example, claimed to have seen "many deserted Villages, some of them of very great extent and capable of holding many human Inhabitants" during their voyage in and around Puget Sound, Juan de Fuca Strait, Georgia Strait, and, significantly, Burrard Inlet in 1792. Perhaps the most intriguing source, though, is the report made by Sproat in 1876 cited favourably by McDonald and Harris, the latter scholar giving it great weight in his analysis, "The Making of the Lower Mainland." Indeed, the reserve

commissioner himself made mention of contradictory evidence on this very important point, including stories of an Hudson's Bay Company official accompanying Squamish Chief "Kah-pil-lah-no" to a spot on the north shore he knew well to view "the best place to grow potatoes" in "1825 or 1827," about the time that Fort Langley was established, and a petition signed by a Squamish chief "and 65 others...which states that before any white men settled at Burrards Inlet, and before Moody's mill was created, the Squamish Indians had been in the habit of using this place occupied by them,...which place seems to be the present Mission reserve." Sproat dismissed this data for several reasons, not the least of which was that Kah-pil-lah-no was only of "half Squamish blood" and the petition was, in all likelihood, "drawn up by [Catholic Missionary] Father Dureau" and therefore suspect. In contrast, letters sent by angry whites to colonial administrators at the new capital of New Westminster that complained that the Squamish were "troublesome," "squatting on [a] very good piece of land," and "disputing with the white men who want to settle" were given more weight. Presented, but ultimately dismissed by Sproat, the possibility of earlier usage in this area was echoed much later by Chief August Jack Khatsahlano, who was born in what is now Stanley Park in 1877; in an interview with Major J.S. Matthews, Vancouver's first archivist, conducted in the 1930s, the chief claimed that the Squamish had lived in the region long before the Europeans had arrived. Finally, the relatively recent discovery of middens in Stanley Park suggests that aboriginal people, "likely Squamish," had made "extensive" use

of this locale for about 500 years. It is possible, then, that the Squamish's ongoing presence in Burrard Inlet predated the arrival of industrial development.²³⁵

Whatever the timing of this movement, it is clear that by the late 1850s hundreds of Squamish men and women considered both Howe Sound and Burrard Inlet to be their home territory, with the tribe's largest settlements emerging on the north shore at Capilano and Seymour Creeks and at "Ustlawn," the site of the Oblate Fathers' mission.²³⁶ The earliest censuses of the Squamish undertaken by Sproat and James Lenihan, superintendent for the newly created New Westminster agency of the federal department of Indian Affairs, in 1876 and 1877 respectively, indicate that the tribe's population was slightly more than 600.²³⁷ According to Wayne Suttles, Squamish society, like other Coast Salish tribes, consisted of four distinct, yet intricately connected social groupings: individual families that occupied their own section of a large communal dwelling and maintained their own "domestic economy"; house groups that, during the winter months, included several individual

²³⁵ This paragraph and the one above are culled from: McDonald, Making Vancouver, 5-6, 244 note 7; Harris, "Voices of Smallpox around the Strait of Georgia," 11-12 and "The Making of the Lower Mainland, 70, 91, and 87 note 3; Hill-Tout, "Notes on the Skqomic of British Columbia," 27-30; BCARS, RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-7, "Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat's Report...1877"; Major J.S. Mathews, ed., Conversations with Khatsahlano, 1932-1954 (Vancouver 1955), 31.

²³⁶ BCARS, RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-7, "Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat's Report...1877"; Volume 3650, File 8424, "New Westminster – Superintendent James Lenihan's report and census on the Indians of the Lower Fraser Country, 1877"; Hill-Tout, "Notes," 30; and McDonald, Making Vancouver, 6, map 1.1, "Burrard Inlet, 1870s."

²³⁷ BCARS, RG 10, Volume 3611, File 3756-7, "Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat's Report...1877"; Volume 3650, File 8424, "New Westminster – Superintendent James Lenihan's report and census on the Indians of the Lower Fraser Country, 1877." Sproat puts the number at "about 639" whereas Lenihan states it was "over 600 in all"; both men indicate that most Squamish possessed a residence at both Howe Sound and Burrard Inlet.

families, usually connected by inter-marriage; and villages that consisted of several house groups that shared a specific locale. Villages were by no means self-contained, hermetically sealed entities; marriage and kinship ties between these units were extensive. ("[T]heir cousinships are endless and even perplexing to themselves," Hill-Tout wrote in 1900.) Collectively, villages that "occupi[ed] a longer stretch of shoreline or a drainage area and share[d] a common name and, to some extent, forms of speech, subsistence methods, and ceremonial procedures" constituted a "tribe," the last social grouping in Suttles' typology.²³⁸

Although Squamish society was not as hierarchical as aboriginal populations in the northern coastal areas of British Columbia, it was divided into three different classes. "The greater number of people belonged to an upper or respectable class, from which leaders of various sorts emerged on various occasions. Mobility within this group was fairly free," Suttles concluded, writing about the Coast Salish as a whole. "A smaller group of people belonged to a lower class, upon which the upper class imposed its will and which it treated with contempt. Movement from this lower class into this upper class was probably difficult. A still smaller group of slaves lived with their masters." In short, "native society" was shaped like "an inverted pear." As the first clause of this quotation suggests, Squamish leaders, or the "siem," were drawn from the male heads of so-called respectable families; the position, which

²³⁸Wayne Suttles, "The Persistence of Intervillage Ties Among the Coast Salish," 210-222. Hill-Tout draws the same conclusion, albeit in a more general manner in "Notes," 31-34; so, too, does Ryan in "Squamish Socialization," 36-40.

was based on a sophisticated and culturally specific calculus that included gender, lineage, wealth, skills, and, it appears, superhuman powers, passed from father to eldest son or, in the event that no male kin existed, to a brother and his sons upon the leader's death. (Dan Paull, the father of prominent longshoreman and Squamish leader Andrew Paull, was said to be a descendant of "Te Qoitchetahl," a serpent slayer in Squamish mythology.)²³⁹ The *siem*, who was identified by whites as a "chief," controlled access to important resource sites and, as a consequence, played an influential role in the management of wealth, property, and important ceremonial rights within his immediate family, extended kin, and ultimately, the village and tribe as a whole. There was not, however, a formal tribal council and the leaders' power was by no means absolute; indeed, as John Lutz has concluded, based on the anthropological work carried out by Homer Barnett amongst the Coast Salish: "[a]ll decisions about collective action – when and whether to move a seasonal camp, to hold a feast, to wage war – were made by the *siem* in consultation with family heads within households."²⁴⁰

The rhythms of Squamish life were shaped by many things, not the least of which were the variety, availability, and seasonal variation of specific "food types,"

²³⁹ Matthews, Conversations with Khahtsahlano, 199. See also E. Palmer Patterson, "Andrew Paull." The myth of the serpent slayer is recounted in many sources, including Hill-Tout, "Notes," 73-76.

²⁴⁰ Suttles, "Private Knowledge, Morality, and Social Classes among the Coast Salish," 7-11; "The Persistence of Intervillage Ties," 210-219; Hill-Tout, "Notes," 31-34; William W. Elmendorf, "Coast Salish Status Ranking and Intergroup Ties," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 27 (1971), 353-380; Lutz, "Gender and Work in Lekwammen Families," 85.

a dynamic noted by every anthropologist, from Franz Boas to Wayne Suttles, who has studied the Coast Salish. In the spring, individual Squamish families left their larger winter villages and moved to areas throughout the Lower Mainland, including English Bay, False Creek, Burrard Inlet, and, possibly, the mouth of the Fraser River, to procure deer, fish, shellfish, shore birds, and edible plants; there they joined other Coast Salish tribes, like the Musqueam, Tsawwassen, and Cowichan, in a vast geographical space cross-hatched by complex political, economic, and cultural relations. ("The real Squamish appears to be a separate tongue, but many Squamish Indians [also] speak the Cowichian," one observer recorded.) Marked by a gendered division of labour in which men, generally, undertook hunting and fishing and women processed the catch and harvested other foods, the Squamish's extensive use of these spring-summer resource sites wound down in early August when most people travelled to Howe Sound or up the Fraser River to the Fraser Canyon to catch salmon -- the staple of their and other Coast Salish tribes' diets. As the journals kept by Hudson's Bay Company officials at Fort Langley attest, thousands of aboriginal people made this trek on an annual basis, returning sometime in the fall with their cedar canoes, "splendid piece[s] of native workmanship," piled high with dried salmon.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ Harris, "Voices of Smallpox," 16-21; "The Making of the Lower Mainland," 72-75. The description of the canoe comes from Hill-Tout, "Notes," 55-56.

The resources generated by this seasonal process provided families with both sustenance for the winter and the material required to manufacture tools, clothing, and necessities. This subsistence economy overlapped in complex ways with what historians and other scholars have called a "prestige" economy. Excess food and other items, for example, were exchanged amongst families and house groups through gift-giving and large meals, both rituals providing an opportunity to, in Cole Harris' words, "maintain status and consolidate social claims: to a name, a marriage, a guardian spirit, a song, or a place." A wide variety of more formal ceremonies, known collectively by the Chinook trading word "potlatch," stretched this prestige economy between villages and other tribes. Periodically held by a siem, his family, and, sometimes, extended family, the potlatch involved feasting, dancing, and, importantly, gift giving; this circulation of wealth – food, hunting and fishing implements, canoes, or clothing – marked significant events, reaffirmed prestige and status, and legitimized the power and influence of a particular leader. "Representatives from Lytton and Kamloops in the interior, and from the upper coast and Vancouver Island were present on one occasion at *Qoiqoi* [Stanley Park]," one contemporary observer recorded. "Over two thousand in all sat down to the feast." Fusing its religious, social, economic, and political values, the potlatch played a

pivotal role in Squamish society; it was, in short, a nexus between the subsistence and prestige economies.²⁴²

The precise ways in which Squamish society was shaped by contact with whites during this early period is hard to know. Like many other aboriginal groups in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, it was likely affected by the first epidemic of smallpox to sweep through the region in the late 1770s and early 1780s; analysed in depth by Robert Boyd, the disease was responsible for a sharp decline in the region's aboriginal population, perhaps as high as 90 per cent. The testimony of one of Charles Hill-Tout's informants, a Squamish man thought to be 100 years old, which was recorded in 1896, appears to confirm this general point; after recounting a story of the tribe's origins, the informant recalled:

[O]ne salmon season the fish were found to be covered with running sores and blotches, which rendered them unfit for food. But as the people depended very largely upon these salmon for their winter's food supply, they were obliged to catch and cure them as best they could, and store them away for food. They put off eating them till no other food was available, and then began a terrible time of sickness and distress. A dreadful skin disease, loathsome to look upon, broke out upon all alike. None were spared. Men, women, and children sickened, took the disease and died in agony by hundreds, so that when the spring arrived and fresh food was procurable, there was

²⁴² The anthropological and ethnographic literature on the potlatch is massive. For British Columbia see Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, *An Iron Hand upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast* (Toronto 1990) and Tina Loo, "Dan Cranmer's Potlatch: Law as Coercion, Symbol, and Rhetoric in British Columbia, 1884-1951," 73:2 *Canadian Historical Review* (1992), 125-65; Christopher Bracken, *The Potlatch Papers: A Colonial Case History* (Chicago 1997). Mary-Ellen Kelm and Robin Brownlie provide a critique of Cole and Loo in their "Desperately Seeking Absolution," *Canadian Historical Review* 75:4 (December 1994), 543-556. On the specific argument being made here, see Harris, "The Making of the Lower Mainland," 72-75; Lutz, "Lekwammen," 87.

scarcely a person left of all the numbers to get it. Camp after camp, village after village, was left desolate.

In this regard, the society that whites first encountered and that Squamish sources later remembered, was perhaps but a remnant of a very different religious, social, economic, and political existence – one marked deeply by the far-reaching collective experience of coping and combatting a deadly disease. Indeed, it is imaginable that the Squamish once made extensive use of Burrard Inlet and Howe Sound prior to the late 1770s or early 1780s, only to retreat to the latter locale in the face of a smallpox epidemic that was ravaging many tribes in the Lower Mainland, Strait of Georgia, Juan de Fuca Strait, and Puget Sound.²⁴³

More directly, the Squamish, like other aboriginal populations in the region, incorporated foreign goods such as potatoes, chickens, blankets, clothing, knives, and firearms – acquired from aboriginal intermediaries or directly from whites at Fort Langley and/or Fort Victoria – into both the subsistence and prestige economies; it was for this reason, Homer Barnett surmised, that the size and scope of potlatches increased substantially during this time. What was more, the incorporation of white traders and their goods into the broader pattern of Squamish life added yet another,

²⁴³ Robert Boyd, "Smallpox in the Pacific Northwest: The First Epidemics," *BCS* 101 (Spring 1994), 5-40; Cole Harris, "Voices of Smallpox around the Strait of Georgia," 3-30; Hill-Tout, introduction to "Notes," 22; For a slightly later period consult James R. Gibson, "Smallpox on the Northwest Coast, 1835-1838," *BCS* 56 (Winter 1982-1983). Elizabeth Vibert takes up this topic in her exceptional study of the Columbia Plateau; see her "The Natives Were Strong To Live': Plague, Prophecy, and the Prelude to the Encounter," in *Traders' Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846* (Norman, Oklahoma 1997), 50-83. For the Prairies see Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto 1999), 36-39.

sometimes deadly dimension to the tribe's complex economic and political relations with others. Throughout the early 1800s, for example, the Squamish and other Coast Salish tribes, weakened by the spread of smallpox years earlier, were the target of violent raids conducted by the Lequiltok, a longstanding enemy that belonged to the larger Kwakuitl (Kwakwaka'wakw) cultural group to the north. So extensive, and feared, were the attacks undertaken by the Lequiltok that Squamish women used to invoke the enemies' name to hush their children. By the 1850s, however, things had changed. "There is not a tribe on the Fraser that has not memories of evil times and bitter losses caused by the visits of this band [the Lequiltok]," Hill-Tout wrote in 1900. "Only on one occasion is it recorded that the Squamish got the better of their foes, and that since the white man's time and the advent of firearms. The Squamish at that time had a courageous and resourceful leader in the head chief Kiapilanoq [Capilano]."²⁴⁴ That the Squamish were deeply affected, both indirectly and directly, by the presence of whites is obvious enough; the key point, however, one which is particularly germane to this analysis, is that during the fur trade period the Squamish's seasonal rounds of resource procurement and the broader subsistence and prestige economies of which they were an integral part remained intact. In short, British Columbia was still a "native

²⁴⁴ Harris, "The Making of the Lower Mainland," 78-80; Hill-Tout, "Notes," 49-50. Due to time, space, and economic constraints, I have left the Squamish's engagement with Christianity, in this case, the Oblate Fathers, unexamined, a glaring omission. The presence of missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, in BC is taken up in: Fisher, Contact and Conflict, chapter 6, "The Missionaries."

place"; or, as Chief Che-ack-mus Tom put it: "[M]any years after the white man came, our people could and did gain a living suitable to our wants from the forest and the sea."²⁴⁵ Fort Langley and Fort Victoria were portents of change, however.

* * *

From the mid-19th century to the early decades of the twentieth century, British Columbia underwent a momentous transformation as the emergence of an urban, industrial society, fuelled by massive immigration, the railroad, and the unyielding logic of accumulation, reshaped the social, political, and economic relations between natives and newcomers in significant ways. Key to this multifaceted and spatially discontinuous process was the state. The formation of the united colony of British Columbia in 1866 and its subsequent entry into Confederation in 1871 provided white authorities at the federal and provincial level with the institutional and administrative means in and through which to "mak[e] law, order and authority" and facilitate the implementation of a capitalist economy in a native place. By extending the state's reach over the most intimate dimensions of aboriginal life, the federal Indian Act of 1876, "a formidable dossier of repression," was the cornerstone of a dual process of racialization *and* proletarianization – its twin objectives girded by other initiatives undertaken by both the federal and provincial governments that, in time, stripped aboriginals of their rights as citizens

²⁴⁵BCARS, RG10, V11021, File 520c, "Squamish and Royal Commission," Chief Che-ack-mus (Tom) to Honourable Gentlemen of the Commission on Indian Affairs," undated, likely between 1912 and 1914. On this point see Harris, "The Making of the Lower Mainland," 78-80.

and limited or eliminated their access to resources such as timber and fish. That the balance of power in the province was shifting was particularly obvious when it came to the creation of reserves, a controversial and contested undertaking given that the provincial government showed little interest in either the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which recognized aboriginal title or in matching the land settlements undertaken within the numbered treaties on the prairies. By the late 1870s, for example, the Squamish, who, along with other Coast Salish tribes bore the brunt of white encroachment, were confined to a clutch of sites in and around Howe Sound and parcels of land on the north shore of Burrard Inlet, an archipelago of aboriginal territory in a sea of white pre-emptions. "[The government] favoured small reserves partly to clear as much space as possible for newcomers but also because Native people would not be able to support themselves," Cole Harris has written. "They would, therefore, find outside wage work and in so doing would acquire habits of industry, thrift, and material accumulation."²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ "The whole district is so much settled up or owned by non-residents that it will be extremely difficult to extend reserves in many places should extension prove necessary," Gilbert Sproat, the newly minted reserve commissioner, wrote to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in 1878. This paragraph is based on the following: Hamar Foster, "Law Enforcement in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia: A Brief and Comparative Overview," *BCS* 63 (Autumn 1984); Tina Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia, 1821-1871* (Toronto 1994); Harris, "Making of the Lower Mainland," 68-102, in particular figures 3.6 and 3.9; Tennant, *Aboriginal People and Politics*, chapter four, "Segregation and Suppression," 39-52 and chapter five, "Demands for Title, Treaties, and Self-Government, 1887-99," 53-67; Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 111-118; Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, chapter 8, "The Consolidation of Settlement: The 1870s and 1880s," 175-211; Newell, *Tangled Webs*, 4-62; Cole Harris, "Introduction," and Hamar Foster, "Honouring the Queen's Flag: A Legal and Historical Perspective on the Nisga'a Treaty," *BCS* (Winter 1998-99); Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 72-175; Lutz, "Making 'Indians' in British Columbia: Power, Race, and the Importance of Place," in White and Findlay, eds., *Power and Place in the North American West* (Seattle and London 1999), 61-84; BCARS, RG 10, V3639, F7416, Dominion and

At the same time that aboriginal people increasingly found themselves the focus of the law's disciplinary power, especially in the realm of land and resources, the economic basis of the region was undergoing a significant transformation. Lumbering, salmon canning, and mineral extraction expanded considerably; so, too, did road and railway construction, coastal and interior steamboat service, and deep-sea maritime traffic. This shift was particularly pronounced in and around Vancouver; as Robert A. J. McDonald has illustrated, between 1863 and 1913 "Burrard Inlet...entered the industrial age." Sawmilling and lumber production, coupled with trade, shipping, and management services, underwrote Vancouver's rapid transformation from "mill town to metropolis," and by the opening decades of the twentieth century a large, diverse, and highly variegated working-class population had emerged. "[There is] a very mixed assemblage of people [here]. While Europeans or at least whites fill the responsible posts, Indians (Squa'mich), Chinamen, Negroes and Mullattoes and half breeds and Mongrels of every pedigree abound," surveyor George Dawson observed in 1875.²⁴⁷ As this quotation suggests,

Provincial Commissioners to James Lenihan, 27 November 1876; V3650, F8424, "New Westminster – Superintendent James Lenihan's report and census on the Indians of the Lower Fraser Country, 1877"; V3670, F10770, Sproat to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 1878. The final quotation is from Harris' "Introduction."

²⁴⁷ Cole Harris, "The Struggle with Distance," and "Industry and the Good Life around Idaho Peak," in Harris, The Resettlement of British Columbia, 161-218; Gerald A. Rushton, Whistle Up the Inlet: The Union Steamship Story (Vancouver 1974); H. Keith Ralston, "Patterns of Trade and Investment on the Pacific Coast, 1867-1892: The Case of the British Columbia Salmon Canning Industry," in Ralston and Friesen, eds., Historical Essays on British Columbia (Toronto 1976), 167-176; Patricia Marchak, Green Gold: The Forest Industry in British Columbia (Vancouver 1983), 29-54; R. Peter Gillis and Thomas R. Roach, "A Touch of Pinchotism: Forestry in British Columbia, 1912-1939," in Lost Initiatives (New York 1986), 129-59, 282-287; Patricia E. Roy, "Progress, Prosperity,

Squamish men and women were pivotal, not marginal actors in this new material context, combining new remunerative endeavours with long-standing economic and cultural practices. They engaged in wage labour because the money they earned on the job provided the wealth necessary to sustain both the household and prestige economies. Indeed, as late 1914, Indian Agent Peter Byrne reported "that there were two potlatches, accompanied by dancing, during the past month in this agency, one was given by Mrs Mathias Joseph, widow of the late Joe Kapilano, of the Kapilano Reserve, the other was given by an Indian women named Sophie, who formerly lived on Kitsilano Reserve...."²⁴⁸ That both celebrations were sponsored by women is significant for it suggests that gender relations amongst the Squamish were undergoing a significant realignment as aboriginal women, who, in the new industrial context, had access to wages and thus could accumulate wealth and prestige independently of men, were able to hold potlatches – a practice that was once shared by both sexes but had shifted in favour of men during the "colonial

and Politics: The Railway Policies of Richard McBride," *BCS* 47 (Autumn 1980); Norbert MacDonald, "C.P.R. Town: The City-Building Process in Vancouver 1860-1914," and Robert A.J. McDonald, "Victoria, Vancouver, and the Economic Development of British Columbia, 1886-1914," in *Readings in the History of British Columbia* (Vancouver 1989), 251-278 and 315-342. The two quotations are from McDonald, *Making Vancouver*, xi and 19. According to Knight in *Indians At Work*: "[B]y the beginning of the 1890s, [Indian families] worked, lived, and participated in the vortex of industrial and urban developments taking place in the Vancouver area." See p.233.

²⁴⁸ The quotation is from BCARS, RG10, V1479, Letterbook, Peter Byrne to Assistant Deputy and Secretary, DIA, 3 February 1914. Other references to potlatches held by the Squamish can be found in: BCARS, RG10, V3611, F3756-11, "Gilbert Malcolm Sproat's Summarized report of the Indian Reserve Commission in British Columbia 1877"; V3944, F121,698-53, Devlin, Indian Agent for New Westminster to Vowell, Indian Superintendent, 16 July 1896; Hill-Tout, "Notes," 49; Add.Mss 1056, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, testimony of Chief Mathias Joseph and Chief Harry.

moment" as European goods supplanted the prestige items once manufactured by women.²⁴⁹ Class relations were shifting too. Like tens of millions of other "globe-hopping proletarians" whose patterns of life were decisively altered by the intrusion of capital and the state, the Squamish engaged in wage labour because as time went on they possessed few other options.²⁵⁰

"Nearly all the Squamish Tribe are remarkable for their industry, intelligence, and cleanliness." So said superintendent James Lenihan in 1877, his words freighted with assumptions of class and racial superiority.²⁵¹ At the time that he made this observation, the Squamish population, which totalled approximately 639, was almost equally divided between the reserves in and around Howe Sound and those scattered along Burrard Inlet (see appendix 5). Between 1883 and 1913, however, the number of Squamish living at Howe Sound on a permanent basis contracted sharply from 367 to 33; at the same time, the population of the Mission Reserve, the largest community on the North Shore, increased substantially from 142 to 225. The magnitude of this shift in population geography comes into sharper focus when one considers that the total Squamish population declined precipitously

²⁴⁹ According to John Lutz, a similar shift took place amongst the Lekwammen (Songhees) of southern Vancouver Island, another Coast Salish group. See Lutz, "Gender and Work."

²⁵⁰ The final line of this paragraph is indebted to: Montgomery, The Fall of the House of Labor, chapter 2, "The Common Laborer," 58-111; Gutman, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919," in Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America (New York 1977), 3-78.

²⁵¹ Ryan, "Squamish Socialization," 41-50; BCARS, RG 10, V3650, F8424, "New Westminster – Superintendent James Lenihan's report and census on the Indians of the Lower Fraser Country, 1877."

during this period, from a peak of 726 in 1883 to 382 in 1915. In 1883, Howe Sound was home to approximately 50 per cent of the Squamish community; twenty-nine years later just under 8 per cent of the population lived there on an ongoing basis. Writing in 1912, the inspector of Indian Agencies concluded: “[T]he Indians [are] evidently moving down to the reserve at Burrard Inlet in order that they might take advantage of opportunities for employment....” Indeed, they were. “A great number of these Indians live and exist by the work of their hands. I have known some of these [men] who have been working for over twenty years in the saw-mill and at other occupations of a like character,” echoed Andrew Paull a year or two later, perhaps thinking of his father, Dan, who started work at Moody’s sawmill on the North Shore in the late 19th century.²⁵²

The extent of the “Squamish Tribe’s” participation in the industrial economy is illustrated further by income statistics gathered by Indian agents and published in the annual reports of the Department of Indian Affairs starting in 1877. A small part of the federal government’s overarching project of extending administrative control over aboriginal life – a project that required, among other things, the

²⁵² The census material was gathered from several sources: BCARS, RG10, V3611, F3756-7, “New Westminster Agency, Commissioner Sproat’s report on the Squamish River Reserve, 1877” (1872); V4074, F441,744, Ditchburn, Inspector of Indian Agencies to Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 3 November 1913 (1883-1912); annual reports of the Department of Indian Affairs published by year as part of Canada, Sessional Papers (1915-1929). The totals for Burrard Inlet in 1872, 1913, 1915, 1924, and 1929 include all Squamish reserves, including Mission, in the Lower Mainland area. See also: BCARS, Add.Mss 1056, Testimony of Andrew Paull before the McKenna-McBride Commission.

production of knowledge about the "Indian" -- this information was understood by bureaucrats and others as an index of assimilation, what one federal minion called "economic and sociological progress." Several historians of aboriginal people, including John Lutz and James K. Burrows, have examined these figures in depth and concluded that they are "approximate only." Not only did the ideological context in and through which these numbers were assembled affect the reliability of the department's yearly reports, but out in the field, collection and tabulation methods were not uniform, access to northern and interior climes was often limited, and not all Indian agents were good at their jobs. The limitations of this data are underscored further when one considers that this analysis, unlike the study undertaken by Burrows, for example, is concerned principally with the economics of a single aboriginal community, not the agency as a whole. From 1871 to 1924, the Squamish were part of the sprawling New Westminster agency which included aboriginal people from the Fraser River valley, the Lower Mainland, and the Sunshine Coast from Howe Sound to Toba Inlet; in 1924, communities from the Lower Mainland and Sunshine Coast, including the Squamish, were reassigned to the newly created Vancouver agency. That the annual reports fail to distinguish between individual bands within these larger administrative units makes trying to tease out evidence related specifically to the Squamish all but impossible. At best,

then, they capture only the broad contours of "Indians at work" and they do so only on a macro level.²⁵³

As the tables contained in appendices 6 and 7 suggest, aboriginal people in both the New Westminster (1913-1923) and Vancouver (1924-1930) agencies worked in a wide range of industrial settings. They stacked lumber in the mills, stowed cargo on the docks, built fences on farms, felled trees in the coastal forests, gutted fish in the canneries, and piloted small boats in the salmon fishery. Over time, the total income derived from these occupational pursuits increased slowly and steadily (except for periods of recession and depression), while that secured from more traditional means, such as hunting and trapping, diminished until 1923. To bring this image of occupational pluralism and dependence on monetary wages into sharper focus, consider the returns derived from the Vancouver agency, a geographically smaller administrative unit in which the Squamish comprised about one-third of the total population, making them the single largest group within its boundaries. According to the evidence contained in appendix 7, in 1924 about 55 percent of the total income earned in the agency came from industrial work of some kind; five years later that figure had ballooned to 72 per cent. What is striking, though, is that throughout this period, the so-called roaring twenties, the agency's

²⁵³ On the problems associated with the income statistics see Lutz, "Work, Wages, and Welfare," 128-134 and figure VII; Burrows, "A Much-Needed Class of Labour," 27-46; Zaharoff, "Success in Struggle," 34-38. It is also unclear whether or not the revenue figures are "gross" or "net" figures. What about the costs of fishing for a cannery?

total revenue actually declined from \$163,684 in 1925 to \$123,292 in 1927 before inching back up to \$166, 521 in 1930, just as the country was sliding into the economic abyss; its per capita income traced a similar pattern. At the same time, the percentage of revenue that flowed from hunting and trapping, while down substantially from earlier times, almost doubled; so, too, did the income flowing from household agricultural production. This combination of developments suggests that traditional subsistence practices, while no longer at the core of economic life, persisted – supplementing the wages earned on the job and “buffering” aboriginal families from the periodic booms and busts associated with an industrial economy so dependent on natural resources and global markets. That all of the occupational pursuits undertaken by aboriginal workers were seasonal is significant too, hinting at the ways in which the temporal and spatial rhythms of a pre-capitalist, kin-ordered way of life dovetailed with the logic of a burgeoning casual labour market.²⁵⁴

While the annual reports of the Department of Indian Affairs shed some light on the extent to which Squamish men and women engaged in household production and paid work, they tell us precious little about the form, content, and politics of this

²⁵⁴ The data in this paragraph is gathered from several sources: BCARS, RG10, V3611, F3756-7, “New Westminster Agency, Commissioner Sproat’s report on the Squamish River Reserve, 1877” (1872); V4074, F441,744, Ditchburn, Inspector of Indian Agencies to Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 3 November 1913 (1883-1912); V11021, File 520c; annual reports of the Department of Indian Affairs published by year as part of Canada, Sessional Papers (1915-1929). The totals for Burrard Inlet in 1872, 1913, 1915, 1924, and 1929 include all Squamish reserves in the Lower Mainland area. It is expressed in chart form in the appendix. The “buffering” quote is from Knight.

behaviour. To begin, consider the former endeavour, household production. From the earliest days of the colonial project in BC, government and religious officials hoped that aboriginal people would take up farming; hard work, discipline, and self-reliance, so the argument went, were its obvious rewards, the virtues of any “civilized” person. But the Squamish never ploughed the soil of Burrard Inlet or Howe Sound in any large-scale way; indeed, as white observers from the mid-to-late 1870s to the opening decades of the twentieth century knew well, the agriculture taking place on the reserves was primarily of a subsistence kind. “[There is] very little improvement [in the land],” James Lenihan observed in 1877, after visiting several Squamish communities in the Lower Mainland. There were, however, some small “patches of vegetables,” “fruit gardens,” and “meadow[s]” where hay, some of it sold to local businesses, was growing. Writing to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs fifteen years later, a Catholic missionary made a similar observation: “Some have a small garden attached to their dwellings on which they raise berries in season and sell them at Vancouver, making on average from sixty to eighty dollars each family.” The vegetables and fruits that were harvested from these plots – the largest and most prodigious of which were sewn in and around Howe Sound – included potatoes, corn, turnips, beans, peaches, plums, cherries, raspberries, strawberries, and rhubarb; according to a census of “agricultural and industrial statistics” compiled by the Department of Indian Affairs between 1899 to 1919, it

was not uncommon for some families to keep horses, cows, and chickens as well.²⁵⁵ Significantly, "garden stuff" was typically, though by no means exclusively, the responsibility of Squamish women, a gendered division of labour that mapped similar distinctions within Squamish society that existed prior to the advent of industrial capitalism. In the realm of household production, however, time spent in the garden was followed by time spent in the city as Squamish women, with home-made woven baskets in hand, went to the city to sell the fruits of their labour. "I could hardly give you an idea [of how much revenue is derived from the sale of produce] because it is generally the women that take it in and sell it," a Squamish man told an inquisitive government official in 1913, underscoring how this gendered dynamic informed both familial consumption and, it appears, the management of household finances – developments noted by Indian agents in other coastal agencies.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ BCARS, RG10, V1493, "New Westminster Agency, Agricultural and Industrial Statistics, 1899-1919"; V3650, F8424, "New Westminster – Superintendent James Lenihan's report and census on the Indians of the Lower Fraser Country, 1877"; V3857, F80,782, Inspector, Indian Agencies to Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, 15 April 1912; V3857, F80,782, Paul Durieu, OMI to A.W. Vowell, Indian Superintendent, 1892; Add.Mss 1056, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, testimony of Indian Agent Peter Byrne, 20 June 1913, and testimony of various Squamish men, including Chief Harry, Chief Mathias Joseph, and Andrew Paull.

²⁵⁶ BCARS, Add.Mss 1056, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, testimony of Peter Byrne ("garden stuff") and Chief Harry ("sell it"). The relationship between gender and colonialism in the BC context is taken up by: Marjorie Mitchell and Anna Franklin, "When You Don't Know The Language, Listen To The Silence: An Historical Overview of Native Indian Women in BC," in Latham and Pazdro, eds., Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays On The History of Women's Work in British Columbia (Victoria 1984), 17-36; Jo-Anne Fiske, "Colonization and the Decline of Women's Status: The Tsimshian Case," Feminist Studies 17:3 (Fall 1991), 509-35; Carol Cooper, "Native Women of the Northern Pacific Coast: An Historical Perspective, 1830-1900," Journal of Canadian Studies 27:4 (Winter 1992-3), 44-73; Lutz, "Gender and Work in Lekwammen Families," 80-105.

Small-scale agricultural work, like other realms of aboriginal life, was lodged in a dense web of legal regulation which set boundaries and erected limits to aboriginals' access to resources on land and sea. Indeed, the aboriginal land that supported these modest yet important endeavours was itself contested terrain: fueled by the unyielding pressure of industrial and urban expansion and girded by the power of the state, cut-offs, expropriations, and sales of reserve land uprooted gardens, eliminated fruit-bearing trees and edible plants, and eroded access to deer and other resources. "The road going through our reserve has affected what land I and Andrew Jack have cleared," Samson Thomas, a Squamish man who resided on the 33-acre Inlailawatash Reserve on the north arm of Burrard Inlet, stated in 1913. "I planted 20 fruit trees, 24 raspberry bushes and a patch of potatoes. Andrew Jack had 12 fruit trees. Our intentions were to fence and cultivate more land and build a house on it, but on account of the road affecting our clearing we cannot fulfill our intention." The Squamish understood well the politics of race, class, and the environment at play in such instances; on several occasions they demanded additional compensation from the Pacific Great Eastern Railway and the city of North Vancouver for both the loss of productive land on the Mission Reserve and better tools "for fixing up their houses and [remaining] gardens."²⁵⁷

²⁵⁷ BCARS, Add.Mss 1056, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, testimony of Samson Thomas, 23 June 1913. During one set of negotiations between the Squamish and City of North Vancouver over the surrender of a right-of-way, an inspector from Indian Affairs made note of the "plants and trees belonging to the Indians" that would be lost when the road was built. See BCARS, RG10, V3857, F80,782, Inspector of Indian Agencies to Secretary, Department

The encroachment of white society on Squamish land eroded small-scale agriculture in other ways too. Between 1910 and 1921, residents of the Seaichem and Kowtain Reserves along the Squamish River complained to provincial and federal officials that unusually strong freshets were eroding valuable reserve land; they wanted the government to help stem the flow of rushing water as it had “at the request of white settlers whose properties were in danger.” No assistance materialized. Not only were federal and provincial officials unable (or unwilling) to sort out which level of government was responsible for river banks on reserves, but the dam constructed by the provincial department of public works for “the protection of lands owned by white settlers” effectively “redirected a great volume of water” in the direction of Squamish settlements. “One of the members has his land all cleared but the river has washed most of it away,” a Squamish chief wrote in 1915. “[A]t the present time [he] has only a small piece of land.” Indian agent Peter Byrne agreed. Reporting five years later he claimed that the river -- its course altered by the dam and other naturally occurring blockages of driftwood and debris -- was “washing away very rapidly the cleared land on the Seaichem Reserve No.16 of the Squamish Tribe of Indians [and] several acres have been destroyed and some of the Indians’ houses have been carried away.”²⁵⁸ High water levels were indeed a natural

of Indian Affairs, 15 April 1912; 10 June 1912; 8 November 1912. A similar calculus appears in the “correspondence regarding the surrender of Squamish Reserves for the Pacific Great Eastern Railway Company, 1913-15” in BCARS, RG10, V4074, F441,744.

²⁵⁸ On the erosion of the Howe Sound reserves see: BCARS, RG10, V5051, F365,640-1, “Correspondence regarding the protection of the banks of the Squamish River,” in particular: Indian

phenomenon, but the context in and through which the river flowed was political. Not only did white settlers and commercial farmers receive differential treatment, leaving aboriginal producers to watch their land wash away, but, on a wider, more structural plain, the latter had few other options: without access to capital and the permission of the state, it was impossible for Squamish men and women to clear trees on a large-scale basis to make room for new gardens, let alone purchase land outside the reserve.²⁵⁹

agent, New Westminster to J.D. McLean, Secretary, DIA, 1 June 1910; Peter Byrne to Assistant Secretary and Secretary, DIA, 10 August 1916; J.E. Griffiths, Deputy Minister and Public Works Engineer to J.D. McLean, DIA, 28 August 1916; Byrne to Assistant Deputy and Secretary, DIA, 15 April 1920. See also V11021, File 520c. Squamish Chiefs to Royal Commission, 8 March 1915.

²⁵⁹ With or without capital, aboriginal people were forbidden to cut trees for commercial purposes for several reasons, the most important of which was that the colonial government in BC had never settled the question of ownership of aboriginal land prior to its entry into Confederation in 1871. Thus the provincial government still claimed a "reversionary interest" in all aboriginal land and resources; thus, Victoria argued that once a piece of land ceased to be used by aboriginal people it legally belonged to it. As a consequence, the provincial government argued further that any revenue derived from the sale or development of aboriginal land belonged to it as well. The federal government, which had failed to persuade BC to settle the question of aboriginal title to land, claimed that any revenues derived from sale or development properly belonged to the aboriginals who were the real owners, to be held in trust by the federal government. The impasse over "reversionary interest" kept aboriginals – if they could find the capital and receive the permission of the Department of Indian Affairs – from undertaking commercial ventures such as logging reserve land. Ironically, there were occasions when the impasse over reversionary interest slowed the ability of industry and the state, specifically municipal governments in Vancouver and North Vancouver, to expropriate land under the Indian Act or municipal by-laws. See: BCARS, RG10, V1451, Letterbook, Devlin to Joseph Kapilano, November 1897; Devlin to Chief, Mission Reserve, 24 February 1898; Devlin to Vowell, 19 March 1898; Devlin to Chief of the Sechelt, undated, 1898; V1452, Letterbook, Devlin to Vowell, 9 August 1898; V1453, Letterbook, Devlin to Vowell, 11 [?] May 1899; V1455, Letterbook, Devlin to a supplier in Vancouver, 20 July 1900; Devlin to Vowell, 8 March 1901; V4049, F361,780, McDonald, Indian Agent to J.D. McLean, Secretary, DIA, 25 April 1910; Chief Harry, Tom, and Joseph to "Mr Haswell," 16 April 1910; J.D. McLean to T.R.E. McInnis, 12 July 1910; V1479, Letterbook, Peter Byrne to the Assistant Deputy and Secretary, DIA, 7 April 1914; V1483, Letterbook, Byrne to C.H. Gibbons, Secretary, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, 19 January 1916; V11021, F520c, Chief Che-ack-mus Tom to Honourable Gentlemen of the Commission on Indian Affairs, undated; Chief Andrew to Royal Commission, 13 March 1915; Chief Harry to Royal Commission, 16 March 1915; Add.Mss 1056, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, testimony of Chief George and Peter Byrne.

Subsistence production was not limited to small-scale agriculture. Utilizing the traditional seasonal camps that dotted rivers, streams, and creeks in and around Howe Sound, the Lower Mainland, and the Fraser River Valley, Squamish men, often accompanied by their families and/or other relatives, hunted for deer, ducks, and grouse and fished for salmon and trout, the "general food of our forefathers." "[The camps] are found to be a great convenience to the Indians interested in them," the Indian agent for the New Westminster agency remarked in 1904. "[T]hey reside on them every year at certain seasons while hunting and securing fish for their winter use, and in fact seem to be as much used now as when just allotted [in 1877]." Fragmentary evidence suggests that access to particular resource sites was still regulated by familial relations into the early years of the twentieth century, an extraordinary example of cultural persistence given the state's assault on the potlatch -- the nexus between the prestige and subsistence economies -- and the intrusion of the commercial fishery. Like agricultural work, hunting and fishing were shaped by a gendered division of labour: men took responsibility for catching the deer or salmon and women, it appears, looked after its preparation and the sale of any surplus. "They still depend a great deal on clams and other fish which they catch, such as trout and salmon," Peter Byrne, Indian agent for the New Westminster agency, observed in 1913. "[A]t 4 am you will see them [Squamish women] crossing the ferry each with a basket of clams on their back which they sell to the whites for \$.25 or \$.30 and with this money the[y] purchase their groceries

and go home." Some families, though, were more dependent on hunting and fishing than others – a reality shaped decisively by a family's size, its stage in the life cycle, and the primary income earners' access to paid work. "[O]lder Indians...depend upon fishing almost exclusively for their maintenance and...count upon selling a few odd fish in order to procure flour, tea, sugar, clothing, and other similar present day necessities of the Indian's as well as the White man's existence," read a confidential report filed by the McKenna-McBride Commission in 1916, highlighting the importance of age in this regard.²⁶⁰

Fishing for household consumption and modest financial gain, like working a "patch of vegetables," was also deeply politicized. In the mid-to-late 19th century, the fisheries in British Columbia were not regulated to any great extent; by the turn of the century, however, as the industrial fishery in the province grew, the federal government, acting under the auspices of the British North America Act of 1867, set about managing commercial stocks by regulating the opening and closing of

²⁶⁰ BCARS, RG10, V3634, F6510, Indian Agent, New Westminster to A.W. Vowell, Indian Superintendent, 25 January 1904. The persistence of traditional methods of regulating access to seasonal camps is captured in BCARS, RG10, V3748, F29858-4, Indian Agent, Fraser Agency to A.W. Vowell, 19 October 1905. "The relatives of those above mentioned have the privilege of fishing on these rocks," the agent remarked. Other sources include: BCARS, Add.Mss 1056, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, testimony of Peter Byrne ("4am"). The final point about dependency is based on: BCARS, RG10, V1451, Letterbooks, New Westminster Agency, 1897-98, Devlin to J.D. McLean, Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, 11 January 1898; Volume11021, File 520c, Chief of Indians of the Squamish Tribe to Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, 15 March 1915; BCARS, GR 672, BC Provincial Secretary, Royal Commission Correspondence, Box 5, File 4, "Confidential Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of BC (1916)."

seasons, gear type, location, and access.²⁶¹ A key component of this process was the creation of an aboriginal food fishery; "Indians shall, at all times, have liberty to fish for the purposes of providing food for themselves, but not for sale," the new regulations, passed in 1888, stated. Over time, state control – which, at its core, assumed that regulating aboriginals' access to fish was tantamount to extinguishing their pre-existing right to harvest this resource – expanded considerably; by the early decades of the 20th century it was unlawful for aboriginals to fish for food unless they possessed a permit, specific gear, and did so in a certain locale. "I am deluded with a deamaned from the Indians for food which is only a result of the fact the the law prohibits the Indian to sell fish so he can gett money to buy necessities," Andrew Paull wrote to the Indian agent in 1920.

Now Mr Byrne[,] I Andy Paull cannot sell fish according to law[,] [W]ill you give some potatoes to plant so those depending on me can have potatoes without me having to buy the same by the sweat of the brow[,] [I]f not, permit the Indian to sell fish, for such is the contention of the Indians in general; I wish I was not the representative of the Indians, then I would not have to raise so many questions, and interupt you, but in the mean time as an official I must beg that you consider and kindly act on our demands, for the good and welfare of the Indians.

The extent to which Squamish men and women complied with this regulatory regime on a day-to-day basis is difficult to assess. It is clear, though, that they resented the

²⁶¹ BCARS, RG10. V1451, Letter books, New Westminster Agency, Devlin to J.D. McLean, Secretary, DIA, 11 January 1898; Devlin to Chief, Squamish River, 9 September 1900. On the expansion of the salmon fishery and canneries see Alicja Muszynski, "Race and gender: structural determinants in the formation of British Columbia's salmon cannery labour forces," in Kealey, ed., Class, Gender, and Region: Essays in Canadian Historical Sociology (St. John's 1988), 103-120.

constant harassment meted out by fisheries inspectors and game wardens, the presence of white commercial and sports fishers in and around traditional fishing camps, and, in a wider sense, the abrogation of their collective rights upon which this entire regulatory edifice was based. "The river passing through my reserve belonged to me and my brother Indians for us to use in making our living," one Squamish man remarked. "A long time ago, the Indians depended upon fishing and hunting as their only means of living. Now things have changed."²⁶²

Indeed they had. Subsistence production persisted, but it did so in a diminished and severely circumscribed way. As a result, Squamish men and women depended on a wide range of paid labour, including cannery work, commercial fishing, hop picking, and longshoring, for their "means of living." As several scholars have pointed out, entire aboriginal families and villages undertook cannery work and commercial fishing on a seasonal basis, providing the brains and brawn that fuelled the industry's staggering growth, led by Henry Bell-Irving and Anglo-British Columbia Packing, between 1871 and 1914. "At this season of the year all the Indians are employed at the canneries and earning good wages," Frank Devlin, the Indian agent

²⁶² This paragraph is based on: Newell, *Tangled Webs*; BCARS, RG10 V1451, Letter books, New Westminster Agency, Devlin to J.D. McLean, Secretary, DIA, 11 January 1898; V11021, F520c, Chief Che-ack-mus Tom to Honourable Gentlemen of the Commission on Indian Affairs, undated, likely [1914]; Chief and Indians of the Squamish Tribe to the Royal Commission, 15 March 1915; BCARS, Add.Mss 1056, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Box 2, File 5, testimony of Chief Harry, Mathias Joseph, Chief George; BCARS, GR 672, Box 5, File 4, "Confidential Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs," 1916; NAC, RG 10, V10899, F167/20-2, Andrew Paull to "Mr Byrne," 3 May 1920; R v Sparrow [1990] 1 SCR 1075.

in New Westminster observed in 1897. "A lot of people went to Knight's Inlet from our people and other tribes....The Squamish used to go too," echoed Agnes Alfred, a Kwakiutl woman who worked in coastal salmon canneries throughout the early 1900s. As this remark suggests, however, although both men and women worked in the industry, they did so in different ways as capitalist forms of employment tapped into – and, perhaps, sharpened – existing gendered divisions within aboriginal society. Squamish women, often with their children strapped to their backs or playing around their feet, laboured in the canneries, employing skills they developed in a domestic context to earn wages in an industrial one. "[W]omen folks they work in the cannery, and there is always considerable demand to work in the cannery by the cannery men," a Squamish man remarked in 1913. But high demand, as Alicja Muszynski has argued, did not mean high wages. Salmon cannery workers paid aboriginal women (and men for that matter) less than white and Asian workers, a development made possible, ironically, by the persistence of subsistence production and the capacity of the Squamish, like other aboriginal communities, to augment paid work on the job with unpaid work on the land and ocean.²⁶³

²⁶³ Muszynski, "Race and gender," 103-119; Newell, *Tangled Webs*, 79-80 (Alfred quote); Ryan, "Squamish Socialization," 40-42; Canada, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs," (1884); BCARS, RG10, V1451, Letter books, New Westminster Agency, Frank Devlin to W.D. Bryan, M.D. [?], 7 May 1897; Devlin to Vowell, 10 March 1899; RG10, V1477, Peter Byrne, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, 9 December 1912; RG 10, V4045, F351,304, Indian Agent, West Coast Agency to Secretary, DIA, 11 August 1916; Add.Mss 1056, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, testimony of Andrew Paull, Peter Byrne, Chief Harry.

