

## Strikes, Bogeys, Spares, and Misses: Pin-boy and Caddy Strikes in the 1930s

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# Strikes, Bogeys, Spares, and Misses: Pin-boy and Caddy Strikes in the 1930s

Ian MacMillan

YOUTH HAVE ALWAYS PLAYED an important role in the economy and labour force, contributing to the collective 'household wage'. This has been especially so in what is now ubiquitously described as the service economy. Historically the gender divisions of labour meant that employment opportunities outside the home were largely restricted to males while young "girls" assisted in family chores inside the home. Boys are thought to have undertaken little household work in the traditional female sphere, although research in this area is quite rudimentary and oral recollections might well be tainted by gendered memories filtered through decades of understanding of what constitutes "proper" male tasks.<sup>1</sup>

During the interwar period adolescents began spending more leisure time away from their parents and enjoyed greater social freedom than their predecessors. In the late 19th and early 20th century the problems of modern youth were initially most commonly associated with working-class boys.<sup>2</sup> Activities ranged from

<sup>1</sup>Neil Sutherland, "'We always had things to do': The Paid and Unpaid Work of Anglophone Children Between the 1920s and the 1960s," *Labour/Le Travail*, 25 (Spring 1990), 105-141, 113. For more detailed information see Neil Sutherland, *Growing Up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television* (Toronto 1997).

<sup>2</sup>John Bullen, "Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario," *Labour/Le Travail*, 18 (Fall 1986), 163-187. The caddies and pin-boys who were involved in strikes demonstrated a high degree of cohesiveness and thus exhibit many of the attributes of youth gangs even though there is no direct evidence of the involvement of gangs. Marcus Klec has suggested that the solidarity of youth gangs during the 1930s was a potential means of collective action in the working world. Specifically he examines male criminality and society's attitudes and perceptions of youth and youth gangs as well as the roles that youth played in supporting their parents' strikes. These issues are

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roaming the streets to participation in organized entertainment or alternatively engaging in new commercial amusements. Urban life and the new leisure or mass culture activities of golf and bowling also increased the opportunities for young boys to earn money. Through working outside the home "boys" were on their way to becoming "breadwinners."

The intent of this article is to illustrate the degree to which unorganized youthful male workers were willing to strike and press for improved wages and working conditions during the 1930s when employed as caddies and pin-boys.<sup>3</sup> One may well ask why it is important to examine these two specific groups of workers and what the similarities and contrasts are between them. In many respects they reflect broader trends in society. Both were employed in the emerging leisure/mass culture market while neither group had full access to consumer participation in that market. Consequently their primary role was as workers, not consumers. Those engaged in caddying included children, adolescents, and young adults who were often married. Available evidence suggests that as the Depression wore on married men increasingly competed for caddying work. In contrast it appears that pin-boys involved only children and adolescents.<sup>4</sup> The wages earned by both groups contributed directly to the family wage. The attitude of employers was that they were simply earning "pocket money" or engaged in "casual labour" that was not intended to support a family. In this sense societal attitudes were similar to those that viewed women's paid work outside the home as mere "pin money."

Two distinct typologies in terms of workplaces/cultures and work patterns may be discerned between caddies and pin-boys. Generally golf clubs and bowling alleys are representative of workplaces and workers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that were declining (craft based production) and emerging (unskilled mass production). Golf caddies were novice apprentices in an increasingly debased craft oriented

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discussed in chapter three "'A Twin Sister of Hard Times': Youth Delinquency in the Great Depression". See Marcus Klee "Between the Scylla and Charybdis of Anarchy and Despotism: The State, Capital, and the Working Class in the Great Depression, Toronto, 1929-1940," Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University, 1998.

