

Annual Meeting: Committee on Canadian Labour History 2 June 1988

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**Annual Meeting
Committee on Canadian Labour History
2 June 1988**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE (26)

Peter Bischoff
Jacques Ferland
Ian Radforth
Craig Heron
Bettina Bradbury
Andrée Levesque
Ian Duill
Suzanne Morton
Peter McInnis
Lynne Marks
Karen Dubinsky
Carolyn Strange

Elaine Bernard
Linda Kealey
Franca Iacovetta
Denyse Baillargeon
Odette Vincent-Downey
Diana Pederson
Barbara Roberts
Del Muise
Cecilia Danysk
Gail Cuthbert Brandt
Joanne Burgess (Prog.-1989)

Table Officers:
President, R. Babcock
Vice President, P. DeLottinville (Regrets)
Treasurer, G. Kealey

AGENDA

Adopted as presented.

Minutes of last meeting, adopted as published in *Labour/Le Travail*, 22 (1988), 387-9.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Bob Babcock used this opportunity to raise a very interesting discussion of the conference on Australian-Canadian History. Interveners included Jacques Ferland, Bettina Bradbury, and Craig Heron, all of whom attended the meetings in Sydney in December 1988. All agreed that the agenda had been extremely serious, and hopes were expressed that the conference be reconvened in Canada at a future date.

VICE-PRESIDENT

I regret that I am unable to attend this year's meeting of the Labour History Committee. The Association of Canadian Archivists is holding its annual confer-

ence this year in Fredericton at the same time as the Learned's Conference, and as chairman of the ACA Labour Archives Committee, I have conflicting obligations for this week.

I thought it might be useful, however, to give a brief written report on activities in the archival community that may interest members of the Labour History Committee.

At the National Archives of Canada, there are several items of interest to the committee.

1. Acquisition Strategy. The National Archives study of its acquisition policy continues. Although the original schedule for this study called for completion this summer, it now appears that the acquisition strategy work will continue until late fall or early winter. At the present stage, the attention of the acquisition strategy committee has been focussed on general issues, relating to the balance between preservation of federal government records and records of national significance from Canadian society, and general strategies by which these records are preserved. In the next few months, more detailed work should be starting on the examination of particular programmes, such as the labour archives programme, business programme, social and women's programme, etc. These more detailed reviews will be conducted on the divisional level.

The Manuscript Division committee, of which I am a member, would welcome some comment from the Labour History Committee. Although Joanne Burgess volunteered last year for this duty, the delay in schedule meant that little could be accomplished. I would hope that she would be willing to continue this role for the Labour History Committee in the coming year.

2. Publications relating to Labour History. Most Labour History Committee members may know that John Smart, Government Archives Division archivist in charge of the federal labour records, has published his *Records of the Department of Labour, RG 27* guide. The guide contains a brief history of the Department of Labour and a summary description of the series of records contained in this record group.

The Manuscript Division is also planning a guide to the records of labour unions in its custody. This guide, which is similar in format to the recent National Archives guides on the Ethnic Archives programmes and the literary archives guide, is scheduled for publication in the next fiscal year, 1990-1991.

3. The National Archives's Manuscript Division was reorganized in May 1989. The new organizational structure groups archivists into three general sections one section for the records of Prime Ministers, cabinet ministers, M.P.s and political parties; a second section for records of colonial administrations, the Hudson's Bay Company, and papers of civil servants; and a third section for social, cultural, economic, and multicultural records. There is a slight increase in resources for the

political and public records, and more work for all employees in the division.

The former Economic/Scientific Archives section has been renamed the Economic and Scientific Programme. The three former acquisition programmes of Labour, Business and Science and Technology have been regrouped into two larger programmes Labour and Business; and Sciences and Technology, Social Sciences and Health Sciences. Since resources for these two new programmes are the same as for the older section, there does not appear to be any major changes to activities as a result of the reorganization itself. Details of the reorganization will be worked out over the summer.

4. **Collection Storage Space.** The National Archives storage facility in Renfrew, Ontario, is scheduled to open late this fall, but predictions are that severe limitations on space for new acquisitions of government and private records will continue for the next few years. A larger storage facility is planned for Gatineau, Quebec, but will not be completed until the early 1990's. This continued shortage of space will affect the acquisition of both federal government and private archives.

Other developments in the archival community which may be of interest to the Labour History Committee relate to the Association of Canadian Archivists' Labour Archives Group. Over the last year, the Labour Archives Group has been responsible for a special issue of *Archivaria* 27 (Winter 1988-89), on the state of labour archives. The Group has also resolved some internal administrative problems with the ACA executive over the involvement of non-ACA members in the activities of the Labour Archives Group. Currently, the ACA seems to be more open to contact between its special interest groups, like the labour archivists, and other specialist groups with similar interests. As the ACA will meet next year in Victoria as part of the Learned's Conference, perhaps there may be some opportunity for a joint CHA/ACA session?

I will attempt to convince one of my National Archives colleagues to attend the Labour History meeting in my place.

TREASURER AND EDITOR

Gregory Kealey introduced detailed financial statements concerning the journal's activities in 1988, which resulted in a marginal deficit of \$133.49 on expenditures of \$49,476.35, \$19,676.00 of which was covered by SSHRC grants. At the time of writing, the journal had a total of 1,095 subscribers, and the treasurer/editor remarked on a slight shift towards international sales this year.

Among the supplementary publications forthcoming are the proceedings of the Welsh-Canadian Labour History Conference (1987). The co-editor, Deian Hopkin, had hoped to be with us in Quebec, but sent regrets owing to a recent death in the family.

Selected proceedings of the Australian conference are also planned.

OTHER BUSINESS

Attention was drawn to upcoming conferences and events in the Notebook/Carnet.

Franca Iacovetta reported on the upcoming conference on Ethnic Studies, MHSO, Fall 1990, and efforts to keep the New Hogtown Press a going concern.

Eric Sager will be the Programme Co-ordinator for the Victoria meetings of the CHA in 1990. Themes include the Pacific Rim, Native Peoples, and the Nineteenth Century.

LABOUR HISTORY SYMPOSIA

On the urging of Craig Heron, the Committee agreed to support the project of launching informal symposia on Labour History to be held in conjunction with future CHAs.

Since the time of the Quebec meeting the following information has been obtained. The CHA will convene on 27-29 May 1990. The Pacific North West Labour History Association convenes, in the same locale, on 2-4 June. On 26 May, Craig Heron will endeavour to chair the FIRST ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON CANADIAN WORKING CLASS HISTORY, a day-long event that may include: a roundtable on research-in-progress; a panel discussion on the writing on working-class history in the last 10 years; a panel on the peculiarities of the British Columbians, and another on labour history and unions.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The present incumbents at the table were all re-elected by acclamation.

Ian McKay and Peter McInnis were named programme co-ordinators to the Kingston CHA in 1991.

VOTES OF THANKS/CONGRATULATIONS

Were given to Joanne Burgess, for her work on the Quebec programme, Craig Heron, for his achievement as runner-up in the Macdonald Prize competition, and Nikki Strong Boag, for placing first.

Please purchase your copies of *Working in Steel* and *The New Day Recalled*, if you have not already done so.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.