While the women worked in the canneries, the men piloted small crafts for the commercial salmon fishery which, as Alicja Muszynski, Keith Ralston, and Dianne Newell have illustrated, underwent a significant restructuring between 1889 and 1918 as construction of new canneries skyrocketed, production of canned salmon ballooned, and licensing arrangements expanded. Faced with the cost and inconvenience of travelling to New Westminster to register and the indignity of having to ask white authorities for permission to fish in the first place, most aboriginal fishers simply refused or neglected to secure a proper commercial license – a development which prompted salmon canners, in desperate need of labour power, to apply and pay for permits on their behalf. This informal arrangement was formalized in 1900 when the federal government – under pressure from canners (who enjoyed the profitability which came with cheap aboriginal labour) and the Department of Indian Affairs (which wanted to shelter aboriginal fishers and cannery workers from competition from Asian and American workers) – created a special category of “attached” cannery licenses for aboriginal fishers. “By getting government to issue the bulk of fishing licenses to canneries, by making it easier for Indians than for other fishers to fish for them, cannery operators assured Indians’ participation in the industry for decades to come,” Newell has concluded. “Licensing and regulation had thus served to capture Indian labour for the white-owned industry at a time when labour was scarce.”

Squamish men were part of this “captured” labour force – fragmentary evidence suggesting that they operated under the auspices of attached licenses most of the time. Access was one thing, earnings, though, were quite another. “You go to work and buy a boat which costs nearly \$150, before you catch one fish. You get a net for \$125 or \$150 that comes to \$300,” Chief Mathias Joseph remarked at a time when the provincial economy was starting to cool, Japanese workers were carving out a larger role for themselves in the industry, and the aboriginal population continued to decline. “Sometimes we go behind at fishing and sometimes we only make \$25 up to \$100. I have been fishing for a long time and we have made nothing so far....Take last year, the highest man in the cannery, I mean Indian, made about \$400 at Steveston in the 45 days fishing.”²⁶⁴ The shifting fortunes of the salmon fishery and irregularity of wages that resulted prompted many Squamish to take up work in the hop fields scattered throughout the Fraser River valley on a seasonal basis. As W.E. Ditchburn, the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, observed in 1925, sketching out the linkages between paid work and subsistence production: “they have to seek employment when and where it can be found and the hop picking

²⁶⁴ Muszynski, “Race and gender”; Ralston, “Patterns of Trade and Investment”; Newell, *Tangled Webs*, especially chapter 4, “Indian Labour Captured, 1889-1918,” 77; BCARS, RG 10, V1451, Letter book, New Westminster Agency, Devlin to J.D. McLean, DIA, 11 January 1898; Volume 1453, Letter book, Devlin to Vowell, 10 March 1899; V11021, File 520c, Chief and Indians of the Squamish Tribe to the Royal Commission, 15 March 1915; Add.Mss 1056, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, testimony of Andrew Paull, Mathias Joseph, Chief Harry, and Peter Byrne.

rounds out the season very nicely after the seaweed gathering, berry picking, and fishing is over."²⁶⁵ Prior to the interwar period, longshoring filled in nicely as well.

* * *

William Nahanee was Hawaiian. Born in Honolulu in 1873, he came to British Columbia in 1896 at the age of 23 and, shortly after arriving, married a Squamish woman, Cecilia. Like other Hawaiians or Kanakas, who, by 1881, made up about three per cent of the population around Burrard Inlet, William might have worked for employers along the northwest coast or on Vancouver Island before settling on the north shore and taking a job on the docks. It is also possible that William was a seafarer for it was not uncommon for "working men who got wet" to jump ship in Vancouver -- some of them, like Chilean sailor and future docker Benjamin Cordecado, who also married a Squamish woman, taking refuge on the Mission Reserve. By virtue of his marriage and residence, government officials considered William an "Indian." As a result, he was permitted to hold office on the reserve, apply for permits to hunt and fish, and vote on band affairs; Cecilia, though, was not. On the job, William, like many other Squamish men, specialized in handling logs and lumber. "They couldn't read or write but they could measure those timbers by eye and fit them into the ships better than the White Man," one longshoremen recalled. "Bill Nahanee, old Jimmy Frank, Bill Newman, Charlie Newman, and George

²⁶⁵ BCARS, RG10, V4045, F351,304, Ditchburn to Duncan C. Scott, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 6 January 1925.

Newman. They were the greatest men that ever worked the lumber. They were really nice to us young fellows. They used to show us what to do, how to be careful and everything else," echoed another. One of those young fellows was William's eldest son, Edward. Like other Squamish boys his age, Edward grew up on the Mission Reserve and followed in his father's occupational footsteps; he went to work on the waterfront in 1911 or 1912 at the age of fifteen and soon garnered a reputation as a skilled lumber handler.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ As early as 1877, government officials took note of the "Squamish Indians" who were "sharp enough to see the advantage of being beside the white men employed in these mills." See BCARS, RG10, V3611, F3756-7, "Commissioner Gilbert Malcolm Sproat's report on the Squamish River Reserve, 1877." Information on Edward, William, and Cecilia Nahanee was gleaned from: Canada, Census of Canada, 1901; BCARS, RG 123, V11021, F520c, "Census of Squamish Indians Mission Reserve North Vancouver, BC"; McDonald, 22-23; Man Along the Shore, 10, 55-57; Philpott, "Trade Unionism and Acculturation," 42; "Squamish Longshoreman Has Watched Vancouver Grow Into Great Port," Vancouver Daily Province, 10 May 1941. There are, however, some significant wrinkles in this data. In the newspaper article, written, it is important to note, by Andrew Paull, "William Nahanee Sr" is described as being 67 years old and a veteran of 52 years on the waterfront. William's age corresponds with the date of birth in both the federal census and the records of the DIA, but his reported length of service on the waterfront does not. If William spent 52 years on the waterfront, then he started work in 1889 at the age of 15. According to the 1901 census, however, William came to Canada from Hawaii in 1896 at the age of 23. His younger brother also reported coming to Canada in 1896. But the article contains another piece of information that clouds the picture a bit more. According to William: "I had to start work and earn a living the best way I could for my Hawaiian father died when I was two years old, and my mother, a Capilano Indian, had a hard time to keep up with the customs introduced by the coming of the white men." If the word "mother" is changed to "wife" than the above statement makes perfect sense: it is possible that his father died when he was young and that he was forced to go to work at a young age – ending up in British Columbia, as so many other young Kanaka men did, and marrying Cecilia. If this is the case, when, exactly, William started on the waterfront is the only question that remains. But if the statement is true, then it contradicts the available census data: if William had a Hawaiian father who died when he was 2 and Squamish mother than he was not born in Honolulu and did not come to Canada in 1896 at the age of 23. In the end, I decided to accept the information contained in the 1901 federal census and 1913 DIA census. As for the contradictory statements made in the article, I believe that William was mistaken about his length of service on the waterfront. If he went to work on the waterfront upon arrival in Canada then his length of service, at the time Paull wrote the article, was 45 years, not far off from the 52 that was reported. What is more, I think that Paull might have misquoted/misunderstood William when he spoke about his "Capilano mother. It was not unusual for men to use the term "mother" and "wife" interchangeably at that time.

The Nahanee's skill and status "working the lumber" flowed, in part, from the Squamish's long history as planermen, labourers, and loggers. "They had quite a few Native Indians working at Moody's, not so much in the mill but working a lot of jobs outside," Axel Nyman, a pioneer waterfront recalled years later. "You see, before they got the conveyors going they had narrow gauge track, about three different lines. All the slabs and stuff would be wheeled on the tracks. There were Chinese, Japanese, and Native Indians working on that sort of thing." Indeed there were, and many of them were also responsible for cutting the massive spruce and fir trees that ended up in the booming grounds and sawmills of Burrard Inlet and Vancouver Island. For many Squamish men, between 1899 and 1906, the years for which detailed "agricultural and industrial statistics" are available, income derived from hand logging was more than double that secured from commercial fishing. "As a rule, the men they follow the longshoring line. Some of them are donkey engineers and sometimes they work driving donkey engines at logging camps," Andrew Paull remarked, illustrating one of the ways in which logging and longshoring were linked. With this background, it is no surprise that Squamish longshoremen emerged as adept lumber handlers, an important distinction given the need for waterfront workers to carve out a niche in a casual labour market; "The Indians were 'it' on the sailing ships," one old timer recollected.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ Man Along the Shore, 13; BCARS, RG 10, V1493, "Agricultural and Industrial Statistics, 1899-1919"; Add.Mss 1056, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Royal Commission on Indian Affairs, testimony of Peter Byrne and Andrew Paull; Knight, Indians at Work, chapter 11, "Sawmilling, Logging,

That the Vancouver waterfront, like waterfronts around the world, was marked by cleavages of race and specialization is illustrated further by two photographs reproduced in Robert A.J. McDonald's Making Vancouver (see appendix 8).²⁶⁸ The first, taken in 1889, depicts a longshore gang standing in front of several lumber ships, a thicket of masts, rigging, and lumber ramps towering overhead. Short, stocky, and brown-skinned, most of the men are native, more than likely Squamish from the Mission Reserve, except for the supervisors on the left, who are white. The second photo, taken less than a decade later, shows the membership of the city's first longshoremen's union, clad in suits, ties, hats, and ribbons, posing in front of a replica of the SS Umatilla, the organization's float in the annual labour day parade; with one, perhaps two, exceptions they are all white. The difference that race made on the waterfront is not hard to see. Not only were both groups racially distinct, but the different backdrops featured in each frame – lumber ships in one, a coastal vessel in the other – captures visually the linkage between colour and cargo. To be sure, the photos do capture something of the dignity and pride that both aboriginal and white longshoremen derived from their labour: they were all *hard working men*. But, significantly, it was the latter, not the former, who were able to articulate that gendered and racialized message in a public forum, one which was designed to allow respectable white male workers to assert their identity as producers and, in so

Longshoring.”

²⁶⁸ See McDonald, Making Vancouver, 10-11 and 83-84 for the photos.

doing, lay claim to a place in the broader civic order. When aboriginals did participate in public festivals and celebrations it was not as workers, but, as McDonald suggests, as representatives of the exotic, of the "other."

As these images suggest, the status of aboriginal longshoremen as lumber handlers was by no means equal to that articulated and defended by white waterfront workers who – given the unequal distribution of economic, political, and cultural resources between white and aboriginal workers that made racially segmented labour markets, like that on the waterfront, possible – successfully monopolized the loading and unloading of general cargo which was less dangerous and more lucrative than "working the lumber." This position of relative privilege was girded by the sense of entitlement that all whites possessed by virtue of being white in a racist society, a structure of feeling deeply imbricated in culture, discourse, and space, formalized in law, and bound up in the very material structures of the province's political economy. In the specific context of the waterfront, it was reinforced by employers who were reluctant to hire "Indians" to move general cargo and, in the end, benefitted from competition from racially distinct gangs. It is crucial not to underestimate the importance of employers in creating the conditions within which such divisions were naturalized and legitimized; indeed, it is not hard to see how white longshoremen's own sense of powerlessness and alienation on the job would make them more receptive to the authority and benefits derived from, what

David Roediger once called, "the fiction that they are 'white.'"²⁶⁹ Aboriginal workers negotiated the politics of race and class in variety of ways, undertaking individual and collective struggles marked decisively by the tensions associated with being both a longshoreman and being an Indian.

"I had the strength and I had the brains," Edward Nahanee recalled. "We were all one big family. A part of each other." The "we" in this seemingly innocuous remark is significant for it is ambiguous. It is unclear just who, precisely, Edward is referring to. On the one hand, it appears that he is speaking about longshoremen as a whole and, significantly, the economic and cultural gap that existed between them and their employers; on the other hand, however, given that Edward, his father, and their aboriginal friends continued to work in gangs composed primarily of aboriginal men suggests that he is likely referring to the Squamish "family" as well. The overlapping identities of class and race at play here are revealed further by the language that waterfront workers, both white and aboriginal, employed on a day-to-day basis. According to Edward, "the Indians and white fellows, when we worked together, [s]ome of the whites could talk the Indian language. That was

²⁶⁹ On the making of a racially and ethnically divided working class in British Columbia see Creese, "Class, Ethnicity, and Conflict: The Case of Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1880-1923"; Warburton, "Status, Class, and the Politics of Canadian Aboriginal Peoples," 119-141; "The Workingmen's Protective Association, Victoria, BC, 1878," 105-20. The quotation is from David Roediger, "From the Social Construction of Race to the Abolition of Whiteness" in Towards the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics, and Working-Class History (New York 1994), 1-19 at 8. It sums up the thesis in his path breaking Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class (New York 1991).

funny you know, because the Indian boys couldn't say anything behind their backs." Once the argot of the fur trade, Chinook, the "Indian language," was the lingua franca of many industrial workplaces, including, for a time, the waterfront; indeed, the vocabularies of white and aboriginal dockers were often peppered with Chinook jargon such as "skookum" (strong), "chuck" (water), and "mesachie" (bad or evil) well into the twentieth century. In addition to being the language of work, Chinook could, on occasion, be the language of resistance -- permitting aboriginal workers to undermine, perhaps only briefly, white workers' sense of racialized camaraderie and entitlement that backstopped their ongoing monopoly on specific cargos. "George Newman, he was always full of fun. He would holler down the hatch in Indian language and then he would start to laugh," Edward observed, the punch line in this anecdote being that white workers "down below" did not understand George's orders.²⁷⁰

In other situations, Squamish men sought to neutralize white privilege in a more forceful way. "There was a one eyed [Indian] fellow running...side and he hated the sight of a white man. Sure enough, inside of two hours he threw a plank on [Moose] Johnson's foot and he had to go home," one white docker recalled years later. Consciousness of racial difference and identity clearly mattered in the longshoring "family," a dynamic that was reinforced off the job by the spatial

²⁷⁰ Man Along the Shore!, 29 and 55-57; Charles Lillard, "A Chinook Gazeteer," in David Day, ed., Men of the Forest (Victoria 1977), 18-26.

separation of white and aboriginal waterfront workers: by the interwar period, the former had moved from the waterfront district into the working-class suburbs of South and East Vancouver, while the latter, refashioned as "Indians," were confined to reserves on the north shore of Burrard Inlet and Howe Sound. On a day-to-day basis, white and aboriginal longshoremen might have worked the same ships, walked on the same docks, and drank at the same bars, but off the job they lived in two remarkably different contexts. As Rolf Knight observed more than twenty years ago: "the pervasive and durable feature of native Indian workers was their identification, first and foremost, as members of their particular 'tribal' Indian communities."²⁷¹

No where was the importance of this "identification," and its uneasy relationship with the politics of being a longshoremen, more evident than in the realm of unionization. As the North American economy shifted from competitive to monopoly capitalism, the Industrial Workers of the World emerged, offering up a heady mix of revolution and reform -- "socialism with its working clothes on" -- to those workers who did not fit well into the established craft union structure: the unskilled, the migratory, and the foreign born.²⁷² Like waterfront workers across the

²⁷¹ Knight, Indians at Work, 33. My sense of this issue is also indebted to: Kay Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal and Kingston 1991); David R. Roediger, Towards the Abolition of Whiteness and The Wages of Whiteness.

²⁷² This section on the race and unions is informed by the excellent work of Eric Arnesen, "Biracial Waterfront Unionism in the Age of Segregation," in Winslow, ed., Waterfront Workers, 19-61 and Bruce Nelson, "The 'Lords of the Docks' Reconsidered: Race Relations among West Coast Longshoremen, 1933-61," in Waterfront Workers, 155-192. In the same volume see Calvin Winslow,

continent who were swept up in this wave of militancy, lumber handlers in Vancouver, the vast majority of whom were Squamish, founded IWW Local 526 in 1906. William Nahanee, Dan Paull, and Joe Capilano were among its ranks which, according to one estimate, included about 50 to 60 men. Meetings were usually held on the Mission Reserve and the union's crest – which featured a peavey crossed with a cargo hook – was designed by John St. John, a black, former sailor from Barbados. That Squamish men were drawn to the IWW is perhaps not a complete surprise. Like other workers, they inhabited workplaces that were undergoing significant transformations: in the woods, the mechanization of logging techniques was rapidly converting the “forest” into a “factory”; in the commercial fishery, canneries were increasingly mechanized while out on the water sails, oars, and gill nets were replaced by motor boats, seines, and trolls; and on the waterfront, the emergence of steamships, coupled with the rapid diversification of goods and expansion of port facilities, meant increased pressure to turn ships around quickly and heightened competition in the labour market. Not only did the Wobblies take aim at those unskilled workers caught in the vortex of monopoly capitalism, but it preached a simple message of inclusion, dignity, and defiance at a time of

“Men of the Lumber Camps Come to Town”: New York Longshoremen in the Strike of 1907,” 62-96 and Howard Kimeldorf, “Radical Possibilities? The Rise and Fall of Wobbly Unionism on the Philadelphia Docks,” in Winslow, ed., Waterfront Workers, 97-130. On the IWW see Leier, Where the Fraser River Flows; McCormack, “Wobblies and Blanketstiffs”; Shoom, “A fine, practical internationalism’.” The international dimensions of this period of struggle are discussed in Eric Hobsbawm, “National Unions on the Waterside,” 242.

widespread bigotry and class exploitation; what was more, the IWW promoted a highly decentralized form of union organization that suited the Squamish men well, for they continued to migrate on a seasonal basis to hunt, fish, and work.²⁷³

Little is known about Local 526. No union records have survived and the Department of Indian Affairs, ordinarily very keen to document the most intimate details of aboriginal life, had nothing to say on the matter, at least not in print. A nasty, brutish, and short waterfront strike in 1909, one characterized by impressive levels of racial solidarity, apparently marked the local's demise. That aboriginal workers were pioneers of industrial unionism is important to note for it was this commitment to organizing the unorganized that would, by World War I, inform the challenge mounted by the Socialist Party of Canada and One Big Union – on the waterfront and in other workplaces.²⁷⁴ Yet what is equally striking, and perhaps more important given the parameters of this analysis, is that the IWW emerged at the same time that coast and interior Salish communities were experimenting with new forms of resistance. In 1906, representatives from all the coast and interior Salish groups, communities which felt the squeeze of settlement pressures and industrial development more acutely than others, met on Vancouver Island; they nominated

²⁷³ Seager and Roth, "British Columbia and the Mining West," 231-267; Richard Rajala, "The Forest as Factory: Technological Change and Worker Control in the West Coast Logging Industry, 1880-1930," *Labour/Le Travail* 32 (Fall 1993), 73-104; James Conley, "Relations of Production and Collective Action in the Salmon Fishery, 1900-1925" in *Workers, Capital, and the State*, 86-116; Philpott, "Trade Unionism and Acculturation," 42-44.

²⁷⁴ Seager and Roth touch on this point in "British Columbia and the Mining West: A Ghost of a Chance," 231-267.

a delegation of three chiefs, including Squamish chief, IWW member, and longshoreman Joe Capilano, to take their demands directly to King Edward in London. Although the mission was unsuccessful – the British government maintained that the question of title was strictly a Canadian issue – the unity of coastal and interior groups was, as political scientist Paul Tennant has argued, “a step in the evolution of pan-Indianism” that set the stage for future, more broadly based innovations under the leadership of Andrew Paull in the 1910s and 20s.²⁷⁵

Without question, the assertion of aboriginal rights, particularly title to land, was part of a specific pattern of complaint among the Squamish that stretched back to the earliest days of white settlement and drew upon the cultural resources at the core of their community; at the same time, however, it is important not to underestimate the political contribution of their participation in the industrial economy. Travelling great distances and working in a variety of occupational settings likely enhanced the Squamish’s understanding of the breadth and depth of the changes wrought by white society and allowed for the wider dissemination of political ideas amongst different aboriginal groups. This was particularly true in the realm of waterfront work. Not only did the existence of all-aboriginal gangs serve as “important nodes for the continued use and transmission of native languages and beliefs, including political ideals,” but when those gangs travelled from Burrard Inlet

²⁷⁵ Tennant, Aboriginal People and Politics, 85.

to the sawmills on Vancouver Island, where culturally similar and often related aboriginal groups also laboured as lumber handlers, those important nodes were stretched wider. In this context, the links between the emergence of the IWW and the first pan-Salish organization come into sharper focus. Not only were the same people involved in both movements, but, on a wider canvas, both were about asserting control over an economic and political context in which the balance of power had shifted decisively in favour of white society with the emergence of industrial capitalism and the incursion of the colonial state. This dialectic of politicization is captured by the nickname adopted by Squamish dockers for Local 526; it was called the Bows and Arrows, an assertion of identity and difference at a time when white society was bent on political erasure and cultural genocide.²⁷⁶

After the demise of Local 526, Squamish waterfront workers joined Local 38-57 of the International Longshoremen's Association in 1913, about a year after white

²⁷⁶ This paragraph draws on Man Along the Shore!, 26, 27, 29, 33, and 41; Knight, Indians at Work, 123-130 and 286, note 29; Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics, chapter 6, "The Politics of Survival" and chapter 7, "From Intertribal to Province-wide Political Action, 1900-16." Although Tennant provides a nuanced portrait of aboriginal politicization at the turn of the century, he makes absolutely no effort to explore the links between unionization and the emergence of aboriginal organizations dedicated to land claims. Moreover, he is reluctant to make even the broader connection between aboriginal participation in the industrial economy and their politicization around issues of race and class, observing: "[I]n most parts of the province, ... Indian economic participation [did not] have any direct and positive political consequences. The coastal fishing industry provided the major exception" As this chapter asserts, so, too, did longshoring. Similar developments were underway in other ports. As Howard Kimeldorf and Robert Penney have illustrated, in the early decades of the twentieth century, the unionization of African American dockers in Philadelphia coincided with the popularity of Marcus Garvey and his pan-Africanist movement. See their "Excluded' by Choice: Dynamics of Interracial Unionism on the Philadelphia Waterfront, 1910-1930," ILWCH, 51 (Spring 1997), 50-71. See also Arnesen, "Biracial Waterfront Unionism in the Age of Segregation" and Nelson, "The 'Lords of the Docks' Reconsidered: Race Relations among West Coast Longshoremen, 1933-61."

workers had established ILA Local 38-52 in Vancouver. "The Indians used to handle nothing but lumber and the whites, the general cargo. Sometimes they'd be working in the next hatch to each other and they'd get talking. That's how some Indians learned English and that kind of talk led to the formation of the ILA," one lumber handler recalled. "Things were dying out and ILA was getting bigger and bigger," echoed another. Communication across divisions of race and specialization was no doubt important in this process of union building, but so too were the broader, structural shifts taking place in the shipping industry which brought larger numbers of workers together to load and unload a wider range of commodities on a single vessel; by the eve of World War I, only a handful of ships took on big quantities of lumber -- "500,000 feet or more" -- while sailing vessels, once the domain of aboriginal dockers, continued to disappear.²⁷⁷

The decision to disband the "Bows and Arrows" and join the ILA sparked a fierce debate amongst Squamish workers.²⁷⁸ While no transcripts or minutes of this discussion have survived, it is likely that some of the debate revolved around the political and institutional differences between the IWW and the ILA, the former organization preaching a form of interracial unionism, the later holding fast to the biracial strategies that were proving to be so effective in Gulf Coast and northeast ports at the same time. But as Ed Long, one of the few white lumber handlers,

²⁷⁷ Man Along The Shore!, 46-47.

²⁷⁸ Man Along The Shore!, 46-47.

recalled, aboriginal workers were politicized both as workers and as "Indians," and during this debate they laid bare an agenda that linked workplace struggle to wider aboriginal concerns: "A lot of the old Indian boys didn't like it because they could go to work and quit and the boss would go and get him because he was a good lumber handler. They couldn't do without him." At the core of the "boys" critique of the ILA was an abiding sense of pride in their status as skilled men "on the lumber" and a desire to protect their customary practice of merging casual labour on the docks with more traditional patterns of life. In the end, about 90 per cent of the Bows and Arrows backed the move into an independent ILA local – the men, evidently, opting for a safe haven through racial separation. Between 1912 and 1916, when Local 38-57 was an independent organization, veteran docker William Nahanee was its first president; his son Edward occupied the vice-president's post.²⁷⁹

There is little doubt that aboriginal longshoremen's decision to join the ILA was in part pragmatic: put simply, unlike the IWW, it was growing, it had a strike fund, and it possessed a record of recent success in other ports. At the same time, though, it is crucial not to underestimate the influence of the burgeoning sense of pan-Indianism taking hold amongst the Squamish, and the ongoing cross-fertilization taking place between struggles on the reserves and off. The political

²⁷⁹ Philpott, "Trade Unionism and Acculturation," 44; Man Along the Shore!, 46-47. The observation about leadership in the post-1916 period is based on a reading of the BC Federationist, various years. Ian McKay's "Class Struggle and Merchant Capital: Craftsmen and Labourers on the Halifax Waterfront, 1850-1900," in Palmer, ed., Character of Class Struggle (Toronto 1986), 17-36 was also important to this paragraph.

career of Andrew Paull illustrates these notions well. The first child of Dan and Teresa Paull, Andrew Paull was born in 1892 in the Howe Sound area, the Squamish's traditional territory, and, like other children his age, was educated by Catholic missionaries on the community's main reserve on the north shore. The Paulls were a "prestige family" – which is to say, they occupied a position of considerable status within Squamish society. Dan Paull, for example, worked closely with the Oblate Fathers to establish a church and school and took up longshoring, a relatively well-paying job, at a young age; by the turn of the century, he had secured the rank of "watchman" or disciplinarian at the Mission church and, at one time, as foreman with the Cates stevedoring company. With this kind of inheritance, it is perhaps not a surprise that after six years of school, Andrew, who later spoke of the pivotal role that the Oblate Fathers played in his early life, went on to study law in Vancouver in 1907 or 1908, just a year or so after chiefs from both interior and coastal Salish groups had gone to London. In the years that followed his legal apprenticeship, Andrew emerged as an influential political figure, both on the reserve and off, at a time when a new generation of aboriginal leaders was coming to the fore. He was an interpreter for the McKenna-McBride Commission "relating to Indian Affairs in the Province" from 1913 to 1916; a longshoreman, member of the ILA, and delegate to its annual convention in Vancouver in 1914; a founder of the Allied Tribes of British Columbia, an organization created in 1916 to lobby the

government; and secretary of the Squamish Tribal Council that was created seven years later.²⁸⁰

Without question, the creation of these organizations, like the mounting of the Salish delegation to London in 1906, were the products of a lengthy struggle for title to land, rights to resources, and the restoration of self-government, a struggle given added momentum by, among other factors, the contentious “sale” of the Kitsilano Reserve in 1913 and the McKenna-McBride Commission’s refusal to inquire seriously into any of these vexatious issues. It is also significant that these organizational endeavours emerged at a time of great political fermentation on the waterfront. Not only were aboriginal people reaching for a just settlement both on the reserve and off, but the experiences appear to have sharpened their appreciation of the interconnectedness of both battles – and, importantly, new ways to fight them. Indeed, success on the waterfront was all the more important given that at the same time that possession of reserve land was being eroded, access to resources was being curtailed, and competition for work in other occupations was on the rise. “My father said that my grandfather had been a longshoreman and we

²⁸⁰ This paragraph on Andrew Paull is based on the following: BCARS, GR 123, Volume 11021, File 520c, “Census of Squamish Indians Mission Reserve, North Vancouver”; E. Palmer Patterson, “Andrew Paull and Canadian Indian Resurgence,” (PhD Thesis, University of Washington, 1962); Patterson, entry for “Andrew Paull” in Canadian Encyclopedia Second Edition (Edmonton 1988), 1630; Joan Ryan, “Squamish Socialization,” (PhD Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1974), 42-46; William John Zaharoff, “Success in Struggle: The Squamish People and Kitsilano Indian Reserve No. 6,” (Masters Thesis, Carleton University, 1978); Paul Tennant, Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989 (Vancouver 1990), chapter seven, “From Inter-tribal to Province-wide Political Action, 1900-16” and chapter eight, “Cut Offs, Claims Prohibitions, and the Allied Tribes, 1916-27.”

had to hang on to what he had started," longshoreman Tim Moody, a Tsimshian man who married a Squamish woman, recalled. "It was all we had."²⁸¹

Aboriginal workers were deeply involved in the labour activism that defined the period during and immediately after the Great War. In 1916, Local 38-57 and Local 38-52 were amalgamated, a development due, in part, to the ascendancy of a new, more left-wing leadership on the docks at a time when talk of "one big union," "new democracy," and even revolution filled the air. Increasingly bent on closing the gaps of skill, specialization, and income that divided waterfront workers, the new leadership steered the union toward an increasingly militant position on the battlefield of class war as the conflict overseas dragged on, democratic rights at home were suppressed, and the high cost of living made it increasingly hard for workers to make ends meet. Support from aboriginal longshoremen, by no means unanimous or unproblematic, was significant. As one longshoreman remarked during one of the many saw-offs that took place during this time: "It is beyond the ability of my mental apparatus to understand why those who boast of having a higher degree of intelligence and civilization than that of the Indian will be so base as to scab on their fellow workers when the Indian will not do so. Were scabs able to understand the Indian language they would receive an education on an Indian's opinion of a scab."²⁸² Other anecdotes confirm this general observation. During the

²⁸¹ Quoted in Philpott, "Trade Unionism and Acculturation," 46-47.

²⁸² Quoted in Seager and Roth, "British Columbia and the Mining West, 239-40.

1923 strike, for example, William Nahanee worked alongside Bill Pritchard and Jack Kavanaugh on the ILA's negotiating team. One waterfront employer complained that aboriginal longshoremen were collaborating with white workers and planning to "incite a riot," a violation of a deal he had cut with the "Indians" who, ordinarily, were "peaceable and easily handled."²⁸³

The precise role that aboriginal longshoremen played in these events is not known. What is clear, though, is this: that aboriginal longshoremen were not "easily handled" during the 1923 strike cost them dearly. Under the terms and conditions of the post-strike settlement between the Shipping Federation and the newly minted company union, members of the ILA, if they were not blacklisted outright, were entitled to only a small portion of available work. Whatever unity existed between Squamish longshoremen and their white counterparts dissolved in an atmosphere of bitterness, acrimony, and recrimination – much of it shot through with racism. It was in this context that Andrew Paull arranged to meet with J.H. McVety, head of the Dominion Employment Service office in Vancouver, and B.C. Keeley, president of the Shipping Federation, in early January 1924 to discuss the emerging post-strike regime of labour relations – and the place of aboriginal workers within it. Sitting in McVety's Powell Street office, Paull criticized the collective agreement

²⁸³ BCARS, GR 1313, File P-180-36-1923, E.J. Palmer, Manager, Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing, Chemainus, to the Honourable Attorney General, 16 October 1923; CVA, Add.Mss 279, Box 36, W.C.D. Crombie to Douglas Armour, 3 November 1923. Crombie incorrectly describes Nahanee as "a Siwash Indian from Vancouver Island."

signed by waterfront employers and the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers Association which granted the new union a monopoly on available waterfront work and set aside a smaller percentage of opportunities for the so-called "ex-employees" – former members of the ILA who, in the opinion of the Shipping Federation, were politically moderate and thus eligible for employment. Paull was one of those ex-employees; so, too, were Edward Nahanee, William Newman, Fred Corkill, and many other Squamish men from the Mission Reserve. And while he was, to some extent at least, satisfied that aboriginal longshoremen would have some access to waterfront employment, Paull no longer believed that it was in their best interests to belong to an organization that was dominated by white workers.

According to McVety, who filed a report on the meeting shortly after it wound up, the young, articulate longshoreman argued forcefully that aboriginal workers feared "intimidation at the hands of that organization [the ILA]" and felt that the practices of white trade unions were incompatible with their specific needs, not just as workers but as aboriginal people as well. For Paull, the latter, more fundamental concern was a question of language as many Squamish waterfront workers were "illiterate" and "unable to secure the information placed on the blackboards." What was more, he added, it was also a question of merging more traditional patterns of life, such as hunting and fishing, with the less flexible time-work discipline that came with decasualization as the "Indians...objected to being placed in gangs because of the necessity of working whenever the gangs in which they were placed were

equipped." It was with these three separate, but intimately linked issues in mind, Paull concluded, that approximately 125 aboriginal longshoremen, the majority of whom lived on the north shore, voted to withdraw from the (diminished) ILA, form a separate union, the Independent Lumber Handlers Association, and pressure the Shipping Federation to hire its members independently of other waterfront organizations.²⁸⁴

After much discussion, waterfront employers, in conjunction with the Dominion Employment office, reached a compromise. "It was finally agreed that the business agent of the Lumber Handlers' Association would keep in touch with the government employment office and would be permitted to fill such orders as were assigned to him by those in charge of the employment office," McVety wrote afterwards. "[The business agent] would be supplied with the introduction cards so that it would be unnecessary for the men to apply in person at the office, he to distribute them to the men individually in order to permit of them being taken up by the stevedoring foreman at the ship's side."²⁸⁵ For the Shipping Federation, recognition of the ILHA dovetailed nicely with its overarching agenda of cultivating more peaceful labour relations. By ensuring that skilled ex-employees were

²⁸⁴ The quotations are taken from NAC, RG 27, Strike and Lockout Files, Volume 332, Strike 95 (Vol.2), J.H. McVety, General Superintendent of Employment Services of Canada, to F.E. Harrison, 23 February 1924; McVety is writing about a meeting that took place on 10 January 1924. See also: Major Crombie to ILHA, 26 January 1924; F.E. Harrison, Inspector, Department of Labour, to H.H. Ward, Deputy Minister of Labor (Ottawa), 23 and 25 February 1924.

²⁸⁵ NAC, RG 27, Strike and Lockout Files, Volume 332, Strike 95 (Vol.2), J.H. McVety, General Superintendent of Employment Services of Canada, to F.E. Harrison, 23 February 1924.

available to handle logs and lumber, one of the waterfront's most difficult commodities, it successfully assuaged the concerns of critics within its own ranks who were troubled by the poor performance of replacement workers. What is more, by providing the new union with a (small) slice of the available work, the Shipping Federation ensured that the waterfront workforce remained divided by racial difference, job category, and skill level – divisions that undermined working-class solidarity and helped to cement the company union's position as the sole political option for most dockers.

For the aboriginal longshoremen who withdrew from the ILA, this new arrangement was about carving out a zone of opportunity in the increasingly bureaucratic, decasualized, and white post-strike world of waterfront work. Indeed, they understood well the linkages between their long-term survival, access to material resources, and ability to control their own affairs; it was, after all, an argument that Paull, and many other aboriginal people, had been putting to Indian agents, cabinet ministers, and provincial premiers in one form or another for some time. "A lot of objection has been raised by former employees who are not members of our [new] association. ... Our organization is desirous of including in their members all half breed and Indians that can do the work for the purpose of safeguarding our voting power as we want to control the affairs of our association," Paull wrote to Crombie after the meeting concluded. "[Ex-ILA men now] regard us as enemies and they have promised by some means they will eventually force us...

to again organize the Port in one union irrespective of who comprises the membership. We do not want in another one union, we want to be by ourselves."²⁸⁶ As in other areas of aboriginal-white relations, however, the gap between the rhetoric and reality of this bargain was wide.

From the perspective of the labour manager, Paull's vision of independence was a non-starter. At its core, it embraced casualism as a means to accommodate simultaneously aboriginals' more traditional patterns of economic life and to ensure that they maintained a foothold in waterfront employment. As such, it ran counter to the very logic of decasualization and the Shipping Federation's wider objectives of not only making better workers, but making better citizens as well. By February 1924, the impact of this contradiction on the day-to-day workings of his reform initiatives was apparent. "[A]s it happens, every day that this system was in operation showed an increasing efficiency in the operation of the system," Crombie wrote. "[B]ut unfortunately an agreement was entered into with the Indians which automatically withdrew a large number of men from these permanent gangs and automatically and instantly broke down the system which was in the process of formation." The "permanent gangs" that Crombie was referring to belonged to the ILA, not the company union, which received the lion's share of the available work as part of its collective agreement; but as his closing words suggest, he was clearly

²⁸⁶ CVA, Add.Mss 279, Box 36, File 1, Paull to Crombie, 26 January 1924; Paull to Crombie, undated, likely March, 1924.

thinking about the ways in which the special treatment afforded the ILHA threatened to scuttle his entire reform agenda. "Since the time of this agreement with the Indians there has been little or no attempt on the part of the stevedoring companies to continue the gang system."²⁸⁷

To shore up the implementation of the "Seattle plan," Crombie brought the ILHA under the regulatory ambit of the despatch hall and the joint committee structure that formed the basis of decasualization and the wider welfare capitalist project of which it was a part. Like the company union, for example, the ILHA was forced to submit its new members to the Shipping Federation's admission committee; its earning and efficiency were recorded and tabulated by the labour manager; and, after waterfront employers decided to eliminate the Dominion Employment Bureau from the hiring process, its members were hired at the despatch hall. For Paull, the decision to stop using the government office was particularly infuriating. "[I]t was the desire of the employees whom I represent to amicably function with our employers, and that the lumber handlers were going to be independent of any other longshore organization in this port," he wrote. "Our objection to being picked for work in or around the despatch hall is that we are still of the same mind as originally represented to the Federation, that is, that we want to be by ourselves, and not to associate or come in contact with any other of your

²⁸⁷ CVA, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 4, Crombie to the Chairman of the Labour Committee, 11 February 1924.

employees." As the force of Paull's language suggests, independence was not simply about where, geographically, a lumber handler should be selected for work, but, more importantly, about the emerging relationship between the ILHA and the sweeping process of reform. As much as Paull hated to admit it, as time went on, the lumber handlers were "being forced to render service in accordance with any arrangement entered into by some other organization."²⁸⁸

The agreement that Paull had in mind was, of course, the collective agreement signed by the Shipping Federation and the VDWWA in 1924 -- which, among other things, guaranteed the company union most of the available waterfront work. This clause, perhaps more than any other, affected the ILHA the most. "[T]he VDWWA have been doing better than previously owing to their getting the full benefit of their preferential agreement," Crombie wrote. "[A]s a result, the ex-employees are suffering proportionately." Of particular note, he concluded, was the status of the lumber handlers, "who are losing many of their members owing to lack of steady work." Indeed they were. When Paull first met with McVety and Keeley in January, 1924, the ILHA's membership stood at about 125, "mostly Indians." According to the department of labour, within six weeks of that meeting, the organization's ranks swelled "to three or four hundred," including men of "practically every nationality" and many "who had not formerly worked on the waterfront." Why

²⁸⁸ CVA, Add.Mss 279, Box 36, File 1, Andrew Paull to Crombie, 11 April 1924.

this substantial hike took place is not exactly clear, but it is reasonable to assume that after receiving assurances of employment, the union leadership set about assembling enough workers to field gangs on any given day. By the end of 1925 and early 1926, however, as Crombie made good on his promise to reduce the overall size of the labour market, pare away the "inefficients," and reward the company union with preferential treatment, the ranks of the ILHA contracted substantially. "I believe you are well aware that the membership of the ILHA has been getting pretty small and that they have difficulty in providing worthwhile gangs for logs and lumber," a member of the union's executive wrote. "I believe it is not the wish of the Federation to see this Organization cease to function." At that time, its membership was around 60, of whom only 5, perhaps 6 were aboriginal, and dropping. By 1928, "Andy Paull and others who belonged to the Bows and Arrows" had been, in the laconic words of one contemporary observer, "let out of their organization for non-payment of dues."²⁸⁹

The point, here, is not that the labour manager was solely responsible for the decline and fall of aboriginal longshoremen -- though as the "King Bee" of the waterfront he certainly played a pivotal role in this development. Rather, it is this: Elimination of casual longshoremen in order to maximize efficiency was at the core

²⁸⁹ CVA, Add.Mss 279, Box 32, File 5, Crombie to Joe Webber, 2 October 1925; Box 60, File 6, Crombie to J.C. Irons, 17 March 1926; Box 36, File 1, Paull to Shipping Federation, 11 April 1924; NAC, RG 27, Strike and Lockout Files, Volume 332, Strike 95 (Vol.2), Crombie to ILHA, 26 January 1924; J.H. McVety, General Superintendent of Employment Services of Canada, to F.E. Harrison, 23 February 1924; F.E. Harrison to H.H. Ward, Deputy Minister of Labour, 23 February 1924.

of decasualization. Because Squamish workers, for cultural, economic, and political reasons, were both desirous of, and limited to, a single commodity and a casual status, they were affected disproportionately by the Shipping Federation's reform agenda. Or, put another way, in a society and workplace shaped decisively by race, the reforms affected different races differently.

That the economic logic of these initiatives was bound up with a specific vision of what composed both a "good worker" and "good citizen" certainly did not help aboriginals' chances. Throughout the 1920s, maritime traffic in Burrard Inlet increased and port facilities expanded. Although more and more cargo was being loaded and unloaded on the north shore, the vast majority of the longshoremen were based in Vancouver, a state of affairs that prompted the mayor of North Vancouver to contact waterfront employers in the fall of 1928 to inquire about "the formation of a Longshoremen's union in this city." In late October, city counsellors met with the executive of the Shipping Federation to discuss the issue; after much discussion, the latter group made it clear that, although it was not logistically possible to have gangs made up of men solely from North Vancouver, they understood the desire to ensure that the "taxpayers" of the north shore benefited from the development taking place there. "Let's make an earnest effort to work the men who live on the North Shore into gangs," the president of the Shipping Federation concluded. Whether or not either party had workers from the Mission Reserve, or other Squamish locales, in mind is hard to know for sure; but the use

of the word "taxpayer" suggests that they were thinking about white, not aboriginal, men. To be a taxpayer was to own property and, by extension, to be a citizen – statuses at the core of the Shipping Federation's reform agenda, statuses that the Squamish could not legally or materially possess.²⁹⁰

Without longshoring, Squamish men and their families tapped a wide range of resources to make ends meet. In the wake of the 1923 strike, the band council passed a resolution calling on the Department of Indian Affairs to distribute money from their trust fund "to the large number of Indian heads of families" who were complaining of "hardship"; how much money was approved by government officials is unclear.²⁹¹ At the same time, Squamish men and women continued to work in other sectors of the economy such as the commercial fishery, cannery work, and hop-picking, although the fishery, according to the superintendent of Indian affairs in the province, was no longer as lucrative as it once was: "[F]ishing on the Fraser River and the Lower Coast has fallen off to a very great extent of late years," he wrote.²⁹²

In this context, household production such as gardening, seaweed gathering, berry picking – traditionally women's work – hunting, and fishing took on additional

²⁹⁰ CVA, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 10, City Clerk, City of North Vancouver, to President of Shipping Federation, 5 October 1928; "Meeting between the executive of the Shipping Federation of BC and a committee from the North Vancouver City Council ... 17 October 1928"; William W. Scott to H.R. McMillan, 7 October 1933.

²⁹¹ Quoted in Roine, "The Squamish Aboriginal Economy," 71.

²⁹² BCARS, RG10, V4045, F351,304, Ditchburn to Duncan C. Scott, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 6 January 1925.

importance. During this period, the Indian agent for the Vancouver Agency, C.C. Perry, informed the chief inspector of fisheries of the Squamish's urgent need for additional permits for the aboriginal food fishery. "I beg to inform you that Denny Mack and Old Cronie, two Indians of the Squamish tribe have today visited this office to make application for a permit to fish for salmon," he wrote in December 1924. "These...Indians were very anxious to fish for food...and have urged me to make this application definitely on their behalf.... I would inform you that these Indians reside permanently at North Vancouver, and as the majority of the Squamish Indians are Longshoremen and are out of employment, they would be put to expense and trouble in preparing to go further afield in Howe Sound." Others did make a move "further afield." Looking back on this period, Tim Moody recalled that after his father lost his job on the docks, the family moved to Howe Sound and survived by hunting and fishing; they sold the fruits of their labour to residents of Woodfibre and Britannia and also accepted cash relief from the band council and the Department of Indian Affairs. Similarly, Simon Baker remembered picking hops, cutting firewood in North Vancouver, and fishing on the Skeena River during this time frame.²⁹³

Fishing for food and modest financial gain was never simple, of course. Conflict with white commercial and sport fishers was rife. At the same time,

²⁹³ NAC, RG10, V10899, F167/20-2, C.C. Perry to Major Motherwell, Chief Inspector of Fisheries, 17 December 1924; Philpott, "Trade Unionism and Acculturation," 45-47; Roine, "Squamish Aboriginal Economy," 84.

throughout the interwar period, the Department of Marine and Fisheries stepped up its efforts to reduce the number of aboriginals fishing for food in order to preserve salmon stocks by making it more difficult to receive a license and cracking down on those fishing without one. The sons of longshoremen George Newman, for example, were routinely harassed by fisheries inspectors for "taking fish in the creek in the Mission reserve without first obtaining a permit from the Fisheries Department." Other altercations between unemployed longshoremen and state officials were more serious. "Peter Harry has asked me to write you as he is in great distress.... [H]is gas boat ... was taken by the fishing authorities," one Alexander Burke wrote to C.C. Perry on behalf of his Squamish friend. "His boat he tells me is his sole means of livelihood and by now he is destitute, besides himself he has to support his wife, Bernadette, Noel, Harry, Emma, Soloman, Jimmy and Stephen his grandchild. The assistance he begs is for groceries only, the necessities of life." Waterfront work never obviated the need for additional paid employment or subsistence production, but its absence certainly placed additional pressure on both endeavours at a time when the state, among other factors, was making it harder and harder to secure "the necessities of life." Looking back on the 1923 strike and the period of reform that followed, one Squamish longshoremen recalled simply: "In ten days it was all over. We lost our jobs and everything."²⁹⁴

²⁹⁴ NAC, RG10, V10899, F167/20-2, Burke to Perry, 7 November 1925; A.P. Halladay, Inspector of Fisheries to C.P. Perry, 21 October 192; Perry to Billy and Henry Newman, 9 October 1924; Philpott, "Trade Unionism and Acculturation," 45-47.

* * *

In the mid-to-late 1920s, Squamish dockers, could be found fishing on the Squamish or Capilano River for personal consumption, selling surplus salmon to whites around Howe Sound or in Vancouver, attending meetings of the newly amalgamated Squamish band, and debating the politics and possibilities of aboriginal rights. At the same time, during the interwar period, white men on the waterfront struggled to secure a square deal, and they were, for the most part, successful in this endeavour. Indeed, during this time, many were able to take advantage of the post-war boom in maritime traffic and the relatively constant employment to secure property and homes in Vancouver's emerging blue-collar suburbs; in the context of the post-strike welfarist consensus, a new home centredness was emerging, bundled up in a new set of expectations about what one legitimately could expect from one's employer. The difference between these two images is striking. Viewed from a wide angle, it is the legacy of a long process of racialization, proletarianization, and marginalization underway since the mid-to-late 19th century – a process that, on the waterfront in the interwar period, included ideologies, institutions, and practices of decasualization, company unionism, and welfare capitalism.