<sup>3</sup>No females were employed as pin-boys or caddies in the strikes examined. However, on rare occasions they appear to have worked as caddies. The Royal Montreal-golf club employed females during the 1920s as noted in a photograph in James Barclay's *Golf in Canada, a history* (Toronto 1990), 396. During World War II, when gender roles were temporarily shifted, it appears that girls began to caddy. One example is Marlene Streit, who later won many national and international amateur championships. L. V. Kavanagh, *History of Golf in Canada* (Toronto 1973), 138.

<sup>4</sup>The earliest delineation of distinct life-stages before adulthood were introduced through labour and education legislation. Youth under 14 were classified as children while those between 14 and 18 were adolescents. See Cynthia Comacchio, "Dancing to Perdition: Adolescence and Leisure in Interwar English Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 32 (Fall 1997), 5-35, 8-9. The article examines the shaping of modern adolescence in the interwar period and the attempted regulation of youthful pastimes.

occupation. Caddying was virtually the only route to a professional career as a golf "pro." Even though not all caddies could aspire to a career as a pro, many looked forward to the opportunity. Caddies worked among the upper classes and were subject to paternalistic patrons/employers. In contrast, pin-boys were "unskilled" and worked in a more plebeian atmosphere which resembled a manufacturing or industrial assembly-line type of work, constantly resetting pins. They could be subject to a form of speedup by increasing the number of lanes for which they were responsible. And, although pin-boys were not the direct recipients of welfare capitalism, the winds of welfare capitalism permeated the work environment with many bowling alley customers participating in employer recreation programs. Spatially, the workplaces were obviously distinct as was the number of employees. Golf caddies were generally separated from one another on expansive golf courses and were more numerous than pin-boys with up to several hundred working casual hours seasonally at urban golf courses. Pin-boys worked in close proximity to one another, in groups of up to 25, with more regular hours of employment.

Caddies and pin-boys were the only groups of youthful workers who consistently struck during the Great Depression.<sup>5</sup> Thus they demonstrated active resistance, rebelliousness, and militancy on the job. No such strikes were recorded in earlier decades and they did not occur in later years.<sup>6</sup> Their militancy illustrated an ability and willingness to organize themselves into relatively cohesive units, and take strike action regardless of region, ethnicity, race, and language. Employers were willing to exploit or create barriers based on race, age, marital status, and eligibility for relief. Strike issues for caddies and pin-boys included the employment relationship, union recognition, increases rather than reductions in pay, minimum wages, gratuities, timely payment of wages, restrictions on the number of workers, discipline in the workplace, refusal to undertake unpaid work, the weight of golf bags, and access to free golf.

Therefore working-class caddies and pin-boys were in step with the broader labour movement and were determined to actively resist their employers' demands

<sup>5</sup>Although there were other strikes by youthful workers in 1937, they did not form a consistent pattern over the course of the Depression. Ten boys employed by the Champion Delivery Service in Edmonton staged a successful sit-down strike at their employer's office. In September newspaper delivery boys in Sydney, Nova Scotia, struck the *Halifax Herald* in a successful bid to increase payment rates. The *Toronto Clarion* commented that the strike featured "militant picketing by the newsboys of the shack which is used by the Herald as a distributing centre in Sydney and the mining towns on this side of the harbour." See "Newsies Strike; Win Pay Boost," *Toronto Clarion*, 22 September 1937. The Toronto Newsboys' Union boycotted specific magazines in November of 1937 to forestall an increase in wholesale prices.

<sup>6</sup>This assessment is based on my reading of Department of Labour records. It is important to note that strikes involving "part-time" workers were excluded from the record between 1901 and 1929. Douglas Cruikshank and Gregory S. Kealey, "Strikes in Canada, 1891-1950," *Labour/Le Travail*, 20 (Fall 1987), 85-145, 128.