As this chapter has demonstrated, far from being marginalized by the emergence of industrial capitalism, Squamish workers figured prominently in a wide range of industries, taking up longshoring, amongst other occupations, almost from

the moment that sawmills first came to Burrard Inlet; they were skilled and knowledgeable lumber handlers, and widely regarded as such. At the same time, however, Squamish men pooled in the ranks of the lumber handlers because the waterfront labour market was segmented by race and specialization – a reality that emerged from, and helped to reproduce, a general condition of political and economic inequality that divided aboriginal people from white society. In this context, not surprisingly, aboriginal workers were politically active both on the job and on the reserve, a dialectic of politicization that was fraught with tension as they negotiated the complex interplay of race and class. This dynamic is captured by the simple fact that the IWW, ILA, and ILHA emerged at the same time as the Salish delegation to London, the Allied Tribes of British Columbia, and the Squamish Tribal Council; the same people were involved and the objectives of both the push for industrial unionism and aboriginal rights overlapped in significant ways.

That Squamish longshoremen opted for independent organizations – IWW Local 526, ILA Local 38-57, and the ILHA – more often than not suggests many things, not the least of which is the abiding importance of being an “Indian” in the context of a workplace and society dominated by whites. No doubt the drubbing that the ILA Local 38-52 took in 1923 reinforced their general assessment of this relationship. Indeed, in the wake of that titanic battle, the fortunes of aboriginal longshoremen shifted as the Shipping Federation, bent on reforming workplace relations after nearly a decade of strike activity, set about reconfiguring the

waterfront labour market. Squamish dockers, whose access to the waterfront was severely circumscribed by the terms of the post-strike settlement, were marginalized during this period. Attempts by the newly formed ILHA to secure a toehold on the waterfront for those who objected to “working whenever the gang they belonged to was equipped” failed. The days of casualism and, as a result, Squamish waterfront workers, were numbered.²⁹⁵

There was a cultural, economic, and political logic underlying Squamish longshoremen's objection to the new time-work discipline at the core of decasualization. On one level, it ran counter to their more traditional habits and values – pre-industrial sensibilities which easily meshed with the demands of a casual labour market. At the same time, the limits placed on aboriginal economic behaviour by both the administrative and coercive mechanisms of the colonial state and the exploitative character of wage work, made occupational pluralism, of which waterfront work was a key component, the basis for material and cultural survival. White longshoremen, especially those men at the bottom of the waterfront's earnings and access pecking order, faced broadly similar conditions and challenges; both white and aboriginal men were working people, after all, and this was a

²⁹⁵ Knight, Indians at Work, 123-130 and endnotes 29 and 41 on page 286; Lutz, “Work, Wages, and Welfare,” 122-23; H.B. Hawthorn, C.S. Belshaw, and S.M. Jamieson, The Indians in British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Adjustment (Toronto 1958), 162-3; Jamieson, “Native Indians and the Trade Union Movement in British Columbia,” Human Organization 20:4 (Winter 1961-2), 219-225; Frances Wilfred Thompson, “The Employment Problems and Economic Status of the BC Indians,” (MSW Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1951), 35-36. See also Philpott, “Trade Unionism and Acculturation,” 36-59.

capitalist society. But William and Edward Nahanee and their Squamish counterparts faced the additional burden of being "Indian." In a racially-segmented labour market, that meant being confined to a more dangerous and less lucrative commodity; in a racist society that meant being subjected to state regulation, stripped of even the most democratic rights, and forced to grapple with the anomy that developed in colonialism's wake. As Andrew Paull once remarked: "Conditions were better back in the early 1900s, we didn't have so many white men breathing down our necks."²⁹⁶

The "white men" that Paull had in mind included Indian agents, fisheries inspectors, and game wardens. Unlike white workers, who would have to wait until the Depression and immediate post World War II era for the state to carve out a role for itself in the most intimate dimensions of daily life, aboriginal workers confronted state intrusion into "Indian affairs" from the earliest days of colonialism. In this regard, from the vantage point of aboriginal workers, then, decasualization, and the wider agenda of welfare capitalism of which it was a part, did not forestall state intervention; rather, it intensified it. Marginalized by the elimination of casual workers, Squamish longshoremen were forced to seek assistance from the Department of Indian Affairs and rely more heavily on economic endeavours that were extensively regulated by a wide range of state agencies. As Chris Roine has

²⁹⁶ Lutz, "Work, Wages, and Welfare," 252.

argued, between 1923 and 1940 the economic basis of Squamish society shifted away from wage labour to the leasing of undeveloped land and the selling of unprocessed resources; significantly, the deals, not to mention the substantial revenues that they produced, were administered for the band council by the government. At the same time, however, by heightening the Squamish's dependence both on household production and the benefits that flowed from the "management of resources," it is possible that this development added additional urgency to struggles for aboriginal rights, which, as Andrew Paull's testimony before a special House of Commons committee and the government's subsequent ban on all discussion of title suggests, climaxed in 1927.²⁹⁷

In his comprehensive book Indians at Work, Rolf Knight had virtually nothing to say about Squamish longshoremen during the interwar period. Writing specifically about Chief Dan George – who graduated from the Mission school in 1915 and, after a few years as a logger, went to work on the waterfront in 1919 – Knight observed: "His position during the 1923-1935 period is unknown to me." A paragraph later, he concluded honestly: "The complex history of that period is nearly impossible to sort out today." This chapter was inspired by Knight's path breaking contribution, and the challenge of sorting out the riddle of the rise and fall of aboriginal longshoremen in Vancouver. The mid-to-late 1920s were a turning point

²⁹⁷ Roine, "Squamish Aboriginal Economy," chapter 4, "Subsistence, Labour, and Land, 1923-40."

as the far-reaching changes brought about by decasualization, specifically the erosion of the status of the casual longshoremen, undercut the presence of aboriginal longshoremen substantially. As a consequence, white and aboriginal workers entered the Depression occupying very different economic positions. Those who would take up the struggle for "work and living wages" would not reach out to unemployed aboriginal workers in any concerted way. Thus, when labour strife came to the waterfront during the depths of the economic crisis, aboriginal and white workers would be on the opposite side of the picket line – the former attempting to take back the jobs they lost during the so-called roaring twenties, and strengthen the battle for aboriginal rights which had been going on for nearly a century.

Part III: Eclipse

**Chapter 5: "So Much For the Past, Here's To A Fighting Policy"
The Great Depression, the Communist Party of Canada,
and the Eclipse of Welfare Capitalism, 1929-1933**

For waterfront workers, as for workers throughout the industrialized world, the Depression brought the modest period of economic expansion after World War I to an abrupt halt. While the working class had certainly weathered cycles of boom and bust in the past, this period of "bust" was unlike anything anyone had seen before. In the wake of Wall Street's "Black Thursday," merely a symptom of the North American economy's deeper, structural problem of overproduction and underconsumption, Canada's gross domestic product nosedived; so, too, did its level of foreign investment. When the economic storm hit British Columbia, it did so with a vengeance. Total lumber production, one of the pillars of the provincial economy, dropped by almost 30 per cent as exports to the United States, the principle market for logs and lumber, declined from 651 million feet in 1929 to 75 million feet in 1932, a drop of approximately 88 per cent. Smaller industries felt the squeeze as well. "[B]usiness with us is worse than at any time during the last 26 years and the price[s] we are quoting to the trade are lower than for any time during the last 20 years," Edwin Tomlin, head of BC Cement Company, wrote in 1933.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ For a general discussion of this period see John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, Canada, 1922-1939: Decades of Discord (Toronto 1985); Palmer, Working-Class Experience, chapter 5, "Dissolution and Reconstitution, 1920-1940," 214-267; Hobsbawm, The Age of Extremes, chapter three, "Into the Economic Abyss," 85-108. The national statistics are drawn from Michiel Horn's CHA pamphlet The Great Depression of the 1930s in Canada (Ottawa 1984), 3-7; See Lembcke and Tattam, One Union in Wood, 18-20; Vernon Jensen, Labor and Lumber (New York 1945), 151; and Al Parkin, "Labor and Timber," BC Lumber Worker, 10 February 1947, for the lumber industry. Tomlin

No sector of the economy was immune. Indeed, with corporations buying and selling fewer commodities such as lumber and cement, shipping traffic in and out of Vancouver plummeted by close to 50 per cent between 1930 and 1933. As a consequence, the number of men employed on the docks declined substantially, a development captured by the 52 per cent contraction of the Shipping Federation's total payroll disbursement from \$1,625,593 in 1928 to \$772,529 in 1933. Waterfront workers, like their counterparts in other sectors of the economy, faced staggering levels of under- and unemployment; nearly 40 per cent fewer longshoremen plied their trade in 1932 than did so in 1928. "[T]he machinery of capitalist production had slowed down to a walk," the BC Lumber Worker observed; indeed, the industrialized world, it appeared, was starving in the midst of plenty.²⁹⁹

L. Bereton, a long-time docker, was one of those men who lost his job. On 27 March 1933, he penned a letter to the labour manager, Major Crombie, to find out why. "I have proved without a shadow of a doubt that as far as Japan Dock is concerned I am not guilty of inefficiency and that goes for any Dock on the Waterfront," his letter began. "I can still push a truck with the Best of Dock Men and

is quoted in CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 13, File 18, Tomlin to Crombie, 4 March 1933; Tomlin to Allan Walker, 7 March 1933.

²⁹⁹ The waterfront statistics are drawn from the following: "Report of Board in Dispute Between Various Firms, Members of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia, Limited, and Their Employees, Members of the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers Association," Labour Gazette 34:7 (June 1934), 598; BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, W-278-3, B-2370, Crombie to Honourable Alfred Duranleau, Minister of Marine, 9 December 1931; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, 33-B-5, File 8, "Vancouver Waterfront Labor Situation," undated, likely 1935, appendix, "Payroll Disbursement, 1924-1934. Additional information is available in Box 18, File 9b, "Memo: Low Earning Men Interviewed 2,3 July 1936." The final quote is from Parkin, "Labor and Timber."

not only that but where does patriotism come in." Bereton, like many of his co-workers, was a veteran of the Great War and, as such, felt that his service overseas, coupled with his decision to cross the picket line in 1923 and ten years of loyal service to the Shipping Federation, was worth something -- at the very least, an explanation for his dismissal, ideally, his job back. "[T]ake yourself and [despatcher] McMarsden[,] 1st Division Men old Red Patch[,] I too am 1st Division and served in the trenches[,] France and Belgium," he continued. "[N]ow then I served your firm all through the strike and now you want to get rid of me and you go about it in such a manner as to deprive me of even the Decency of a job where a Little Independence was assured during such Depression which is worse than War and I ought to know having served through two now sir. ... I hope you give me this request as it means a lot to me and if you want to see me I shall be pleased." It was a forceful, yet somewhat deferential, letter about betrayal; to fire a hard working man -- especially one who defended democracy both overseas and, by backing the Association, at home -- was an affront to a powerful sense of entitlement which had matured during ten years of welfare capitalism. In Bereton's eyes, at the core of the post-war pact was a guarantee of a "Little Independence," a little competency, a status which was his due as a returned soldier, a worker, and a man. To fire him now, in the context of the Depression, a time when this highly prized objective was receding further and further from view, was not only a repudiation of all of this, but, in Bereton's most potent turn-of-phrase, a fate worse than war itself. "I have not

earned 25 Dollars since the 1st of Jan 1933," he added in a postscript. "[Y]ou can[']t help but you have to show me where I have not given my Interest to my Employers no matter who they are."³⁰⁰

Bereton's protest was more than simply a "spasmodic" response to shifting material conditions. Indeed, his argument, couched in terms of "decency" and "independence," echoed the protests made by waterfront workers in the 1920s against the Shipping Federation's inability to "play the game" and the absence of a "square deal," phrases which anchored a culturally-specific and gendered vision of the way things ought to be -- both on the job and in society more generally. But in the context of the Depression, as the logic of the post-war pact with the Shipping Federation came unglued, Bereton's masculine and labourist sensibilities were wrenched from their moorings, a structure of feeling that was shared by other waterfront workers. "[M]y conscience is absolutely clean that I have done my duty to my employers. I only feel sorry for those who have misjudged me, as I know the Law of Compensation will repay them many times for the hurts they have caused me," echoed A.W. Sager.³⁰¹ Whether the Shipping Federation was on the receiving

³⁰⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 1, L. Bereton [Brereton?] to Crombie, 27 March 1933. The question of a "gender crisis" during the Depression is taken up in Ruth Roach Pierson, "Gender and the Unemployment Debates, 1934-1940," Labour/Le Travail 25 (Spring 1990), 77-104; Margaret Hobbs, "Rethinking Antifeminism in the 1930s: Gender Crisis or Workplace Justice? A Response to Alice Kessler-Harris," Gender and History 5:1 (Spring 1993), 4-15. "Competency" is lifted from Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," William and Mary Quarterly XLVII:1 (January 1990), 3-29.

³⁰¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 1, A.W. Sager to Major Crombie, 10 January 1933. The "spasmodic" quote is a reference to E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," in Customs in Common (New York 1993), 185-258 at 185 to 189.

end of any divine retribution during this period is unclear, but what is obvious is that Bereton and Sager, like other men on the hook, had lost faith in the paternalist bargain; they were “hurt”, both as workers and as men, and, as a result, were open to other political possibilities which offered to restore both proper class and gender relations. It was the Communist Party of Canada that articulated this vision and, as a consequence, emerged as a powerful oppositional movement on the docks. It is precisely this development, waterfront workers’ disillusionment with the Shipping Federation, the making of a communist-led opposition, and its (momentary) eclipse of welfare capitalism that is the focus of this chapter.

* * *

When the Association and the Shipping Federation sat down to renegotiate the collective agreement in late 1929, neither side was particularly concerned about the nation’s economic prospects; no doubt, the stock market crash was worrisome, but no one at the bargaining table understood that they were at the front end of an economic crisis that would last the better part of the decade. The negotiations, then, looked a lot like the fights waged throughout the 1920s. For the Association’s executive, the expiration of the five-year-old agreement provided an opportunity to advance an agenda that everyone was, by now, familiar with: higher wages, rotation despatch, and equalization of earnings. For their part, waterfront employers, exasperated by the union’s repeated attempts to usurp the rights that properly belonged to masters, not servants, returned to the position they staked out two

years earlier, one which rejected a wage increase on the basis of the agreement's cost-of-living provision, sought to tighten those clauses which allowed the Association to protect "inefficient" members, demanded a thorough-going reclassification of waterfront workers to boost productivity, and centralized greater powers in the hands of the labour manager. In short, within the framework of welfare capitalism, the question of power -- who should have it, how much, and to what ends -- was on the top of everyone's agenda. "[T]he proposition which you have submitted scarcely recognizes us at all," the union's executive wrote to Crombie in December 1929, underscoring this core issue, "and especially not as an Association."³⁰²

After nearly a year of negotiation, the two organizations signed a new three-year deal on terms extremely favourable to the employers. As in the past, the Association, operating within a narrow institutional and political bandwidth, was forced to make the best of a bad situation; it abandoned its call for better remuneration, rotation despatch, and equalization of earnings in exchange for, among other things, a commitment from the Shipping Federation to replace the picking system -- which was still used to hire dock workers -- with a gang system. No doubt, this gain, which held out the same potential benefits as the

³⁰² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 3, "Proposals by the Association with a view to having them included in the proposed agreement"; "Comments on Association Proposals"; Walker to Crombie, 17 November 1930; copy of agreement, 22 November 1930; Box 3, File 6, "Memorandum" from the Shipping Federation to the VDWWA, 14 December 1929; Walker to Crombie, 21 December 1929; Box 23, File 12, transcript of negotiations, 12, 18, 22 November 1929.

decasualization of the longshoremen, was an important one for the company union, especially its dockers, but it did come at a considerable price.³⁰³ Not only did the company union give up its more aggressive demands, but, in the process, it permitted the Shipping Federation, and Crombie in particular, to assume "direct control" over the classification of workers, determination of efficiency, and despatching of gangs. K.A. McLennan, president of the employers' organization, certainly knew a cakewalk when he saw one; "The thanks of the entire Federation is due to the Negotiations Committee for the splendid work they have done and intelligent results which have been brought about," he wrote. "Those that the Labor Manager deal[s] with know that he is in full charge." So, too, did Ivan Emery, member of the union's executive in 1929 and its president in 1930. After the union executive voted to abandon its more aggressive position late in the process, he resigned in protest, claiming later that his colleagues had "stabbed [him] in the back."³⁰⁴

The "intelligent results" secured by the Shipping Federation loomed large as the nation plunged into the economic abyss. In the spring of 1932, as trade contracted and marine traffic slowed, the Shipping Federation, buoyed by its unequivocal victory in the 1929 negotiations, responded in the same way all

³⁰³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 11. Crombie to "all dock companies," 10 July 1930; 14 August 1930; Box 16, File 8, "Bulletin #2," 21 November 1930; memo, "re: dock gang system," undated, likely late 1930.

³⁰⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 23, File 12, memo, "re: recent Negotiations and Discussions," 24 March 1930; Box 50, File 10, K.A. McLennan to "All Members," 24 November 1930.

employers did when markets sagged and profits dropped -- with austerity. Backed by the agreement's cost-of-living clause, waterfront employers moved to drastically cut wages; "We find that the reduction in the Cost of Living as we were authorized to figure it under the Agreement is 5.06% in relation to the base rate of \$.80," the executive's advisory committee concluded that April, employing a logic that was as draconian as it was mechanical. "[W]e therefore propose to reduce the base rate by 5% or 4 cents." But the proposed wage cuts did not stop there; indeed, as overproduction and underconsumption continued to drive the price of consumer goods lower and lower, the Shipping Federation, as per its "rights" laid out in collective agreement, set out to reduce its base wage rate by an additional 16 per cent in 1933.³⁰⁵ It was one of the cruel ironies of the Depression: at the same time that the price of bread, milk, and clothes declined, making these items, at least technically, more affordable, working people's ability to purchase such goods ebbed as unemployment and wage cuts sent purchasing power into a tailspin. "I am astounded at the figures," a union executive member remarked. "Only a few months ago since a reduction was made, and now we [are] called in a[gain] to take some more punishment."³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 6, "Report from the Advisory and Negotiations Committee to the President and Directors of the Shipping Federation," 3 March 1932; 7 April 1932; "Minutes of a Joint Meeting between the Shipping Federation Advisory Committee and the Executive of the VDWWA," 17 February 1933; Box 62, File 6, "The Shipping Federation of British Columbia Limited; Longshore Base rate as Compared with 1924", 30 November 1933.

³⁰⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 7, "Minutes of a Joint Meeting," 17 February 1933

As the recession deepened, the "punishment" only got worse. Indeed, the push to reduce wages was but one component of a wider plan to place "longshore labour...upon an improved and business like basis and as nearly as possible on a parity with other regulated forms of employment" through a root and branch reclassification and reduction of the Association's membership -- an objective which had eluded Crombie for some time but, with the revision of section 12 of the collective agreement to give him near monopoly control over all decisions related to registration, required no additional justification beyond the obvious: given that, on average, less than half of the company union's membership were being despatched on a daily basis it was possible now to eliminate the men who were not efficient or physically fit enough for waterfront work. "It is reasonable to believe that in course of time a form of esprit de corps would come into existence through the high standard of efficiency called for and required to be maintained among selected men," the labour manager reassured the president of the Shipping Federation, "and that certainly before long this would engender a feeling of pride and satisfaction in the men themselves and their Organization based upon their good earning ability and the consequently good living conditions these men would be able to enjoy." In total, Crombie planned to reclassify 274 registered dock and ship men as "casual

men available for surplus work only," a move which effectively absolved waterfront employers of "any obligation...to guarantee them employment."³⁰⁷

The Association was not amused. "[I]t was unanimously carried that every effort be made to resist the putting of the proposal into operation, and that the [union's negotiating] committee take steps immediately to use whatever influence they can towards that end," read a resolution passed by a general meeting of the company union. At meeting after meeting, the union leadership, many of whom belonged to the clutch of men who struck the compromise that led to the 1930 agreement, protested the wage rollback, arguing that throughout the 1920s the Shipping Federation had already chiselled away at the men's "earning power" by reducing or eliminating the additional wages paid for "travelling," "suspended," and "stand-by" time. What was more, it argued, throughout this period, and even into the first few years of the Depression, the Association was moving more tonnage per capita than it ever had; "We feel this extra effort on the part of the men should receive some recognition," executive member Frank Kenning told waterfront employers.

The leadership's position was not limited to assertions of increased efficiency; indeed, as it had in the past, it tapped the rhetoric of welfare capitalism to mount its

³⁰⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 1, Crombie to Secretary, VDWWA, 12 October 1932; Box 23, File 12, memo, "Re: "Recent Negotiations and Discussions," 24 March 1930; Box 5, File 7, Crombie to Clendenning, 19 September 1932; Crombie to the President and Director of the SFBC, 7 October 1932; Crombie to K.A. McLennan, 15 November 1932.

opposition to wage cuts and layoffs." [We] would also like to draw the attention of this committee to the fact that the longshoreman of to-day is a decided improvement in that of days gone by," it stated in a report to the Shipping Federation, this specific argument appearing under the sub-heading "Longshoreman as Home Builder," "they have responded to the 'Good Citizen' policy so strongly advocated for many years. They have become Home owners or are making payments towards that end. They have accepted the responsibilities of worthy citizens."³⁰⁸ But tucked in this line was both continuity and change: indeed, the point, here, was not just that waterfront workers had fulfilled the terms and conditions of the collective agreement, but, more importantly, they had met their obligations as citizens, and that success, alone, justified better treatment.

Joe Boyes, business agent from 1925 to 1927 and union president in 1932, understood the politics of the Shipping Federation's position well. "[W]e want peace, and hope you want peace. Not peace at any price, but peace at the best price," he told the waterfront employers' negotiating committee. "We do not want to go to the mat, but unfortunately we are in a position at the present time[,] through the Industrial situation present in the world today, that the men themselves, a large number of them, are not earning what we might term a livelihood." The implications of this development, Boyes continued, were obvious: by purposely undercutting

³⁰⁸ Both arguments are contained in CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 6, "Comparison of Longshore Wages and Conditions To-day with that of 1924," 17 March 1932.

waterfront workers' ability to make ends meet, the Shipping Federation was calling into question not only the moderate, labourist leadership of the Association, but the legitimacy of the entire welfare capitalist project. "We cannot control the men's feelings....Present time men are not earning the money they [are] used to. Makes them feel antagonistic....I want to try and draw your attention [to the fact] that a drastic reduction in wages is going to be bad for the sane thinking man," he concluded, emphasizing here, as he did in other correspondence with the City Hall, that the employers' organization was creating the conditions within which the men could easily be "stampeded" into supporting a different, less compliant union.³⁰⁹

It was a possibility not lost on some waterfront employers. "I do not think that we should jeopardize the relationship with our men by forcing a too drastic reduction in wages but that we should confine our efforts to changes in working conditions," the head of Griffiths Stevedoring told the labour manager. Harold Brown, general manager of Union Steamship and president of the Vancouver Board of Trade, agreed. "I would make a frank appeal to the directors that the matter should at least be considered seriously with a view to deferring actions until the winter is over, or until the expiry of the existing agreement," he advised Capt. E. Aikman, president of the Shipping Federation, in a pointed letter which highlighted the relief crisis

³⁰⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 6, "Transcript of Notes Taken at General Meeting of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia, Wednesday, 27 April 1932.

facing Vancouver. "[T]he consequences [of your actions] are to be reckoned with later."³¹⁰ But the labour manager was undeterred.

Girded by the powers granted him under the new collective agreement and the possibilities opened up by the economic recession, he moved ahead with wage reductions and the reclassification of waterfront workers -- over the heated objections of some bosses and all workers. "This one sided state of affairs is a very sure way of bringing about unpleasant conditions," the union's executive remarked, underscoring just how ineffectual it had been, "and we shall be very sorry indeed if it becomes necessary for the Association to...take steps to adjust matters themselves."³¹¹ Many rank-and-file members were far more frank, and voiced their opposition to Crombie's austerity plan, in particular, and the ravages of the Depression, more generally, in deeply personal terms. "I was started on this job by Mr. Wright of the CPR and Capt. Groves said if I stood by them I would never regret it, and after having done so for nine years what has just happened to me now does not back up his statement to me," one wrote in 1933. "I consider it a humiliating insult that I am thrown in the discard and deprived of a chance to earn a living in my own country for no just reason, while all kinds of foreigners not nearly efficient are left at work. That is not being patriotic and loyal to Canadian and British peoples." Here, in three sentences, was the core sense of entitlement that prevailed amongst

³¹⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 7, Harold Brown to Capt. E. Aikman, 12 January 1933; Box 5, File 6, Griffiths Stevedoring to Crombie, 16 March 1932.

³¹¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 3, File 1, Walker to Crombie, 20 June 1932.

waterfront workers, one which had gestated during the salad days of welfare capitalism and was indelibly marked by the class, gender, and racial politics associated with a good worker and a good citizen. "I am now an outsider of your organization but would like to get a chance with the drifters that come around there," echoed "68th Battery," an unemployed docker, "returned man," and father who was "up against it." "Now Major Crombie, I don[']t want anything that is not coming to me but I would like a square deal."³¹² So, too, did many others and, given both the Shipping Federation's unwillingness to stick to the post-war pact and the Association's inability to defend it, they were willing to explore more radical options to secure what a "loyal," "Canadian and British," working-class man deserved: an opportunity to secure his rightful place on the job, in the family, and in the nation. The palette of political possibilities contained many different shades; for many disillusioned waterfront workers, red was the colour of choice.

* * *

For the Communist Party of Canada, as for communist parties the world over, the late 1920s and early 1930s was known as the "Third Period." Through the prism of socialist science, Stalin -- who, by this time, had cemented his grip on both the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist International -- observed a sharpening of the inherent contradictions of capitalism: overproduction and

³¹²CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 6, File 3, "68th Battery" to Crombie, undated, likely early 1930s.

rationalization was producing mass unemployment while, at the same time, imperial powers were preparing for war, both amongst themselves and against the Soviet Union. "This combination of an extreme intensification of basic antagonisms with the growth and development of highly complex and inter-locking strands in the capitalist web provides a picture of something quite unique," one delegate to the party's decisive Sixth Party Congress announced. "Its extreme complexity, its capacity, and one might say its absurdity and savagery, it is a veritable tower of Babel...."³¹³ The upshot, then, was clear: a global economic and political disaster was imminent and the world's workers, especially those in the west, had to be mobilized; the revolutionary moment, it appeared, was imminent. For the Communist Party of Canada, Moscow's "left turn" required a decisive break from the Leninist strategy of working within existing trade unions, new initiatives amongst the unemployed, and a fundamental re-evaluation of its relationship with the moderate forces of labourism and social democracy.³¹⁴ To this new militant end, the party created the Workers Unity League (WUL), its national centre for "red" unionism, in 1930, an organization which, according to its constitution, was dedicated to nothing less than "mobiliz[ing]

³¹³ Provincial Archives of Ontario (PAO), Records of the Attorney General (RAG), RG 22, Series D-1-1, File 3188 (1931), "Political Thesis of the Communist Party of Canada; 'The Lessons of the Sixth Convention.'"

³¹⁴ For the Canadian context see: Manley, "Does the International Labour Movement Need Salvaging?" 147-80; "'Starve, Be Damned!'," 466-491; "Canadian Communism, Revolutionary Unionism, and the 'Third Period'," 167-94. Other important studies include: Bruce Nelson, "Unions and the Popular Front: The West Coast Waterfront in the 1930s," International Labor and Working-Class History 30 (Fall 1986), 59-78; Robin Kelley, Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communist During the Great Depression; Hobsbawm, The Age of Extremes, chapters 3-5, 85-177.

and organ[izing] Canadian workers for the final overthrow of capitalism and for the establishment of a Revolutionary Workers Government."³¹⁵ Party stalwarts knew that such an ambitious task was not for the weak of heart; indeed, it required both "iron discipline" and a "clear Bolshevik perspective."³¹⁶ The political responsibility of all CPCers, then, was threefold: to engage in "courageous...self-criticism of all mistakes," wage a ruthless campaign against the right-wing "elements" within the party, and to fight the conservatism of the mainstream unions -- the "labour fakirs" -- which were fast becoming "integrated with the organs of the capitalist class and the capitalist state."³¹⁷ It was in 1929, against this backdrop of "bolshevization" and ambitious objectives that the CPC turned its attention to mobilizing the country's working class -- on the farms, in the factories, and on the waterfront.

On the trade union front, the party's first two years of work under the Third Period line were a complete disaster. A walk-out by workers at Hamilton's National Street Car Company ended in defeat as attempts to foment a "revolutionary situation" alienated the Hamilton Trades and Labour Council, sympathetic

³¹⁵ PAO, RAG, RG 22, Series D-1-1, File 3188 (1931), "Workers Unity League of Canada, Draft Constitution Governing All Sections Until First National Convention."

³¹⁶ NAC, Communist Party of Canada (CPC), MG 24, M-7380, "Report of the Sixth Convention of the Communist Party of Canada," 7 June 1929. The "clear" quotation is taken from NAC, Communist International Fonds (Comintern) Fonds, K-278, File 92, Political Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International to the Communist Party of Canada, undated, likely 1929.

³¹⁷ PAO, RAG, RG 22, Series D-1-1, File 3188 (1931), "The Lessons of the Sixth [Party] Convention"; Anglo-American Secretariat, Profintern, to the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada, 1930; NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-276, File 67, Political Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International -- "Closed letter to the Central Committee of the CPC," 8 April 1929.

politicians, and the city's working-class communities which, historically, had provided the party with relief and material support. Although the party leadership conceded that this particular strike was a failure, the fact that it occurred at all confirmed, at least for them, the accuracy of the Third Period analysis. But such rationalizations did not come as easy for WULers the next year when their attempts to wrest control of Cape Breton miners from the United Mine Workers of America ended miserably. Despite repeated warnings from veteran party member and miners' leader J.B. McLachlan that such a shameless display of "revolutionary credentials" would alienate rank-and-file members, the WUL pressed on, only to find that after three months of posturing no locals were interested in affiliating.³¹⁸ Things were little better in the struggle to organize unemployed workers, a task which was the responsibility of the WUL-affiliated National Unemployed Workers Association (NUWA) established in 1930. As John Manley has argued, for the better part of the year, the NUWA focussed on single itinerant men "whose 'rowdiness' and lack of bourgeois respectability,' it was thought, made them willing combatants in the 'struggle for the streets.'"³¹⁹ This was certainly the case in Vancouver, the "mecca" for the

³¹⁸PAO, RAG, RG 22, Series D-1-1, File 3188 (1931), Industrial Director of the CP of C to ICP&A of Miners, Profintern, and Anglo-American Secretariat, Profintern, 15 June 1930; NAC, Comintern Fonds, File 102, untitled party report, 1930. According to this document, "The defeat of the party in Nova Scotia and the failure to build up the revolutionary miners union there is the greatest failure of the past year's work." See also: Manley, "Canadian Communists, Revolutionary Unionism, and the 'Third Period'," 172-73; David Frank and John Manley, "The Sad March To The Right: J.B. McLachlan's Resignation from the Communist Party of Canada, 1936," *Labour/Le Travail* 30 (Fall 1992), 115-34.

³¹⁹ Manley, "Starve, Be Damned!" 466-468.

unemployed, where communist activists orchestrated approximately 100 demonstrations for “work and wages” in 1930 alone. But local activists in Toronto and Montreal were not as effective as their west coast comrades, complaining to the party brass that the NUWA’s emphasis on single men, fetishization of violence (“[I]n a very short time the streets...will be running with blood,” one party executive member said), and utopian demands closed off the possibility of activism to the vast majority of unemployed workers in their urban bailiwicks: married men and women who were concerned with the politics of day-to-day survival, not the potential for revolution.³²⁰

The party’s organizational woes were compounded further by the intense sectarian struggles being waged within its ranks between those who embraced the ideological demands associated with the Third Period and those who did not. “Well I suppose you know the outlines of the situation in your old stomping ground,” Tim Buck, party leader, wrote to a Canadian comrade in Moscow in 1929. “But you will be interested to know that practically all of the old leading group went far to the right. ... Its funny, eh, [Florence] Custance and Mike [Buhay] used to pride themselves upon being ‘lefts’.”³²¹ Branded as “right-wing elements,” “opportunists,” and, worst of all, members of the “Trotskyist Opposition,” many of the “old leading group” left

³²⁰ The “mecca” quote is taken from Patricia E. Roy, “Vancouver: ‘The Mecca of the Unemployed,’ 1907-1929,” in Artibise, ed., Town and City: Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development (Regina 1981), 393-415; Smith is quoted in Palmer, Working-Class Experience, 229; this paragraph is based on Manley, “Starve, Be Damned!”

³²¹ NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-313, File 336, Tim Buck to “Dear Charlie,” 14 February 1929.

the party; those that did not, such as long-time members Maurice Spector and "Moscow" Jack MacDonald, were promptly purged. But this struggle over the party's new direction was not limited to the upper echelons of the organization; indeed, it alienated many of the party's Ukrainian, Jewish, and Finnish supporters who refused to sacrifice their ethnic organizations on the altar of a purified class programme. "[The party] has as its official task the wrecking and disrupting of institutions that took ... years and years to build and that are in the best interests of and for the benefit of the Communist Movement," a group of Jewish party members from Toronto told the CPC's political committee in 1930.³²² It was a position that members of the Finnish Organization of Canada and the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association, organizations which provided the bulk of the party's membership, shared. As the front page of *Vapaus*, the FOC's newspaper, proclaimed: "[Stewart] Smith's Steam Roller is not Effective in Sudbury -- The Membership is Disgusted with Machinations from Above."³²³

To be sure, things looked bleak for the Communist Party and its affiliated organizations, the Workers Unity League and the National Unemployed Workers

³²² For the expulsion of Spector and MacDonald see: NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-276, File 61, "Minutes of the Enlarged Committee ... November 4"; NAC, CPC, MG 24, M-7380, "Statements by Comrade Stewart Smith and Tim Buck to the Convention of the CPC," 5 June 1929. On the Jewish opposition see: NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-279, File 97, "Minutes of the Political Committee of the CPC," 22 July 1930.

³²³ NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-278, File 82, *Vapaus*, 9 November 1929. See also: K-278, File 101, Buck to Executive Committee of the Communist International, undated; K-276, File 67, Political Secretariat of the ECCI – Closed letter to the CEC of the CPC, 8 April 1929; Jack [Davis?] to Stewart [Smith], 5 February 1929.

Association. Not only were such "machinations from above" responsible for the departure of many stalwarts of the struggle, but they also contributed to the party's inability to keep and develop skilled organizers, men and women capable of, to borrow from Maurice Spector, utilizing "the rich treasures of political experience of the past four years."³²⁴ Tom McEwen, the national executive secretary of the WUL, understood this situation well. After five weeks in Northern Ontario attempting to organize a "General Workers Union" amongst dockers and grain elevator employees, he met a "blank wall" as politically minded Finns and Ukrainians, still angered by the party executive's position on the so-called foreign-language associations, showed no interest in organizing or being organized by the CPC.

Activists who did remain in the party were chronically underfunded ("Financially, the WUL is as barren as the Sahara," McEwen remarked in 1931), moved from place to place, and, as a consequence, often found themselves overworked and in industries that they knew little, if anything, about.³²⁵ "Some day I'm going to write a leaflet on communist versatility," George Drayton, prominent Vancouver CPCer and secretary of the local WUL, wrote in 1931. "I have to grab a few days work once in a while to support my kiddies as the City authorities told me

³²⁴ NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-276, File 62. Spector to the "PolCom of the CEC," 6 November 1928.

³²⁵ On the problem of party finances see: NAC, CPC, MG 24, M-7376, McEwen to Jack, "7-1-31"; Drayton to McEwen, 10 July 1931; Comintern Fonds, K-281, File 121, Buck to Smith, 21 January 1931. McEwen's tour of Northern Ontario is detailed in: NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-276, File 66, Joe [Knight?] to "Dear [George] Porter," 30 May 1928.

I could go to work for the city at 2\$/day and support them or go to the can, and apart from that I have nothing to do but study the course and read the funnies."³²⁶ Other party members were more caustic when it came to expressing their views on the state of the party. "No, Tom, its no damn use. What in the hell is the need of trying to persist and subjecting yourself to unlimited hardships in [the] face of god damn drivelling s--- like this," party member and logger J.M. Clarke told McEwen after being appointed "Agrarian Director" and reassigned from Vancouver to Saskatoon. "Words, words, words. Oceans and oceans of empty verbosity. Miles of trollop; reams of junk; hours of scatter-brained blah that in no way indicates the slightest understanding of conditions as they actually exist out in the country and out among the rank and file of the workers. No, there's but one thing to do -- get out and stay out."³²⁷ By 1931, with a trade union membership at an anaemic 7000, it appeared that many CPCers had reached a similar conclusion.

At the party's much anticipated plenum that year, the application of the Third Period line was at the top of the agenda. "The Party has not seen the decisive importance of taking up and organizing the workers upon the basis of the fight for their immediate, particularly, economic demands," they all agreed. "[T]he demands have been put forward in a propagandist way without showing to the workers the

³²⁶ NAC, CPC, MG 28 IV 4, R-1617, Volume 52, File 74, Drayton to McEwen, 6-14-29.

³²⁷ NAC, CPC, MG 24, M-7376, J.M. Clarke to Tom McEwen, 3 August 1929. For more on this "sandy-haired Scot from the Shetland Islands with a gift for strong words" see Clay Perry's history of the International Woodworkers of America in BC Lumberworker, November 1996.

practical ways to organize the struggle for their realization." This resolution, like many others debated at the convention, spoke to the mistakes made in Hamilton and Cape Breton, the critiques levelled by local activists, and the willingness of the Comintern to countenance rejigging the Third Period analysis. No one doubted that capitalism had entered a period of crisis, or that labourists were too timid to build militant industrial unions, but clearly, as two years of stagnation and sectarianism suggested, something had to change. In this regard, with the backing of its comrades in Moscow, the plenum endorsed a slightly different approach: "a turn to real, everyday struggles on the basis of the daily needs of the masses."³²⁸ This was not so much a break from Comintern policy or a rejection of its ultimate aim, but a softening of tactics. To many rank-and-file activists, however, the party's turn to the "everyday" as a foundation for struggle was merely a confirmation of the lessons they had learned doing, what J.M. Clarke called, the "mind numbing" work of organizing. Indeed, within the broad parameters of official policy, the grassroots had always showed, to borrow from Bruce Nelson, "a significant capacity for independent initiative, especially in regard to trade union issues."³²⁹ On the Vancouver waterfront, as in other locales, this was precisely the case.

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³²⁸ PAO, RAG, RG 22, Series D-1-1, File 3188 (1931), "Resolutions of the Enlarged Plenum of Communist Party of Canada, February 1931," 13.

³²⁹ The quote is from Nelson, "Unions and the Popular Front," 59-60.

When party members referred to "District 9" they were, at least technically, referring to the entire province of British Columbia; but as communist organizer and writer William "Ol' Bill" Bennett made clear to his comrades in Toronto, for all intents and purposes, it was a "one-town district": Vancouver, including the Lower Mainland, was the hub of CPC activity. It was not that there were no organizational prospects in other parts of the province, Bennett explained in 1931, as there were "coal mines on Vancouver Isle, smelting at Trail and Anyox, paper mills at Powell River and Ocean Falls ... [with] thousands of workers." And certainly there were members of the CPC, mostly Scandinavian-born workers, in small towns (Chemainus) and larger centres (Prince George) outside the Lower Mainland. But organizational work, amongst the employed and unemployed, was "conditioned" by the "peculiar economics" of coastal logging and the wider resource-based economy of which it was a part, he continued. Indeed, its seasonal nature and large itinerant workforce turned Vancouver into a clearing house for the province's "frontier labourers" -- the loggers, miners, fishers, and others who, at one time, supported the radical workers' movement.³³⁰ It was a material condition that was reinforced by the party's initial hardline on the so-called foreign language organizations. "Federalism so severely condemned by the CI has left its mark in the District," Bennett said. "[As a result] these Finnish units are still apart from the general work of the Party." In this regard,

³³⁰ The quotation is taken from Conley, "Frontier Labourers, Crafts in Crisis," 9-37.

"ol' Bill" concluded, the obstacles facing the party were legion, and only by moving beyond mere "propaganda" could it hope to repair its links with foreign-born members, expand the struggle to other regions, and, at the same time, take advantage of the "fruitful opportunities" that existed in the city itself.³³¹

Of particular interest to Bennett, the party, and the Workers Unity League were the city's waterfront workers. Indeed, given the role that longshoremen around the world had traditionally played in spearheading working-class offensives, they were considered to be exceptionally militant and, due to their links with seamen, a vital link in "establishing and maintaining contacts with comrades in other countries." What was more, given waterfront workers' pivotal role in the transportation of goods, many CPCers believed that strong maritime unions were crucial to prevent the export of arms to countries hostile to the Soviet Union. Thus, in the summer of 1931, just months after the plenum endorsed a new approach to revolutionary work, party members in Vancouver set their sights on "200 more members" of which half were to come from the "mills and docks." George Drayton, district head, understood that no amount of revolutionary posturing was going to close the yawning occupational divides that separated Vancouver's waterfront workers, dislodge the powerful

³³¹ NAC, CPC, MG 24, IV 4, R-7376, "Report from District 9," undated, likely 1929-1930; Comintern Fonds, K-XXX, File 117, Minutes of the Political Bureau, Draft Resolution on District 9 presented by Bennett, 1 June 1931. CPC activity outside the Lower Mainland is detailed in Gordon Hak's "The Communists and the Unemployed in the Prince George District, 1930-1935," *BC Studies* 68 (Winter 1985-86), 45-61. For more on Bennett see: Tom McEwen, *He Wrote For Us: The story of Bill Bennett, Pioneer Socialist Journalist* (Vancouver 1951); Leier, *Rebel Life*, sidebar, "William 'Ol' Bill' Bennett," 120-21; and Bennett's own *Builders of British Columbia* (Vancouver 1937).

company union, or undercut the ideological hegemony of the Shipping Federation. The party's approach, then, would have to be grounded in the needs and moods of rank-and-file workers. Just what exactly they were, however, remained to be understood fully. "Maybe there are some good elements among them, but we have not been able to locate them," Bennett said, "perhaps [we] will be able to in the near future, as they have been affected by the radicalization just as any other elements now."³³²

Organizers with the WUL certainly possessed a clear sense of their objectives: a stable, independent, industrial union on the docks that would fight, as they promised to do in other sectors of the economy, against lay-offs, wage cuts, and other day-to-day hardships; they were as interested in being good trade unionists as they were in being good bolsheviks.³³³ But the means to this end were not so obvious. Indeed, the WUL's campaign to usurp the power of the company union actually involved two different, but intimately connected, dynamics: a direct attempt to "locate" sympathetic waterfront workers on the job and to build an oppositional fraction within the company union and a wider initiative amongst the city's unemployed for "work and wages," a campaign which, by virtue of its mass

³³² NAC, CPC, MG 24, IV 4, R-7376, "Report from District 9," undated, likely 1929-1930; Comintern Fonds, K-XXX, File 117, Minutes of the Political Bureau, Draft Resolution on District 9 presented by Bennett, 1 June 1931.

³³³ This turn of phrase is taken from Manley, "Canadian Communists, Revolutionary Unionism, and the 'Third Period'."

appeal, drew some waterfront workers into the militant fray. Consider, first, the role of the latter in this process.

On the national stage in 1931, just months before the party's official endorsement of the united front from below, the WUL and the NUWA mounted a petition drive calling on the state to enact a wide range of reforms to assist the unemployed, the centrepiece of which was the provision of "non-contributory unemployment insurance" by the federal government. Emblematic of the party's turn to "everyday" issues as a means to politicize the unemployed, the WUL Bill attracted tens of thousands of signatures and drew thousands of others to rally for its adoption. Spurred on by the success of this "mass" work, and the softening of the Third Period line, party leaders in Toronto voted to disband the NUWA, renaming it the National Council of Unemployed Councils, in hopes of drawing moderate workers-- "the workers who still attend church" -- into the new organization's more inclusive block and neighbourhood councils.³³⁴ "[S]truggle against concrete cases of evictions in the neighbourhood," the party's Central Organization Department

³³⁴ The "national" material is drawn from Manley, "Starve, Be Damned," 471-474. See also NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-281, File 116, Stewart Smith to Tim Buck, 9 August 1931. In this letter, Smith advises Buck about a memo coming from the Comintern that endorses "the widening of the conception of the unemployed organization...." Party member George Winslade made the "church" remark at the first national convention of the WUL in 1932. See K-285, File 144, "Report of the First National Convention of the WUL."

advised, underscoring its new political tack, "struggle for clothing to children of unemployed who stay from schools due to no shoes, etc."³³⁵

In Vancouver, the response from party members was decidedly mixed. On the one hand, they embraced the move to broaden the party's appeal by toning down the revolutionary rhetoric, prioritizing workers' immediate demands, and building bridges -- if only small ones -- to other left-wing organizations. In the summer of 1931, for example, Malcolm Bruce, once dubbed by a police informant as "the most dangerous agitator the Communists have," met with the Independent Labour Party to discuss the CPC's agenda for the unemployed. Although it is unclear just how constructive this gathering was -- it was not uncommon for such debates to turn ugly -- significantly, within a year, the party had successfully brought together 98 delegates from 59 different labour organizations, including the waterfront's company union, at a United Front Conference.³³⁶ Evidence of the party's new direction was evident in other realms of activity as well. In 1932, CPCer Charles M. Stewart ran for city council on a "Workers' United Front Platform" that included demands for unemployment insurance, cash relief without discrimination, free medical treatment, a shorter work day, and milk in schools. The logic at work, here, was obvious. "[G]et them to endorse these [broad] demands and not around

³³⁵ NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-XXX, File 124, "To all district and sub-district organizers" from "Central Organization Dept of the CPC," 22 September 1931.

³³⁶ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B-2300, L-125-1, "Report from [British Columbia Provincial Police] Operative #9," 1931; L-125-1-1932, "Report from [BCPP] Operative #9, 8-2-1932." See Manley, "Starve, Be Damned," 468-69, for more information on CPC-ILP conflict.

whether we sing the Red Flag or not," a party member in Vancouver advised a comrade in Cranbrook, BC, who was interested in a related initiative. "Do not go to the left and split, get to the moods of the workers, do not move unless you have the majority, otherwise discouraging results will follow."³³⁷

On the other hand, local activists rejected the idea that it was necessary to liquidate the NUWA. Located in the heart of the city's skidroad, the Vancouver branch of the NUWA was at the forefront of agitation for work and wages; it sponsored hundreds of rallies, including a very successful Hunger March to Victoria in February of 1932, and also published the Unemployed Worker. Amongst those drawn to the association were workers, among them casual longshoremen, who, according to local CPCers, were attracted to both its oppositional temperament and the presence of union "cards" and a "constitution." Indeed, for some, the explicit connection between the association, the WUL, and the Communist Party did not seem to be a problem: "When the workers [are] prepared to accept a militant policy, no matter how trivial the demands may be[,] they are willing to accept affiliation." To be sure, activists in Vancouver did not object to the broader direction that the party was taking, a "broadening-out process," but they did oppose the "mechanical" way

³³⁷ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B-2300, L-125-1-1932, leaflet, "Workers's United Platform -- Vote and Boost Charles M. Stewart"; B-2302, L-125-1-1933, J. O[s]bourne to R. Adams, Cranbrook, BC, 7 February 1933. For the shift in the Workers' Unity's approach to "the economic struggle" see NAC, CPC, MG 24, IV 4, R-7376, McEwen to Drayton, 15 July 1931. United front activities amongst veterans are detailed in BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B-2300, L-125-1-1932, "Report from [BCPP] Operative #9, re: 'Bolshevik Activities,' 12-12-32."

in which this specific resolution was being implemented.³³⁸ "The policy of block committees and neighbourhood councils, with which... [we are] in entire agreement, will in this district...be committees and councils of the NUWA," the local executive wrote. And they were.

By the fall of 1932, neighbourhood councils were established in most working-class districts in and around Vancouver, including South Vancouver, Mount Pleasant, Grandview-Woodlands, and the waterfront district.³³⁹ At the top of the councils' collective agenda were bread-and-butter concerns such as assisting the unemployed in getting relief and protesting unfair rent hikes and evictions. On occasion, the work of these organizations was supplemented by flying picket squads drawn from the ranks of the NUWA. In one battle in South Vancouver, the home of many longshoremen, a three-day demonstration at a rental property convinced the owner, a "would-be capitalist," not to oust a working-class tenant who had no money for rent or electricity. "The sight of seven husky pickets going upstairs had given him a heart attack, so he fortified himself with a half bottle of rum," the Workers Unity reported. "This made him feel big enough to try and throw everyone out, but the only

³³⁸ The "broadening" reference was made by party member George Winslade at the first national congress of the WUL in August 1932. See NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-285, File 144, "Report of the First National Congress of the WUL"; "mechanical" is taken from Comintern Fonds, K-XXX, File 141, "Report from District 9," 1932.

³³⁹ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B-2300, L-1-125-1, "Workers Unity League, BC District, Three Month Plan of Work/August 1st to November 1st."

result of this move was a black eye for the landlord.”³⁴⁰ When they were not “negotiating” with a property owner, members of the NUWA often went door to door in districts such as South Vancouver “broadcasting their propaganda” and provided additional support for local unions on strike.³⁴¹ Overall, the tactical combination of the NUWA’s militancy and the neighbourhood councils’ broad-based appeal appeared to be paying off, not only in the case of this specific confrontation, but, at least to some degree, in the wider realm of party membership. The local party counted 524 people in its ranks in 1932 – approximately 45 per cent of the province’s total – 330 of which were drawn from the ranks of the unemployed, many of whom took out a membership card within the last year.³⁴² Even the central executive committee of the party had to admit, as it did in a letter to the Anglo-American Secretariat of the Comintern, that a “very wide movement” of “leftist attitude,” largely centred around the NUWA, was emerging on the west coast.³⁴³

Significantly, Vancouver-based CPCers also reported some movement amongst longshoremen and seamen. During this period, individuals attached to the Waterfront Neighbourhood Council were active in the many taverns and rooming

³⁴⁰ NAC, Comintern Fonds, File 129, Workers Unity, 1 September 1931; additional examples of this kind of activism can be found in BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B-2301, L-1-125-1933, copy of Unemployed Worker, November 1933.

³⁴¹ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B-2300, L-1-125-1-1930, report from a British Columbia Provincial Police informant, unsigned, undated.

³⁴² NAC, Comintern Fonds, R-16, File 138, “The WUL in Canada by C.Watt, 5/7/1932”; R-16, File 141, “Report of District 9 – Vancouver Membership.”

³⁴³ NAC, Comintern Fonds, R-1, File 176, Comrade Morgan to the Anglo-American Secretariat, “Report on the Canadian Question – 7/3/32.”

houses in the downtown area, including "Co[n] Jones Gambling Hall," a place, according to police informants, for "idle left-wingers," and the "Refuge," a flophouse not far from the city's docks. "The single workers who were organized in groups chiefly on the rooming house basis numbered around two hundred for some time, and all fraction members (Vancouver Centre) was [sic] made responsible for organizing these rooming houses or block committees," a report issued by District 9 read. The activities of this neighbourhood council were both political and cultural events; it sponsored campaigns dedicated to tenant's rights and held social gatherings that offered a temporary respite from the harsh realities of life on the bum. "Whist Dance" and "Draw for 10 lbs Turkey," read one advertisement; "House Social by Block Committee #4, Waterfront South, 432 Heatley Avenue -- Home of Hilda Johnson," read another. Both dimensions of the neighbourhood council's activities provided party members with an opportunity to become acquainted with longshoremen and the politics of waterfront work. Indeed, according to a "Three Month Plan of Work" drawn up by local WUL, the Waterfront Neighbourhood Council was an important educational and cultural link between residential and occupational struggles, one that held out the possibility of drawing dissident waterfront workers into the orbit of the broader "Marine Workers League," an umbrella organization tied to the CPC's centre for red unionism.³⁴⁴

³⁴⁴ BCARS, RAG, GR 1723, L-1-176-4, untitled report from police informant, 21 September 1938; the "Refuge" evidence is from NAC, Comintern Fonds, "Report from District 9," 1932; BCARS, RAG, B-2301, L-1-125-1933, clipping from Unemployed Worker; B-2300, L-1-125-1, "Workers Unity

Significantly, Hilda Johnson and her neighbourhood council were not the only ones that tapped the didactic qualities of culture; indeed, other branches of the communist movement sponsored sporting events ("Unemployed Ties Sailors' Home 1-1"), organized mass rallies and parades ("Support the Hunger Marchers!"), and published newspapers (Workers Unity) to promote an oppositional world view. Experiments in working-class theatre were particularly vibrant. Often linked to the Progressive Arts Club, Workers' Experimental Theatre troupes, and foreign-language associations, musical and dramatic productions -- known as agitational propaganda, or agitprop -- offered blunt assessments of working-class life and politics. Clifford Odet's "Waiting for Lefty" is perhaps the best known of these socialist realist works, but its central message of solidarity and struggle was reproduced in scores of smaller efforts such as "Unemployed," a one-act play which concluded with a rousing, united-front-from-below-inspired scene in which workers reject charity, embrace non-contributory unemployment insurance, and sing the International with the audience. Short performances like "Unemployed" were often part of a larger programme of entertainment that included public lectures. Delivered by Canadian bolsheviks, foreign comrades, or fellow travellers these talks took up a wide range of topics including "The Workers' Press," "A Proletarian Life," and workers' experiences under the Bolsheviks. Significantly, several speakers -- like

League, BC District, Three Month Plan of Work/August 1st to November 1st"; Manley, "Communism and the Canadian Working Class During the Great Depression: The Workers' Unity League, 1930-1936," (PhD Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1984), 270.

Walter Larsen, a longshoreman from Tacoma, WA, who addressed a mass meeting in Vancouver in 1932 and Tom Russell, a miner, occasional longshoreman, and member of the CPC, who spoke in Victoria a few years later – made waterfront workers the focus of their talks, emphasizing the utopian conditions that existed on the Soviet docks.³⁴⁵ His speech, like the performance of “Unemployed,” linked the economic calamity of the 1930s to a simple, yet radical, notion: the working class and employing class had nothing in common and only through struggle would the masses get their due -- relief in the short term and power in the long term.

In 1933, District 9 finally dissolved the NUWA, a decision which was spurred on by the general drift of party policy, the desire to avoid a factional struggle, and, perhaps more importantly, a shift in government policy towards the unemployed; that year, the Department of National Defense established relief camps in British Columbia, as it did in other provinces, a move which drained most of the “tin-canners” to locations outside the Lower Mainland where the communist-led Relief Camp Workers Union assumed a more prominent role. But political and cultural agitation amongst unemployed workers who remained in the city continued as block

³⁴⁵ The material for this paragraph is drawn from the following: BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B-2300, L-1-125-1932, copy of Unemployed Worker, 27 February 1932; “Report from [BCPP] Operative #9,” 21-3-32, 6-5-32, 11-7-32, 26-1-32; L-125-1, J.H. McMullin, Commissioner, British Columbia Provincial Police to the Attorney General of British Columbia, 19 August 1931; B-2301, L-125-1, T. Kennelly, Corpl. “A” Divn. Hqrs. Victoria to Officer Commandg. “A” Division, Victoria, 22-1-35; L-125-1933, copy of script for “Unemployed.” See also: James Doyle, “Red Letters: Notes Toward a Literary History of Canadian Communism,” Essays on Canadian Writing 55 (Spring 1995), 22-39; Bonita Bray, “The Weapon of Culture: Working-Class Resistance and Progressive Theatre in Vancouver, 1930-38,” (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1990), especially chapter three on “Waiting For Lefty.”

and neighbourhood councils proliferated. In 1933, 114 councils were active, and according to one informant working for the provincial police, they were demonstrating some alarming, independent tendencies. "Many persons who openly declared hostility to the NUWA when it existed have joined a Block Committee and have proven themselves to be more radical than even the officers of the old NUWA," he wrote.³⁴⁶ Among the party's growing supporters were men like H.H. Scobie, an unemployed longshoreman from Burnaby, a suburb just east of Vancouver. He rented out space in his home for \$1/day to the Workers Unity League for the purposes of political meetings. Whether or not Scobie was "more radical" than his red acquaintances is unclear; what is obvious, however, is that the party's general agitation for "work and wages" was, at least to some degree, resonating with waterfront workers who, like other working men and women in the city, refused to "starve in silence."

* * *

At the same time that the Workers Unity League was working amongst the city's unemployed, it was also active on the trade union front, demonstrating the same capacity for independent initiative that was the hallmark of its push for, among other things, non-contributory unemployment insurance. While the party brass in the

³⁴⁶ Lorne Brown describes the creation of relief camps in When Freedom Was Lost: The Unemployed, the Agitator, and the State (Montreal and Buffalo 1987), especially chapter four, "Conflict in the Camps." The statistics regarding the growth in councils is from Manley, "Starve, Be Damned," 473. The lengthy quote comes from BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B-2301, L-1-125-1933, "Point[s] From Talk With Operators."

east continued to debate the uses and abuses of the Third Period line -- attempting to reconcile the "turn to the everyday" which accompanied the united front from below with a resolute belief, steadfastly defended by the Comintern and its Canadian supporters, that social democrats were merely "social fascists" -- local CPCers in Vancouver were turning their collective "face[s] to the shops."³⁴⁷ "To hold a propaganda meeting on the street corner or in a hall or to stand up in a union local and take a stand is communist work alright, but it is easy," Drayton wrote to the WUL's national director, highlighting the importance of fraction work within the reformist unions. "The hard work consists of building up contacts in the plants, and in the Company Town, etc. This is the true test of a Communist today."³⁴⁸

But there was not much "easy" or "hard" work taking place on the waterfront. Throughout 1930 and the better part of 1931, the WUL attempted to "locate" sympathetic longshoremen on the job by exploiting its contacts with like-minded seamen, both locally and globally. One of those links was Allan Campbell. Born in 1900 in Glasgow, Campbell, like most working-class boys at that time, left home at a young age; he worked as a tinsmith during the early years of World War I and, later, joined the Royal Navy. Before and after the war, he spent time in Edinburgh, Newcastle, Manchester, and Liverpool, presumably looking for work. During his early twenties, Campbell became a member of the Communist Party in Glasgow

³⁴⁷ NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-285, File 144, "Report of the First National Congress of the WUL."

³⁴⁸ NAC, CPC, MG 28 IV 4, R-1617, Volume 52, File 74, Drayton to McEwen, 30-6-30.

and, according to police there, was "frequently seen about the Town Fountain expounding on communism" and was involved in local strike activity in 1924. A few years later, Campbell went to sea, eventually making his way to Montreal where he signed on as a fireman on the S.S. Canadian Seigneur, a vessel which arrived in Victoria, BC, in the spring of 1929. Shortly after arriving on the west coast, Campbell, along with three mates, was charged with three counts of "unlawfully combin[ing] to disobey a lawful command" given by the Canadian Seigneur's Master and was sentenced to eight weeks of hard labour at Oakalla Prison Farm, a facility south of Vancouver. After serving his time, he was released in late May at which point the Federal Department of Immigration and Colonization issued him a stern warning: stay out of trouble or risk deportation back to Scotland. Within a year Campbell had joined the CPC, just as its "struggle for the streets" was heating up.³⁴⁹

During the fall of 1930 and winter of 1931, Campbell and James Litterick, a young, Scottish miner and former member of the Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain, spearheaded the vast majority of the CPC's unemployed demonstrations in and around Vancouver. "Arm yourselves with sticks and clubs, give blow for blow. Fight like hell, fight harder than you ever fought in Flanders," Campbell told a street

³⁴⁹ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, L-1-125-1931, "Record -- Allan Campbell," Chief Constable's Office, 26 January 1931; Eric W. Hichens, Special Constable to Chief Constable, W.J. Bingham, "Ref: Allen Campbell alias McEwen," 22 January 1931; Jas. L. Malcolm, Canadian Government Emigration Agent, to Director of European Emigration, 17 January 1930; A.E. Skinner, Division Commander, to W.J. Bingham, Chief of Police, 21 December 1929; "In the Supreme Court of British Columbia, Oyer and Terminis and General Gaol Delivery," 1931. Campbell is mentioned briefly in Manley, "Starve, Be Damned," 468.

meeting in December 1930. "We all know that there is plenty of food in Vancouver. If we cannot get it we will take it."³⁵⁰ This appetite for activism, coupled with his knowledge of Marxist theory, made Campbell a valuable comrade, a status which, in Drayton's eyes, was only heightened by his rapport with seamen and longshoremen and "connections" to the waterfront more generally.³⁵¹ But Campbell's work in this regard, like the initiatives of other CPCers across the country, was cut short by state repression; he was arrested in Vancouver on numerous occasions for unlawful assembly and rioting -- for "endanger[ing] the persons and properties of a great number of the His Majesty's quiet and peaceful subjects" -- and, after receiving a suspended sentence on one occasion in 1930, was convicted and sent to Oakalla in March 1931 by Judge Denis Murphy.³⁵² What happened to Campbell after he served his time is unclear; what is obvious, however, is that he was no longer leading demonstrations of unemployed workers or active on the waterfront helping the WUL to build a party fraction, suggesting that he was either underground, out of the movement, or, with the help of the Immigration and Colonization department, in Scotland.

³⁵⁰ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, L-1-125-1931, Eric W. Hichens, Special Constable to Chief Constable, W.J. Bingham, "Ref: Allen Campbell alias McEwen," 22 January 1931.

³⁵¹ NAC, CPC, MG 24 IV 4, R-7376, Drayton to National Executive Secretary of the WUL, 3 March 1931.

³⁵² BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, L-1-125-1931, "In the Supreme Court of British Columbia, Oyer and Terminus and General Gaol Delivery," 1931. Murphy was particularly busy during the Depression sentencing communists (real or imagined) to jail time; see Parnaby, "What's Law Got To Do With it? The IWA and the Politics of State Power in British Columbia, 1935-1939," *Labour/Le Travail* 44 (Fall 1999), 9-45 at 40-43.

At the same time that Campbell was being convicted, the WUL was tapping links with other sympathetic seamen, connections which, in the end, proved to be equally ephemeral. "I read in the two weeks ago Worker that places in big zee ports in Europa where International Zeeman and Doch Workers Organization establish on bases of WUL," W.L. Greenwood, a sailor who operated between Tacoma, Vancouver, and Rotterdam, wrote to the party in 1931. "On the lest boat, I give the boys that paper, where the address can be fou[nd?] Also for...sealors [sailors?] that can...read more about militant organisation, too subscribe for the...International Seafarer...." In reponse, Tom McEwen provided Greenwood with additional copies of party newspapers and asked him to provide the "names and addresses of a few seamen and dockers in Vancouver who would be willing to distribute such literature and possibly constitute themselves a Provisional Port-Depot Committee." It was request that underscored just how minimal the WUL's presence on the docks really was. Shortly thereafter, he advised District 9 that a local sailor who believes that "the sentiment...is good for organization" had been in contact with the party and that, as a result, Vancouver CPCers should keep their "eyes peeled for every contact on the waterfront."³⁵³ They did, but it was a steward from a coastal vessel who joined the Young Communist League, not a sailor who plied the waters between North

³⁵³ NAC, CPC, MG 24 IV 4, R-7376, W.L. Greenwood to Comrade Bruce, 4-3-31; National Executive Secretary of the WUL to Greenwood, 17 March 1931; McEwen to George Mink, National Chair, Marine Workers Industrial Union, 19 March 1931; National Executive Secretary of the WUL to Drayton, 17 March 1931. On Mink's career, see Vernon L. Pederson, "George Mink, the Marine Workers Industrial Union, and the Comintern on America," *Labor History* 41:3 (2000), 307-320.

America and Europe, that came into view. Greenwood, it appears, was never heard from again.

Drayton was not altogether thrilled with his new YCL recruit. In a cranky letter that also detailed the district's lack of progress amongst miners in the province, he informed McEwen that, since the newcomer was a steward on a coastal vessel, he possessed little knowledge of the conditions facing deckhands and firemen; what was more, the veteran CPCer concluded, "he can't speak two words before a crowd." McEwen was sympathetic to Drayton's position, but advised him to find something for the steward to do such as "bring a few longshoremen and seamen together" so that "older comrades can talk to them" or distribute party literature. "Isn't it possible for him to get aboard some of them [ships] or to be as much on the docks as possible with some seamen's literature or papers sticking carelessly out of his pocket so it can be detected by the comrades on board?" McEwen asked. Drayton clearly did not think so, and by May 1931 had concluded that the "young CPR steward" was a "flo[p]" and "useless." There were, of course, other options, he told McEwen, such as a new "longshoreman in the party" who "has given me the address of a sympathizer and will call them together and try to do some work in that regard in the near future." But even Drayton seemed to be aware that this contact was likely no better than the others; "[h]e is only partly employed" and "works exclusively on wheat boats," the prominent CPCer added, the implication being that as an underemployed wheat trimmer -- one of the waterfront's most casual jobs

even at the best of times – his influence on the docks, like that of Campbell, Greenwood, and the CPR Steward, was limited.³⁵⁴ Clearly, the WUL was a long way from its objective of building a strong opposition group within the company union; indeed, well into the summer of 1931, District 9 was reporting that it was still “weak” on the waterfront due to a “shortage of forces.”³⁵⁵

This state of affairs started to change that fall when the WUL made organizational gains amongst a different, though certainly related, group of men: lumber workers in the Lower Mainland. As early as 1929, long before the party’s “right turn,” a group of communist loggers revitalized the Lumber Workers Industrial Union. While pulp cutters in Ontario were able to keep a tiny membership together in the camps after the demise of the One Big Union, on the west coast, save for the remnants of the Wobblies, there was no union presence in the camps and mills at all. Indeed, so bad was the situation in District 9 that before anyone could do anything, they had to send “back east” for pamphlets, union cards, and other material. But within two years of its founding meeting, held in a rooming house in the city’s downtown, the LWIU had built up substantial support amongst loggers in the skidroad district and mill workers at both Fraser Mills in New Westminster and, significantly, at Barnet Mill on the Vancouver waterfront. “We are now getting

³⁵⁴ NAC, CPC, MG 24 IV 4, R-7376, Drayton to National Secretary of the WUL [McEwen], 3 March 1931; 11 April 1931; 22 May 1931; National Executive Secretary of the WUL [McEwen] to Drayton, 18 April 1931.

³⁵⁵ NAC, CPC, MG 24 IV 4, R-7376, District Secretary WUL, BC Section to National Secretary, WUL, 25 June 1931.

involved in languages of a different kind than the ordinary worker ever heard before, when we start talking about class struggle and the issues of unemployment and so on, socialism," Ernie Dalskog, then a 26-year-old unemployed logger and newly minted member of the CPC recalled. "A lot of these people had come from the farming country in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and other countries. They're not used to it and they think that its goofy what we are preaching, what we are agreeing to. By this time, there's quite a lot of street struggles, organizational work and so on."³⁵⁶

The "organizational work and so on" undertaken by the LWIU climaxed in the fall of 1931 when workers at both Fraser Mills and Barnet Mill went on strike over wage cuts, deteriorating working and living conditions, and discrimination against union supporters. To labour historians, the Fraser Mills strike is important for several reasons; not only does it stand out as the opening salvo in lumber workers' renewed campaign to organize one of the province's most important industries, but, in a wider sense, it underscores the Communist Party's prominent role in sustaining the idea (and practice) of industrial unionism at a time when the mainstream labour

³⁵⁶ On the LWIU in Ontario see: Ian Radforth, Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980 (Toronto 1987) and J. Peter Campbell, "The Cult of Spontaneity: Finnish-Canadian Bushworkers and the Industrial Workers of the World in Northern Ontario, 1919-1934," Labour/Le Travail 41 (Spring 1998), 117-46. For the situation in British Columbia see: Myrtle Bergren, Tough Timber (Toronto 1967), 25-27; Lembcke and Tattam, One Union in Wood (Madeira Park, BC 1984), 20-28; Gordon Hak, "British Columbia Loggers and the Lumber Workers Industrial Union, 1919-1922," Labour/Le Travail 23 (Spring 1989), 67-90; Hak, "Line Up or Roll Up: The Lumber Workers Industrial Union in the Prince George District," BC Studies 86 (Summer 1990), 57-74; Jeanne Myers, "Class and Community in the Fraser Mills Strike, 1931," Workers, Capital, and the State, 141-160. The Dalskog quotation comes from an interview conducted by Clay Perry with Ernie Dalskog, 29 October 1979; the transcript is held at the Industrial, Wood, and Allied Workers' Union (IWA) Archives in Vancouver.

movement, for all intents and purposes, had gone into hiding.³⁵⁷ For the purposes of this discussion, however, it is the modest involvement of the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers Association in the strike that is most important. At a mass meeting held under the auspices of the LWIU in October, for example, delegates from seventeen different unions, including the Association, endorsed resolutions calling for, among other things, the "demoli[tion]" of the "vermin infested and unsanitary shacks & bunkhouses" and the elimination of "Chinese and Japanese [labour] bosses" who routinely skimmed "25¢ on each [Asian worker's] cheque."³⁵⁸ In addition to this formal support, fragmentary evidence suggests that some waterfront workers, likely members of the NUWA or a block/neighbourhood council, provided assistance on the picket lines and participated in events designed to boost solidarity. "I was [booked] to wrestle Maillardville[']s strongest man Doudouin Proulx," Leo Canuel, a picket captain at Fraser Mills, recalled. "But at the last minute he was taken from the card and replaced by Albert Paquette, longshoreman, top bully and rough and tumble fighter. This fight lasted 40 minutes

³⁵⁷ On the CPC and industrial unionism see Palmer, Working-Class Experience, 250-51. Myers, "Class and Community in the Fraser Mills Strike, 1931," 141-160 and Lembcke and Tattam, One Union in Wood, 20-28, single out the importance of the Fraser Mills strike. See also IWA Archives, "History Notes: Harold Pritchett, 1st President of the International Woodworkers of America. Verbatim report recorded July 1971 by Ken McEwen"; Clay Perry interview with Harold Pritchett, 21 October 1978.

³⁵⁸ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B-2300, L-1-125-1-1931, copy of a resolution from a mass meeting, 21 October 1931.

officially. He won but I got out of the ring and he stayed on his back in the centre of the ring. I got all the applause...."³⁵⁹

During the Barnet mill strike, the formal and informal contact between the WUL, LWIU, and the waterfront's company union was far more substantial. Not only did the Association and the striking mill workers share the same stretch of Burrard Inlet, but, more importantly, the stevedoring work at Barnet was handled by a member of the Shipping Federation, Barnet Stevedoring Company. As a consequence, after picket lines went up at the mill in late September, representatives of the mill's strike committee and the leadership of the VDWWA met on several occasions, the former hoping to convince the latter to honour the demonstration and refuse to handle any hot lumber; a similar "dialogue" -- sometimes with words, sometimes with fists -- took place between rank and filers on the mill's wharf as well.³⁶⁰ Significantly, the VDWWA refused to cross the picket line. In a letter to Major Crombie, union secretary Allan Walker argued that any attempt to work at the mill would be considered "strike-breaking" by the mill workers and, as a consequence, "would be met with violent resistance," a development which would place Association members in "very grave danger," both on the job and in the street. Indeed, the potential for violence was only heightened by the activism of unemployed workers, he added, who, "owing to the Depression (and I will admit, to

³⁵⁹ IWA Archives, written submission from Leo Canuel to Clay Perry, 12 June 1980.

³⁶⁰ NAC, CPC, MG 24 IV 4, R-1617, Volume 52, File 74, leaflet issued by LWIU during Barnet strike.

the influence of some malcontents) will stop at nothing in the way of showing their disapproval." Understanding the provocative nature of the company union's actions, Walker added this appeal: "This Committee feels sure that you will approve (at least Morally) with this action and [dis]miss the suspicion that there has been any showing of teeth on their part...." In short, its refusal to work was about the safety of its members, not sympathy for the mill workers.³⁶¹

Or was it? On the one hand, it is important not to underestimate the Association's safety concerns; many of its members were former scabs and no doubt wished to avoid the kind of harassment they experienced after breaking the 1923 longshore strike. As well, there was something to Walker's sense that the economic despair brought about by the Depression heightened the possibility of violence -- the recent clashes between mill hands, replacement workers, and police at Fraser Mills, as well as the repeated confrontations between the NUWA and the authorities, were evidence of that. On the other hand, it is important not to ignore the extent to which some Association members identified with Barnet workers; not only was it common for the more unskilled mill workers to work alongside the longshoremen on the docks or, during times of economic slowdown, to join the hundreds of men that filled the waterfront's casual labour market, but, in a more immediate sense, they faced similar Depression-induced concerns, namely wage

³⁶¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 4, Walker to Crombie, 3 October 1931; VDWWA to "Mr Chairman and Gentlemen," 3 November 1931.

cuts, deteriorating working conditions, and under/unemployment. Indeed, on several occasions, the Association's executive invited the mill's strike committee to address its general meetings, and, according to a report written by the Shipping Federation's advisory committee on labour matters, the "question of intimidation and violence" was not even on the agenda: "the Strikers were permitted to address the Meeting and confined their remarks entirely to the conditions which had brought about the Strike, thereby undoubtedly influencing the Meeting to confirm the action taken by the gangs in sympathy with the Strikers." Clearly, some members of the company union, like those gravitating to the NUWA and its block/neighbourhood councils, were being drawn in to the wider orbit of communist-led activism, backing the LWIU in its struggles against austerity-minded employers and, in the process, registering its own grievances with the Shipping Federation as well.³⁶²

Waterfront employers' response to the VDWWA's show of independence was twofold. At first they struck a somewhat moderate pose, assuring the Association that all necessary precautions had been taken to ensure the safety of its members as 7 local constables, 13 mounted British Columbia Provincial Police officers, and 28 RCMP constables, 16 of whom were on horseback, had been assigned to the Barnet situation. But the Association was not convinced, prompting the Shipping Federation to remind the executive that by not loading Barnet lumber it was well

³⁶² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 4, Report from Advisory Committee to "the President and Members of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia," 16 November 1931.

within its rights to terminate the collective agreement, a deal "entered into to safeguard the mutual interests of both parties at the cost of much expensive machinery." Faced with the possibility of losing its monopoly on the lion's share of waterfront work, the company union agreed to cross the Barnet picket line. To be sure, the Shipping Federation was furious with the Association's ILA-like behaviour, as it was on numerous occasions in the past; but, in the opinion of waterfront employers, what made this episode particularly worrisome was the presence of the Communist Party and its influence on lumber workers, in general, and longshoremen, in particular. "[T]he situation which has arisen may have a more serious side to it than would appear on the surface," a report by the executive's advisory committee on labour issues concluded, "and one which might make the action taken by the Association appear to be more ill advised if the Members of the Shipping Federation clearly understand that both at Fraser Mills and Barnet the Strikers have belonged to the Lumber and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union, which is affiliated with the Workers' Unity League, a communist organization...."³⁶³

The Shipping Federation's concern that the Association was being influenced by communism was well founded. Indeed, on the other side of the class divide, correspondence between District 9 and the party brass in Toronto was upbeat, with

³⁶³ The paragraph is drawn from CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 4, Report from Advisory Committee to "the President and Members of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia," 16 November 1931; [?] of Lucas and Lucas to Crombie, 29 October 1931; F.H. Clendenning to "president and Directors, 28 October 1931; W.J. Devitt, Chief Constable, to Shipping federation, 29 October 1931; Allan L. Walker to Crombie, 2 December 1931.

west-coast CPCers talking about the new possibilities which opened up on the waterfront in the wake of the Fraser Mills and, specifically, Barnet Mill strikes. "All longshoremen approached and refused to load," one report began. "While we have had no party fraction functioning in the trade unions, party members in a few have done very good work along with good sympathizers in bringing the unions into the struggle. Several members have been recruited for the party from the reformist unions."³⁶⁴ With this modest success amongst mainstream organizations -- including the Association -- and the unemployed more generally, in 1932 there was indeed reason to be bullish about the prospects for the communist movement. Not only were membership numbers on the rise and neighbourhood/block councils spreading across the city, but the very idea that a more militant struggle was important, necessary, and just was taking hold amongst pockets of workers, both on and off the job.

* * *

One of these "good sympathizers" was Oscar Salonen, a married, 47-year-old Finnish longshoremen, who came in contact with the party following the strike at Barnet Mill. Before joining the Association in 1925 or 1926, Salonen -- like many men of his age, class, and ethnicity -- worked at a variety of jobs throughout the Pacific Northwest; he was a coal miner in Butte, Montana and southern Alberta and,

³⁶⁴ NAC, Comintern Fonds, "Report from District #9," 1932.

later, a barber in other coal mining towns in the Crow's Nest Pass and on Vancouver Island. He and his wife lived at 432 Heatley Avenue, a stone's throw from the city's waterfront. Given Salonen's background, it is likely that he was sympathetic to radical politics even before going to work on the waterfront; indeed, many Finnish immigrants who came to North America in the early decades of the twentieth century emerged from a political culture steeped in class politics. Those on the left-wing end of the spectrum -- the so-called red Finns who pooled in Minnesota, Northern Ontario, and British Columbia -- joined the Industrial Workers of the World and/or the Communist Party, and, philosophical and tactical differences notwithstanding, were ardent supporters of industrial unionism. Moreover, before settling in Vancouver and taking up work on the docks, Salonen worked in a region and industry (mining) characterized by a vibrant "radical heritage" which included the Western Federation of Miners, Socialist Party of Canada, and the United Mine Workers of America. In this regard, it is perhaps not a complete surprise that Salonen -- once, ironically, known to the labour manager as "a good worker," "a man of sober and steady habits," and a member of the VDWWA's tug-of-war team -- was, by late 1932 or early 1933, actively building a party fraction inside the company union.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁵ NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-286, File 163, "Situation of Vancouver Waterfront," 29 August 1934; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 24, File 8, Crombie to J.E. Hall, President, 25 April 1935; Box 63, File 1, letter of recommendation for Salonen by Crombie, 13 March 1931. When Salonen joined the party is hard to pin down. A report issued from District 9 in 1934 stated that he was the party's "chief contact" on the docks; given that Heavy Lift, the party fraction's newspaper, appeared on the

One of the first people that Salonen enlisted was Ivan Emery. As detailed earlier, the London-born Emery was a married man, a veteran of World War I, strike breaker in 1923, member of the VDWWA's executive in 1926 and 1929, and union president in 1927 and 1930, a position he resigned after failing to secure union control of the despatch hall during negotiations with the Shipping Federation. Emery was followed into the "Progressive Group" by George Brown, a married, British-born longshoremen who, unlike Emery, was not a former scab, but a former member of the ILA. In addition to Brown, the party fraction included other married, ex-ILAers as well, including Jack Hughes, the VDWWA's business agent in 1928, and Al Ratti, a son of Irish immigrants who, according to the labour manager, possessed little education but "prid[ed] himself in being 'tough.'" Blondie Moffat, a winch driver, rounded out this group of dissidents. As these brief, thumbnail sketches suggest, the men who formed the backbone of the party fraction all possessed some affinity for union politics, ranging from Salonen's exposure to, and likely involvement in, industrial unionism to Brown's ILA credentials to Emery's tenure as the outspoken, critical leader of the VDWWA. What was more, all of the men were married, had worked on the docks for long periods of time -- Brown, Ratti, and Hughes had been on the hook for at least ten years -- and had established themselves as reliable,

waterfront in 1933, it is reasonable to assume that he became involved sometime in late 1932 or early 1933. See Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows*; Campbell, "The Cult of Spontaneity," 117-146; Carlos Scwantes, *Radical Heritage: Labor, Socialism, and Reform in Washington and British Columbia, 1885-1917* (Washington 1979); Palmer, *Working-Class Experience*, 170-176, 184, 198, 224-225.

highly skilled longshoremen. Indeed, by 1930, all of them were members of regular ship gangs, a status which, in comparison to ship casual/spareboard men and dockers of any classification, was the most stable in an otherwise unstable and highly stratified job market. In short, Salonen, *et al.*, were precisely the kind of workers, the kind of citizens, that the Shipping Federation desired. However, amidst the economic calamity of the 1930s, they were not acting as a bulwark against labour militancy; no, they were its vanguard.³⁶⁶

This "Progressive Group" made its public debut with the publication of Heavy Lift, a small, mimeographed newspaper which appeared on the waterfront -- and in the diners, smoke shops, and bakeries in the skidroad district -- in May 1933. Emery and Moffat were particularly active in its production; so, too, was a small army of party members and sympathizers, both on and off the docks, who contributed their labour power, journalistic, editorial, and cartooning abilities, and knowledge of class politics. Burnaby-resident Mrs Erickson was one of these people. After the death of her husband, a longshoreman, she rented out space in her home to help make ends meet; one of her "boarders" was in the CPC/WUL and the gang which printed the Heavy Lift. Not surprisingly, then, this new, oppositional paper -- "edited and made

³⁶⁶ This paragraph is drawn from NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-286, File 163, "Situation of Vancouver Waterfront," 29 August 1934; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 24, File 8, Crombie to J.E. Hall, President, 25 April 1935; Box 4, File 5, Secretary Treasurer, VDWWA, to Secretary, Shipping Federation of British Columbia, "VDWWA Alphabetical Roll of Membership," 23 January 1924; "Membership Roll VDWWA," 1930; Box 6, File 7, "List of Ship Gangs," "List of Dock Spare Board Men," and "List of Spare Ship Board Men, 1931; "List of Longshoremen," 1933 and 1935.

up by Longshoremen ... for all workers" – reflected the complex united-front political milieu from which it emerged.³⁶⁷ Indeed, Heavy Lift spoke frankly about the bread-and-butter issues that mattered most to rank-and-file longshoremen while, at the same time, it articulated an agenda of industrial unionism, class struggle, and workers' power, the hallmarks of radical labour politics.

The centrepiece of Heavy Lift's political programme was a call for union control of the despatch hall, a demand which had been percolating on the waterfront for some time. Like former Association leader H.F. Lumsden, the dissident longshoremen attached to Heavy Lift maintained that controlling the despatch hall was the only way to distribute dwindling work opportunities more evenly ("They will not play the game!"), reduce the wage gap between gangs ("Yours for a square deal"), eliminate the job and wage classifications which divided the regular from the casual men ("If they classify one man, they classify us all"), and abolish the company blacklist ("If they fire one man, they fire us all").³⁶⁸ But unlike their labourist forebears, the "progressive group" took aim not just at the behaviour of a specific foreman or the labour manager, but at the entire welfare capitalist system of which they were a part, arguing that only by ousting the "stool pigeons" at the helm of the

³⁶⁷ Heavy Lift (HL), 5 January 1934, states that the paper debuted on 8 May 1933. The quote is from Manley, "Communism and the Canadian Working Class During the Depression," 271 and the information on Mrs Erickson comes from BCARS, RAG, GR 429, Box 21, File 2, Crombie to G. McGregor Sloan, Attorney General of British Columbia, 20 September 1934. A similar paper, Waterfront Worker, emerged on the San Francisco docks just a year before HL; see Nelson, Workers on the Waterfront, 114-15.

³⁶⁸ HL, 8 December 1933; 21 December 1933; 26 April 1934; 26 November 1934.

VDWWA, rejecting their “policy of collaboration and backpatting,” and building solidarity with waterfront and marine workers in other ports could all of this be achieved. “So much for the past,” one article in the newspaper proclaimed. “Here’s to a fighting policy.”³⁶⁹ In short, the Heavy Lift’s agenda was a repudiation of both the Shipping Federation’s “better citizens, better workers” policy and the Association’s labourist sensibilities, both of which had framed waterfront labour relations for nearly a decade.

That this new, “fighting policy” represented a break from the “backpatting” ways of the past was established in other ways as well, not the least of which was Heavy Lift’s ongoing mockery of the labour manager. Perhaps the most potent symbol of welfare capitalism on the docks, Crombie was depicted as a bumbling military officer who, among other problems, was no longer able to command respect for, or compliance with, his orders, a development symbolized by his inability to keep his horse in line. In one frame entitled “Still Galloping Major?”, Crombie is shown sitting atop a tired old beast unable to carry out his duties on the waterfront; in another, he is sprawled on the ground, his cap knocked off, while his horse, obviously responsible for the accident, gallops away. Nearby, a clutch of longshoremen, standing in a ring reminiscent of the shape-up, simply laugh at the deposed waterfront leader. Normally attentive to his every need and wish, in this

³⁶⁹ HL, 5 January 1934; 15 January 1934; 13 April 1934; 5 July 1934.

context, the Major's ill-behaved steed is meant to symbolize the notion that old relationships, like the one which existed between the VDWWA and the Shipping Federation, were indeed breaking down. In some formulations, Cooke, the head despatcher, was included for comedic effect, his penchant for stating the obvious ("It does not look good, Major") used to underscore Crombie's inability to stem the rising tide of militancy. "The Major sat by the window/With a frown upon his brow/He was deep in concentration/And he seemed to wonder how/That damned Association bunch/Was getting on so well," a poem that lampooned both men began. "Just then long Cook said something/And was told to go to Hell." It was a notion reproduced in a cartoon that depicted Crombie, Cooke, and other "reactionaries" hammering away at a boulder labelled "Association Solidarity." After surveying the situation, the despatcher reports that the rock is "Too Solid, Major" -- much to the labour manager's chagrin. By satirizing the relationship between Crombie, Cooke, and waterfront workers in this way, Heavy Lift was, at least symbolically, inverting both military and class-based hierarchies and, in the process, rejecting the relationship of deference and obligation at the heart of welfare capitalism (see appendix 9).³⁷⁰

Significantly, Heavy Lift's attempt to organize waterfront workers on the basis of their class experiences was augmented by an explicit appeal to working-class manhood as well; the images, text, and symbols contained in the paper often

³⁷⁰ The material on the newspaper's depiction of Crombie is drawn from: HL, 24 November 1933; 21 December 1933; 5 January 1934; 23 March 1934; 13 April 1934; 25 May 1934.

tapped, what one writer has called, "the mobilizing power of masculinity" (see appendix 10).³⁷¹ Without question, the dominant image, here, was that of the brawny "snoose chewing" longshoremen; with legs as thick as pilings and arms as big as Popeye's, he is depicted "sweatin' [and] tearin' [his] guts out" on the dock and "tween decks."³⁷² Often times, the stern-faced young man is pictured wielding a club or cargo hook as he clashes with both the bosses and the scabs who, in striking contrast, appear ugly, servile, and/or effeminate. In one cartoon, a longshoremen, armed with a rifle marked "strike ballot," takes aim at a fat man in tails and silk hat in a tree. "Will you come down Fed[eration]?" he asks. "Are you ... men?" the boss replies. "Damn right," he answers emphatically. "Don't shoot," the Federation concedes, "I'll come down." In other sequences, Heavy Lift cartoonists invoked both sports and military motifs to mark off desirable class and gender politics. In the former, a giant soccer player shouts "R'arin' to go!" as he closes in on a tiny,

³⁷¹ The quotation is taken from Elizabeth Faue, Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1914-45 (Chapel Hill 1991), 71. The literature on working-class masculinity is vast and growing; see, for example, the special issue of Labour/Le Travail, "Men and Masculinities," 42 (Fall 1998); Nancy Forestall, "Bachelors, Boarding-Houses, and Blind Pigs: Gender Construction in a Multi-Ethnic Mining Camp, 1909-1920," in Iacovetta, ed., A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s (Toronto 1998), 251-290; Angus McLaren, The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930 (Chicago 1997), chapter five, "Murderers," 111-131; Faue, "Gender and the Reconstruction of Labor History: An Introduction," Labor History 34:2/3 (Spring-Summer 1993), 163-178; Francis Shor, "Masculine Power and Virile Syndicalism: A Gendered Analysis of the IWW in Australia," Labour History 63 (November 1992), 83-99; Michael Roper and John Tosh, "Historians and the Politics of Masculinity," in Roper and Tosh, eds., Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800 (London 1991), 1-24; Ava Baron, "Gender and Labor History: Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future" and "An 'Other' Side of Gender Antagonism at Work: Men, Boys, and the Remasculinization of Printers' Work, 1830-1920" in Baron, ed., Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor (Ithaca and London 1991), 1-46 and 47-69; Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners.

³⁷² HL, 10 November 1933; 1 August 1934; the quote is from HL, 5 January 1934.

bourgeois man in goal; in the latter, six waterfront workers, holding a flag emblazoned with the names of Pacific Coast ports, march across a battlefield to confront a massive, overweight boss squatting behind barbed wire.³⁷³ Clearly, real working men, unlike strikebreakers or the more moderate leadership of the VDWWA, were not afraid to be militant. As one article put it: "Have YOU got any guts! Can you depend on YOURSELF! That is the only question you need concern yourself with. The 'other fellow' you are so afraid of has a habit of proving himself the better man."³⁷⁴

In this important sense, the Heavy Lift offered up a vision of restoration -- restoration of bona fide, working-class militancy on the job and, by extension, restoration of waterfront workers' independence and autonomy in the labour market and society more generally, a status which was seriously undermined with the onset of the Depression. "Your problem is not your masters profits, it is your livelihood [sic]. It is the life of your children, their health," an article entitled "Speed" concluded. "It is a question whether...your wife or children need to go to a dentist, need new shoes. ... Look after yourself, the employer is perfectly capable of taking care of himself."³⁷⁵ Although the dissidents' class and gender politics were markedly different in important respects -- the effete backpatting ways of the Association standing in contrast to the virile, confrontational style of the "progressive group" --

³⁷³ HL, 26 October 1934.

³⁷⁴ Both the cartoon and the quote are taken from HL, 11 May 1934.

³⁷⁵ HL, 23 January 1934.

as the above quotation suggests, its radical vision was premised on traditional assumptions about proper gender relations within the family. Indeed, the ideal of a male breadwinner and dependent wife were valued by dissidents and moderates alike, the former, unlike the latter, arguing that only collective struggle, not co-operation, could secure this highly prized objective. "[Our demands] are vital for the welfare of the longshoremen, their wives, and children," one article stated, underscoring how the elimination of hierarchy at work was tied to its maintenance in the home.

Against the backdrop of the Depression, the Shipping Federation's push for austerity and reform, and the Association's apparent inability to fight back, Heavy Lift, less than a year after its release, became the "collective organizer of a veritable network of left-wing groups and party cells on the docks," clusters of opposition which, according to a report issued from District 9, included approximately 100 men. Buoyed by this support, a slate with ties to the communist movement, running exclusively on the agenda laid out in the Heavy Lift, launched a bid for the leadership of the VDWWA in late 1933, the year the depression hit rock bottom.³⁷⁶ The old executive, having signed a contract in 1930 that, in the end, paved the way for massive wage cuts and the "reclassification" of hundreds of men, was removed from office. Only one member of the new union executive, stalwart secretary-

³⁷⁶ NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-286, File 163, "Situation of Vancouver Waterfront Work, 29 August 1934.

treasurer Allan Walker, had ever been elected before. The new president was Milton Reid, a married, 45-year-old dock worker. He was joined on the executive by 39-year-old Thomas Cauldwell, a married man who, significantly, was the siderunner in Oscar Salonen's ship gang. Salonen himself was elected as business agent; Emery was appointed to the union's bargaining committee. No other members of the original party fraction took up official positions within the union, though, like the business agent, they played a key role, both in a general sense by articulating an oppositional agenda and, more specifically, by recruiting like-minded candidates: one, possibly two, other members of the executive were drawn from longshore gangs in which a member of the "progressive group" worked. In short, the 1933 election was, in the words of Heavy Lift, a "clean sweep!"

* * *

The ascendancy of a left-wing opposition within the VDWWA between 1931 and 1933 was a product of both the party's specific campaign on the docks, one which tapped the moods and needs of rank-and-file workers whose faith in welfare capitalism was badly shaken by the economic calamity of the 1930s, and its wider cultivation of a culture of struggle amongst the city's working class, both employed and unemployed, during this period. It would be wrong, though, to think of this dynamic in terms of "communists" and "workers" -- as if the two categories were separate, the former swooping and radicalizing the latter as the crisis of the depression deepened. While the CPC's shift from the ultra-leftism of the Third

Period to the softer, less heavy-handed approach of the united front from below certainly provided a more conducive institutional and strategic context for mass work, ultimately, it was the initiative of local activists, coupled with the knowledge and agency of waterfront workers, that gave the movement both its form and content.

The composition of the Heavy Lift, for example, speaks to this relationship between the CPC/WUL, its official party line, and the realities of organizing on a day-to-day basis. In many respects, the images that it printed were stock characters, the archetypical proletariat, drawn from the mental warehouse of communist political propaganda, but, in this context, meshed with what organizers like Blondie Moffat, Jack Hughes, and others knew to be the realities of life "on the hook." Indeed, taken together, such representations and the practical political programme of union-run despatching and equalization of earnings illustrates just how immersed the party fraction was in the moods and needs of their fellow longshoremen and, in a wider sense, of the ways in which the official party line had given way to local issues -- concerns which were shaped by nearly a decade of welfare capitalism. "We [the communists] have the experienced forces, we have the organization, and the materials, and the councils that it takes," a veteran of these struggles recalled years after. "But we can do nothing before...[the] fellows want to go on."³⁷⁷

³⁷⁷ IWA Archives, Myrtle Bergren interview with John McCuish, undated. McCuish was an organizer with the LWIU and was active in Communist Party circles during the 1930s and 1940s; in 1934 and 1935 he was active on the Vancouver waterfront.