for concessions. In "Strikes in Canada, 1891-1950" Douglas Cruikshank and Gregory Kealey affirm David Montgomery's assertion that "Strikes can only be understood in the context of the changing totality of class conflicts, of which they are a part."<sup>7</sup> This is also true of the strikes by caddies and pin-boys. Canadian workers generally struck in cyclical waves. In the period 1933-1938 the victories of striking workers exceeded those of employers. The strike waves of 1934 and 1937 in the broader labour movement were the only one-year waves recorded and had considerable success with 63 and 66 per cent of combined strike victories or compromises.<sup>8</sup> These waves also signaled an increase in service sector strikes over previous years. Strikes by caddies and pin-boys generally support this pattern with the critical exception that their strike waves began two years earlier than those of other workers. Caddy strike waves occurred in 1932, 1934, and 1937 and pin-boy strike waves occurred in 1932, 1937, and 1939. Intervention by the state in the form of employment agencies, police, and relief "detectives" was often crucial in breaking the more protracted strikes. While numerous editorials were written by newspapers that were supportive of striking caddies, no such editorial support was granted to the pin-boys from the mainstream press. Instead support came from communist newspapers such as the *Unemployed Worker*.

The Communist Party (CP), through the Worker's Unity League (WUL), played a pivotal role in initiating the strikes and was the only labour group to vigorously assist the youthful workers, particularly the pin-boys, in their attempts to unionize. The first spontaneous (and unsuccessful) walkout by either group of workers was undertaken by pin-boys in March 1932 in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. This would indicate that tensions already existed between youth workers and their employers. Within days of that event, Japanese pin-boys in Vancouver organized by the WUL engaged in a three-week strike against their employer. A few weeks later, also in Vancouver, caddies who appear to have been connected to organizations associated with the CP, undertook the first successful caddie strike. The labour organizations caddies and pin-boys approached in attempts to unionize reflected their distinct workplace cultures. While pin-boys were aided by the WUL, which was attempting to form new industrial unions as an alternative to the skilled craft unions, the caddies sought out the craft union oriented Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. With the exception of support from local labour councils, however, once strikes began, the broader labour movement, unlike the WUL, made no sustained effort to assist the youthful workers.

Information on the caddy and pin-boy conflicts is derived from the Department of Labour (DOL) Strikes and Lockouts Files. Even though DOL representatives often

<sup>7</sup>Cruikshank and Kealey, "Strikes in Canada, 1891-1950," 86.

<sup>8</sup>A strike wave occurs when both the number of strikes and the number of strikers in a given year exceed the average of the previous 5 years by more than 50 per cent. Cruikshank and Kealey, "Strikes in Canada, 1891-1950," 96, 114-115.

doggedly pursued the minutiae of statistical details concerning strikes for their supervisors in Ottawa, this source was usually deficient in terms of providing analysis of the motivations and goals of the strikers. Normally one set of DOL strike forms was to be completed by the "employer" and another set by the "workers." In many instances the worker section remained uncompleted. Individuals associated with the CP were regularly sought out by the DOL to provide information concerning strikes. During the WUL pin-boy strike in Vancouver, Hugh Thornley of the DOL met with Mr. Palmgren of the *Unemployed Worker* and stated that since his paper had placed the strike before the public he should assist in providing information. According to Thornley, Palmgren promised to see the man who provided the information on the strike and have the DOL strike forms completed. Yet three visits by Thornley failed to produce the forms, leading him to conclude that "These people have become very sullen and threatening since the Chief of Police has refused them further permission to parade as the result of their rioting at & in the neighborhood of the City Hall on the last occasion they paraded." Palmgren was also approached by Thornley to provide information on the first caddy strike that took place in Vancouver. Once again Palmgren declined to provide the information.