But woven into this agenda of working-class entitlement was not just a specific sense of how the workplace should, ideally, be reconstructed, but a notion of desirable gender relations as well. In addition to demarcating the shades of masculinity that defined a boss, company union man, and a supporter of the progressive group, the activists tied to the CPC/WUL emphasized the capacity of its political programme to salvage the male breadwinner and restore proper, which is to say hierarchical and patriarchal, gender relations in the family as well. In this particular sense, the “clean sweep” programme harkened back to the vision of class politics and “radical manhood” articulated by the Socialist Party of Canada and One Big Union during the 1910s -- one that, similarly, attacked the “wishy-washy guys” of labourism and combined a culture of struggle with “particular masculinities and gender hierarchies” at a time of economic, political, and social upheaval. Ironically, many of the men who steered clear of the political programme of “Messr. Pritchard and Kavanaugh” and opted, instead, for the possibilities offered up by enlightened labour relations were now constructing and engaging in a political movement that, ten years earlier, they chose to ignore and even oppose.³⁷⁸

The election of the “clean sweep” slate, then, marked the eclipse of welfare capitalism; not surprisingly, it prompted a sharp and immediate response from the

³⁷⁸ McCallum, “Not a Sex Question,” 15-54.

Shipping Federation. With the post-war consensus torn asunder, it opted for a time-honoured method of policing the bounds of working-class citizenship: coercion.

Chapter 6. The Right to Work As “Free Men”: The Struggle For Social Citizenship, 1933-1935.

On the waterfront, the period immediately following the election of the “Clean Sweep” slate in 1933 was one of consolidation, a complex process that involved not just the promotion of a specific agenda, as crucial as that was, but more importantly, the wider transformation of the ideological and institutional milieu that continued to gird company unionism and the wider welfare capitalist project of which it was a part. As one might expect, this dynamic was fraught with tension: on the workers' side of the class divide, WUL officials routinely clashed with communist and left-leaning longshoremen on the Association's executive while, at the same time, the “Progressive Group” continued to square off against less militant members of the union's leadership. Underlying both sides of the debate, both inside and outside the Association circles, was one of the age-old question of labour politics: how far was the union prepared to go to secure the rights and entitlements that were a working man's -- indeed, a citizen's -- due? Until this time, the Shipping Federation had policed the political boundaries of working-class citizenship in myriad ways, most notably and effectively by shaping both the ideological parameters and bureaucratic context in and through which workplace issues were debated and resolved. But in the face of an emerging left-wing opposition on the docks and, what appeared to some, a breakdown of constituted authority in the city at large, the Shipping Federation shifted from the left foot of consent to the right foot of coercion -- an age-

old manoeuvre undertaken by employers when working people started singing a different political tune. Key to its counteroffensive was the creation of the Citizen's League, a secretive organization that brought together the biggest and most powerful of BC's business interests, and its close collaboration with all levels of government. This chapter examines the politics of consolidation, confrontation, and coercion, placing particular accent on the tensions between radicals who emerged from the waterfront context and those attached to the formal party structure, the "constant campaign of repression" waged by the combined forces of capital and the state, and the ultimate demise of the Clean Sweep movement.

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In the fall of 1933, the three-year deal inked by the Association and the Shipping Federation expired; a year later in October, the two parties signed an additional multi-year agreement which was based on the majority award of an arbitration board convened under the auspices of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act. The negotiations that took place in the intervening twelve-month period were, not surprisingly, both tedious and difficult, bringing into sharp focus hardening positions on both sides of the bargaining table. With the ascendancy of Emery, Salonen, and Brown -- whom the Shipping Federation would later call the "Big Three" -- to the leadership of the Association, the union staked out a position that rested on a simple, yet far reaching, proposition: "[the union] will not accept an agreement that will restrict or share its right to control its own internal affairs,

discipline its members, or otherwise carry out its aims and objectives," including its support for the broader labour movement.³⁷⁹ Such declarations would not have been out of place in the 1920s, when Association leaders, bound by more moderate labourist sensibilities, sought to varying degrees to safeguard the union's autonomy. However, gone from the debate this time around was the sense amongst union leaders that securing these demands was pivotal to the long-term co-operation of the Association and Shipping Federation, the vitality of company unionism and decasualization, and the future of welfare capitalism. "The Federation is pictured as our benefactor, anxious for our welfare, and desiring only of peace and harmony," one Association member remarked sarcastically during the negotiations. Indeed, in this context, the Big Three's push for union control of the despatch hall and equalization of earnings – positions that flowed from a deep-seated desire for both political and personal independence – was angled toward more radical and, to the Federation, threatening ends.

This bargaining position was given further elaboration – and support – in the pages of Heavy Lift. Throughout the negotiations, the labour paper, enjoying increased readership in the wake of the Clean Sweep slate's election victory, called repeatedly for an end to "dependence," "constitutional red tape," and "interference" in Association business." In short, one headline read, "To be or not to be a company

³⁷⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 3, Statement of Association Negotiations Committee," 17 January 1934;16 February 1934.

union – that is the question.” Writers at Heavy Lift girded this core message of autonomy (“We must and will control our own affairs”), strength (“We have gained the confidence...to speak our minds”), and virility (“We shall stand solid upon our right to accept or reject the agreement as free men”) in many ways, not the least of which was by contrasting waterfront workers’ valiant efforts during the Great War with the submission they suffered at the hands of their employer and the Great Depression. “Then the war ended,” an article that ran in November 1933 concluded, “and officers who had four years of military training, an occasional one in action, returned to carry on in industry as they had learned in war, to treat men as automatons.” This notion that military hierarchy, and the subordination that came with it, was reproduced on the waterfront on a daily basis was taken up at length by a Heavy Lift scribe in July 1934 who compared the Shipping Federation’s “system of hiring and despatching” to military discipline and punishment by court martial: both inspired “fear and awe.” In the final paragraph of his discussion, the author moved from the literal to the metaphorical, recasting the devastation wrought by economic calamity, and exacerbated by timid company union leaders, in a way that blurred the distinction between the Great War and the class war. “Through all this story of wage cuts, and elimination, and classification, and stool pigeons, and mad foremen, and crooked and dirty dispatchers, and abortion of the principles of trade unionism, and liaison officers, and death, and maiming, and robbing, the executive and officials stood by, hat in hand, and acquiesced.” Just how many waterfront

workers identified with such harrowing prose is difficult to gauge; what is clear, however, is that the specific bargaining agenda that prompted this working-class writer to put pen to paper was widely supported. At mass meetings held in late 1933 and early 1934 – raucous affairs which drew upwards of 700 men – resolutions laying bare this position were endorsed by a large majority of Association members.³⁸⁰

Local CPC and WUL officials were certainly pleased with such large-scale, public demonstrations of support for the Heavy Lift programme; but their enthusiasm in this regard was often tempered by an unshakeable concern with the persistence of other, more moderate political sensibilities within the Association, particularly at the leadership level. Writing to party headquarters in Toronto in late 1933, one Vancouver-based CPCer spoke of the unwieldy character of the progressive group, the network of left-wingers which orchestrated the “clean sweep” campaign. “Most of the men had no or very little experience in executive work and executive meetings,” his report observed, commenting specifically about the political complexion of the group after a recent decision to double its size in order to build wider alliances. “We also took in the soldier, whom you have met. It seems to me we will be able to make a good alliance member out of him. The biggest problem

³⁸⁰ HL, 21 December 1933; 8 March 1934; 11, 28, September 1934; the military metaphors can be found in 24 November 1933; 23 February 1934; 26 April 1934; and 13 July 1934. Material related to the union meetings can be found in NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-286, File 152, Report from District 9, 27 November 1933.

with him is to keep him sober. ... [T]aking him into the group was necessary if a split was to be avoided." Splits, of course, were as likely to take place within the ranks of the union's left wing -- populated, according to local party bigwig George Drayton, by "ex-wobblies, ex-socialists, labor partyites, and in fact every kind of radical from ex-communists who are honestly confused to Christian socialist cranks [and] clever renegades" -- as between reform-minded and more moderate longshoremen. Either way, Drayton told a friend in February 1934, "All of these [positions] have to be handled. It requires the strictest vigilance to guard the alliance line and constantly combat any deviations."³⁸¹

Of particular concern to Drayton and other local party officials was the executive's early decision not to go on strike once the existing collective agreement expired, a move that, in the words of one report from District 9, reflected a marked "tendency to capitulate to legalism." Legalism, in this context, was a reference to the leaders' -- and especially party member Ivan Emery's -- ongoing respect for the VDWWA's constitution, a document imposed on the organization after the 1923 strike, and their belief that it was possible to achieve an aggressive agenda through collective bargaining, not collective action. "Our comrades [are] wrapped up in it with all its legal aspects," one local CPCer wrote in May 1934, referring specifically to the executive's decision to appear before a conciliation board at a time when

³⁸¹NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-286, File 152, Report from District 9, 27 November 1933; K-287, File 163, report from District 9, "2-19-1934"; K-288, File 165, Drayton to "Dear friend," 14 February 1934.

longshoremen up and down the coast, especially in San Francisco, were laying it on the line. It was a sentiment echoed in the pages of Heavy Lift: "We still believe in Santa Claus." The relationship between reds on the outside of the union and those on the inside was so strained that at one point the party considered moving Emery to the Longshore and Water Transport Workers of Canada – an offer he refused because it was a paid position and he did not want longshoremen to think, especially given his past as a strike breaker and former head of the company union, that he was on the take.³⁸² On another occasion, Drayton accused members of the so-called progressive group of "cover[ing] up" some of their more egregious errors – such as permitting Association gangs to unload hot cargo from coastal boats in port from San Francisco – in order to avoid being reprimanded by party officials. "In regard to the situation of the longshoremen, it is a very complicated problem and it is getting worse as it goes," he told a comrade back east.³⁸³

Drayton's anxiety about the politics of consolidation was not limited to the left-wing of the longshoremen's union as the ongoing presence of the "reformist" ex-officials of the Association was also cause for concern. At several mass meetings dedicated to discussing the negotiations with waterfront employers, former VDWWA executive members, including Harry Burgess, William Hart, and Frank Kenning, men who played influential roles on the beach during the heyday of welfare

³⁸² NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-287, File 163, Report from District 9, "2-19-34"; HL, 25 May 1934.

³⁸³ NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-288, File-165, Drayton to T.C. Sims, 21 May 1934.

capitalism, challenged the Clean Sweep slate on questions of procedure and tactics. They also took aim at the role of the CPC and WUL in waterfront affairs.³⁸⁴ Down, but not out, the so-called old guard was also successful in subsequent union elections – contests that were still held regularly in accordance with the original constitution. In late 1933 or 1934, for example, Allan Walker, who served on the union's executive for many years during the 1920s, defeated party member Ivan Emery for the position of secretary-treasurer, 331 votes to 219. (Emery retained his position on the bargaining committee.) “[I]n the union elections Salonen was elected again as business agent and Emery was defeated as Secretary and the Reactionary Walker was elected again,” District 9 reported. “This man Walker holds the job as secretary due to his popularity and loaning money to workers to back horses, etc.”³⁸⁵

Whether or not loan-sharking had anything to do with the stalwart secretary's victory is not known; what is clear, however, is that Walker's more incremental approach to labour relations did have some support. Looking back on this period of consolidation in and around the mid-1930s, long-time longshoreman Sam Engler recalled that the new business agent was “really on the ball”; at the same time,

³⁸⁴ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 24, File 8, Crombie to Hall, “20-5-35.”

³⁸⁵ The exact date of the vote is unclear; the report from District 9 indicates that it took place “at the end of 1933” while an Association document is dated early January, 1934. See CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 2, Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers Assn – Election of Officers and Executive, “13-1-34”; NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-287, File 163, report from District 9, 29 August 1934. It was also not uncommon for Emery to butt heads with the so-called old guard on the union's executive; see BCARS, RAG, GR 429, Box 21, File 1, K.A. McLennan, Manager, Robin Hood Mills, Ltd., to Gordon Me. Sloan, Attorney General, 21 May 1934.

however, Engler was of two minds on the question of union-run despatch: he wanted to end discrimination and favouritism on the docks – that was why he backed the Clean Sweep movement – but was skeptical of investing such tremendous power in the hands of union officers without appropriate checks and balances. At the same time, given the economic and familial hardships brought on by the Depression, he was wary of going on strike to achieve this end, an option that was spoken of ad nauseam in dissident circles. Other workers, most notably some ex-ILAers, were more equivocal in their criticisms, taking aim at, what one docker named Jones called, Salonen's "Hitlerite attitude" and the way it left workers "not knowing where they are in regard to whom to obey or what to do as threats are used, suspensions or fines, which has had an influence on the gang men." Of particular concern to some was the sense that the union's agenda was being influenced in part by "pressure from the outside" – a reference to the links between the Clean Sweep leaders, Workers Unity League, and Communist Party.³⁸⁶

There certainly was pressure coming from outside. But as pivotal as the CPC and WUL were in orchestrating the rise of the Clean Sweep slate and, through the Heavy Lift, marshalling support for a more militant agenda, their influence on the longshoremen's union, while substantial, was by no means total. Drayton knew this

³⁸⁶ BCARS, Howie Smith Oral History Collection, Tape 3944:71-72, Interview with Sam Engler by Howie Smith; Engler's recollections are also contained in Man Along The Shore! and Fighting For Labour; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 53, File 6, "Memo for Mr Hall. Re: W.N. Watts – Worked with Red Reid on Ballantyne Pier"; Box 50, File 2, Jonas or Jones to Crombie, 23 August 1934.

and often lamented the fact that he was unable to co-ordinate a stronger party presence within the opposition group. "We have not paid enough attention to it in the past. Too many men have been rotated through," he remarked, perhaps in the spirit of Bolshevik self-criticism. "[A] person has to be there [on the waterfront] for at least three months before you can get the hang of it."³⁸⁷ To highlight the extent to which Drayton -- and the local party -- was on the outside looking in is not to suggest that some of his criticisms were without merit. The union's constitution, a document that made it all but impossible for the Association to act as a bona fide trade union, was indeed a "bulwark" against militancy; even the Roosevelt administration in the United States, which was busy crafting its New Deal for labour, understood the injustice of unfair labour practices of this sort.³⁸⁸ The point, here, though, is this: there were limits to the party's influence. And as much as Drayton, *et al.*, wanted to refashion the company union in their own image, the texture of the reform movement, from its bargaining agenda to the way in which its objectives would be secured, was shaped to a considerable degree by waterfront workers themselves -- communists and non-communists, reformers and moderates alike.

Whether or not there was friction between the Communist Party and the Association did not matter much to the Shipping Federation; nor did the political differences between "ex-communists" and "Christian socialist cranks." As in the past,

³⁸⁷ NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-288, File-165, Drayton to T.C. Sims, 21 May 1934.

³⁸⁸ The "bulwark" quotation is taken from HL, 25 May 1934.

waterfront employers staunchly opposed the Association's bargaining position; at one point in the negotiations, for example, Crombie simply wrote "no, no, no" down the left hand margin of a union position paper and mailed it back to Association officials, reaffirming in no uncertain terms that "the employment and the regulation of all waterfront labour, including the despatching and distribution of work and earnings, should be controlled and supervised by the Federation." But as familiar as the debate over union despatch and other issues was to waterfront employers, what was new – and indeed most concerning – to them was the presence of "communistic doctrines or leadership" on the docks. Not surprisingly, then, during this period of bargaining, it often overshadowed more technical discussions of matters such as the cost of living in Vancouver, wage scales in other Pacific Coast ports, or the travelling time to outlying ports.

After obtaining a copy of a leaflet issued by the Workers Unity League in late December or early January 1934 that indicated that the "Waterfront Workers Association" was behind its campaign against wage cuts, waterfront employers demanded that the Association publicly denounce the red-led organization as a precondition to further negotiations. "The Workers Unity League is an illegal organization," R.D. Williams, chair of the Shipping Federation's negotiating committee, told Association representatives. "You can be in sympathy with anybody you like, but what we are asking you do is to disown [it]." George Brown, who, along with union president Milton Reid, vice-president Tom Cauldwell, business agent

Oscar Salonen, and bargaining committee member Ivan Emery, argued the workers' case, refused to do so, stating: "I am not in a position to tell the membership of 940 men that the Workers' Unity League is no good. If they knew what it was they may be sympathetic to it," to which Salonen, an original member of the so-called Progressive Group, added, perhaps getting a chuckle from Emery and Brown: "The Shipping Federation is going to make our members acquainted with the WUL. Might be well for me to look into it." After much debate, union representatives grudgingly agreed to sign the employers' statement – "This Association is not affiliated in any way with the Workers Unity League, and did not authorize reference to their Association in that circular" – and negotiations continued, only to break down shortly after when key issues once again came to the fore. "I do not see why you cannot put it in writing," Brown stated at one point, referring to waterfront employers' evasiveness on the question of a closed shop. "You held us up on the Workers Unity League business."³⁸⁹

The Shipping Federation's private campaign to intimidate the Association was augmented publicly by an "Open Letter" campaign. Meticulously prepared by F.G.T. Lucas, a prominent Vancouver lawyer with close ties to the ruling provincial Liberal Party, in consultation with Major Crombie, the letters were an attempt to speak over the heads of union leaders and communicate directly with those who, in the opinion

³⁸⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 8, "Minutes of a Joint Meeting of the Negotiating Committees ... 15 January 1934."

of the Shipping Federation, were being "kept in the dark": rank-and-file waterfront workers, their "wives," and "families." In language that combined the barrister's orderly, if plodding, argumentation and the labour manager's paternalist rhetoric, the letters took up three different, but intimately related arguments in hopes of convincing employees that their best interests lay, as always, with the boss and the company association, not a bona fide labour union. The first strategy looked to the past. "The Federation has...done its utmost to make it clear that we are always willing, not only to listen to, but to deal with any complaint, hardship, unjust usage, or any other legitimate grievance any waterfront workers may have," one letter began. "As reasonable men, you realize that the interests of yourselves and ourselves are best served by close co-operation between us all, to make working conditions as safe, convenient and satisfactory as humanly possible." In this formulation, the previous decade appears as somewhat of a golden age, a time in which "reasonable men" on both sides of the class divide worked together to eliminate the picking system and for the common good; it was an argument that carried with it an important, if unstated, rider, one which permeated the Shipping Federation's entire letter writing campaign: even amidst this decade of discord, it was still possible to return to the garden of class harmony.

But placing before waterfront workers what was lost by indulging in tough talk and activism was but one part of waterfront employers' message; for them it was also crucial to excoriate publicly those who fomented discontent on the docks and

unleashed a "torrent of vilification" against Shipping Federation officials. Referred to variously as the "trouble-makers," the "radicals," and the "secret seven," those both behind Heavy Lift and a part of the newly elected "Clean Sweep" slate were cast as manipulative outsiders bent on undermining the waterfront's co-operative ethos through "constant misrepresentations," "unfair and misleading comments," and the "deliberate concealment of facts" – tactics designed to "befog" workers' judgement. Not only were the doyens of disagreement working strictly for their own cynical, self-serving ends – "It is not these men who will go hungry and suffer the misfortunes that come down on all concerned when employers and workers are set at each others throats," stated one letter – but their actions were also an affront to the code of manly comportment, at once "sane" and "reasonable," that had shaped labour relations on the docks for a decade. "If they had the courage to come openly before you... you would be able to judge whether, as we say, they are trouble-makers on the waterfront, or honest, hardworking men such as the great majority of you, loyal to yourselves, your families – and loyal to your jobs," one letter stated, attempting to tap the mobilizing power of masculinity to close, not open, the class divide.

Finally, the Shipping Federation's open letter campaign critiqued the specific bargaining agenda advanced first in the pages of Heavy Lift and later by the leaders of the Association, namely union-controlled despatch, equalization of earnings, abolition of classification, and a closed shop. Laden with tables, charts, and graphs,

the arguments advanced in this regard were more than simply an attempt to discredit the union's positions on the basis of logistical or economic criteria, but an explicit appeal to waterfront workers' individual, as opposed to collective, self interest. The only collaboration in the service of a class-based agenda that waterfront employers desired was between workers and bosses, not between workers themselves, not on the docks and certainly not across different sectors of the economy. "We have...decided to discuss all these matters with you individually, in black and white, in the confidence that you will appreciate that our motive and object is the common good for all," the Shipping Federation stated, striking a forthright and benevolent position.

In sum, the open letters looked both backward and forward. With their emphasis on shared objectives and mutual obligations, the letters bore all the marks of the reformist sensibilities that the labour manager and waterfront employers had brought to bear on labour relations for a decade. At the same time, however, the very appearance of the letter campaign reflected the Shipping Federation's acute, if late, realization that the political ground was shifting. As Ship and Dock stated: "So long as the domineering, bullying Fascist-inclined element on the Federation could hammer the table and say 'That's that' open letters were not necessary."³⁹⁰ From the

³⁹⁰BCARS, RAG, GR 429, Box 21, File 1, Open Letter to "VDWWA, ILHA, and Ex-Employees," 8, 16, 21 November 1933, 4, 7, 29, December 1933; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 42, File 5, untitled, itemized billing information from F.G.T. Lucas, 4 November 1934; Heavy Lift, 8 December 1933. CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 59, File 3, Ship and Dock, 4 May 1935. When the open letters first appeared, Heavy Lift mocked them mercilessly; see HL 10 and 24 November 1933.

employers' perspective, more than just another dispute over the terms and conditions of the collective agreement, the emergence of an oppositional movement on the docks signalled not only the fracturing of the post-war consensus that it had worked so hard to manufacture, but that waterfront workers were, in fact, imagining, what one waterfront employer referred to as, "an entirely new conception, including plans for its application, of the rights of labor and its position in the economic life of the country."³⁹¹ This was a scary proposition, especially given the role of the CPC and WUL in struggles amongst workers in BC, across the country, and up and down the Pacific Coast.

As the tone and content of the open letters suggest, the gulf between the Association and the Shipping Federation was wide -- so wide, in fact, that by the spring of 1934 a federal conciliation board was called to broker a settlement between the increasingly testy parties. After several weeks of hearings, the board -- which consisted of Justice Harold Robertson representing the department of labour, J.E. Hall on behalf of the Shipping Federation, and Charles Stewart, a "proletarian fighter" nominated by the union -- handed down its final decision at the end of June. The majority opinion, crafted by Robertson and Hall, was a complete repudiation of the Association's position: it ruled against union control of the despatch hall, equalization of earnings, abolition of classification, and a closed shop:

³⁹¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, 33-B-5, "Vancouver Waterfront Labor Situation."

"[T]he employment and regulation of all waterfront labour including the dispatching and distribution of the work and earnings should be controlled and supervised by the Federation." It was an emphatic, hardline conclusion, one which was tempered only slightly by a vague recommendation that "the Federation should continue in an endeavour to meet the wishes of the Association to equalize, as far as possible, the earnings between the high and low earning gangs." Predictably, Stewart's minority report, written in a punchy, less officious style, upheld each and every claim made by the Association, from the big ticket items listed above to smaller, technical issues such as travelling time and workers compensation allowances. "[T]he Association [is] a workers' organization representing the interests of the workers -- and not a part of the Federation to keep workers under control," he wrote, underscoring the issue that had underpinned labour-capital relations on the docks for over a decade. "If the Federation refuses to concede this demand I can see no alternative other than that the Vancouver Longshoremen will be forced to adopt the same course [of action] as the Longshoremen to the South."³⁹²

The following autumn, the Shipping Federation and the Association finally signed a three-year agreement, one which was based, in large measure, on the majority report. On the key issue of despatching, for example, key clauses in the new deal were taken entirely from Robertson's and Hall's final submission thereby

³⁹² "Report of Board of Dispute Between Various Firms, Members of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia and Their Employees....," in Labour Gazette 34:7 (July 1934), 596-620.

ensuring that control of this crucial dimension of labour relations remained safely in the employers' collective hands. Significantly, the Association did secure a modest advance in this regard as clause four of the agreement permitted the union to appoint a representative "to co-operate with and assist the Labour Manager in carrying out the supervision and administration of Schedule 'B'" – the rules and regulations that governed despatching. Stronger assurances governing the union's ability to look after its own internal affairs as well as an increase in the base wage rate and shorter hours were also attained. After nearly a year of negotiation, Association members, many of whom still supported the more ambitious bargaining agenda that swept the reform slate to power, voted to accept the agreement – 544 to 133. According to one government investigator, they did so "reluctantly"; according to one waterfront worker, they did so under duress. "We were greatly astonished at the changed attitude of the better men on the [negotiating] Committee. Something has happened. We do not know what it is," K.A. McLennan, head of Robin Hood Mills told the province's attorney general, hinting that the latter, not the former assessment of the membership's frame of mind was likely more accurate. "They may have found out that Mr. Clendenning and I surveyed the waterfront Saturday afternoon accompanied by a Civic Police Authority ... and they may have come to the conclusion that the Shipping Federation was quite serious when, on

several occasions we have expressed the opinion that it was quite alright with us if they wanted to go ahead and strike.”³⁹³

It was not long after the negotiations ended that the deal unravelled. Writing to the labour manager as early as December 1934, union secretary Allan Walker, speaking on behalf of the executive as a whole, complained that the Shipping Federation was not honouring its commitments under the new agreement as waterfront employers continued to hire outside men when Association workers were available. Additional letters, crammed with similar complaints, soon followed. “If no satisfactory action can be obtained by request, the Association [will] take steps to bring about the arrangements themselves [sic],” one missive stated emphatically. “Will it ever be possible for us to convince the Federation that the members long ago completely lost faith in the fairness and impartiality of the employer controlled despatching office? [C]onfidence can never be restored, however fairly the despatching may now be carried out,” echoed another.³⁹⁴ Exasperated and provocative, the Association’s correspondence with the labour manager in the weeks and months that followed the October agreement was indicative of just how

³⁹³“Report of Board of Dispute Between Various Firms, Members of the Shipping Federation of British Columbia and Their Employees....,” in Labour Gazette 34:7 (July 1934), 596-620. Some of the key clauses are reproduced in the “Report of Royal Commission Concerning Industrial Dispute on Vancouver Waterfront,” in Labour Gazette 35:11 (November 1935), 982-995; the “reluctant” and “coerced” comments are in the same volume. The final quote is in BCARS, RAG, GR 429, Box 21, File 1, McLennan to Gordon Sloan, 21 May 1934.

³⁹⁴ The first letter is in CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 2, Negotiating Committee, VDWWA to J.E. Hall, BCSF President, 3 May 1935; the second quote is taken from VDWWA to Crombie, 4 February 1935. See also Crombie to VDWWA, early January 1935; 31 January 1935; 8 February 1935; VDWWA to Crombie, 4 February 1935; 27 February 1935; 17 April 1935.

far labour relations had deteriorated. The Association would indeed “take steps” to protect what it had won at the bargaining table and secure what it had been denied -- manoeuvres that would trigger a counterattack from the Shipping Federation, backed by the full weight of the state, of a size and scope unseen since 1923.

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J.C. Barrs was a waterfront worker, member of the Association, and, along with another man from his longshoring gang, a backer of the Clean Sweep movement. Whether or not Barrs was a member of the Communist Party is unclear; what is certain, however, is that in the early-to-mid 1930s, he regularly hosted meetings of dissident waterfront workers and their sympathizers -- seamen, loggers, electric railwaymen, and the jobless among them -- at his apartment in the city's downtown. Like Barrs, other rank-and-file longshoremen, men once dubbed “dangerous, stay in the background types” by a Shipping Federation informant, also opened up their homes, apartments, and hotel rooms to political meetings. The Victory Rooms on Powell, Glen Apartments on Hastings, and the World Hotel on Cordova Street were particularly alive with talk of waterfront politics; so, too, were other, non-residential spaces such as the many beer parlours, pool halls, or shoe-shine shops in the waterfront district where Clean Sweep supporters gathered to assess recent developments, plot strategy, and socialize. What is striking about these seemingly mundane daily gatherings is not just what they reveal about the male, working-class cultural milieu of the city, but, perhaps more importantly, how

meetings such as these formed the backbone of the oppositional movement when sustaining the idea of struggle was an immediate and pressing issue. That a wide range of workers, drawn from both inside and outside of the company union, were often in attendance is particularly significant. Not only does it shed light on the united front context within which communist and like-minded individuals were operating but also on the two-sided character of this consolidation process, a dynamic that was bound up with both the internal political developments on the docks and, in a more external sense, the continued cultivation of struggle and solidarity amongst unemployed and employed workers across the province.³⁹⁵

Chief among the party's priorities on the external side of this political equation was the worsening condition of the province's unemployed workers and the potential for a mass movement to confront the humiliation of enforced idleness, the desperation of poverty, and the absence of unemployment insurance. Out in the relief camps, which were taken over by the Department of National Defence in July 1933, the CPC-affiliated Relief Camp Workers Union, accused by the province's attorney general of "demoral[izing] the camp system," was in the thick of things, orchestrating protests amongst unemployed single men against poor working

³⁹⁵ This paragraph is drawn from a series of reports filed by informants hired by the Shipping Federation; in some cases, the informants were longshoremen, in others, they were detectives supplied by Pratt Secret Service. See CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 50, File X, 13, 16, 17, July 1934; 6, 7, August 1934; 14, 17, 24, 25 September 1934; 1, 3, 5, 19, 20 October 1934.

conditions, low remuneration, and rotten grub – and risking expulsion from the camps and loss of relief in the process.

This ongoing agitation for “work and living wages” culminated in two large-scale walkouts – one in December 1934, a second in April 1935 – which brought thousands of men to Vancouver. In the city itself, the arrival of striking relief camp workers, coupled with the ongoing presence of a vibrant left-wing community active at the block and neighbourhood level, a large population of unemployed transient workers, and scores of men deemed ineligible for the camps, only exacerbated an already tense and certainly volatile situation. Mass demonstrations and running battles with the police, common occurrences since the onset of the Depression, continued almost unabated while most politicians, trapped in an ideology that viewed unemployment as an individual failing, not a function of the inherent instability of the economic system itself, remained unable to offer up any viable solutions. “In any further consideration of the unemployment problem in BC, there is one factor which should be given serious consideration, and that is the growing activities and influence of the communistic element which seems to have centred on this province,” the provincial minister of labour, George S. Pearson, wrote to the prime minister in March 1934, just days after unemployed men, many of whom were in the city from the relief camps, rioted at the Vancouver Men’s Institute, a homeless shelter. “The feeding grounds for their activities are found primarily amongst the

unemployed single men, who are centred in great numbers in the the city ... and in the various National Defense Camps."³⁹⁶

The minister had good reason to be concerned; not only was the blacklisting of RCWU organizers and the presence of relief camp strikers creating an intolerable situation in Vancouver, but the "reds" presence amongst the unemployed provided them with a staging ground to create, what he called, "friction between workers and their employers" that promised to disrupt nearly "every line of industrial endeavour."³⁹⁷ To some extent, Pearson was correct: individuals tied to the WUL had long appreciated the dialectical relationship between the struggle amongst the unemployed, whether it was focussed on the block and neighbourhood councils or the relief camps, and conflicts taking place in specific workplace settings like the waterfront. Indeed, between 1934 and 1935, as both the relief camp and waterfront campaigns entered new phases, the former defined by mass walkouts, the latter by the question of consolidation, the links between the two campaigns became more

³⁹⁶ BCARS, RAG, GR 429, Box 21, File 1, Honourable George S. Pearson to Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, 21 March 1934. This rest of this paragraph is drawn from the following: BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B2300, F-125-1-1932, report from "operative # 9," 16-12-1932; B2301, F-125-1933, report from BCPP detective, 12 September 1933; B2301, F-125-1, G. Page, Chair, SUPA, to Honourable Gordon Sloan, Attorney General, 9 March 1934; BC Relief Camp Workers Union to "Dear Comrades," 10 March 1934; RAG, GR 429, Box 21, File 1, Vancouver Council of Social Agencies to Honourable Gordon Sloan, 18 April 1934; File 4, "Memorandum for the executive committee of the council of social agencies special meeting, December 17, 1934, to consider the situation arising out of the presence of several hundred men in the city discharged from camps, who under regulations cannot be reinstated in the camps and have no means of subsistence," 17 December 1934. See also: Brown, When Freedom Was Lost and Liversedge, Recollections of the On-To-Ottawa Trek. For a thorough examination of unrest in the BC camps see Todd McCallum's unpublished paper "Work Without Wages": Resisting the Relief Camp System in British Columbia, 1931-1935."

³⁹⁷ BCARS, RAG, GR 429, Box 21, File 1, Honourable George S. Pearson to Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, 21 March 1934.

direct. Police detectives reported that members of the company union, both leaders and rank and filers, were participating in other RCWU-sponsored protests like the infamous "snake dances" that slithered along Vancouver's main streets and through large department stores to draw public attention to the plight of the unemployed. At a mass meeting held in April 1935, Association members voted to take a one-hour "rest period" at the end of the month in support of the "boys from the camps" – a show of solidarity that was followed by joint participation in the annual May Day parade. The parade, which coincided with the massive strike carried out by the Relief Camp Workers Union and the convergence of thousands of unemployed workers on the city's downtown, was attended by approximately 15,000 people. Days later, when about 250 unemployed men occupied the museum section of the public library, it was Tom Cauldwell, a left-leaning member of the Association's executive, and Oscar Salonen, a communist, who, along with the Chief of Police, Colonel W.W. Foster, brokered a deal with city hall to secure the men two days relief. "Two thousand boys, most of them just out of school, asking the right to be citizens of the country for which their fathers died, demanding that the slave compounds be abolished, and that they be allowed to work for a living, and they are told their demands are 'defiant and belligerent,'" a journalist named Skipper Sam wrote in Ship and Dock, a publication that routinely examined the plight of both

unemployed and waterfront workers. "From the fury of democracy, good Lord, deliver us."³⁹⁸

For dissident longshoremen, these close, if only partial, links between the two struggles were significant for they illustrated not only that the city's left-wing and labour movement supported their cause, but, in a more ideological sense, that waterfront workers' best interests lay not with the Shipping Federation but, ultimately, with other working people – two messages that were pivotal to the process of consolidation.³⁹⁹ Evidence of similar united front efforts that were bound up, at least in part, with the waterfront struggle could be found in other places too, including the ranks of the coastal loggers (striking fallers on Vancouver Island received support, in cash and kind, from the Association in 1934), street railwaymen (Edward Jones, a BCER employee, was also an activist on the waterfront), and working-class ex-servicemen.⁴⁰⁰

During the early days of the Third Period, the Communist Party created the Workers Ex-Servicemen's League, a left-wing alternative to existing veterans'

³⁹⁸ Ship and Dock, 10 May 1935.

³⁹⁹ BCARS, RAG, GR 429, Box 22, File 16, report from operative, 10 April 1934; Box 21, File 4, F. Cruickshank, Inspector, Commanding 'E' Division, to Commander, BC Provincial Police, 19 May 1935; CVA, Series 199, 75-E-2, File 2, Vancouver City Police, Communist Affairs Branch, reports "Re: Relief Camp Workers," 29 April 1935, 1, 17, 18 May 1935, 10 August 1935; File 8, "In the Matter of a Meeting of Relief Camp Strikers Held ... May 22nd 1935; Statutory Declaration of Bertie Worthy."

⁴⁰⁰ On the loggers situation see BCARS, RAG, GR 429, Box 22, File 16, report from operative, 20 March 1934. Details of the cross over between the longshoremen and the street railwaymen can be found in BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B2301, F-1-125-1, report from operative "Re: Longshore Situation," 9 May 1934; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 50, report from "Operator #3," 14 September 1934; NAC, CPC, MG 28 IV 4, H-1615, Volume 51, File 61, "British Columbia District – Longshoremen's Strike"

organizations which in the party's opinion were "controlled by commissioned officers and agents of the capitalist class" and, as such, "constitute[d] a force against unity and against the militant labour movement." Abolition of tribunal boards, free medical care, and no discrimination against politically active veterans were at the top of the WESL's agenda. "[Let] no more monuments be built for 'dead heroes' until 'living heroes' are provided for," read one of the organization's leaflets; "Comrades! Wake up to the fact; your King and Country does not need you," echoed another. Within a few years of its creation, the WESL, like other red-led organizations, was steering a less confrontational course. "[It has] made a very wise and from our point of view, a very dangerous change in tactics to sink party differences and outward symbols and work together to obtain the satisfaction of veterans' demands," an operative with the BC Provincial Police reported as early as 1932. "In order to avoid arousing party antagonism [it no longer displays] the Red Flag [or sings] the Internationale."⁴⁰¹ Later, in the wake of the Clean Sweep candidates' election victory, WESL also stepped up efforts to appeal to working-class veterans both on the waterfront and in society more generally. The former initiative was particularly important given just how thoroughly hierarchies of military rank and hierarchies of class were intertwined

⁴⁰¹ BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B2301, L-125-1-1932, report by operative #9, 12-12-32; L-125-1-1934, J.H. McMullin, Commissioner, BCPP, to the Attorney General, 19 November 1934; CVA, Series 199, 75-F-1, File 13. WESL leaflet. Raymond Frogner provides a description of the WESL's activities in Vancouver during both the relief camp and waterfront strikes in chapter 2 of "Within the Sound of the Drum": Currents of Anti-Militarism in the BC Working Class in the 1930s," (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1991). See also Michael Lonardo, "Under a Watchful Eye: A Case Study of Police Surveillance During the 1930s," *Labour/Le Travail* 35 (Spring 1995), 11-43.

on the docks, while the latter move was designed to appeal to those ex-servicemen who were members of the city's militia – units of which were under the command of prominent Shipping Federation members like R.G. Parkhurst who was both head of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company and commanding officer of the "1st Battalion, The Vancouver Regiment, 29th Battalion CEF."⁴⁰² "Ex- Servicemen! Your comrades who served with you and [are] now working on the Waterfront, both seamen and longshoremen, are being held back from exercising the democratic right they fought for, the right to have a voice in the administration of the conditions under which they must work," a WESL handbill proclaimed, drawing a contrast between workers' proud service overseas and their submission on the job. "Because of the intolerable work conditions prevailing on the waterfront ... the Provincial Bureau of the WESL calls upon all veterans to assist longshoremen in the struggle."⁴⁰³

This combination of workplace and veteran's issues, both of which traded on the antagonism between officers and enlisted men and offered up the possibility of restoring a sense of manly pride and independence, was particularly attractive to Michael James "Mickey" O'Rourke. Born in county Limerick, Ireland, in 1878, O'Rourke, a Catholic by religion and miner by trade, enlisted in the Canadian

⁴⁰² On this point see: CVA, 75-E-7, Acting Chief Constable, Vancouver City Police to Lt. Col. McKenzie, Officer Commanding, 1st Battalion, The Vancouver Regiment, 30 July 1935; J.J. Nicholson, Intelligence Branch, Vancouver City Police, to Superintendent, CID, Vancouver City Police, 27 July 1935; R.G. Parkhurst, Lt. Colonel, 1st Battalion, to Acting Chief Constable, 7 August 1935.

⁴⁰³ CVA, Series 200, 75-E-5, File 9, WESL leaflet.

Expeditionary Forces in New Westminster, BC, in 1915. (Military service was nothing new for O'Rourke; before immigrating to Canada he served for seven years with the British armed services and, at the time of his enlistment in the CEF, was an active member of the militia, the 104th Battalion.) After a short training stint in Shorncliffe, England, he was sent to France as a stretcher-bearer with the CEF's 7th Infantry Battalion and, like all of his comrades in arms, saw action in several muddy, gruesome, and deadly encounters, including Passchendaele and the battle for Hill 70 near Lens. For his nearly two years of active service, he was awarded the Military Medal, Victoria Cross, and Distinguished Conduct Medal for bravery, making him one of Canada's most decorated soldiers. After the war, O'Rourke, who, according to military doctors, demonstrated "a marked degree of debility" and was "nervous and tremulous," lived for a brief time in Seattle, taking a room at the Georgian Hotel in the city's downtown, and later returned to BC where he started working as a longshoreman on the Vancouver docks.⁴⁰⁴ Details of his life in the 1920s are scarce. He remained single throughout his life, lived for periods of time in the hotels in the city's waterfront district, and, given that his name does not appear on any Shipping Federation ship or dock gang list, likely worked as a casual or spare board man, an irregular and poorly paid position. "He lived a hard life," Michael Kevin

⁴⁰⁴ NAC, RG 150, Volume 1942-43/166, Box 7484, File 428 545, O'Rourke, Michael James.

Dooley, a local Vancouver historian and former maritime worker, concluded after conducting research on the decorated war veteran.

While little is known of O'Rourke's politics, either before or immediately after his stint in the Great War, one event in the late 1920s suggests a link between his "hard life" in the post-war period and (further?) politicization as a veteran, waterfront worker, and a man in the mid-1930s. In 1929, O'Rourke was invited to London by the Prince of Wales to attend a banquet in honour of all winners of the Victoria Cross. He refused to attend, a move prompted, according to his obituary, by an inability to buy suitable clothes for the occasion. That he was eventually given a "new outfit" by a group of generous veterans and yet still refused to attend (he sold the new suit and "disappeared" for three weeks) suggests that something else was at work here: likely anger – anger at the hypocrisy of those who offered to honour veterans' war-time sacrifices while failing utterly to meet their peace-time needs, a sentiment that had been percolating amongst many ex-servicemen since the Armistice was signed and gained increased currency with the onset of the Depression.⁴⁰⁵ Indeed, by 1935 O'Rourke was a backer of oppositional movements both on the docks and in the ranks of established veterans' organizations; "[I]nsofar as Mickey O'Rourke, VC, is concerned," a member of the Canadian Legion's

⁴⁰⁵ On this point see Morton and Wright, Winning the Second Battle.

executive in BC remarked after learning of the decorated soldier's political activities, "no doubt he was led away by others."⁴⁰⁶

The "others" that this legionnaire had in mind were, of course, communists and communist sympathizers. At the same time as they were upping the ante in the struggle amongst the relief camp workers, loggers, street railwaymen, and working-class veterans, attempting to bend these specific campaigns toward the possibility of a general strike on the waterfront, the Association's executive was trying to bolster the presence of the province-wide Longshore and Water Transport Workers of Canada, a companion of the US-based Maritime Federation of the Pacific that Harry Bridges, communist longshore leader in San Francisco, and others were using to stoke the "syndicalist renaissance" south of the border. Created in April 1934, the new body -- which published Ship and Dock and eventually included affiliated locals from both the BC mainland (New Westminster and Powell River) and Vancouver Island (Victoria, Nanaimo, Duncan, and Chemainus) -- hoped to forge an "industrial organization" in order to secure "adequate wages, reasonable working hours, and decent working conditions." Although its rhetoric was in this instance mild, few on either side of the class divide doubted the pivotal role that party members played in its creation and its importance to shoring up support for dissident longshoremen --

⁴⁰⁶ My thanks to Michael Kevin Dooley, whom I met at the Vancouver City Archives on 3 June 1999, for his insights on O'Rourke and the waterfront context more generally. O'Rourke's death in 1957 garnered both an obituary (7 December) and an editorial (11 December) in the Vancouver Sun. This final quote is from Robert MacNicol, Secretary, BC Provincial Command, Canadian Legion, BESL, to David Paidley, 27 June 1935.

a linkage captured by the new organization's letterhead that featured graphics which would not have been out of place on the masthead of The Worker and a return address marked 45 Dunlevy Avenue, the Association's headquarters located in the despatch hall.⁴⁰⁷

Shortly after it was created, the company union voted to affiliate with the new body and, in March 1935, sent delegates to an LWTWC conference to draw up a more aggressive agenda for the province's maritime workers. After much discussion, the group called for a master agreement with the Shipping Federation – one which included higher wages, equalization of earnings between ship and dock workers, and, to no one's surprise, union-run despatching. The fledgling umbrella organization also signalled its intention to establish a more formal alliance with Bridges' body and pledged its support for any locals involved in a strike. When a small LWTWC affiliate, the Vancouver Export Log Workers Association, went on strike in early April for union recognition, the Association honoured its picket line – an act that left scores of raw logs in Burrard Inlet for three weeks and, eventually, helped secure a modest wage hike.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 43, File 4, copy of the LWTWC constitution; resolution passed by LWTWC, 25 June 1934. One key clause of the organization's constitution read: "[A]ny local may without consent of the Executive Board go on strike or otherwise take such action as it may deem fit to protect or further the welfare of its members." See also HL, 16 April 1934; 11, 25 May 1934; 1, 24 August 1934, and 11 September 1934. The "syndicalist" quote is from Nelson, Workers on the Waterfront.

⁴⁰⁸ On this point see McCandless, "Vancouver's 'Red Menace.'"

At about the same time as this body was making overtures to longshoremen in outlying ports and seamen aboard both deep sea and coastal vessels, the Association's executive was courting members of the Independent Lumber Handlers Association and former supporters of the International Longshoremen's Association – men who had been organized into their own independent gangs after the crushing of the 1923 strike. For the better part of the 1920s, all three groups had competed fiercely for available work as the Association, which was guaranteed the lion's share of job opportunities as a reward for breaking the strike, fought the Shipping Federation and the smaller waterfront organizations to ensure it lived up to the letter and intent of its post-strike welfarist commitments. On occasion, members of the Association's executive -- Ivan Emery for one, during his brief tenure at the helm of the company union in 1927 -- did speak of the need to merge all three organizations; but when they did so, it was, more often than not, understood as a way to safeguard the integrity of their collective agreements, not, as was the case during the early years of the Depression, as a means to transcend them. For its part, the Shipping Federation agreed to recognize the new amalgamated organization despite the presence of, what the labour manager called, "communistic doctrines" amongst its executive, a decision justified, perhaps, on the grounds that it was not in the waterfront employers' best interests to further antagonize the men, especially with a new round of negotiations on the horizon. Whatever the rationale, inside the party's district bureau, local officials were fairly pleased with their progress on the

waterfront. "[Y]ou must realize that we had very little time to consolidate firmly our position," a report filed by District 9 stated, drawing Toronto's attention to its important achievement and hinting that significant challenges still lay ahead. "The antagonism that existed before amalgamation between the various groups is still felt in the Union."⁴⁰⁹

On the job itself signs of this further political reorientation were legion. Consider the actions of communist Oscar Salonen, one of the original members of the "Progressive Group" and Association business agent. Early in his tenure Salonen, backed by the union's executive, presided over a newly created network of ship and dock gang delegates charged with the responsibility of policing the collective agreement, mediating between union members and foremen, and keeping the executive, especially those members associated with the dissident group, informed about the actions and temperament of both workers and management. In this important respect, the delegates, who, collectively formed a "gang delegates committee," played an important role in politicizing workers on a day-to-day basis by acting as a conduit for the new militancy percolating on the waterfront.⁴¹⁰ For his part, Salonen could often be found in the despatch hall, scrutinizing the actions of Crombie, Cooke, and others as they selected men, assembled gangs, and sent

⁴⁰⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 8, Crombie to Members of the Shipping Federation, 28 and 29 September 1933. The District 9 quotation is taken from NAC, Comintern Fonds, K-286, File 152, Report from District 9, 27 November 1933.

⁴¹⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 53, File 6, "Memo for Mr Hall. Re: W.N. Watts – worked with Red Reid on Ballantyne Pier," undated, likely 1934 or 1935.

them to work. "[He] apparently had spoken to the men in the basement and threatened and intimidated them with the result that practically every man declined to go out to work and the order for men could not be completed and the despatching stopped," the labour manager informed waterfront employers, describing a standoffs between the communist business agent and the despatching staff that took place in December 1934. "[T]he episode ended with the appearance of victory for Salonen. ... [I]n my opinion no real reason other than a desire to appear to obtain and enforce dictatorial power in the selection of men prompted the action taken by Salonen under the instruction of his organization."⁴¹¹

While questions related to despatching and access to work had long been a staple of waterfront labour relations, for Crombie there was clearly something about this particular exchange with Salonen that set it off from previous disputes with Association brass: it was a bald-faced, if somewhat theatrical, attempt to usurp the power that rightfully belonged to management, not the union – one which, like the creation of a new industry-wide umbrella organization, amalgamation of existing longshore unions on Burrard Inlet, and other recent developments, was an indication that the October agreement, like the post-war welfarist consensus before it, was coming apart at the seams. "The gang delegate system ... is aimed at a breaking down of that friendly spirit which ought to exist between the men themselves as well

⁴¹¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 2, "Memorandum, 8-1-35," from Crombie to waterfront employers; the incident in question took place in December 1934.

as between employer and employee," the president of the Shipping Federation, J.E. Hall told Allan Walker, the Association's secretary.⁴¹²

Yet the emergence of the gang delegate system was but a prelude to a bolder, more provocative move. Against the backdrop of the wider organizational developments taking place both regionally and locally, Association leaders George Brown, Ivan Emery, Jimmy Greer, Oscar Salonen, and Allan Walker appeared before the Shipping Federation's negotiations committee in early May, 1935 and confirmed what had been obvious to many for some time: the Association wanted a new agreement, one which granted a shorter work week, higher wages, equalization of earnings, closed shop, and union-run despatch, and it was prepared to go on strike to get it. "Do you intend to prevent the citizens from making a livelihood? I would be ashamed to make a point of that thing," Brown remarked. In the context of this lengthy, sometimes acrimonious meeting, this simple, almost throwaway question stands out because of one word: citizen. Once a cornerstone of the Shipping Federation's agenda of decasualization and welfare capitalism, the notion of citizenship was by now code for the restoration of a working man's rightful place on the job, in the home, and in society at large, a status which was severely undercut with the onset of the Great Depression. For many longshoremen, the agenda put forth by the Clean Sweep cadre, in particular its centrepiece, union

⁴¹² CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 2, J.E. Hall to Allan L. Walker, 10 May 1935.

control of the despatch hall, was the lynchpin in this individual and collective project. Not surprisingly, then, at a mass meeting shortly after Brown, et al., laid bare their intentions, Association members endorsed a resolution to “force this issue to a final settlement” by a margin of 483 to 315. By no means a unanimous endorsement, the results do, however, suggest that longshoremen's collective appetite for reform was substantial, an assessment brought into sharper focus when one considers just how marginal the dissident group was in 1932 and early 1933. “We will only work as free men,” one docker exclaimed after the vote was taken -- underscoring, in one single phrase, the complex braid of class, gender, and racial politics at work on the waterfront.⁴¹³

On 27 May 1935, the union took unilateral control of despatching. This bold move, what one federal government official called “a deliberate breach by the Union of the basic principle upon which the October [1934] agreement rested,” was accompanied by an equally provocative decision to strike in sympathy with a small LWTWC affiliate located in Powell River which was demanding union recognition and wage parity with waterfront workers in Vancouver. On 1 June, the Association, which had refused to handle Powell River newsprint on a somewhat ad hoc basis during the last two weeks of May, made its boycott against this “hot” cargo official, declaring that “we will permit no more compromises for any ships.” Other LWTWC

⁴¹³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 4, File 2, VDWWA to J.E. Hall, 23 May 1935. The second quote is from:

affiliates followed suit. Shortly thereafter, the Shipping Federation, satisfied that the Association's actions represented a repudiation of the collective agreement, announced that it was no longer under any obligation to hire union men. "Work is available for longshoremen at prevailing rates of pay and men wishing to work should apply to the Labour Manager," a notice posted on the waterfront read. On 5 June, the Association went on strike – joined, within a week or so, by other maritime workers attached to the LWTWC.⁴¹⁴

That the relationship between employers and employees had come to this -- the mixing of struggles amongst unemployed and employed workers, the creation of the LWTWC, the introduction of the gang delegate system, and the union's move to "force the issue to a final settlement" – left the labour manager, the architect of decasualization and welfare capitalism, both angry and somewhat dispirited. To be sure, the so-called subversives, with their mean spirited and misleading rhetoric, ridiculous demands, and radical connections, were to blame for all of this, but, in his opinion, so too were waterfront employers. "I have lost the intimate and personal knowledge which I once had of the men...through being expected to be always in the office and on hand should any member of the Federation want me," Crombie told J.E. Hall, the president of the Shipping Federation in a pointed letter. More than simply a complaint over working conditions, the labour manager accused waterfront

⁴¹⁴ This paragraph is based on the findings of the Davis report published in Labour Gazette, 35:11 (November 1935), 982-995.

employers of corrupting his position as an expert in labour relations, a "neutral party" who "could gain and retain the unquestioned goodwill and confidence of the men," and of bending his expertise to questionable ends. "[My] knowledge of the waterfront has invariably been used by the Federation to their own advantage, and to the detriment of the men," he concluded, suggesting that the longshoremen, at least the "sane" ones, had legitimate grievances.

But his disagreement in this regard only went so far. Although Crombie was furious with his bosses for their role in this debacle, he agreed with them that to restore order on the docks necessitated the removal of the those bent on imagining a larger role for themselves on the job and in the broader community. "Our board has definitely decided that the longshore labor situation here is going to be cleaned up, the radicals eliminated and new arrangements made with loyal, suitable, and competent men," the head of the Shipping Federation wrote. "The Board's objective is to have this housecleaning at a time when it can be accomplished with the minimum of interruption to the traffic of the port. Ways and means of attaining this objective are now being developed and will be brought to a head as quickly as possible."⁴¹⁵ Significantly, the "ways and means" necessary to "clean house" were

⁴¹⁵ Crombie's assessment of union-run despatching is contained in CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 63, File 11, Crombie to J.E. Hall, 27, 28, 30 May and 1 June 1935. His critique of the Shipping federation is located in Box 32, File X, Crombie to J.E. Hall, 20 May 1935. The final quotation can be found in Box 45, File 9, J.E. Hall to K.A. McLennan, 3 May 1935. See also various letters from the Shipping Federation's lawyer, J.E.D deB Farris, in Box 30, File 9.

being developed long before the Association took control of the despatch hall, the stand-off over "hot cargo" from Powell River, and the beginning of the strike.

* * *

The Shipping Federation's open letter campaign, which began in late 1933 shortly after the Clean Sweep slate was elected, and its pressure on union leaders to disavow their ties with the Communist Party were the initial public signs of its desire in this regard. But other arrangements were also underway. Early in the new year, just months after the first open letter arrived in workers' mailboxes, a special meeting of the Shipping Federation's board of directors was convened to decide what roles and responsibilities each member would carry out in the event of "any emergency which may arise." Captain E. Aikman, Captain W.M. Crawford, and Lieutenant-Colonel R.G. Parkhurst were put in charge of "arrang[ing] for vessels to quarter and feed men"; Captain P.G. Groves, Major Crombie, and others were assigned to the special "labour committee"; and Colonel R.D. Williams was asked to head up "protection" and given "the power to form his own committee to interview the Chief of Police, the Mayor, and other Officials for the purposes of police protection." The meeting also voted to "make the necessary arrangements for insurance to cover the Building against the risks of Riot and Civil Commotion."⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁶ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 5, File 8, "Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors and the Advisory Committee of the Shipping Federation ... 10 January 1934."

The Shipping Federation's preparedness was augmented further when one of its members, possibly the Kingsley Navigation Company, and a clutch of would-be replacement workers -- a longshoreman, labourer, machinist, engineer, and tile setter among them -- founded the Canadian Waterfront Workers Association, registering the new union in Victoria under the provincial Societies Act in late July 1934. Created to replace the Association in the event that labour relations collapsed, the CWWA's constitution and bylaws were as restrictive as those imposed on the original company association in 1923, banning "any form of demonstration, parade, or affiliation with any radical movement" and limiting membership to "white[s] ... of the full age of twenty-one years, and who have been residents of Greater Vancouver for the period of one year." By early September 1934, the CWWA, under the leadership of Joseph Sigmund, a labourer, was attempting to recruit longshoremen into independent gangs, a move, according to Oscar Salonen, that was designed to "force the hand" of the VDWWA at the bargaining table. Significantly, the new company union's offices were located in the Lumberman's Building, an impressive structure in Vancouver's downtown that was home to many of the province's largest lumber outfits, shipping companies, and, by the spring of 1935, the Citizen's League of British Columbia.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 18, File 9c, Lucas and Lucas to Crombie, 13 August 1934; Box 18, File 9a, "Constitution and Bylaws of the Canadian Waterfront Workers Association"; Box 50, File 2, "Re: Longshore Matters," 10 September 1934. The detail regarding the Lumberman's Building is taken from: CVA, Series 199, 75-E-2, File 3, Vancouver City Police Department, Communist Affairs Branch, Asst. Det-Sergt., Intelligence Branch to Supt, Criminal Investigation Branch, Vancouver City

Like the Citizens Committee of One Thousand, a body founded by employers in Winnipeg in 1919 to help crush the general strike, the Citizens' League of British Columbia was created for the express purpose of rolling back the red menace. Although the origins of this secretive organization remain somewhat obscure, it is clear from the available evidence that waterfront employers played a pivotal role in its formation and subsequent actions. On 18 April 1935, a time in which struggles in the relief camps and on the waterfront were becoming more aggressive and disruptive, the Shipping Federation hosted a luncheon at the tony Vancouver Club, a plush, oak-panelled facility enjoyed by the political and business elite. On the guest list that afternoon were the men who ran the largest and most influential companies in the province, including the Royal Bank of Canada, BC Electric Railway, BC Telephone Company, Bloedel, Stewart and Welch, American Can Company, Anglo-British Packing Company, Union Steamship Company, Buckerfields Limited, Canadian National Railways, Dominion Bridge Company, Canadian Collieries, Safeway Stores, Wallace Shipbuilding, BC Packers, Woodward's Limited, Empire Shipping Company, Hudson's Bay Company, and Robin Hood Mills.

The highlight of the luncheon was a keynote address delivered by J.E. Hall, president of the Shipping Federation. "I am going to endeavour to convince you that

Police Department, 12 August 1935, "Re: Waterfront Strike."

joint action on the part of employers is not only necessary, but imperative," he began, taking up immediately the question of the so-called red menace and "the changed psychology of social relations" that brought it to the fore. "It is a product of developments which followed in the wake of the World War. Conditions have been such for its growth. [It] feeds [on the] shortcomings of the 'capitalistic system.'" This observation, one which suggested an understanding of the links between the prosperity of the 1920s, misery of the Great Depression, and the emergence of more militant class politics, was perhaps not news to the assembled guests, many of whom were fighting their own workplace battles. But Hall's subsequent recommendation no doubt raised a few eyebrows: the city's capitalists must create "an organization, having as its membership the principal employers of labor" to devise "a carefully prepared plan of procedure and attack," he stated, "[and take] step[s] to prepare the public for Government intervention" in order to crush the communist threat. In this context, Hall's reference to state involvement was by no means a call for a "New Deal" for Canadian labour; he was thinking of confrontation, not compulsory conciliation and arbitration. "This is not a picnic, but a fight to the finish," he concluded.⁴¹⁸

Up and running less than eight weeks later, the Citizens' League – under the direction of Hall, Brigadier General Victor M. Odlum, a veteran of both the Boer War

⁴¹⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 1, File 1, "Re-organization Committee, Shipping Federation of British Columbia. Luncheon, Private Dining Room, Vancouver Club, 15 April 1935"; VCA, Series 483, 33-B-5, File 6, "Address by J.E. Hall," 18 April 1935.

and World War I and one-time Liberal member of the provincial legislature, and Colonel C.E. "Doc" Edgett, a former Mountie, prison warden, Vancouver police chief, and conservative politician – undertook a variety of repressive tasks, not the least of which was to work closely with all levels of the state to keep them informed of suspected radical activities in the city. Meetings were held often with sympathetic "sailors, waterfront workers, relief camp men,...and other interests" and the pertinent information was passed along to Vancouver's chief of police, Colonel W.W. Foster, and newly elected mayor and Liberal MLA, Gerald Gratten "Gerry" McGeer. On other occasions, the Citizens' League co-operated with the provincial attorney general and federal department of immigration in an endeavour to "cramp" the communists' "style." Fundraising to support the League's day-to-day operations, boost the political fortunes of Liberal politicians, and prepare an extensive communications strategy designed to educate the public about the so-called red menace were also part of the organization's repertoire. So, too, was ensuring that the city police were sufficiently equipped to handle the impending crisis on the docks; indeed, League funds were used to secure 750 special constables and several radio patrol cars for the VPD. "The presence of your name on our membership roll indicates that you wish to stand firmly for the maintenance of our democratic Canadian institutions and ideals," a form letter distributed by the Citizens' League as part of its fundraising and publicity campaign stated. "[Our organization] is a medium [through which] loyal citizens can band themselves

together to protect their homes and their jobs and to save Canada from a crushing dictatorship.”⁴¹⁹ By bringing together capital and the state, and providing the internal mechanisms for the accumulation, production, and dissemination of knowledge about the “red menace,” this secretive organization – which, according to one ad, “embraces average British Columbia citizens and represents no cliques [or] special interests” – was a key component of the Shipping Federation’s campaign of repression.

But the League certainly did not have a monopoly on these activities; indeed, in addition to organizing special internal committees and founding both the CWWA and the Citizen’s League, waterfront employers undertook their own surveillance of suspected radical activity on the docks and often shared that knowledge directly with various state agencies which were busy mounting their own campaigns of intelligence gathering. Since the earliest days of decasualization and welfare capitalism, the labour manager worked hard to cultivate strong relationships with

⁴¹⁹ This paragraph is drawn from the following material: CVA, Series 483, 33-B-5, File 9, Victor McLean, Citizen’s League, to G.G. McGeer; 33-B-5, File 7, C.E. Edgett to “Dear Member,” 11 July 1935; Series 199, 75-F-2, File 12, “Memo for Council Members,” 17 January 1936 and C.F. Edgett to Colonel W.W. Foster, Chief of Police, 9 November 1936; BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 17, File 5, Charles Woodward to Crombie, undated; Box 18, File X, CWWA to J.E. Hall, 30 December 1935. See also John Stanton, *Never Say Die* (Ottawa 1987), chapter 1, “The Battle of Ballantyne Pier.” Evidence supporting the claim that the League paid for special constables and radio patrol cars is culled from several sources, including: CVA, Series 197, 75-E-7, File 10, Victor McLean to Colonel W.W. Foster, 3 September 1935; File 8, Chief Constable to General Odium, 10 June 1935; File 8, Henry Bell-Irving to Chief Constable, 22 June 1935; File 6, Colonel Foster to G.G. McGeer, 4 July 1935; File 10, Chief Constable to President, BCSF, 13 August 1935; J.E. Hall to Foster, 15 August 1935; File 3, Chief Constable to Deputy Chief Constable, 15 July 1935; Chief Constable to B.T. Chappell, General Superintendent, Canadian National Railway, 16 July 1935.

workers – both at the leadership and rank-and-file level – who were supportive of his initiatives and willing to keep him informed about political developments on the docks; at the same time, Crombie often hired professional private agencies to carry out more extensive surveillance of waterfront workers on and off the job. From 1933 to 1935, the abilities of both amateur and professional informants were in high demand. In terms of the former, the labour manager sought to isolate “reliable, conservative” men who would “react” positively to his “propaganda or proposals” -- and by 1 May 1935 he had done just that. In a letter to the head of the Shipping Federation he identified nineteen individuals who could be trusted and ranked them according to their “weight” or influence on the beach. Of the nineteen men who were singled out, ten were former VDWWA executive members, including former president Joe Boyes and one-time business agent Willam Hart, and nine were former gang leaders, including waterfront veterans Paddy Coyle and Fred Blumberg.⁴²⁰

One man who does not appear on the list, but who played a minor role in this regard was veteran longshoreman and former ILA leader Albert Hill. A longshoreman since 1903, Hill was a staunch opponent of Jack Kavanaugh and Bill Pritchard, opposing the more aggressive bargaining agenda advanced by the two socialists in the weeks and months that led up to the disastrous 1923 strike.

⁴²⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 50, File 13, “The Shipping Federation of BC Limited – Emergency Expenditures, November 1933 to December 1934”; Box 53, File 6, Crombie to J.E. Hall, 1 May 1935.

Sometime after that confrontation, Hill left the beach and took up a position with the Vancouver Harbour Board, a development which was seen by some as a reward for his loyalty to F.W. Peters, then the head of the Shipping Federation; at the same time, it appears that Hill also became a Liberal organizer in the waterfront district. Given this resume, it is perhaps not a complete surprise that by 1935 he was canvassing the "conservative element" within the VDWWA and passing his findings along to the labour manager. "[S]atisfied any strike would be of short duration, as majority of men have homes and are reasonably satisfied," one of his reports stated. "Was in attendance at local club near Federation Building this morning. About 30 longshoremen there. Opinions different as to advisability of strike. Salonen came in stating that the three main issues were increase in wages, union dispatch, [and] shorter hours."⁴²¹

Like Hill, professional informants, hired through the Pratt Secret Service Limited, also kept a watchful eye on waterfront politics.⁴²² Fragmentary evidence suggests that between 1933 and 1935 at least five Pratt operatives were active both on the docks and in the surrounding waterfront district. One of them went by the name of Bud Jackson. In the summer of 1934, Jackson, who signed his reports to the labour manager simply "#5," was busy ingratiating himself to those people he thought were associated with, or had access to, the dissident group. "I personally

⁴²¹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 53, File 6, "Memo. Re: Albert Hill," 14 May 1935.

⁴²² The president of the Pratt Secret Service Agency, C.E. Pratt, once worked for the Vancouver office of the Pinkerton organization.

have been in touch with a foreman of one of the gangs and am confident that we can get the inside results of the next house meeting," one communique, filed on 17 July 1934, read. "Knowing the man very well I suggested that I would make it worth his while to get me the inside dope. He is of the opinion that he can get one of his gang whom he can trust to attend the next meeting, as this particular man has numerous invitations from the leaders to attend the meeting." Whether or not Jackson was successful in this regard is not known; what is clear, however, is that by 1935 one of Pratt's numerous spies had infiltrated the upper echelons of the longshoremen's union. "Our operative is now one of those appointed to the negotiating committee representing Local No.1 [of the communist-led Longshore and Water Transport Workers of Canada]," C.E. Pratt, president of the agency, informed Crombie. "[I]n this capacity it would seem to me that he should be of much value to the Federation."⁴²³

The information generated by this network of allies and informers was compiled and summarized by the labour manager who, by late September 1934, just a month before the new collective agreement was signed, had established an extensive archive of suspected radicals on the waterfront. One particularly comprehensive summary contained the names, addresses, political affiliations, and

⁴²³ An invoice for "Emergency Expenditures" from November 1933, the month the Clean Sweep slate was elected, to December 1934, when the new collective agreement was finally signed, shows payments made to Pratt on a monthly basis at a rate of \$10 per report. CVA, Add.Mss 279, BCSF, Box 50, various reports from operatives, including #5, 16 and 17 July 1935; Box 50, File 2, C.E. Pratt to Crombie, 30 November 1935.

personal predilections of 25 different politically suspect men, many of whom were waterfront workers or linked to the broader communist movement. "R.H. Flynn. 1084 Howe Street. Red Agitator. Attended Trades and Labor Council Meeting in New Westminster on August 21st and spoke on Reds in Canada being sent to Russia....Was employed by CPR as clerk from 1909 to 1929, and was fired for agitating a general strike and openly expressing his radical ideas," one thumbnail sketch read; "J.S. Brown. 1159 -19th East....Is great personal friend of Flynn. Is a miner by trade and a great radical. Is on relief at present, is well dressed and drives a car around Town all day. To be found at all Communistic gatherings," concluded another. That Crombie had amassed intelligence of this kind is significant for several reasons, not the least of which is that it was circulated widely: to waterfront employers, to the Citizen's League, and, ultimately, to municipal, provincial, and federal authorities, all of whom were waging their own campaigns against the so-called red menace.⁴²⁴

With the onset of the Depression and the first nation-wide mobilization of working people since the labour revolt of 1919, the RCMP -- which had languished

⁴²⁴ This paragraph is culled from the following: BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B2301, F-1-125-1, W.C.D. Crombie to Major K.A. McLennan, 20 August 1934; McLennan to Gordon Sloan, 23 August 1934; GR 429, Box 21, File 2, Crombie to Sloan, 20 September 1934; CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 50, File 2, "Confidential. Re: Longshore Situation," 9 May 1934; this file also contains the comprehensive report containing 25 names referred to above; a copy of this report was appended to Crombie's letter to the attorney general on 20 September 1934. See also Box 13, File 3, Executive Assistant of the Shipping Federation to Sloan, 15 June 1935 or 1936. "[I am willing to forward information] either direct or through any one you wish to designate in Vancouver," a member of the Shipping Federation informed BC's attorney general, Gordon Sloan. "Needless to state, we have to be exceedingly careful in passing along the information we receive from private sources."

in the 1920s as its original *raison d'être* receded – redoubled its efforts to keep tabs on politically suspect workers and, in the process, crush the red-led movement of which they were part. By the early 1930s, the Mounties, operating in and through an institutional framework that included a Criminal Investigation Department, Central Registry, and Liaison and Intelligence Office, were responsible for a large network of informers and provocateurs; although the precise number of “human sources” remains a mystery, exhaustive research conducted by Gregory S. Kealey, Reg Whitaker, and others indicates that spies and other informants were active in all regions of the country, compiling files on “every leader, member, and sympathizer in the Communist movement.” Perhaps the most famous operative from this period is Sergeant John Leopold, the diminutive, Bohemian-born farmer who went underground in 1918 or 1919 as Jack Esselwein and moved quickly through the ranks of the Socialist Party of Canada, One Big Union, and the Communist Party of Canada, almost exclusively in Saskatchewan. Unmasked as a labour spy in May 1928 by “Moscow” Jack MacDonald, Leopold was expelled from the CPC, but not before he had spent nearly ten years “discourag[ing] organization work by many tricks” and supplying his RCMP handlers with extensive information about the labour movement’s relatively small, but increasingly influential left wing. Three years later, Leopold, who had been posted to the Yukon after his cover was blown, played a

pivotal role in the controversial conviction of CPC leaders under section 98 of the Criminal Code.⁴²⁵

In Vancouver, where working-class activism was particularly vibrant, the RCMP assigned at least eight secret agents to keep a watchful eye on the Communist Party and its sympathizers; by the end of the decade, this group of operatives had submitted thousands of reports that detailed, almost on a daily basis, the political machinations of the "communistic elements" amongst unemployed and employed workers, including longshoremen.⁴²⁶ "We must not lose sight of the fact that there are large numbers of foreigners among the unemployed. They are easily led by agitators, which are freely and willingly supplied from the Communist Party of Canada," the RCMP's commanding officer in BC, H.M. Newson, wrote in 1931. Among the agitators who concerned the RCMP (and the British Columbia Provincial

⁴²⁵See the following articles by Gregory S. Kealey, "State Repression of Labour and the Left in Canada, 1914-1920: The impact of the First World War," Canadian Historical Review LXXIII:3 (1992), 281-315; "The Surveillance State: The Origins of Domestic Intelligence and Counter-Subversion in Canada, 1914-21," Intelligence and National Security 7:3 (1992), 179-210; "The Early Years of State Surveillance of Labour and the Left in Canada: The Institutional Framework of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Security and Intelligence Apparatus, 1918-26," Intelligence and National Security 8:3 (July 1993), 129-148. The RCMP Security Bulletins 8 Volumes (St. John's 1989-1997) edited by Kealey and Reg Whitaker document the extensive surveillance undertaken by the Mounties during this period. On Leopold consult: NAC, Records of the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS), RG 146, File 0333, Personal File - John Leopold, "Leopold - Medical Record, Medical Examination, 8 August 1921"; "Supplement 'A,' Leopold to A.B. Allard, 24 May 1928"; Leopold to the Commissioner, RCMP, 15 November 1931; Tom McEwen, The Forge Glows Red, 119-22; The Worker, 26 May 1928; Toronto Daily Star, 13 November 1931.

⁴²⁶On the RCMP's coverage of Vancouver see NAC, CSIS, RG 146, File 117-91-68, Subject File: Communist Party of Canada - Vancouver; BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B2300, F-1-125-1, "Communist File," H.M. Newson, Commanding Officer, BC District, RCMP to Honourable R.H. Pooley, 7 August 1931. "S.A. 156, who you already know, is a man who is in close touch with the line of thought as expressed by the ordinary person out of work," Newson told the attorney general.

Police and Vancouver Police Department) most was Allan Campbell, a seamen and party member who was active both in the push for “work and living wages” and, to a lesser extent, the drive to organize waterfront workers. Indeed, it was not long after Campbell, a red Clydesider who, according to one report, had “as many aliases as there are seaports with a shipping office,” came to the Mounties’ attention that he was charged with unlawful assembly and rioting and faced deportation. Details of his trial are contained in chapter five; the key point here, though, is this: the evidence gathered by RCMP informants, like that gathered by Sergeant Leopold in the years preceding the highly publicized trial of Tim Buck and other high-ranking reds, played an important role in Campbell’s conviction and eventual exile – developments that underscore the fragility of working people’s democratic rights and freedoms during the Depression and the immense capacity of the state to silence its most vociferous critics, labour and the left.⁴²⁷

The activities of other Communist Party members who were active on the waterfront were watched closely as well. One exhaustive summary of “all known

⁴²⁷ On Campbell see Chapter 5, in particular: BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, L-1-125-1931, Eric W. Hichen, Special Constable to Chief Constable, W.J. Bingham, “Ref: Allen Campbell alias McEwen,” 22 January 1931; “In the Supreme Court of British Columbia, Oyer and Terminus and General Gaol Delivery,” 1931. The RCMP’s interest in Campbell can be found in NAC, CSIS, RG 146, File 117-91-68, Subject File: Communist Party of Canada – Vancouver, RCMP, CIB, E Division, Report Re: CPC, 19 December 1929 (includes the “aliases” quote), 6 May 1930, 7 December 1930, 18 December 1930, clipping from Vancouver Province, 10 March 1931, 14 June 1931. On the politics of deportation more generally see Shin Imai, “Deportation in the Depression” Queen’s Law Journal 4 (1972), 469-83; Barbara Roberts, “Shovelling Out The ‘Muntinous’: Political Deportation from Canada before 1936,” Labour/Le Travail 18 (Fall 1986), 77-110; Roberts, Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935 (Ottawa 1988).

agitators and organizers" compiled by the RCMP's "E" Division in BC for the mayor of Vancouver in the spring of 1935, illustrates that Oscar Salonen and Ivan Emery as well as the Association and the Longshore and Water Transport Workers of Canada were under intense scrutiny. "With regard to evidence against any of the above...on possible charges of conspiracy, we are unable to furnish anything sufficiently conclusive or corroborative without exposing our agents," J.W. Phillips, the Mounties' assistant commanding officer in BC, concluded. "The foregoing is merely a general outline....Should you desire further detailed information on any particular phase of the above, I would be glad to supply you with whatever information we many have." That the RCMP was running spies on the waterfront is clear enough; what is equally striking, however, is the close co-operation between the federal police force and other law enforcement authorities in the realm of intelligence gathering – an arrangement in operation, it appears, as early as the late 1920s.⁴²⁸

Like the RCMP, the British Columbia Provincial Police and the Vancouver Police Department were also hard at work conducting, what the provincial police

⁴²⁸ BCARS, RAG, GR 429, Box 21, File 4, J.W. Phillips, Asst. Commissioner Commanding "E" Division to G.G. McGeer, Mayor of Vancouver, 11 June 1935; GR 1323, B2300, L-125-1-1931, H.M Newson, Super., Commanding, BC District, RCMP to Commissioner, BCPP, 28 January 1931 and 7 August 1931; L-125-1-"Unemployed 1931," J.H. McMullin, Commissioner, BCPP, to Attorney General, 18 June 1931; CVA, Series 199, 75-F-2, File 12, R.L. Cadiz, Asst. Commissioner, "E" Division, RCMP to Colonel W.W. Foster, Chief Constable, 12 November 1936. The final quote is from BCARS, GR 1323, B2300, F-1-125-1, S.T. Wood, Inspector, Commanding BC District, RCMP, to the Attorney General, 13 November 1931.

chief once called, "a constant campaign of repression" against suspected reds and their sympathizers – and, in the process, sharing the fruits of their labours with other state agencies. In the relief camps, both in urban and rural areas, BCPP operatives kept tabs on the "blood and thunder communists" who wanted "action all the time" merely to satisfy their "stupid class hatred."⁴²⁹ This was certainly true on the docks as well. One exceptionally detailed report, compiled by the BCPP's Criminal Investigation Department in the spring and summer of 1934 and later passed along to the attorney general and minister of labour, illustrates just how comprehensive its knowledge of waterfront politics really was. Beginning with an account of the machinations behind the rise of the Clean Sweep slate, one which correctly identifies the key role that George Drayton, Bill Bennett, Oscar Salonen, Ivan Emery, and J.H. Brown played in this process, the report goes on to assess the structure and function of the Workers Unity League, its relationship to the Association, and the strength of the dissident movement: "[J.C.] Barr and his type have not much use for [Allan] Walker, stating that he was all for the bosses, and that it was too bad that he had been elected again. While mixing with different ones I have brought up about the Heavy Lift, and made remarks about it taking digs at the

⁴²⁹ BCARS, RAG, GR 429, Box 21, File 2, J.H. McMullin, BCPP, to Gordon Sloan, Attorney General, 28 September 1934; GR 1323, L-125-1-1932, "Communist File," Report, Criminal Investigation Branch, BCPP, 26 January 1931; 15 February 1932.

bosses and they have all made the same remark, 'Oh, that's Blondie's stuff,' apparently meaning Morfitt [or Moffat]."⁴³⁰

Under Colonel W.W. Foster, the VPD was no less vigilant in this regard. Once charged with the responsibility of policing the gambling, bootlegging, and prostitution that flourished in the waterfront district, city detectives, some of whom were assigned to the VPD's newly formed Communist Affairs Branch, were with the onset of the Depression filing "private special reports" that summarized the findings of operatives who were busy rubbing shoulders with suspected radicals. "It was found that they [the communists] had been devoting some time to the longshoremen on the docks, and in the longshoremen's rooms on Cordova near Main," one report, completed not long after the Depression began, stated. "But nothing more along militant lines can be hoped for...as there has not been work for sometime....We would suggest that their attitudes indicates the advisability of constant watchfulness." And watch them they did; over the next six years, VPD spies joined communist block organizations, chaired meetings of various front groups, participated in red-led campaigns and demonstrations, "covered the waterfront," and "mix[ed] with striking longshoremen" – all the while keeping the chief of police and the mayor well informed. When this data was shared with the BCPP, the RCMP,

⁴³⁰The first quotation in this paragraph is taken from BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B2301, F-125-1, "Memorandum for the Minister of Labour," 3 January 1935. The report referred to above was appended to this memo; the report, which includes an assessment of the trouble brewing amongst BCER workers, is dated 9 May 1934.

and, on occasion, the Shipping Federation, the circles of surveillance widened even further.⁴³¹

But the authorities' actions in this regard were by no means limited to intelligence work. As the economic crisis worsened and agitation for "work and living wages" in Vancouver intensified, federal, provincial, and municipal police, like their counterparts across the country, often clashed with workers on the city's streets. "I am in receipt of advice from our Commissioner instructing me to co-operate and assist your Department, upon request, at any point in this Province where you deem our services are required," S.T. Wood, the Mounties' commanding officer in lotus land, informed his provincial counterpart in 1931, commenting specifically on the use of his uniformed officers "in connection with the suppression of communistic or similar disturbances." Aided by extensive surveillance and intelligence gathering, it was not difficult for the police to be in the right place at the right time, a tactical development which, according to more than one law enforcement official, made charging demonstrators with offenses such as unlawful assembly or rioting somewhat easier to do.

⁴³¹ CVA, S199, 75-F-1, File 8, Vancouver Police Department, "Detective Report Sheet," 23 December 1929; VPD, Private Special Report, Joseph H. Reilly, PC #181 to W.J. Bingham, Chief Constable, 29 August 1930; File 9, Chief Constable, VPD, to His Worship and Members of the Police Commission, 21 January 1931; File 12, J.J. Nicholson, "A/Det/Sgt" to Chief Constable, 10 and 14 June 1935; "Supplimentary List of Communist Who Act in Liaison With Other Organizations," undated; Series 197, 75-F-1 File 1, McGeer to Foster, 22 June 1935. On the Vancouver Police Department and the question of urban vice before 1935 see Greg Marquis, "Vancouver Vice: The Police and the Negotiation of Morality, 1904-1935," in Foster and McLaren, eds., Essays in the History of Canadian Law, Volume VI: British Columbia and the Yukon (Toronto 1995).

Timing, though, was not everything; indeed, to effectively "suppres[s] communistic or similar disturbances," the police also needed to be properly armed, a notion not lost on the men who headed up the VPD during the 1930s. During his short tenure as chief from 1931 to 1932, Colonel C.E. Edgett, who took a "tough, war-on-crime" approach to policing, put additional officers on the street, increased the number of patrol cars, and acquired more high-powered firearms; Colonel W.W. Foster, who replaced Edgett after allegations of corruption and "underworld connections" forced him from office, sent a clutch of detectives to Washington state in April 1935 to test more protective riot gear and more lethal forms of tear gas. Manufactured exclusively for those wishing to control "riotous mobs" or "strikers" and "protect life and property," the "Lightening Tear Gas Cannister," "Jumper-Repeater Instantaneous Chemical Warfare Gas Candle," and "Long Range Bursting-Type Projectile Shells" proved to be the best buy. "In view of the fact that we now have two officers conversant with the use of gas, I should like a class started, as soon as conditions permit, in order that all officers in the CID and certain numbers of uniform men should have the benefit of instruction," the chief constable told the deputy chief constable in May, 1935.⁴³²

⁴³² On the clashes between the police and unemployed workers see, for example, BCARS, RAG, GR 1323, B2300, L-1-125-1, J. Shirras, Sub-Inspector, Acting, OC "E" Division to the Assistant Superintendent, BCPP, 18 November 1930; Shirras to the Commissioner, BCPP, 15 and 24 January 1931; 11, 12, and 14 June 1931; F. Cruikshank, Inspector, Commanding "E" Division to the Commissioner, BCPP, 19 May 1935. See Marquis, p. 260, on Edgett's law-and-order approach. The tear gas material is drawn from CVA, Series 197, 75-E-7, File 3; this file contains a letter from the detectives in Washington dated 30 April 1935 and several brochures for the "Lake Erie Chemical

At the same time that members of the VPD were learning how to “gas” workers “severely enough to make them unwilling to endure a second exposure,” the provincial police, sometimes working cheek by jowl with federal authorities, carried out, what Attorney General Gordon Sloan described as a “systematic programme of raiding Communistic Headquarters throughout the province.” In Vancouver, Victoria, Cranbrook, Princeton, and Nelson, CPC offices were ransacked and party property – “literature, banners, and society administrative books” – was seized. “The purpose of these raids was to disorganize these known agitators,” one inspector remarked in the summer of 1934. A similar attempt to “disorganize” longshoremen was underway too, as all three police forces, with the assistance of the mayor and the Shipping Federation, worked together to carry out “waterfront protection” – a multifaceted endeavour that involved “street-end protection, intelligence, escort duty, liaison, and reserves.” By the late spring of 1935, upwards of 360 officers, 6 police cruisers, and 1 patrol boat were assigned to the waterfront. One officer accompanied J.E. Hall, president of the Shipping Federation, at all times in order to “watch over protection work” and advise the authorities “of movements for which additional protection would be required”; other members of the employers’ organization were sworn in as “special constables” so that they could move more easily to and from work and assist the police when and

Company.” The final quote is taken from Chief Constable to Deputy Chief Constable, 2 May 1935.

where help was needed. Additional "reserves" were ready at "their respective H.Q. for use wherever the occasion demand[ed]." In late May, just days after the Association vowed to support the Powell River strikers, the mayor of Vancouver, contending with both the ongoing crisis of the unemployed and the impending breach on the waterfront, put the state's impressive repressive capabilities on public display. Described by one Vancouver daily as an "unusual police demonstration," McGeer led a parade of hundreds of police officers, drawn from the ranks of the federal, provincial, and municipal forces, through the streets of Vancouver. Days later, in an incendiary radio address, he railed against those who threatened to undermine constituted authority: "We are up against a Communist revolution and we are going to wipe it out without delay."⁴³³

* * *

It was in this charged atmosphere that the Association went on strike on 5 June. Soon after its 900 members walked off the job, the executive of the Longshore

⁴³³ Details of the BCPP's many raids on CPC headquarters are taken from: BCARS, RAG, B2301, L-125-1-1932, F. Cruickshank, Inspector, Commanding "E" Division, BCPP to the Commissioner, BCPP, 3 December 1932; Thomas Parsons, Assistant Commissioner, BCPP, to Commissioner, BCPP, 17 December 1932; Report, Criminal Investigation Department, BCPP, "4-2-32"; L-125-1-1933, J.H. McMullin, Commissioner, BCPP, to Honourable Attorney General of British Columbia, 10 April 1933; L-125-1-1934, J. Macdonald, Inspector, Commanding, 'B' Division, to Commissioner, BCPP, 28 August 1934; RAG, GR 429, Box 21, File 4, Report from "East Kootenay, Cranbrook City; re: Communistic Activities," 4 December 1934; Box 21, File 5, Attorney General to Major-General Sir James MacBrien, Commissioner, RCMP, 10 July 1935. On "waterfront protection" see CVA, Series 197, 75-F-1, File 1, "Waterfront Protection Order No.3," 8 June 1935 and 6 July 1935 (this plan was "issued to regular recipients," including Lt. Colonel Phillips, Commanding, RCMP and Inspector Cruickshank of the BCPP) and two letters from 75-E-7, File 10, E.F. Riddle, Protection Dept., BCSF, to Foster, Chief Constable, undated and 7 June 1935. The material regarding McGeer is taken from McCandless, "Vancouver's Red Menace," 62.

and Water Transport Workers of Canada called on its affiliated organizations to fall in behind Vancouver's longshoremen in a general strike of all maritime workers. Support for this action was strong, but by no means complete: affiliates in New Westminster and Chemainus on Vancouver Island rallied to the cause while longshoremen in Victoria, Port Alberni, Prince Rupert, and nearby American ports were slow to respond, fearing the cancellation of their own hard-won agreements. For its part, the Shipping Federation moved to break the strike. Replacement workers, protected by the police and ferried to awaiting ships on board a VPD launch based out of the Vancouver Yacht Club, were enrolled in the Canadian Waterfront Workers Association and put to work; as early as 14 June, waterfront employers boasted that about 325 men were labouring behind Association picket lines. At the same time, the Citizen's League, drawing on the information contained in its burgeoning archive of repression and the material support provided by its individual, corporate, and government backers, was busy soliciting the public's support for its anti-communist initiatives.

The organization's campaign, which had started in late May and ran throughout the dispute, consisted of small publications ("The Workers Unity League: Agents of Revolution") and full-page newspaper ads ("Beware the Red Hand Under the White Glove") that sought to excoriate publicly those men and women involved in the struggle to organize both waterfront workers and the unemployed. "By the shrewd, but ruthless capitalization of the economic distress of their fellow citizens,

the Communists spread their doctrines of subversion. By catchwords, by an inverted sociology, by immoderate language and specious argument, they have sought to tear down institutions which have served mankind in the past," an ad that ran in one of Vancouver's daily newspapers read. "But the easy march of the Communists must stop their false doctrines and false economy is to be met with determined resistance. Citizens Unite to Defend Law and Order!" The rhetoric deployed here, like that contained in other League publications, rested on a series of important, if well-worn, oppositions: subversion versus loyalty; violence versus law and order; foreign origins versus British roots. At stake, then, was not simply the practicality of union-control of the despatch hall or the introduction of unemployment insurance, but, if one believed the Citizens' League, the very foundations of western civilization. "If you are in favour of the BRITISH WAY, fill out the coupon below and join with your fellow citizens in this vital movement to protect your home and country from the chaos and destruction of the RED WAY."⁴³⁴

That the League employed the word citizen, both in its moniker and in its propaganda, is also significant. Put simply, to be a citizen was to possess a stake in civil society, a legitimate right to participate fully in the social, economic, and

⁴³⁴ For examples of the Citizens' League's propaganda see: CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 67, File 11, typescript of pamphlet "The Workers Unity League: Agents of Revolution"; UBC-SC, John Stanton Papers, Box 10, File 1, "Communism in British Columbia" and "Warning! Do Not Be Lulled to Sleep By Today's Quiet"; NAC, RG 27, Strike and Lockout Files, Volume 369, Strike 87A contains copies of various League ads from Vancouver newspapers, including "Planned Destructiveness of Communists to be Exposed" and "Who Are The Communists?"

political life of the community. But as the above quotations make clear, in the world view of the Citizens' League, citizenship was not a status that all people shared; indeed, only those thought to be loyal, law-abiding, and committed to the "British Way" qualified. Or, put another way, by constructing those working people who were active in the relief camps and on the docks as communists, "regardless" of the "labels" they wore, was, symbolically at least, to redefine them as outsiders, others, non-citizens -- a designation that obscured the fact that many were married, paid taxes, and served in the Great War. It was a rhetorical sleight-of-hand that dovetailed nicely with the Citizens' League's overarching objective of cultivating a climate of fear sufficient to justify state repression. Not only did it represent the League as the sole defender of peace, order, and good government, but, at the same time, it posed, if only implicitly, an important, potentially deadly question: if one was not a citizen, if one had no legitimate stake in civil society, was it reasonable to expect the government or employers to respect one's civil liberties? Perhaps not.

Although thousands of maritime workers across the province were off the job, members of the Association understood that unless they stemmed the flow of replacement workers to the Vancouver docks, there was little hope of winning the strike. At a mass meeting attended by approximately 3000 men, women, and children on 16 June, Ivan Emery laid bare the Association's next move. "We have heard the rattle of machine guns. I believe we have enough ex-servicemen on the waterfront who are prepared to listen to them again," he exclaimed. "We are going

to elect a delegation and we are going to send it down to Chief Foster, asking permission to go to Ballantyne Pier peaceably to talk to strikebreakers. If they [the RCMP] will turn their guns on us; if they will shoot us down, then you will know that fascism in Canada has taken off the mask and we are up against stark reality."⁴³⁵

Two days later, after last minute attempts to broker a settlement failed, a long procession of strikers, unemployed workers, and other allies, led by veterans wearing their medals and carrying the Union Jack, marched to the pier. A surviving photo of the parade, published in the memoirs of labour lawyer John Stanton, shows a long column of men walking four, sometimes five abreast down the middle of a city street. To a man they are dressed in jackets, ties, overcoats, and hats. Some are talking to the men along their row, while others, stepping out of formation for a brief moment, kibbitz with supporters, many women among them, standing three and four deep on the road's edge. Michael James "Mickey" O'Rourke, longshoremen and decorated veteran, is in the lead, holding the flag high, looking forward – his image slightly blurred as he slips out of the frame.⁴³⁶

Coming as it did in the midst of a bitter strike, this spectacle was a clear declaration of waterfront workers' solidarity and shared determination to defeat the Shipping Federation. Indeed, as many of its participants likely understood, taking to the streets was, in and of itself, a defiant act – one which temporarily appropriated

⁴³⁵ The mass meeting was covered by all the Vancouver daily newspapers; see the Sun, 17 June 1935.

⁴³⁶ Stanton, Never Say Die, 2-11.

a public space, a symbol of order and civic rationality, and invested it with a new political meaning. Under ordinary circumstances, the streets, especially those leading to and from the waterfront, were a conduit for the free flow of goods, traffic, and people; in the course of dissident political practice, however, they were capable of moving hearts and minds as well. In a more specific sense, the parade's very configuration – its signs and symbols – lay bare the bundle of ideas at the heart of the powerful *Zeitgeist* of opposition that had taken hold on the waterfront with the onset of the Depression. The prominent place of returned men, the “medals [they] won fighting for freedom,” and the Union Jack were obvious allusions to the membership's sacrifices overseas on behalf of Canada and the United Kingdom, their experiences as both veterans and longshoremen, and the unfulfilled promises of both the Great War and the welfarist consensus of the interwar period. Workers' fine clothes and orderly demeanor, signs of respectability, accentuated this message further – communicating symbolically, what Emery and others articulated verbally: here were men who took pride in their work, possessed a stake in the economic and political life of the nation, and expected more from their employers and their government. Here, signified by the procession of strikers, was one of the grim ironies of the Great Depression: men who once went to battle overseas,

ostensibly to defend democracy against tyranny, were now marching to protest its utter absence at home.⁴³⁷

At Ballantyne Pier, the marchers were met by Colonel W.W. Foster, the city's chief of police, and an array of VPD, BCPP, and RCMP officers, some of whom toted machine guns. Foster ordered the strikers to turn back; they refused to do so. Just as they signalled their intention to push through the police barricade, several tear gas canisters were launched and the dock was quickly engulfed by the anger, frustration, and disappointment of the past few years. "From behind box-cars charge a squad of provincials on horseback. Screams and shouts and curses. Rocks are flying from behind me. Everybody begins running," a Sun reporter wrote from the front lines. "The sight of galloping horsemen is truly terrifying. The police are laying to right and left with their batons. And quite suddenly the tracks are clear." Although the parade was quickly crushed, the fighting continued for several hours as police and marchers skirmished on the streets of downtown. "Blood-spattered rocks littered the streets in which the fighting took place," Torchy Anderson, a veteran labour reporter for the Daily Province, observed. "Bandaged and blood-dripping heads were a common sight, both among police and civilians." After the initial clash and subsequent "guerilla warfare," dozens of police, paraders, and sympathizers were

⁴³⁷ Stanton, 17. This section is informed by Palmer, Working-Class Experience, 57, 79, 94, 108, 128-29; McDonald, Making Vancouver, 33-34 and 79-85; David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change (Cambridge 1992), 238; and Marshall Berman, All That Is Solid Melts Into Air, especially section five, "In the Forest of Symbols," 287-348.

admitted to hospital, while other waterfront workers were treated at the Ukrainian Labour Temple and nearby union headquarters. Within days, the city police arrested both Emery and Salonen, as well as several of the more well known rank-and-file militants (twelve in all), on charges of unlawful assembly, rioting, and seditious conspiracy, and the mayor banned all forms of picketing from the waterfront area.⁴³⁸

In the wake of the confrontation, McGeer thumped the rostrum at city hall and railed against the “belligerent terror[ists]” who, it appeared to him, were flouting law and order in an attempt to undermine constituted authority. “The brazenness of this open declaration of war is unparalleled in the history of Vancouver....I have said before and I want to repeat now that we are not going to tolerate Communistic agitators who openly incite their fellow citizens to riot and sedition,” he roared. “This blatant and stupid attempt on the part of the Communistic leaders has forced the police to demonstrate that no situation can develop in Vancouver that they cannot handle. Now that the riot has actually taken place and is over, I think we can look forward to a restoration of normal business.” Similar rhetoric was produced by the Citizen’s League and the city’s major daily newspapers. In its lead editorial, “Exploiting Human Unrest,” the Sun cautioned its readers against seeing the dockside riot as “an outbreak of class hatred.” In its esteemed opinion, the events of 18 June were “purely and simply” a conflict between “the forces of order and

⁴³⁸ The first account comes from Bob Bouchette’s dramatic rendition in Sun, 19 June 1935.

disorder" – the latter only too happy too exploit the "mental tumult" associated with "any changing world" for their own self-serving ends: "Among bitter and disappointed men, the instinct to violence is as old as human kind." In a slightly different vein, the Province praised the police for its "discipline and forbearance" and called for a peaceful resolution to the strike: "We should hope that the counsels of reconciliation might still prevail, at least with the men who have their living and not the gospel of violent revolution at stake."⁴³⁹

When strikers and their supporters spoke of the "Battle of Ballantyne Pier" in particular and state repression in general they drew upon categories of analysis that had long been a part of the waterfront's political discourse. A petition drawn up by the Association to "emphatically protest the continual use of City, Provincial, and Federal police against the longshoremen" made sure that its intended recipients – the mayor, attorney general, premier, and prime minister – understood that the vast majority of the men on strike were long-time longshoremen, veterans of the Great War, residents of the city, and taxpayers, and, as such, deserved to "earn a livelihood." It was a sense of expectation and entitlement that Mrs Campbell, secretary of the Association's Ladies' Auxiliary, understood well. "We know our husband's cause is just. As tax payers we feel that Policeman's duty is to hunt criminals and prevent crime, not prevent the honest workers from peaceful picketing

⁴³⁹ Sun, 19 June 1935; Province, 19 June 1935.

and protecting their standard of living," she told the chief of police in a pointed letter; another missive to Colonel Foster, this one signed simply "a soldier's wife and taxpayer," was somewhat less diplomatic: "Get out and be gone. I am ashamed that I was ever a member of the Legion after seeing your dirty work." These ideas were given a more public forum by Bob Bouchette, a sympathetic columnist with the Sun, who rejected the mayor's and Citizens' League's claims that the struggle on the docks was about communism and the future of constituted authority. "Some 800 of Vancouver's longshoremen are married, with families. One hundred per cent of the membership of the VDWWA have worked continuously on the Vancouver docks for periods of from five to forty years. Are these the men who, we are told, are helping fomenters of revolution? The question does not merit a reply." That the strikers and their allies saw the use of force differently than bourgeois politicians and the press is no surprise; what is striking, though, are the categories in and through which they chose to express themselves: married, worker, veteran, taxpayer, and resident. Wrapped in a rights-based rhetoric, this bundle of identities, one which bore all the marks of the political, economic, and cultural milieu associated with the waterfront, anchored a strong sense of entitlement that, clearly, both capital and the state wished to extinguish.⁴⁴⁰

⁴⁴⁰ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 21, File 2, "To Mayor G.G. McGeer....," 12 June 1935; Series 197, 75-E-7, File 8, Mrs Campbell, Secretary Ladies Auxiliary, VDWWA to Chief of Police, 7 June 1935; File 11, "a soldier's wife and taxpayer," undated; Sun, 6 and 7 June 1935. Other examples of this kind of rhetoric can be found in Skipper Sam's column in Ship and Dock, 4 May 1935; BCARS, RAG, GR 429, Box 22, File 3, resolutions addressed to the attorney general from a wide

In the weeks and months after the clash, ever increasing numbers of replacement workers were despatched to load and unload deep-sea vessels. Despite calls in the labour press to "up the waterfront strike" and "hold solid" in the face of "rampant [police] terror" the union's support was haemorrhaging; in a vote taken in late June, 507 decided to keep going, 66 wanted to go back to work, and approximately 300 votes were unaccounted for. Publicly, the Association claimed that these men were on picket duty during the time of the ballot. In reality, they were on the docks, but loading cargo, not walking the line. Even support from the mainstream labour movement softened as delegates to the Vancouver, New Westminster, and District Trades and Labor Council -- many of whom, like president Percy Bengough, were either virulent anti-communists, alienated by the Party's excessive "social fascist" rhetoric of the early years of the Third Period, or, given both the recent violence and long-held craft union prejudices, simply wanted little to do with unskilled workers -- narrowly defeated an executive-sponsored motion calling for a "neutral stance" on the waterfront debacle by a margin of 37 to 31. Repeated attempts by the Association's executive to re-open negotiations were unsuccessful, waterfront employers maintaining that they under no "legal or moral"

range of organizations, including the Finnish Organization of Canada, Brotherhood of Railway Carmen of America, Tecumseh CCF Club, Ward Four Ratepayers' Association; CVA, Series 197, 75-E-7, File 11, A. Cook, Vancouver Height's Women's Labor League to Chief of Police, 20 June 1935; Report of E.F. Kusch, Constable, RCMP, CIB, 10 June 1935 (the report provides an account of a radio address made by Emery); 33-B-5, File 9, LWTWC to Mayor McGeer, 19 July 1935; 33-B-6, File 1, copy of resolution passed by 72 organized women's clubs.

obligation to "resume former relations with the VDWWA and will not do so under any circumstance."⁴⁴¹

Waterfront workers' resolve was undermined further by a decision taken by the mayor and his supporters on city council to refuse relief to striking longshoremen and to cut-off those waterfront workers already on the welfare rolls who were unwilling to return to work. "A list is compiled of the names of applicants in this category ["relief applications of longshoremen"] and checked with the Shipping Federation," W.R. Bone, city relief officer, informed McGeer in late July 1935, his opening line shedding light on the close relationship between capital and the state. "If the Federation reports that work is available should the men re-apply, or that no further work will be given the individual due to his activities in the present strike, no action is taken on the application." As this short quotation suggests, the logic at work here was rooted in the age-old distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor that underpinned a residual, as opposed to an institutional, conception of social security; in short, since the men on strike were in no way "involuntary cases of destitution" the city did not owe them anything.

The response from the Association, labour unions, and religious organizations to the mayor's decision was swift. "To compel women and children for any cause to face starvation, seems to us, to give expression to a spirit which is the

⁴⁴¹ BC Workers News, 28 June 1935; BC Lumber Workers, 22 June 1935. Details of the raucous labour council meeting are contained in Sun, 19 June 1935; on negotiations see CVA, 33-B-5, File 7, J.E. Hall to Mayor McGeer, 16 July 1935.

antithesis of Christianity," Reverend R.N. Matherson of the Collingwood United Church told McGeer in a pointed letter. "Even in isolated cases, this order may coerce men into submission, the general result will be most certainly to foster and spread, rather than discourage the spirit of revolution." McGeer rejected this position outright, arguing that the city council was not about to "subsidize strikes which have as their purpose the establishment of communism and the wrecking of our system of constitutional democracy." Between 26 July and 30 September, the city granted relief in 146 cases "in which the male adult is alleged to be involved in the waterfront labour dispute"; by 18 November, only 18 cases "said to be involved in the waterfront dispute" had been "authorized."⁴⁴² Whether or not these men drifted back to work on the waterfront is unclear; what is obvious, however, is that the union's ability to hold the fort had eroded substantially. Signs of this development were legion. More and more replacement workers, many of whom were aboriginal men who had lost their jobs in the years following the 1923 strike, were working on the waterfront with each passing day; fewer and fewer police officers were walking the beat in the waterfront district. The number of deep-sea vessels sailing past Siwash

⁴⁴² Sun, 29 June 1935; CVA, Series 449, 106-A-7, File 8, W.R. Bone, Relief Officer, to G.G. McGeer, 23 July 1935; Series 483, 33-B-5, File 7, E.W. Griffith, Administrator, Department of Labour, Unemployed Relief Branch, 12 July 1935; D.E. MacTaggart, Corporation Counsel, and W.R. Bone, Relief Officer, to W.L. Woodford, City Clerk, 9 August 1935; LWTWC to W.B. Bone, Relief Officer, 17 October 1935; Reverend R.N. Matherson, Collingwood United Church to McGeer, 24 June 1935; McGeer to Matherson, 28 June 1935; W.R. Bone, "Re: Relief Recipients Involved in Waterfront Disputes," 30 September, 18 October, 5 November, 18 November, 21 November 1935.

Rock and heading for open water was increasingly steadily. On 9 December, the union officially called the strike off.

* * *

Looking back on this tumultuous time in the waning months of the waterfront confrontation, Justice H.H. Davis, asked by the federal department of labour to conduct a thorough investigation into the causes of the lengthy standoff, concluded that, above all else, the Association's "unsound and destructive" leadership was to blame. There was nothing particularly unique or insightful about this conclusion; it was, after all, the same line that the mayor, the Shipping Federation, and the Citizen's League had been peddling for some time. And for them, as for the learned judge, it was an assessment that not only absolved bourgeois society of any responsibility for inducing such a crisis, but, ultimately, fully justified the repressive means employed by capital and the state to bring it to a close. As Davis concluded: "A careful review of the evidence has satisfied me that the stage was so set by the leaders of the men, and the men so much under their influence, that what otherwise might seem harsh and abrupt action by the Shipping Federation was under all the circumstances necessary for the assertion of their rights and the preservation of their interests."⁴⁴³ To point this out, though, is not to deny the important role that the leadership, which, in this case, involved several men tied to the Communist Party

⁴⁴³ See Labour Gazette 35:11 (November 1935), 982-995, for the text of the final report.

of Canada and Workers Unity League, played in the emergence and eventual ascendancy of the opposition movement. During this period, the CPC and its affiliated organizations, which had moved away from the ultra-leftism of the Third Period, supplied valuable human, material, and intellectual resources; the publication of the Heavy Lift, which played a crucial role in giving direction to the tensions and anxieties that etched longshoremen's work-a-day world, is the best example of the party's multi-faceted contribution in this regard. But as the opening section of this chapter makes clear, influence was one thing, ironclad control was quite another. George Drayton and Ol' Bill Bennett understood that; so, too, did Bob Bouchette, a columnist for the Sun: "[Communist leader] Arthur Evans has left the city, but the [waterfront] strike is still on. How does Evans do it, by remote control?"⁴⁴⁴

What Justice Davis (and others) appeared unwilling or unable to countenance is that rank-and-file longshoremen, individuals he once dubbed "good, ordinary men," supported the opposition movement under their own volition; or, to put it another way, that they possessed both the *actus reus* and *mens rea* necessary to commit such an act. Well, they did. During this period, waterfront workers bought copies of Heavy Lift, elected the Clean Sweep slate, attended rallies and demonstrations, and backed a more aggressive bargaining agenda; the leaders of

⁴⁴⁴ CVA, Series X, 33-B-6, File 1, "Issues in the Waterfront Fight As Seen by Bob Bouchette in The Vancouver Sun," undated leaflet issued by the VDWWA. The leaflet is drawn from Bouchette's columns published in the Sun on 6 and 7 June 1935.

this movement were themselves longshoremen, men who, like the Association's membership as a whole, once supported the company union. To say this is not to argue that all longshoremen believed in the reform movement; nor is it to imply that those who did did so without reservation or critique. The politics of consolidation were complex – shaded not only by the differences between boss and worker, but by the differences within the waterfront workforce itself. Rather, it is to point out that in word and deed, they demonstrated both a willingness to reach for a bigger and better position in society and an understanding that the means to this end involved a militant industrial union that was capable of taking control of the despatch hall. To waterfront employers, this kind of challenge was evidence that an “entirely new conception, including plans for its application, of the rights of labor and its position in the economic life of the Country” had “evolved.” New ideas about a worker's place both on the job and in society at large had indeed emerged; but what the Shipping Federation was unable -- or unwilling -- to grasp was that it was more than just a few members of the Communist Party who were contemplating, to borrow from one waterfront worker, how to return to work as a “free man.” Alternatively, waterfront employers understood well just how widespread these rebellious ideas had become and had singled out the so-called red menace as an easy, high profile target.

At the same time that dissident longshoremen were navigating the complex politics of opposition, capital was gearing up too. In the 1920s, “making better citizens” was at the heart of the Shipping Federation's approach to labour relations

and, to some extent at least, both employers and employees shared the bundle of values and workplace reforms associated with it. But by 1935, it was not the promise of consent, but the threat and, later, the reality of coercion that was considered the most effective way to police the boundaries of working-class citizenship – boundaries that waterfront workers were challenging on a day-to-day basis. Indeed, just as waterfront workers were prepared to step outside the ideological and institutional confines of welfare capitalism, so, too, was the Shipping Federation, albeit for different ends. Of course, it did not act alone in this regard; indeed, key to this aggressive defence of the economic and political status quo was the close collaboration of the state, in particular, law enforcement agencies at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels, all of which were undertaking their own anti-communist initiatives. Characterized by undercover informants and covert organizations, clashes on the streets and late night raids, this “constant campaign of repression” combined both surveillance and intelligence gathering and more traditional police work – the former providing a constant flow of information from a variety of human sources to ensure that the latter took place as effectively as possible. Not all of the reports filed by undercover agents were accurate or even useful, of course; but taken together, they allowed the authorities to track the movement and activities of alleged subversives at the (very) least in a general way. As one BCPP detective remarked: “We were well prepared in advance for most demonstrations.” From the perspective of capital and the state, there were limits to

the kinds of ideas and actions that were tolerable in the public sphere – limits that, at times, had to be policed furtively, unaccountably, and with significant force.

The end of the strike brought to a close a period on the docks marked by great extremes. With the onset of the Great Depression, waterfront workers, like workers across the industrialized world, endured severe hardship and deprivation as maritime traffic slowed, unemployment increased, and the Shipping Federation rolled back wages, cut back shifts, and laid off people. At first, longshoremen's anxiety, anger, and opposition in this regard was easily contained by the structures, practices, and ideas that had come to define waterfront labour relations during the 1920s; but as the economic crisis worsened and it became clear to Association members that neither a moderate union leadership nor a benevolent employer were capable of defending their interests, the welfarist consensus that had bound labour and capital together for nearly a decade came apart at the seams. Into the breach stepped a dissident movement that spoke of autonomy, strength, and virility, and within months of publishing a tiny, mimeographed newspaper called Heavy Lift, it assumed the leadership of the company union and, with the support of a large proportion of the membership, spearheaded a drive for more just and humane work relations. The notion that the waterfront, regardless of the obvious differences between boss and worker, was a "deep horizontal comradeship" had given way to a sense of class relations that was as critical and insurgent as it was hopeful and promising. By June of 1935, about 900 longshoremen were on strike, joined across

the province by thousands more, in one of the largest walkouts in British Columbia since the heady days of the national labour revolt. Within weeks, however, capital and the state fought back; the strike was crushed and the Association was eliminated, and the notion of possibility, of entitlement, which had burned so brightly for many workers, dimmed. It did not, however, go out entirely.

Conclusion. Restoration

In the aftermath of the 1935 strike the Shipping Federation set about re-establishing the institutions and practices of welfare capitalism which had served it so well during the 1920s and early 1930s. At the top of its agenda was finding a replacement for the defunct Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers Association; it did not have to look very far. In the days and weeks leading up to the strike, labourer and part-time longshoreman Joseph Sigmund, with the assistance and encouragement of waterfront employers, had registered a new organization, the Canadian Waterfront Workers Association, with the provincial government in Victoria. With the crushing of the old company union, the CWWA was formally activated – its leadership, which included Sigmund and a handful of Association veterans, ratifying a new constitution, by-laws, and collective agreement in the months that followed the formal cessation of hostilities. Under the revised terms and conditions of employment, the CWWA was forbidden to go on strike, participate in “any form of demonstration [or] parade,” affiliate with any “radical movement,” or apply for a board of conciliation under federal law. Its “officers and executive committee” had to be nominated or approved by the Shipping Federation; its membership was restricted to “white [men] who have been residents of Greater Vancouver for the period of one year.” Created solely “to unite fraternally for mutual benefit, protection, improvement, and association, men engaged in waterfront work,” the new company outfit was later joined by two other organizations, the Vancouver

Longshoremen's Association and the North Vancouver Longshoremen's Association thereby re-establishing the organizational fragmentation that had characterized waterfront politics prior to the ascendancy of the opposition movement. "Our organization is clean, and will be kept clean of any radical element, and we are conducting our affairs in a quiet and business-like way," one business agent reported confidently.⁴⁴⁵

In addition to reviving company unionism, waterfront employers' also re-activated its joint committees, only this time around, not surprisingly, there was little pretense that capital and labour were equal partners in this paternalist endeavour: the Shipping Federation's own internal bodies retained exclusive control over "all matters of policy" and the "regulation of the personnel of the gangs" while the shared bodies performed advisory and administrative functions. Writing in advance of a meeting of the "joint advisory and negotiation committee," for example, the labour manager informed the company unions that the employers' own "sub-labour committee" had drafted a new set of disciplinary procedures and penalties for union members who "without excuse or reason...do not report for work with their gang or refuse to continue the job they are working on." Part of the ongoing process of

⁴⁴⁵ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 18, File 9, "Fundamentals of Agreement with the CWWA"; Business Agent, CWWA, to Shipping Federation, 17 September 1935; Box 18, File 9b, "Report of a Meeting held between representatives of Canadian Waterfront Workers Association and Vancouver Longshoremen's Association ... 29 July 1935"; "Constitution and Bylaws of the Canadian Waterfront Workers Association," 1935; CWWA and VLA collective agreement, including "Schedule 'A'" detailing "Rules, Working Conditions, and Wage Schedule," 1937; Box 30, File 6, Executive Assistant, Shipping Federation of British Columbia to R.A. Sargent, Barrister and Solicitor, 4 November 1936.

weeding out inefficient workers, cracking down on acts of defiance on the job, and further decasualizing the waterfront labour market, the reforms, in the view of the Shipping Federation, were only "unfair to men who play the game unfairly" and, as such, required no extensive debate.

Further evidence that a process of restoration was underway was not hard to find. Banquets and picnics were held; smokers, hockey games, and bowling matches were scheduled. Informants working within the company union filed confidential reports with the labour manager. Not only was Heavy Lift no longer available, but a new newspaper, Cargo Hook, rolled off the presses in early 1936 – the aphorism "A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand" appearing on its masthead.⁴⁴⁶ Published by the Canadian Waterfront Workers Association, and backed both politically and financially by the Shipping Federation, Cargo Hook extolled the virtues of the new company unions. "Let your association be one that we can be proud of," one article began. "Let us all unite in making the Port of Vancouver the best and safest port on the Pacific Coast, where ship owners know they can send in a ship to load and that ship will be despatched speedily and

⁴⁴⁶ For the joint committees see: CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 19, File 9, Business Agent, CWWA, to Shipping Federation, 20 October 1936; Box 18, File 9b, CWWA and VLA collective agreement, including "Schedule 'A'" detailing "Rules, Working Conditions, and Wage Schedule," 1937; Box 18, File 9c, President, Shipping Federation to CWWA, 13 February 1936; Box 65, File 3, Crombie to CWWA and VLA, 19 March 1937. 21 September 1937. For the other signs of restoration see: Box 18, File 9a, Secretary to Labour Manager, 9 December 1937; Box 22, File 1, R.H. Clewley to J.E. Hall, 24 November 1936; Box 50, C.E. Pratt, 4 March 1935; Box 18, File 9a, Cargo Hook, February 1936.

without any labour troubles."⁴⁴⁷ That the objective of this publication was to dampen, not to fan the flames of discontent was underscored by its silence on issues of power and authority; in Cargo Hook workplace grievances were presented as the product of an individual's poor choices, bad attitude, or sub-par work ethic, not the inevitable outcome of hierarchy in the workplace, one of the core themes of Heavy Lift. "If you come early, and watch the button/You are sure to work, in other words earn," began the poem "Ode to the Spare Board," offering a lesson in discipline, sobriety, and thrift. "You are dependent on the good old button/Come in and see it reach your name/And when the despatcher puts you down for work/Remember the early bird and play the game."⁴⁴⁸ By emphasizing the "reasonable," "clean," and "wholesome," character of the new company unions' agenda – a plan that stood in contrast to the aggressive, dirty, and foreign politics of the now defunct opposition movement – Cargo Hook made it clear that order had indeed been restored on the waterfront: "Go about your work in a satisfactory manner; keep your own council; pay your dues; and good luck to you all for a prosperous and happy waterfront. Heads up!"⁴⁴⁹

But as members of the Shipping Federation knew well, having things well in hand was not synonymous with the absence of conflict on the job. As in the past, the leadership of the company unions objected when waterfront employers failed to

⁴⁴⁷ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 18, File 9a, Cargo Hook, February 1936; April 1936.

⁴⁴⁸ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 18, File 9a, Cargo Hook, May 1936.

⁴⁴⁹ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 18, File 9a, Cargo Hook, July 1936

live up to the letter and intent of the revised collective agreement ("We feel that the initiative of disciplinary measures should rest with ourselves"), rank-and-file members protested when they were sacked for inefficiency or for possessing the wrong political beliefs ("Why should these men be working and you won't take me back? I am not a talker – only voted wrong"), and waterfront gangs took action when a particular job went too long or a foreman was too harsh ("I apologize for splitting his lip. I don't know what came over me").⁴⁵⁰ From the perspective of waterfront employers, however, these were run-of-the-mill tensions, and they were easily absorbed by the institutions and practices of welfare capitalism. Indeed, of greater concern to them were the developments taking place amongst maritime workers south of the border where the founding of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific Coast in April 1935 and, later, the emergence of the Committee for Industrial Organizations suggested that things might get worse before they got better.

An embodiment of the solidarity that underpinned the great maritime strikes of 1934, the Maritime Federation – which was led, in part, by ILA heavyweight and communist Harry Bridges and Sailors' Union of the Pacific leader and syndicalist Harry Lunderberg – undertook several campaigns between 1935 and 1937 which affected shipping, stevedoring, and warehousing interests in the United States and Canada. Despite this initial burst of activity, however, the vitality of the coast-wide

⁴⁵⁰ CVA, Add.Mss 279, Box 65, File 3, Crombie to VLA and CWWA, 21 September 1937; 9 October 1937; 5 February 1938; H. Burgess to Crombie, 14 October 1937; 12 May 1938; Box 20, File 1, "An Old Longshoreman, a martyr to the Cause" to J.E. Hall, undated, likely 1936;

federation waned in the late 1930s as divisions of occupation and ideology re-asserted themselves. This fragmentation was exacerbated further by the splintering of the American Federation of Labor and the rise of John L. Lewis's insurgent industrial union centre, the CIO. Spurred on by President Roosevelt's new deal for labour and the political acumen of rank-and-file activists from disbanded communist-led unions, the CIO spearheaded an organizational boom in the United States not witnessed since the heroic struggles of 1919. "The onrush of the unorganized millions demanding organization has swept over the barricades the craftists sought to build," one working-class scribe wrote. "Industrial organization has met the test."⁴⁵¹

Against this backdrop, the Shipping Federation supplemented its internal agenda of restoration, with several, more externally focussed initiatives. In the summer of 1937, waterfront employers, in conjunction with the three company unions from Burrard Inlet and longshoremen's associations from New Westminster, Victoria, and Chemainus, convened a "Joint Conference" at the Hotel Georgia in Vancouver to discuss "the question of leftist infiltration in various Industries which could have a serious bearing on the Waterfront Industry." According to the waterfront workers' spokesperson, a longshoreman from Victoria, of particular

⁴⁵¹ On the Maritime Federation of the Pacific and the rise of CIO on the docks see: Nelson, Waterfront Workers, chapter seven, "The Rise and Fall of the Maritime Federation," and chapter eight, "AFL versus CIO: 'We found brother slugging brother'"; Markholt, Maritime Solidarity, Part Two, "The Maritime Federation Years." On the CIO in general see Robert H. Ziegler, The CIO: 1935-1955 (Chapel Hill 1995). The final quotation is from BC Lumber Worker 13 October 1937.

concern was the advance of the CIO on the docks, in the mills, and in the forests of the Pacific Northwest.⁴⁵² While the new industrial union centre had yet to make substantial inroads in British Columbia, he told the assembled guests, some of whom were former leaders of the VDWWA, it was clear that the "common enemy" was bent on "boring from within" the respectable trade union movement, just as it had in 1935. The Shipping Federation's board of directors agreed, and along with the waterfront labour organizations in attendance, it sketched out a plan to communicate with other "independent unions" and "various Industrial and Commercial Organizations" in order to "place before them the necessity of preventing CIO organization within their industries." The group also explored the feasibility of creating a "British Columbia Federation of Labour" and lobbying the provincial and federal governments for legislation that would keep the "subversive Unions to the South" out of Canada altogether, something waterfront employers had been doing on their own for some time. After several hours of discussion, and a nice meal, the meeting adjourned, one of the Shipping Federation's directors thanking the men for their loyalty and ensuring them that "every effort" would be made to "help them" to beat back the CIO. Later that year, at least three additional joint meetings were held – the delegates discussing such weighty matters as "A System for Fighting Encroachment of Any Foreign Organization Into BC Territory."⁴⁵³

⁴⁵² For the woods and mills see Parnaby, "What's Law Got To Do With It?," 9-45.

⁴⁵³ CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 42, File 2, "Memorandum of a joint meeting held in Hotel Georgia, Wednesday, June 2nd, 1937"; Box 46, File 3, "Minutes of a Joint Conference Between the

The "foreign organization" that the Shipping Federation had in mind was the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, a new CIO affiliate which was formed in late 1937 after the Pacific Coast division of the ILA, under the leadership of the irascible Harry Bridges, voted to leave the American Federation of Labor. Despite its organizational success south of the border following its controversial departure from the mainstream labour movement, the new longshoremen's union made little headway on the Vancouver waterfront. The absence of permissive labour laws in the province and lack of financial and human resources from the international union contributed to this turn of events; so, too, did the dispersal of the progressive group which played such a key role in organizing the waterfront in the early 1930s and the emergence of, what Blondie Moffat called, a widespread "fear complex" amongst rank-and-file waterfront workers – legacies of the "constant campaign of repression" waged by the Shipping Federation in 1935 and the final crushing of the strike itself.⁴⁵⁴ As a consequence, the only challenge

Directors of Shipping Federation of British Columbia and Representatives of the British Columbia Longshoremen's Organizations ... 23 September 1937; Box 19, File 12, President, Shipping Federation to the Honourable George S. Pearson, Minister of Labour, Victoria, 15 June 1937; Box 30, File 6, R.D. Williams to Honourable Norman Rogers, Minister of Labour, 17 November 1936; Box 64, File 7, President, Vancouver Board of Trade, J.Y. McCarter to Honourable Norman Rogers, Minister of Labour, Ottawa, 19 November 1936.

⁴⁵⁴ This assessment is based in part on a remarkable collection of spy reports collected by Crombie during the late 1930s contained in: CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 36, File 1, reports from unnamed operative, 15, 17, 21, 22, February 1938; 16, 26, 30 March 1938; 14, 25, 27 April 1938; 4, 9, 14, 27 May 1938; 27 June 1938; 4, 22, 30 July 1938; 15 August 1938; 22 October 1938; 14 November 1938; 10, 19 December 1938; 24 January 1939. Ivan Emery summed up the ILWU's dilemmas in Vancouver at the IWA's annual convention in 1938. See UBC-SC, Harold Pritchett-IWA District #1 Collection, Box 5, File 13, "Annual Convention of the BC Coast District Council, July 30 & 31, 1938."

that waterfront employers faced from a CIO-affiliated union at that time came from the newly formed International Woodworkers of America, not the International Longshoremen's and Warehouseman's Union; it waged a bloody strike at Blubber Bay, Texada Island, against the Pacific Lime Company which was owned, in part, by the Kingsley Navigation Company, a coast-wise operator based out of Vancouver and San Francisco that shipped lime throughout the region.

After eleven months on the picket line, the IWA was soundly defeated, its campaign undermined severely by the tepid response from seafarers and waterfront workers in Washington, Oregon, and Northern California who were reluctant to jeopardize their own hard-won agreements in the name of maritime solidarity. The emergence of the IWA and the Blubber Bay debacle prompted the provincial government to pass, and later amend, a stripped down version of President Roosevelt's Wagner Act called the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act which upheld the legality of company unions and failed to compel employers to bargain collectively with their employees' elected representatives. From the Shipping Federation's vantage point, with waterfront workers safely ensconced in several new organizations, the committee structure up and running once again, and Harry Bridges seemingly at bay, it appeared that the genie of class conflict and state intervention was back in the paternalist bottle. "Here, except for the occasional ill-advised bloomer on the part of some bonehead foreman or superintendent, everything is peaceful and harmonious[.] [W]ork and earnings keeping up

wonderfully well and the men apparently genuinely satisfied," Crombie informed Frank Foisie, his counterpart at the Waterfront Employers' Association of the Pacific Coast, in the spring of 1939. "I think all we need to really make us all happy, is for someone to throw a well-aimed and well-timed bomb at Hitler and Mussolini."⁴⁵⁵

* * *

Scholars of British Columbia's labour and working-class past have written a fair amount about Vancouver's waterfront workers. James Conley, Robert A.J. McDonald, and Mark Leier, for example, have all examined the city's longshoremen, focussing on the years running up to the Great War and the national labour revolt; Richard McCandless has too, analyzing "Vancouver's red menace" and the 1935 waterfront strike in great detail.⁴⁵⁶ While these studies were conceived within very different historiographical traditions, and were angled towards different, though certainly related questions, they share a common interest in waterfront workers during periods of more generalized labour unrest, institutional growth, and political fermentation – an emphasis that mirrors broader trends in labour and working-class

⁴⁵⁵ Parnaby, "What's Law Got To Do With It?," 9-45, examines the emergence of the IWA, the passage of the ICA Act, and the conflict at Blubber Bay in detail. On the links between the Pacific Lime Company, Kingsley Navigation Company, IWA, and ILWU see: CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 39, File 10, R.F. Mather, Kingsley Navigation Company to J.E. Hall, Shipping Federation, 8 October 1936; R.J. Deremer, Kingsley Company of California, to P.J. Maw, Kingsley Navigation Company, 15, 19, 30 January 1937; F.M. Kelley, Secretary, Maritime Federation of the Pacific to Pacific Lime Company, 9 July 1937. The final quote is from Box 46, File 4, Crombie to Foisie, 28 April 1939.

⁴⁵⁶ Conley, "Class Conflict and Collective Action"; McDonald, Making Vancouver; McDonald and Hovis, "On the Waterfront"; Leier, Red Flags and Red Tape; and McCandless, "Vancouver's Red Menace." See also Akers, "Rebel or Revolutionary?" and Campbell, "Making Socialists." On North American labour historians general preoccupation with moments of "expansion," triumph," and "upswing" see the introduction in Frank's Purchasing Power, 1-12.

history. As a consequence, the interwar period, a time marked off on the waterfront – as in other workplaces – by defeat, disillusionment, and conservatism, has been left unexplored; even Man Along the Shore!, an indispensable collection of oral history compiled by “longshoremen themselves,” has little to say about the politics of welfare capitalism, labour market reform, or company unionism. On a very basic level, then, this study is an exercise in recovery – recovery of the patterns of life, labour, and politics of Vancouver’s waterfront workers, both white and aboriginal, during a period when the foundations of a modern port and province, “Canada’s gateway to the Orient,” were laid. Writing in 1937, agitator, journalist, and pioneer historian William “ol’ Bill” Bennett asked his readers one simple, but far reaching question: who built British Columbia? The answer, of course, was the working class, and as this study has illustrated, that group included the likes of Mickey O’Rourke, Edward Nahanee, and Grace Allen.⁴⁵⁷

But more than just a reconnaissance of neglected labouring lives, as important (and sometimes denigrated)⁴⁵⁸ as that objective is, this study seeks to answer a simple, but far reaching question: what happened after “1919”? As a generation of labour and working-class scholars have demonstrated, the labour revolt was the first nation-wide challenge to the prevailing liberal-capitalist order; as

⁴⁵⁷ Bennett, Builders of BC.

⁴⁵⁸ See Michael Bliss, “Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, The Sundering of Canada,” Journal of Canadian Studies 26 (1991-2), 5-17; Jack Granatstein, Who Killed Canadian History? (Toronto 1998).

such, with its clarion call for a "new democracy," this opposition laid siege to some of the nation's most enduring ideals, including the sanctity of individualism, the inviolability of private property, and the legitimacy of hierarchy, both on the job and in society. The origins of the workers' revolt are well known; so, too are its national, regional, and local characteristics.⁴⁵⁹ What is little understood, however, is how the ruling, liberal-capitalist framework, so badly beaten by world war and class war, was successfully rehabilitated in the decades before World World II.⁴⁶⁰ Part of the answer is as obvious as it is grim: unions were busted, strikes were crushed, and leaders were jailed, deported, or killed. But this study is interested in examining the longer term solutions undertaken by state and, in particular, non-state actors to contain, co-opt, or erase those instincts, ideologies, and practices which were antithetical to the prevailing economic and political status quo. In this important respect, this thesis, cast in the mould of historical materialism, seeks to bridge the theoretical ground between labour and working-class history, aboriginal history, and the burgeoning literature associated with "making law, order, and authority" in Canada. In doing so, it not only examines a workplace, region, and time period left relatively unexplored by other scholars, but it re-positions welfare capitalism, which is usually regarded

⁴⁵⁹ Heron, ed., The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925.

⁴⁶⁰ On this question, see Tom Mitchell, "The Manufacture of Souls of Good Quality': Winnipeg's 1919 Conference on Canadian Citizenship, English-Canadian Nationalism, and the New Order after the Great War," Journal of Canadian Studies 31:4 (Winter 1996-97), 5-28; "Repressive Measures': A.J. Andrews, the Committee of 1000, and the Campaign Against Radicalism After the Winnipeg General Strike," left history 3:2/4:1 (Fall 1995/Spring 1996), 133-167

as a failed experiment in industrial democracy, in the wider context of state and nation formation. What is more, it extends into the early decades of the twentieth century the general insights of historians such as Allan Greer and Tina Loo who have traced out the origins of a “colonial leviathan” and located, within particular times and places, struggles undertaken by subaltern groups over the pith and substance of this emerging, liberal-capitalist state formation. In short: through the lens of welfare capitalism on the Vancouver waterfront it is possible to see how and why this broader process of restabilization, accommodation, and compromise took place – and, in the process, to connect the social, economic, and political formation which developed in the wake of 1919 with that which emerged after 1945.⁴⁶¹

In the wake of the 1923 strike, the Shipping Federation embraced an “unconventional and unconservative” philosophy of workplace relations. Inspired by the work Frank Foisie had done on the Seattle waterfront, Major W.C.D. Crombie spearheaded the implementation of a similar reform agenda in Vancouver that sought to secure industrial peace by: building bridges across the chasm of class

⁴⁶¹ This paragraph is informed by: Ian McKay, “The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History,” Canadian Historical Review 81:4 (December 2000), 617-645; McKay, “For a New Kind of History: A Reconnaissance of 100 Years of Canadian Socialism,” Labour/Le Travail 46 (Fall 2000), 69-125; Allan Greer and Ian Radforth, eds., Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Canada (Toronto 1992); Bruce Curtis, True Government by Choice Men? Inspection, Education, and State Formation in Canada West (Toronto 1992); Loo, Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia, 1821-1871 (Toronto 1994); and Loo and Strange, Making Good.

difference; decasualizing the local labour market; boosting efficiency; and, in the process, moulding a more compliant working-class subjectivity. By the end of the 1920s, Taylorism provided the categories in and through which the Association members saw, understood, and debated workplace issues. Words such as efficient, inefficient, fit, unfit, classification, committee, sub-committee, procedure, and process became part of everyone's vocabulary -- altering, subtly, how waterfront workers conceptualized what was wrong, what was obvious, and what was possible. A lot had changed since the era of the shape-up when informal, customary modes of organization shaped the timing and allocation of work; indeed, welfare capitalism and labour market reform called into being new workplace habits, disciplines, and incentives -- a process of reform that in the end remade the everyday texture of working life on the waterfront.

Significantly, the Shipping Federation's dominance in this regard was not total, nor did it go uncontested; although it was able to eliminate strike action and push waterfront workers to work harder and faster, it was less successful in putting the "manager's brain under the workman's cap." Throughout this period other, less cooperative sensibilities, grounded, in part, in a labourist world view, and validated on a daily basis by conflict on the job, persisted -- giving shape to a consistent if moderate struggle over the form and content of the post-war compromise. Working people have long invoked the ideal of entitlement, swaddled it in the garb of liberalism, republicanism, nationalism, or socialism, in order to challenge their social,

economic, and political betters. Waterfront workers in Vancouver were no exception. In the years running up to the Great War and the national labour revolt, ideas about entitlement were bound up in a variety of political ideologies, not the least of which was labourism. A class-conscious, voluntarist, and gradualist way of seeing and interpreting the world, it exalted the status of the independent skilled working man in the face of the corrupting and degrading influences of industrial capitalism, a fundamental value that linked it ideologically to the natural rights traditions associated with British liberalism and American republicanism. As Craig Heron has observed: "It was the politics not of ideologues but of practical people moving outward from their economic struggles."⁴⁶²

Repeatedly challenged by socialism and syndicalism, labourism on the waterfront was given a new lease on life during the paternalist interregnum. By marginalizing more radical political positions, welfare capitalism provided it with a protected, hot-house-like environment within which it could take root, grow, and adapt. While independent labour parties languished in the inter-war period, the values at the core of this tradition, notably the pursuit of a "square deal," persisted – minus, of course, its emphasis on creating an independent political option for waterfront workers and links with socialism which had been shorn away by the defeats suffered between 1918 and 1923. That many of the Shipping Federation's

⁴⁶² Heron, "Labourism and the Canadian Working Class," 358.

members were prominent members of the provincial and federal Liberal parties underscores further the continuity at work here: Liberal-Labourism, so characteristic of late 19th and early 20th century working-class politics, had been reconstituted to some extent. This point is important. Not only are labour historians hesitant to acknowledge the integration of Canadian workers into mainstream political parties, but, more importantly, they have all but neglected the significant impact of labourism on the debates over citizen, state, and nation that took place after 1919 – preferring, instead, to examine the influence of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the Communist Party of Canada, or the industrial unions tied to the Congress of Industrial Organizations.⁴⁶³

Given this ideological pedigree, it is not hard to see how the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers Association and the Shipping Federation found common ground. Indeed, bound up in waterfront employers' vision of industrial democracy were ideals that labourists had cherished for a long time: manliness, respectability, independence, due process, voluntarism, anti-radicalism, and a broader moral sense of fairness. The paternalist project that defined waterfront labour relations throughout the 1920s was born out of, and sustained by, myriad factors – none, perhaps, as important as the quality on display here: *consensus ad item*, a meeting of the minds. Of course, those minds belonged to men. Not only was the cross-class

⁴⁶³ McKay, "Liberal Order Framework," 634, note 39. Here I am taking aim at my own work on class, law, and the state; see Parnaby, "What's Law Got To Do With It?"

alliance between the Shipping Federation and the Association imbued with a shared sense of the desirability and appropriateness of the patriarchal family, but Association leaders, when they were not distinguishing themselves from the masculinity of radical working-class men, were tapping the rhetorical force of the male breadwinner norm to challenge waterfront employers' power on the job. In sum, the apparatus of welfare capitalism and labour market reform certainly erected boundaries and set limits on collective working-class action, but it also provided white waterfront workers with a set of high standards with which to measure their employers' conduct. Over time a new sense of entitlement, a certain knowledge of their own worth on the waterfront and virtue as citizens, emerged – a development incubated further by their ability to purchase a home and participate, to some degree at least, in the emerging consumer economy, a development made possible by the work their wives did in the home.

The historically-specific links between work and home are of particular significance to this study, a fact that sets it apart from the existing literature on waterfront workers which has focussed on one key interpretive question: what is it about life on the hook that prompts waterfront workers to strike, strike, strike? This is an important question, for waterfront workers have long been associated with labour militancy; the battles waged on the British docks in the 19th century and the "great maritime strikes" of the 1930s on the Pacific Coast, for example, stand out as exceptional moments of class conflict. Furthermore, the many and varied answers

offered up by scholars have pointed to the important links between the world of waterfront work, the political economy of specific ports, and the politics of waterfront unionism. Significantly, though, the existing historiography is marred by a narrow focus on the workplace, union hall, and strikes to the virtual exclusion of working-class life beyond the point of production. Consider, for example, Bruce Nelson's superlative assessment of seamen and longshoremen on the Pacific Coast during the 1930s. Key to his study is an appreciation of waterfront workers' syndicalist sensibilities – "moods" and "temperaments" that emerged from their shared experience of "raw exploitation" on the job and their immersion in the "ethnic and working-class subcultures" that ringed many Pacific ports. That Nelson is sensitive to things not easily reduced to the economic is laudable; that his definition of "subculture" excluded family life is problematic – betraying a tacit assumption that identity and consciousness are forged solely at the point of production. By neglecting to cast the interpretive net wide enough to include family life he reinforces, if only in an implicit way, the notion that waterfront workers were isolated from landward society, exceptional in their attitudes and beliefs, and almost otherworldly in their presence, men whose sense of themselves flowed primarily from their time on the hook or time on the booze.

But as feminist historians have long argued, the workplace and the home are locked in a reciprocal and changing relationship in which each plays a role in shaping the other; indeed, not only is the link between work and family fundamental

to capitalist production, but, as Cynthia Comacchio has observed, “social identities are learned and internalized in a family setting, a process of interpellation crucial to the formation of self-identities” – including political ones.⁴⁶⁴ In this regard, by grounding white waterfront workers’ response to welfare capitalism in the context of family life, and drawing out the precise ways in which domestic issues gave form and content to workplace politics, this study departs significantly from the existing literature on waterfront workers. What is more, by doing so, it underscores three important, and broader, characteristics of class and gender relations in the interwar period. First, although working women’s employment options changed in important ways during this time frame, their working lives were shaped decisively by the responsibilities and expectations that came with being a mother and wife, and the familial relations that flowed, in part, from the persistence of patriarchal authority within the home and society generally. At the same time, although working men were defined chiefly by their lives outside the home, a heightened emphasis on the privacy of home life can be detected – a development brought on by the dislocation of the Great War, the collapse of “1919,” and the ascendent cross-class consensus about the linkages between the health of the citizenry and the welfare of the nation. On the Vancouver waterfront, this notion is best captured by the title of a report sent by the company union to the labour manager entitled simply, “The Longshoreman

⁴⁶⁴ Cynthia Comacchio, “‘The History of US’: Social Science, History, and the Relations of Family in Canada,” *Labour/Le Travail* 46 (Fall 2000), 167-220.

as Homebuilder.” The third, and final, point is closely related to the first two, and it bears directly on the wider question of the linkages between workplace reform and the rehabilitation of the dominant order. By underwriting the material and ideological basis of this new domestic reality, welfare capitalism and decasualization helped to stabilize the family as a productive unit after the social, economic, and political convulsions of the Great War and its immediate aftermath. To be a “homebuilder” was to have access to property, enjoy the benefits of a privatized household, and fulfill the obligations of a strong, “free-standing” patriarch – all of which were core characteristics, the *sine qua non*, of a healthy liberal-capitalist society.

This specific sense of entitlement, bound up in the politics of a square deal, loomed large with the onset of the Depression. “I served your firm all through the strike and now you want to get rid of me and you go about it in such a manner as to deprive me of even the Decency of a job where a Little Independence was assured during such Depression which is worse than War and I ought to know having served through two now sir.” So said one waterfront worker after losing his job. What is striking, here, is not just the force with which this man denounced the Shipping Federation’s depression-induced austerity measures, but, more specifically, the words that he chose to do so. Capitalized for emphasis, “Decency,” “Independence,” and “War” lay bare something of the powerful sense of entitlement that had emerged on the waterfront after ten years of welfare capitalism. “[We] have responded to the ‘Good Citizen’ policy so strongly advocated for many years,”

echoed another dispirited docker, drawing out more precisely the links between workplace reform and an emerging workplace rebellion. By 1933, an opposition movement, led by former members of the Association and linked to a broader upsurge in support for the Communist Party of Canada, had developed -- its newspaper, Heavy Lift, bearing the imprint of the variegated occupational and political context from which the movement emerged, and within which it operated.

Combining a keen sense for bread-and-butter issues, with a wider vision of virility, militancy, power, and restoration, the opposition movement toppled the company union in 1933 and moved to settle the issues which had dominated workplace relations for some time: equalization of earnings, rotation despatch, and union-control of the hiring hall. The meteoric rise of the "Clean Sweep" cadre was the product of many factors, not the least of which was the shift in attitude amongst most waterfront workers: they knew well that the post-war consensus had been torn asunder, and, by drawing on the ideological resources nearest at hand, cultivated an expanded sense of what it meant to be a citizen and what it took to secure that highly prized objective. As one member of the Shipping Federation put it: "[an] entirely new conception, including plans for its application, of the rights of labor and its position in the economic life of the Country has evolved." At the same time that waterfront workers mobilized to expand the boundaries of working-class citizenship, the Shipping Federation mobilized too, only this time around, it was the threat and later reality of coercion, not the promise and benefits of consent, that was

considered the most effective way to secure the industrial peace. The 1935 strike was crushed by the combined force of capital and the state, and the expanded vision of possibility and entitlement that had given shape to the opposition movement gave way to a sense of widespread disillusionment and fear. "I have had a bellyful of strikes," one waterfront worker observed after the confrontation was officially over.

Historians of communism in North America, both on the left and right of the political spectrum, have judged the Communist Party during the Third Period harshly. Writing within different intellectual traditions, and bent on answering different kinds of questions, Ian Angus, Desmond Morton, Norman Penner, Bryan D. Palmer, and Harvey Klehr all take aim at the relationship between the Comintern and communist movements in Canada and the United States, placing great emphasis on the ways in which Moscow's shifting objectives and tactics determined the nature of national struggles.⁴⁶⁵ But as this examination of the Clean Sweep movement suggests, at the grassroots level, local party activists demonstrated a considerable capacity for independent action: they did not accept the official line uncritically but adapted it to the particularities of the waterfront workplace, dipping selectively into the warehouse of tactics, policy, and propaganda associated with

⁴⁶⁵ Desmond Morton, Working People (Ottawa 1980); Ian Angus, Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada (Montreal 1981), 265-88; Harvey Klehr, The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade (New York 1984); Norman Penner, Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond (Toronto 1988), 97-110; Palmer, Working-Class Experience, 250-67.

being a radical and a red to find what worked and what did not. To argue this is not to lose sight of the long-term impact of the "Stalinist stranglehold" on the party itself; rather, it is to stake out the particular territory within which local activists, many of whom were former supporters of the company union, operated – their zone of political activity.⁴⁶⁶ Neither Stalin nor Tim Buck, leader of the Communist Party of Canada, spoke directly to waterfront workers or their day-to-day concerns, but for a time Ivan Emery, Oscar Salonen, and Blondie Moffat certainly did -- their key publication, Heavy Lift, revealing the precise ways in which local issues, shaped by a decade of welfare capitalism, had trumped the official party line. This assessment underscores the conclusions made recently by John Manley, who has examined the Communist Party of Canada during the interwar period on a broader scale. At the same time, however, by taking a particular workplace and cohort of workers as a starting point, instead of the party itself and its cadres of committed activists, this study is able to pursue key themes neglected in his national study. To wit: the occupational and political milieu that underwrote the groundswell of support for the opposition movement; the day-to-day tensions between radicals who were drawn from the waterfront milieu and those attached to the formal party structure; and,

⁴⁶⁶ The "stranglehold" quotation is from Palmer, A Communist Life: Jack Scott and the Canadian Workers' Movement, 1927-1985 (St. John's 1988), 1-8.

perhaps most importantly, the cultural origins of the movement's simple yet crowning objective: the right to work as "free men."⁴⁶⁷

This examination of the 1935 strike is significant not only for the ways in which it modifies the existing literature on communism in North America, but for what it suggests about the connections between workplace reform after 1919 and the emergence of a deeper and broader Fordist compromise after World War II. Consider this: what is particularly striking about the emergence of the Clean Sweep movement is that few in its ranks thought that conciliation and/or arbitration boards were key to the opposition's success. While Ivan Emery and others who were drawn from within the company union wanted to bargain more than they wanted to strike, they made no call for state intervention; neither did Communist Party members who were more closely aligned to the formal party structure and, as a result, wanted to strike more than they wanted to bargain. From slightly different perspectives, there was a shared sense that waterfront workers could, and should, mount this challenge on their own. In the years that followed the strike, however, that sensibility went into eclipse amongst both moderate and radical labour advocates as workplace defeats such as this, coupled with broader political developments such as the passage of

⁴⁶⁷ According to Manley: "In Vancouver, the WUL rose *apparently from nowhere* to a position of authority on the waterfront, transforming the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers' Association from a company union into the base of operations for a drive to organize longshoring and marine transport throughout British Columbia." See his introduction to Kealey and Whitaker, ed., RCMP Security Bulletins: The Depression Years, Part II, 1935 (St. John's 1995), 9-20. The emphasis is mine.

the Wagner Act and the success of the CIO in the United States, helped grease the wheels of an intellectual and strategic re-orientation. Seen from this vantage point, the 1935 strike stands out as something of a swan song for more voluntarist sensibilities, a notion reinforced by the fact that successive labour battles in British Columbia waged by moderates and radicals alike placed state-sanctioned collective bargaining at the centre of their agenda. The crushing of the 1935 strike did not, in and of itself, produce this new, state-centred approach to labour politics, but it no doubt helped to convince many working people in BC that the labour movement could no longer go it alone, and that industrial legality was, despite the compromises necessary to extract its full protection and benefits, a more desirable option than what they once faced on Ballantyne Pier. Labour activists, especially those linked to the Communist Party, certainly thought so: by operating under the auspices of the state, and endorsing the broad strokes of labour's New Deal, they could present themselves as more mainstream and more legitimate.

All of this looked remarkably different to aboriginal waterfront workers, of course. At the core of labour market reform, and the broader regime of welfare capitalism within which it operated, was both an image of the ideal waterfront worker and the internal mechanisms – the “technologies of normalcy” – necessary to assemble, differentiate, and evaluate prospective employees and to exclude those who did not measure up. Throughout the inter-war period, hundreds of men were eliminated, and among them were aboriginal waterfront workers, most of whom were

Squamish and lived on various reserves on the North Shore of Burrard Inlet -- the demands of decasualization's new time-work discipline running counter to both their more traditional sensibilities and their ongoing need to work at a variety of pursuits to ensure material and cultural survival. The logic of this development, of this marginalization, comes into sharper focus when it is placed against a broader historical backdrop. With the transition to industrial capitalism in British Columbia in the mid-to-late 19th century, the Squamish, like other First Nations, were remade as "Indians" and "workers" simultaneously -- a process that ultimately produced widespread patterns of exclusion and subordination. On the waterfront, this general condition of inequality manifested itself in a variety of ways, not the least of which was a racially-segmented labour market in which aboriginal waterfront workers were confined to particular cargo and a casual status. None of this was taken lying down, of course. Indeed, throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, aboriginal waterfront workers accommodated, resisted, and negotiated the complex skein of race and class on a daily basis, the political cross-fertilization between workplace and land-claims struggles standing out as a poignant example in this regard. In the 1920s, however, the Shipping Federation's assault on the casual labour market was at one and the same time an assault on the status of aboriginal workers. Unlike many of their white counterparts who were taking advantage of the post-war boom in maritime traffic and relatively constant employment, Squamish waterfront workers

were grappling with the consequences of losing what one lumber handler called their "jobs and everything."

As a consequence, Squamish waterfront workers crossed the picket lines during the 1935 strike in an attempt to take back the jobs that they had lost to white workers during the preceding decade under decasualization. The creation of a new north shore organization -- the North Vancouver Longshoremen's Association -- gave aboriginal workers another chance to work on the waterfront. Under the terms and conditions of the new, post-strike collective agreement, it was guaranteed 10 per cent of the available work, an amount that necessitated a membership of about 80 men. The ranks of the new organization contained a large number of Squamish waterfront workers, many of whom, like Gus Band and Tim Moody, had worked on the beach prior to the 1923 strike. After a long hiatus, the "Bows and Arrows" and the "Indian gangs" were back on the waterfront. But not for long. According to research conducted by Stuart Jamieson in the early 1950s -- an inquiry which was part of a broader interdisciplinary look into aboriginal economic development -- the number of aboriginal waterfront workers plying their trade in Vancouver declined sharply in the years following World War II. According to Jamieson, this was due to the ongoing -- and heightened -- regulation, bureaucratization, and decasualization of longshore labour. Or, as Frances Wilfred Thompson, the author of an unpublished master's of social work thesis completed in 1951, put it: "This decline in membership seems to be in inverse ratio to the degree of stabilization in the longshore industry."

As this thesis has demonstrated, however, the stabilization of employment on the Vancouver waterfront, and the erosion of the status of the casual longshoreman that went with it, was underway after the Great War, not World War II. What Jamieson and Thompson were witnessing was simply the final act in a longer drama of economic marginalization.⁴⁶⁸

This argument bears directly on the ongoing debate about the economic contribution of aboriginal people in British Columbia after the fur trade. The opening salvo in this exchange was fired twenty-three years ago by Robin Fisher in his study Contact and Conflict, one of the pioneering works of the so-called first wave of aboriginal history. "With the transition from the fur trade and the consolidation of settlement," he wrote on the book's second to last page, "the Indian had been reduced from an integral to a peripheral role in British Columbia's economy, and this development largely explains the corrosion of traditional Indian cultures after 1858." While few historians have challenged the first part of Fisher's thesis, that the fur trade was characterized by a reciprocal relationship between natives and newcomers, several scholars, including Rolf Knight, Dianne Newell, and John Lutz, to name but three, have taken up his assessment of the settlement phase in BC, in particular, the notion that aboriginals were relegated to the periphery of the

⁴⁶⁸ See Knight, Indians at Work, 123-130 and endnotes 29 and 41 on page 286; Lutz, "Work, Wages, and Welfare," 122-23; Hawthorn, Beishaw, and Jamieson, The Indians in British Columbia, 162-3; Jamieson, "Native Indians and the Trade Union Movement in British Columbia," 219-225; Thompson, "The Employment Problems and Economic Status of the BC Indians," 36. See also Philpott, "Trade Unionism and Acculturation," 36-59.

emerging industrial economy. Although Knight, Newell, and Lutz are concerned with very different dimensions of this question and, as a consequence, have employed very different conceptual frameworks to orient their analyses, they do share a single conclusion, one expressed pithily by Knight, whose unrivaled Indians At Work was first published in 1978: "Indian workers did not become irrelevant upon the arrival of the steam engine and the disappearance of the fur trade." By examining the rise and fall of aboriginal workers in Vancouver -- from contact to decasualization -- this thesis is part of a growing body of work that rejects Fisher's original formulation, a position that, it is important to note, he continues to defend stridently.⁴⁶⁹

This is not to say, however, that this thesis rests easily in the company of the recent work on aboriginals and wage labour cited above, especially that undertaken by John Lutz. Oriented by a concern for contemporary aboriginal issues, Lutz has sought to prove that First Nations people did indeed make the transition to waged labour and it was the combined impact of federal and provincial laws that "effectively created the category of Indians as 'outside the economy'," not aboriginals' inherent shiftlessness or fecklessness that produced today's "welfare colonialism."

⁴⁶⁹ The final point in this paragraph is a reference to the preface to the new edition of Contact and Conflict in which Fisher contends that no scholarship published between 1978 and 1992 refutes his argument; "[Knight] has floated an interesting and important idea," he states. "But he has not done the research to validate it." Knight has responded to Fisher's dismissal in the preface to the second edition of his book, Indians at Work (Vancouver 1996). Although Newell and Knight are united in their rejection of Fisher's position, and agree on the broad strokes of the "aboriginals and wage labour" question, they have their own disagreements. See their exchange in BC Studies 117 (Spring 1998), 75-8 and BCS 118 (Summer 1998), 123-124.

Understanding the roots of this pauperization is, to be sure, a crucial concern, especially at a time when aboriginal communities face staggering levels of addiction, incarceration, and domestic violence, and closely related concerns such as title to land and rights to resources remain a controversial, and largely unresolved, item on Canada's political agenda. But by placing such great emphasis on the agency of aboriginal people, specifically their successful integration into the capitalist economy, Lutz, writing from an ethno-historical perspective, has allowed the class dimensions of this process to fade. In a recent article published in Gendered Pasts, for example, Lutz documents well the impact of colonialism on the Lekwammen, formerly known as the Songhees, on southern Vancouver Island; the gendered dimensions of this dynamic, particularly in the realm of household production and waged work, are, as the title of the book suggests, his principal concern. When viewed through the prism of historical materialism, however, what is striking about this analysis is the author's complete silence on the exploitative and alienating character of this new industrial world of work. Where, one might ask, are the struggles between boss and (aboriginal) worker over the terms and conditions of employment? How did workplace conflict affect the broader relationship between aboriginal people and white society? Lutz's more recent work on the importance of "power, race, and place" in the discursive construction of "Indian" in colonial British Columbia is marked by a similar aversion to questions of class: here, the process of naming and regulating aboriginal people is shaped decisively by geographic

locale, not, it would seem, by the transition from a pre-industrial to an industrial context, and capital's concomitant need to assemble a work force and exploit its labour power in order to accumulate and expand. In short, when it comes to thinking about aboriginals and *waged* work, far from "seizing the historical leadership," as one recent review essay asserts, Lutz has, in many ways, merely returned us to a pre-Marxist position.⁴⁷⁰

To some extent, this critique echoes the long-standing exchange about structure and agency taking place across many disciplines, including aboriginal history; in a more specific sense, though, it is aimed at the elision of class as a category of analysis in BC history generally, a development marked off by a recent, and prickly, exchange between scholars Mark Leier, Bryan D. Palmer, Robert McDonald, and Veronica Strong-Boag.⁴⁷¹ In the context of this study, understanding that the racialization and proletarianization of aboriginal people took place simultaneously is important, not only because it underscores the powerful economic

⁴⁷⁰ None of this is to discount Lutz's significant contribution to our understanding of gender and colonialism. This paragraph is based on a reading of: Lutz, "The 'White Problem': State Racism and the Decline of Aboriginal Employment in 20th Century British Columbia," paper presented at the 1994 meeting of the Canadian Historical Association and quoted in High, "Native Wage Labour," 258; "Gender and Work in Lekwammen Families, 1843 to 1970," 100; "After the Fur Trade"; "Making 'Indians' in British Columbia: Power, Race, and the Importance of Place," 61-84; High made the assertion about "seizing" the historiographical leadership.

⁴⁷¹ For a recent version of the debate about structure and agency see Kelm and Brownlie's "Desperately Seeking Absolution: Native Agency As Colonialist Alibi?"; Kerry Abel, "Tangled, Lost, and Bitter? Current Direction in the Writing of Native History in Canada," *Acadiensis* XXVI:1 (Autumn 1996), 92-101 and Ken Coates, "Writing First Nations into Canadian History: A Review of Recent Scholarly Works," *Canadian Historical Review* 81:1 (March 2000), 99-114 touch on this debate as well. For the debate involving Leier, et al., see his "W[h]ither Labour History: Regionalism, Class and the Writing of BC History," *BC Studies* 111 (Autumn 1996), 61-75 and the responses by Palmer, McDonald, and Strong-Boag in the same issue.

logic driving this dual process, but because it sheds light on the emergence of a racially-segmented labour market; the ways in which more traditional aboriginal culture dovetailed with the exigencies of casualism; how aboriginal workers came to dominate a particular commodity; and, finally, the inter-penetration of class and racial politics on the waterfront and in society generally. Taken together, all five points are particularly significant for they bring into sharp focus the points of divergence and convergence traced out by aboriginal and white workers within the broader context of class formation – a dynamic that the literature on aboriginal history in British Columbia, with its emphasis on land, law, and resources, has left virtually unexplored. That the Squamish were, by the 1940s, deriving an ever-increasing amount of their yearly income from the management of natural resources, while white waterfront workers and their families were settling into lives buttressed by post-war affluence, was due, in large part, to the struggle over the evolving citizen-worker complex that took place on the waterfront in the interwar period. Class, consciousness, culture, and conflict – the staples of labour and working-class history – played a significant role in shaping patterns of life and labour amongst the Squamish; to ignore or downplay this fact is to obscure significant dimensions of their lives that they themselves, like aboriginal people across the country, took seriously, struggled with often, and hoped, in the end, to overcome.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷² On this general point see: Glen Makahonuk, "Wage-Labour in the Northwest Fur Trade Economy, 1760-1849," *Saskatchewan History* XLI:1 (Winter 1988), 1-18; Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia"; Tony Haddad and Michael Spivey,

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In conclusion, at the core of this thesis is an examination of the waterfront's citizen-worker complex: the structured policies and procedures that it contained; the subjective pressures that it exerted; the material and imaginative context that it shaped; and the responses from waterfront workers, both white and aboriginal, that it provoked. The making of the company union and joint committee structure, the implementation of labour market reform, and the gradual internalization of the managerial logic that went with it, broke down customary loyalties and, in the end, instilled an impulse towards self-regulation, what one scholar has called a "government mentality," amongst company union members. This shift did not, of course, go unopposed; any foreman who had a gang walk off the job or suffered a split lip from a cantankerous hatch tender could testify to that fact. Nevertheless, the overall direction of change was both clear and forceful. All waterfront workers were registered, ranked, evaluated, and disciplined on the basis of efficiency. Company union leaders negotiated and administered increasingly long and sophisticated collective agreements which, by the mid-1930s, looked a lot like the agreements that would dominate labour relations during the heyday of industrial pluralism, right down to the existence of management rights clauses. And the labour

"All or Nothing: Modernization, Dependency, and Wage Labour on a Reserve in Canada," Canadian Journal of Native Studies XII:2 (1992), 203-228; David Bedford, "Marxism and the Aboriginal Question: The Tragedy of Progress," Canadian Journal of Native Studies XIV:1 (1994), 101-118; Warburton, "Status, Class, and the Politics of Canadian Aboriginal People."

manager, the "King Bee of the Waterfront," reigned supreme, having successfully pulled waterfront work from the darkness of casualism and the shape-up into the light of organization and efficiency.⁴⁷³

This workplace agenda was informed by, and helped to reproduce, broader trends in social and moral reform which were, by the interwar period, reconfiguring the ideals of citizen and nation. On the job, this translated into a new sense of what an employer owed its employees, a burgeoning sense of entitlement that took on greater significance the more the waterfront labour market was decasualized and the more that waterfront workers successfully acquired the accoutrements associated with "making it," a house, say, or a car. While the word "citizen" had long been a part of the labourist lexicon, in the post-war period, as state and non-state actors took seriously the mending of crisis-torn families and envisioning and instituting a new morality, it possessed a new, broad-base of support and greater legitimacy; in the long shadow of the "war to end all wars" it resonated across the class divide in a new way. With the economic and social calamity of the Great Depression, however, waterfront workers' faith in welfare capitalism and the narrow, contractual vision of citizenship that sustained it, was badly shaken. Although the Clean Sweep movement was crushed, and company unionism restored, waterfront

⁴⁷³ This paragraph draws on the insights contained in: Colin Gordon, "Government rationality: an introduction," in Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, eds., The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality (Chicago 1988), 1-51; Eric Tucker and Judy Fudge, Labour Before the Law: The Regulation of Workers' Collective Action in Canada, 1900-1948 (Toronto 2001).

workers expanded sense of what it meant to be a citizen and, more importantly, what it took to obtain that cherished objective, persisted into the World War II era. That a deep political and cultural shift had taken place, one which would eventually lend itself to making a new deal with the state and industrial unionism, was underscored by the president of the Shipping Federation who remarked candidly just years before World War II: "The psychology of the working-man today is not what it was five or ten years ago."⁴⁷⁴

By situating welfare capitalism in the context of the broader return to normalcy following the Great War, and the significant reform currents that took aim at family, citizen, and nation, it is clear that this experiment in industrial democracy did not "forestall" the welfare state. Rather, by helping to manufacture a new sense of entitlement, one which could not be satisfied during the Great Depression, it played a key role in the gradual cultural transformation that, in time, underwrote the state's very expansion. Put simply: with its emphasis on the male breadwinner, a disciplined and decasualized workforce, and a political culture tightly fastened to the imperatives of productivity and efficiency, welfare capitalism on the Vancouver waterfront prefigured the broader, Fordist social formation that would come to fruition in the post-World War II era. The restoration of welfare capitalism in the late-1930s, then, would only be temporary, as white waterfront workers would eventually

⁴⁷⁴ CVA, Add.Mss 279, Box 67, File 2, J.E. Hall, President, Shipping Federation of British Columbia, to "the Directors," 8 January 1936.

reap the benefits of a new state-centred system that placed a premium on securing the status of the male breadwinner.⁴⁷⁵ Their aboriginal colleagues, however, would not be so fortunate.

⁴⁷⁵ This transformation is examined in detail in Christie, Engendering the State.

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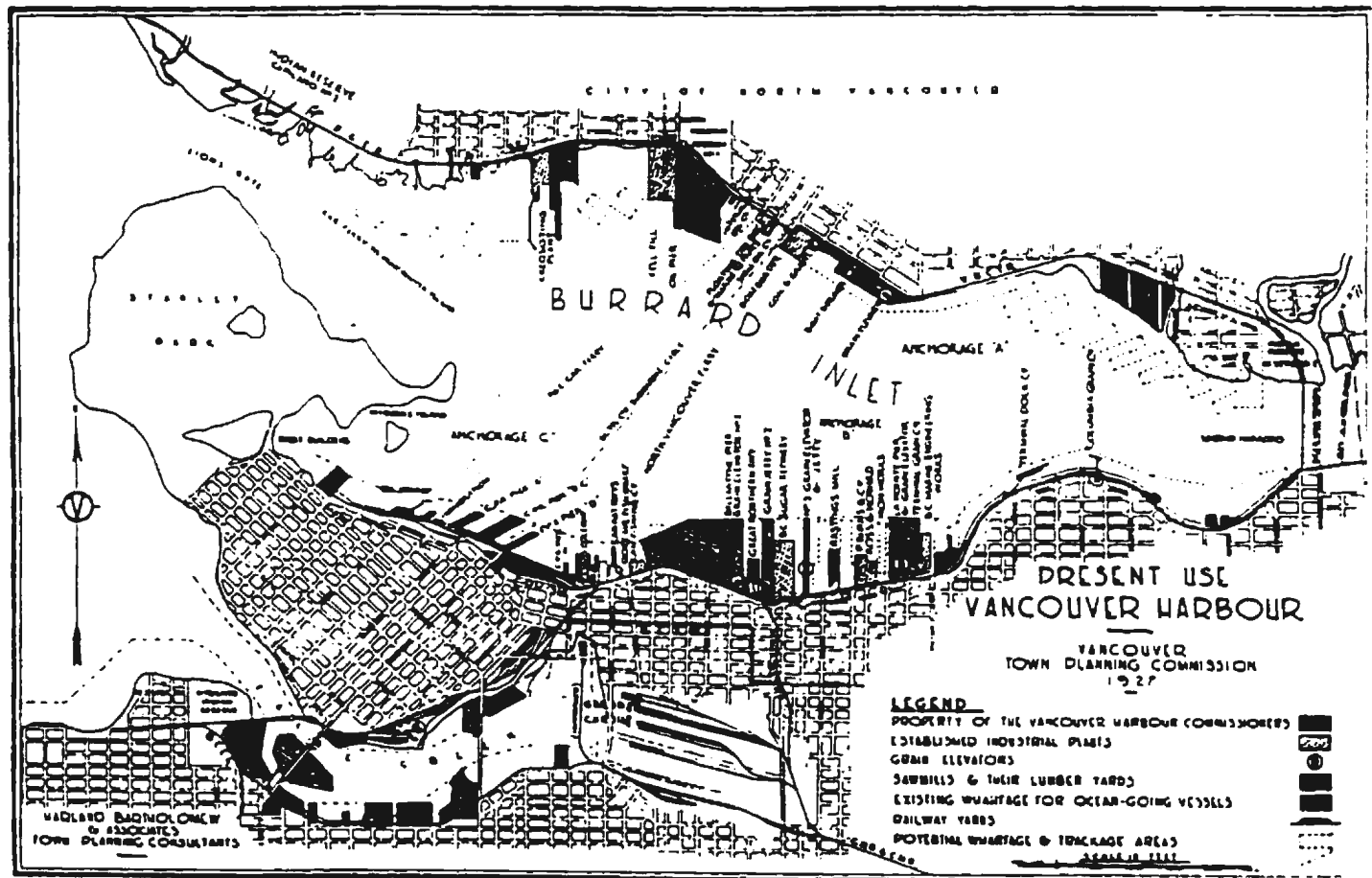
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Appendix 1: Use and Proposed Expansion of the Port of Vancouver, 1927



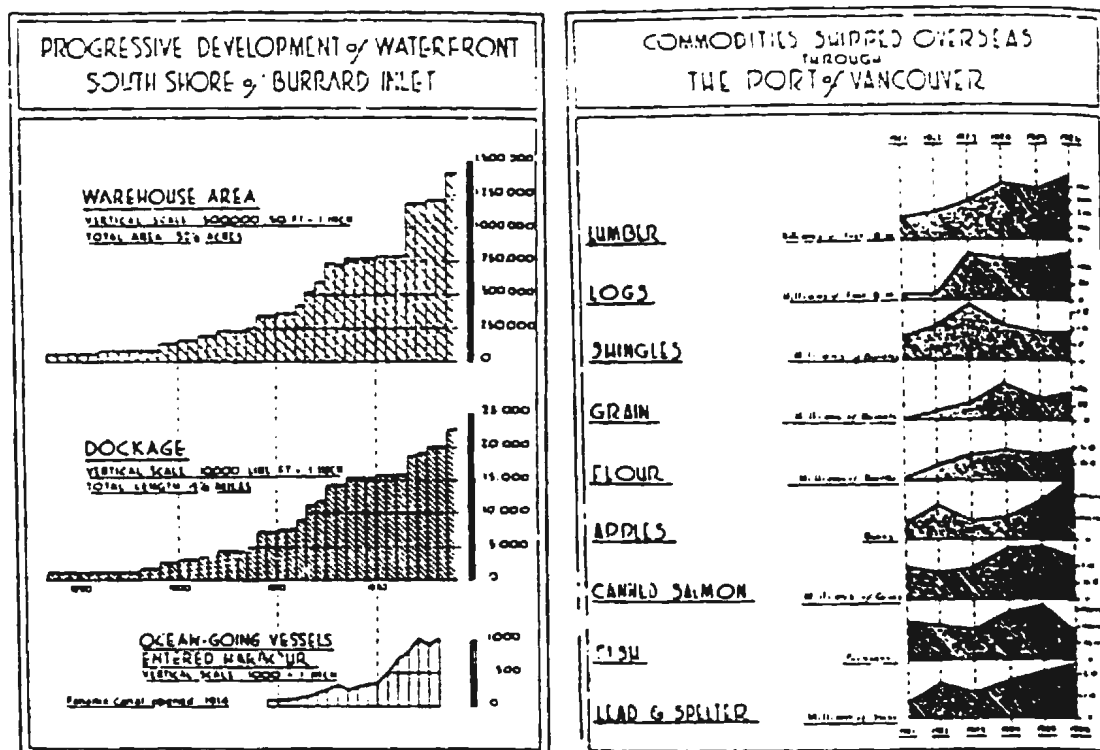
Source: Vancouver Town Planning Commission. A Plan for the City of Vancouver (Vancouver 1929).

Appendix 2a: "Port of Vancouver Statistics"

Category	1912	1921
Regular steamship lines	12	30
Number of vessels inward	9382	11,825
Gross tonnage	4,425,919	9,281,514
Inward freight, tons	575,879 (a)	1,614,000 (b)
Outward freight, tons	259,877 (a)	749,000 (b)
Lumber export (overseas)	25,491,000	89,792,000
Pulp and paper shipments	56,400	146,500

Source: Harbour and Shipping, August 1921; a= deep sea only; b= coastwise and deep sea

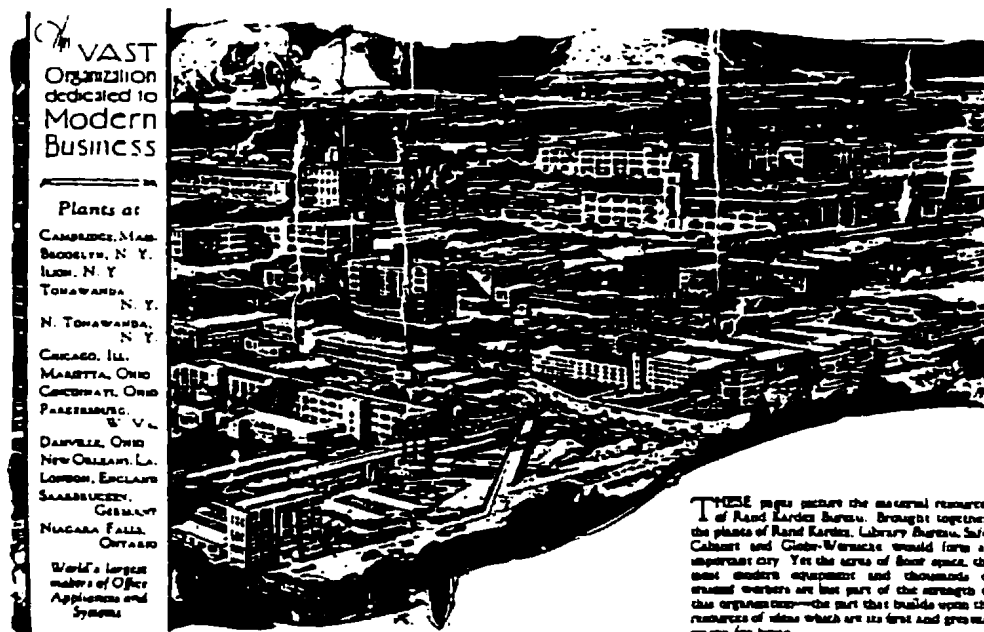
Appendix 2b: "Progressive Development of Waterfront"



Source: Vancouver Town Planning Commission, A Plan for the City of Vancouver (Vancouver 1929).

Appendix 3: The Kardex Man

The ORGANIZATION Behind KARDEX SERVICE



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dedicated to
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THESE pages picture the material resources of Rand Kardex Service. Brought together, the plants of Rand Kardex, Library Bureau, Safe-Cabinet and Globe-Vermaak would form an industrial city. Yet the acres of floor space, the most modern equipment and thousands of trained workers are but part of the strength of this organization—the part that builds upon the resources of ideas which are its first and greatest reason for being.



Have a Talk with The Kardex Man

THE sensible way to start any new record system is to have a talk with the Kardex Man. This is just as true whether the contemplated system is a small index, a large listing or a comprehensive plan of management control.

When you put in a call for the Kardex Man do not think that you are sending for a salesman who will utilize the opening to apply high pressure selling methods and push you into an order for some ready-made plan. That is not the Kardex idea and the Kardex Man does not work that way.

The Kardex Man, both by training and definite instructions, will come to you in a sincere spirit of helpfulness. His primary thought will be to make a study of your individual record-keeping problems. You will find him an authority

on management methods who serves in a consulting capacity.

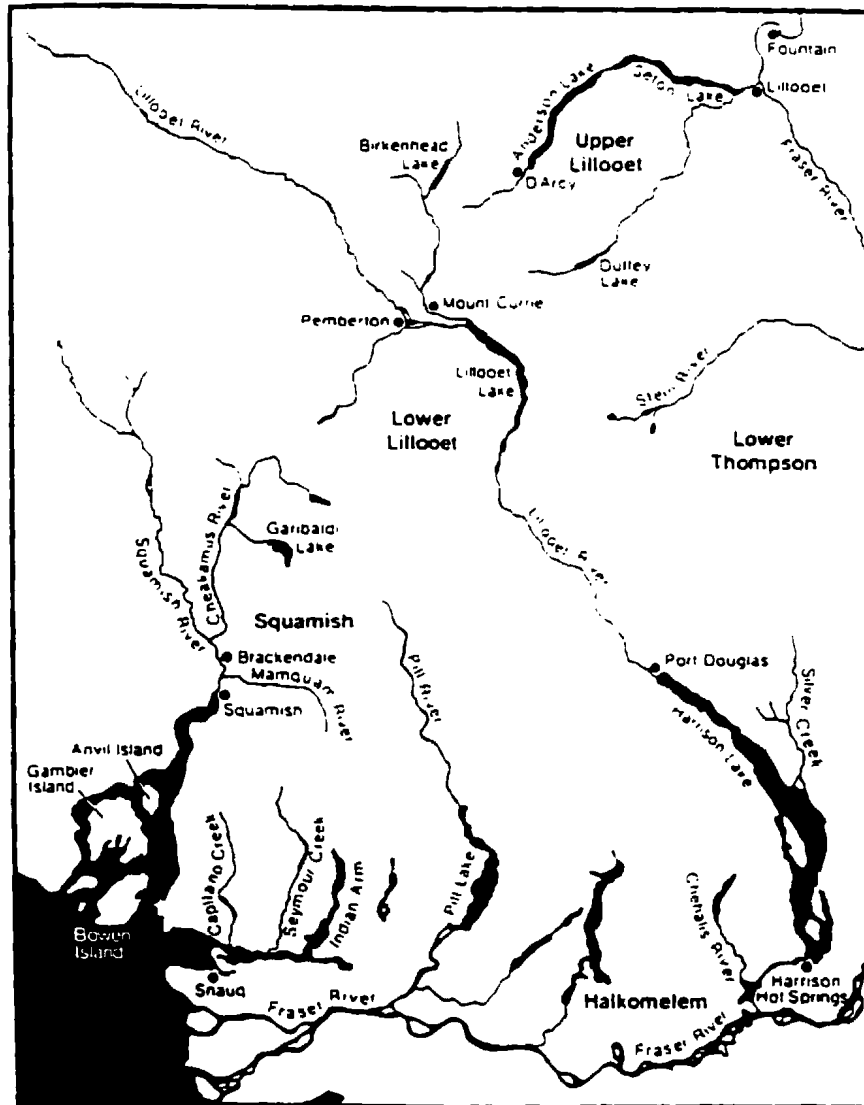
After the Kardex Man has surveyed your requirements, he will place a set of recommendations in your hands. His suggestions will be based on the successful methods used by other concerns but devised to meet your specific conditions. He will do all this for you without placing you under the slightest obligation, either expressed or implied. In nine cases out of ten, the recommendations he presents have such self-evident value that his selling work is done before it is started.

When such expert consultation is available merely for the asking, why not let the Kardex Man know that an open door awaits him at your office?

RAND KARDEX SERVICE CORP'N TONAWANDA, N. Y., U. S. A.

Source: CVA, BCSF, Add.Mss 279, Box 39, File 6, Kardex pamphlet, 1925

Appendix 4a: "Map of Squamish and Lillooet Territory"



Source: Ralph Maud, ed., The Salish People: The Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II (Vancouver 1978), 9.

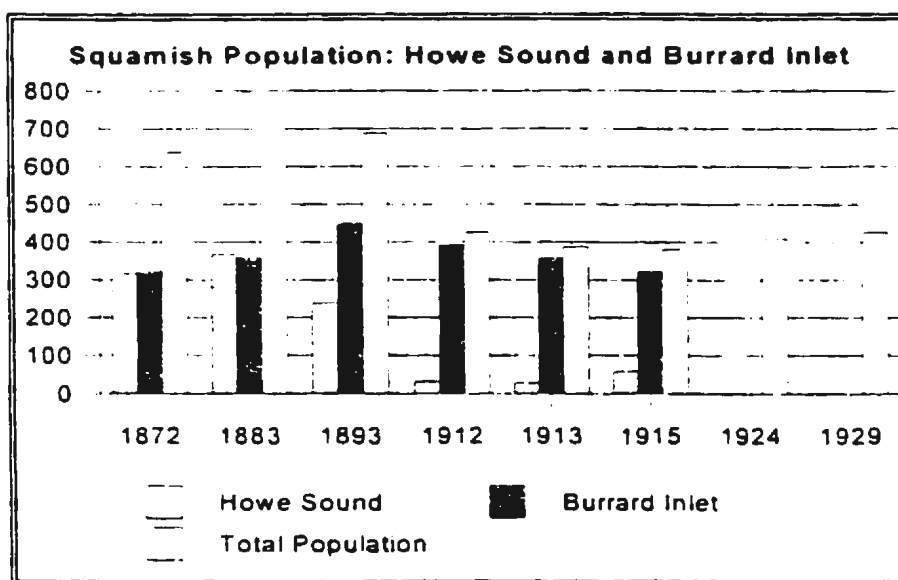
Appendix 4b: "The Lower Mainland in Linguistic Context"



Source: Cole Harris, "The Making of the Lower Mainland" in Harris, ed., The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change (Vancouver 1997), 72.

Appendix 5: Squamish Population, Various Years

Reserve	1872	1883	1893	1912	1913	1915	1924	1929
Howe Sound	317	367	240	33	29	58	NA	NA
Mission	NA	142	253	225	NA	NA	NA	NA
Seymour Creek	NA	58	38	18	NA	NA	NA	NA
Burrard Inlet	322	53	32	36	359	324	410	426
Kapilano	NA	62	61	69	NA	NA	NA	NA
False Creek	NA	44	65	45	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total Population	639	726	689	426	388	382	410	426



Source: The data used in this chart and graph is gathered from several sources: BCARS, RG 10, V3611, F3756-7, "New Westminster Agency, Commissioner Sproat's report on the Squamish River Reserve, 1877" (1872); V4074, F441.744, Ditchburn, Inspector of Indian Agencies to Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, 3 November 1913 (1883-1912); V11021, File 520c; annual reports of the Department of Indian Affairs published by year as part of Canada, Sessional Papers (1915-1929). The totals for Burrard Inlet in 1872, 1913, 1915, 1924, and 1929 include all Squamish reserves in the Lower Mainland area. The "NA" indicates that no data was available for that year.

Appendix 6: Sources of Income, New Westminster Agency, 1913-1923

Year	Farm	Beef	Wages	Fishing	Hunting and trapping	Other Industries	Land Rentale	Timber	Annuities	Total
1913	NA	NA	65,750	59,130	30,680	57,180	NA	NA	NA	254,465
1914	NA	NA	64,250	57,730	30,680	55,680	NA	NA	752	250,317
1915	NA	NA	64,250	57,730	30,680	55,680	NA	NA	5,556	255,121
1916	NA	NA	64,330	57,730	30,580	55,280	NA	NA	3,742	253,287
1917	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1918	NA	NA	35,350	35,350	18,030	30,450	1,200	NA	6,587	134,287
1919	NA	NA	68,800	59,800	27,800	57,250	2,500	NA	6,928	247,278
1920	NA	NA	68,800	59,900	27,800	57,250	2,500	NA	6,928	254,078
1921	NA	NA	68,800	44,950	19,550	49,950	19,855	NA	8,454	251,058
1922	NA	NA	68,700	43,450	17,400	48,450	33,833	NA	8,241	261,174
1923	NA	NA	42,200	8,450	7,650	2000	9,230	18,347	1,717	121,108

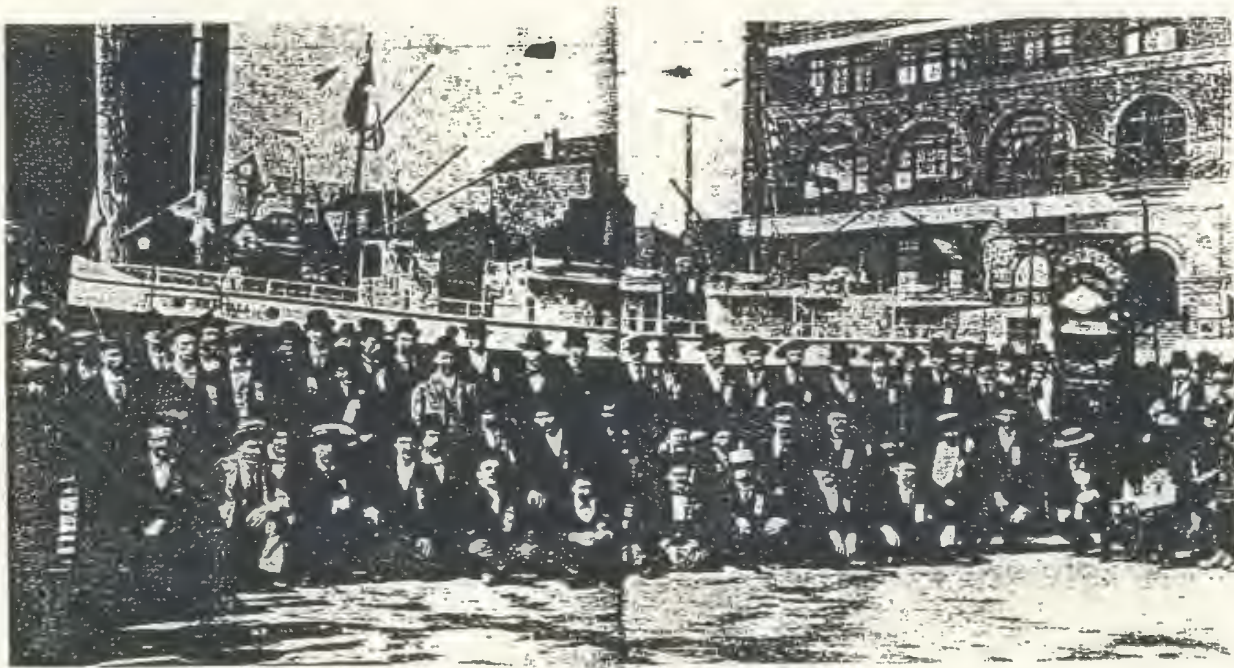
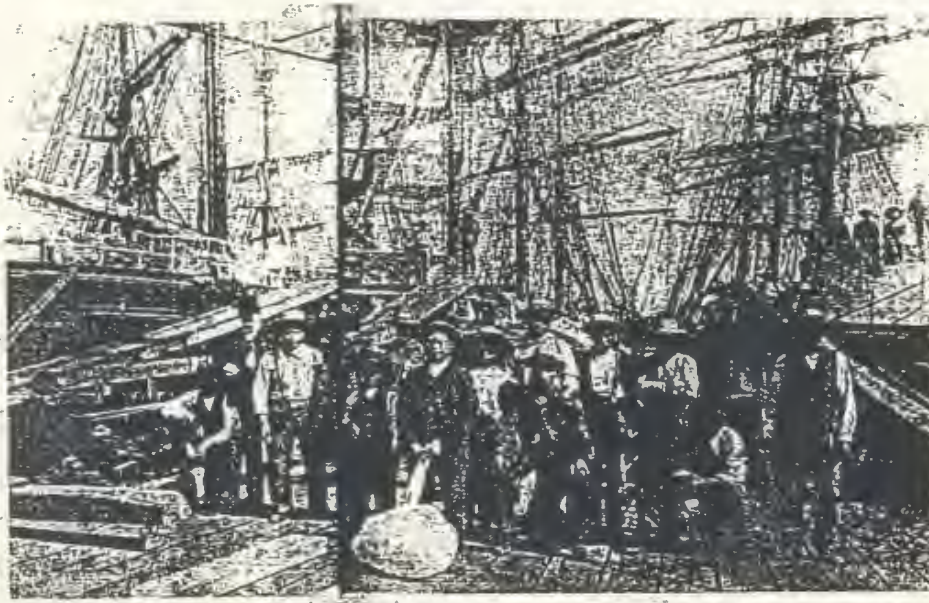
Source: Annual reports of the Department of Indian Affairs published by year as part of Canada, Sessional Papers, 1914-1924; the "NA" indicates that no data was available for that year.

Appendix 7: Sources of Income, Vancouver Agency, 1924-30

Year	Farm	Beef	Wages	Fishing	Hunting and trapping	Other industries	Land Rentals	Timber	Annuities	Total
1924	3 500	100	30 500	28 000	7 600	21 850	5 749	39 566	7 418	145 284
1925	3 500	200	31 000	27 250	8 100	22 700	7 684	50 930	12 263	163 684
1926	3 500	200	31 000	27 250	8 100	22 700	9 089	22 524	12 545	156 910
1927	3 500	200	31 000	27 250	8 100	22 700	9 306	8 691	15 545	123 292
1928	4 600	330	31 000	35 500	10 650	24 700	8 503	2 265	12 636	130 988
1929	6 075	475	41 158	48 600	13 250	25 000	10 218	1 771	12 060	158 626
1930	5 700	400	41 500	48 500	11 150	25 250	17 892	3 896	12 232	166 521

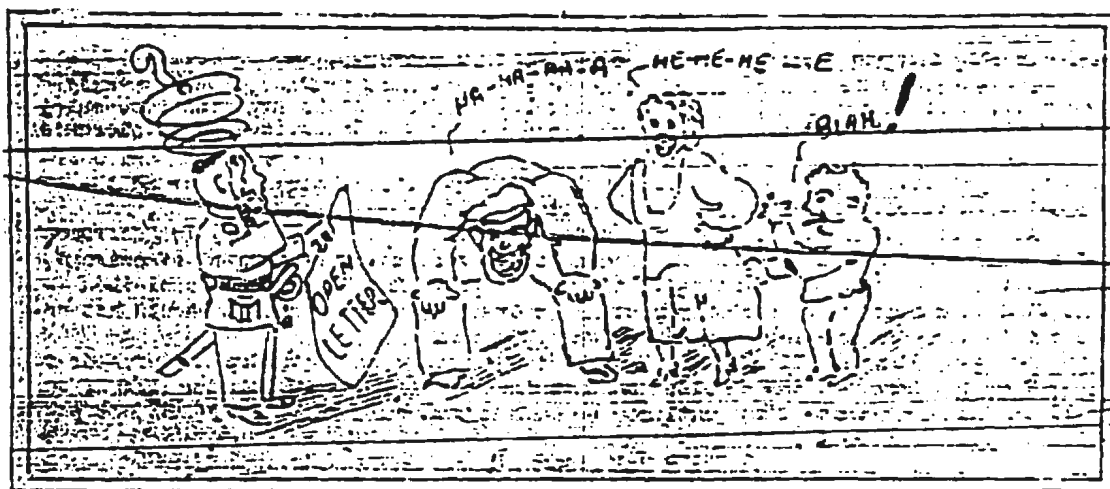
Source: Annual reports of the Department of Indian Affairs published by year as part of Canada, Sessional Papers, 1925-1931; the "NA" indicates that no data was available for that year.

Appendix 8: "Picturing" Race on the Vancouver Waterfront



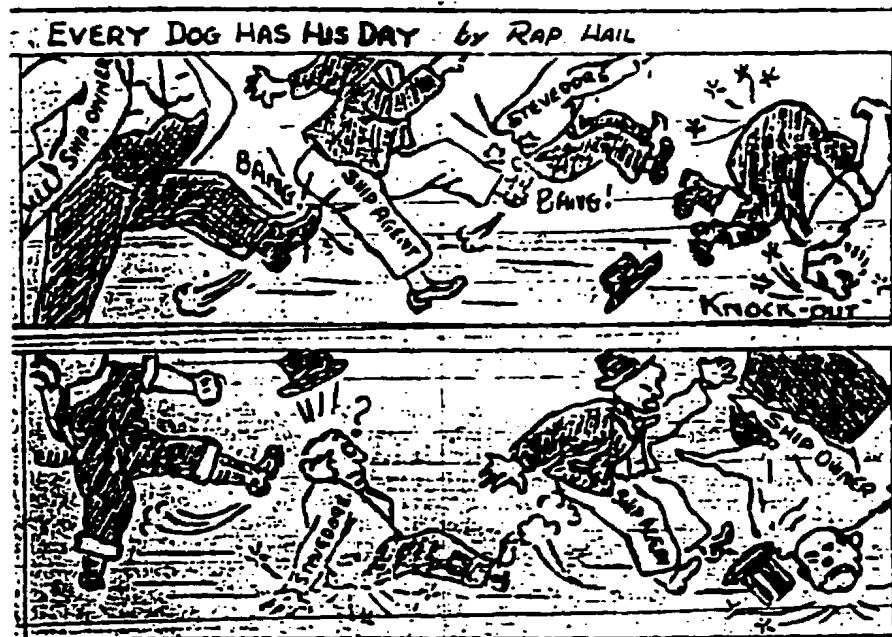
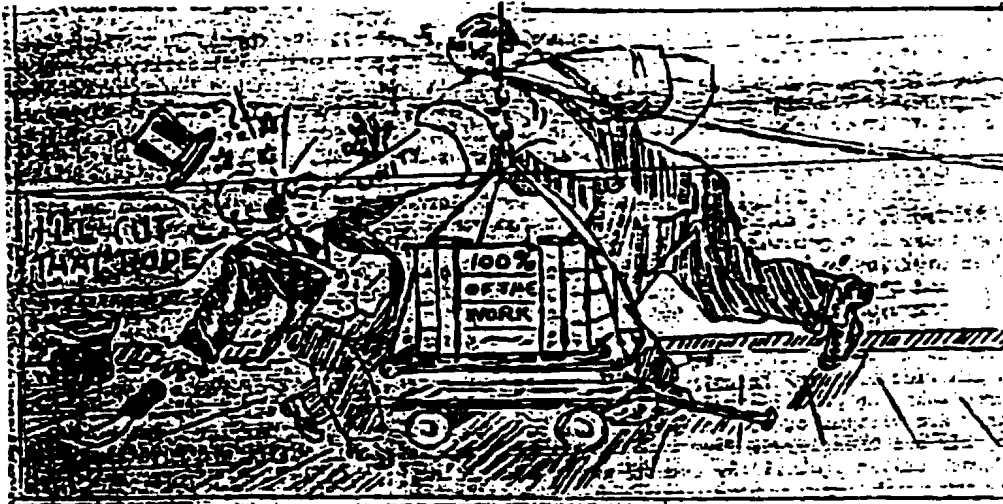
Source: Robert A.J. McDonald, Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863-1913 (Vancouver 1996), 10-11 (top), 82-83 (bottom).

Appendix 9: Lampooning Major Crombie



Source: Heavy Lift, 24 November 1933.

Appendix 10: Mobilizing Masculinity



Source: Heavy Lift, 10 November 1933.