Given the on-going state repression of the CP in this period, and the party attitude towards state intervention in labour conflicts, it is perhaps not unusual that those associated with the *Unemployed Worker* and the WUL declined to report to the state, or for the state. DOL representatives demonstrated less vigor in pursuing employers who were also reluctant to complete the strike forms. Ironically newspapers seem to have provided the most detailed information on the strikes and the motivations of the employees. Many brief and spontaneous strikes may have escaped the attention of the DOL due to their reliance on newspapers to learn of their occurrence. For instance a brief strike by caddies in Cobourg, Ontario, was reported by the Canadian Press wire service and carried in the *Montreal Star*. Likewise a strike by caddies in St. Thomas, Ontario, was reported on by the *Ottawa Evening Citizen*. This leaves the impression that if a wire story was not picked up by a large newspaper, strikes could well go unreported.<sup>9</sup>

The caddy and pin-boys strikes were set against the cultural backdrop of ideological conflict between amateurism and professionalism in sports and the gradual transition from socially-based to commercially-ordered sporting activity. A relative demise of amateurism in sports and the rise of commercial and professional alternatives was a feature of the interwar period. Amateurism was a system that worked primarily for the middle and upper classes' that championed it, allowing them to develop professional careers outside of sports while simultaneously engaged in sporting activity. For example, during the 1920s, amateur univer-

<sup>9</sup>Headlines reflected the differing perspectives and ranged from "Rosedale's Laddies Drop Bags, Strike" of the *Toronto Star*, to the more charged *Unemployed Worker* cry that the "YMCA Supplies Scabs," or the *Toronto Clarion* "Caddies Watch Club Members Heave Sticks."

sity hockey and football teams regularly won the Allan and Grey cups. Working-class athletes, in contrast, had less time or means for such pursuits, particularly at the highest levels of competition. For working-class athletes the severe economic constraints of the Depression removed the material and ideological props on which amateurism was based. Few could afford the "honour" of supporting the class-based amateur codes which kept sports such as golf exclusive.<sup>10</sup> For caddies class distinctions were personalized and highlighted in the world of amateur golf, with the direct, unmediated hostilities of the job an ever-present reality. Caddies described those whom they served as "parasites" and "tightwads." Conversely, class distinctions were more muted in commercialized bowling, although the collective content of working-class resentment was more singularly focused. Pin-boy wrath was not aimed at patrons, but rather at the owners of bowling alleys.

*Pin-boys: The Employment Relationship and Social Setting*

Unorganized "pin-boys" employed at bowling alleys showed a strong proclivity to strike in order to secure improved working conditions and wages, and to address workplace rights and grievances. Nine work stoppages among young bowling alley workers took place over the 1930s.

In some respects the pin-boy employment arrangement was similar to that of the caddies. For instance pin-boys were also paid (daily or weekly) on the basis of piece-work dependent upon the number of sets or games that were played. Like the caddies they were exposed by managers to arbitrary discipline and discretionary power in relation to the allocation of available work. They were also asked to undertake unremunerated tasks and were subject to unilateral reductions in wages. Yet, unlike the caddies, pin-boys held year round employment and were not faced with the revolving labour pool common to the caddy shack. In addition, pin-boys do not appear to have been supplanted during the Depression by older workers, perhaps due to the physical constraints and relative rigors of the work. Therefore pin-boys reflected a particular life cycle and literally grew out of the job. In a similar manner to caddies, pin-boys most often struck when wage reductions were threatened and prior to tournaments when pressure could be most effectively applied on the employer. The last major distinction of the pin-boys is that the labour movement in the form of the WUL attempted to organize them through the Union of Amusement Workers of Canada.

Initially, like golf, bowling had been an elite sport, although it would eventually become a more plebeian past-time. Five-pin bowling was invented in Canada by Thomas Ryan soon after the turn of the century. Ryan owned a ten-pin bowling alley in Toronto and attempted a number of experiments to reclaim the interest of elite patrons. Five-pin bowling with its smaller pins and lighter bowling balls was Ryan's innovation to the sport, a direct attempt to attract elite patrons who found

<sup>10</sup>Bruce Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (Toronto 1996), 62, 77.



Man and woman bowl their way to health as team-mates watch in the background. Barely perceptible beneath the "Bowl Your Way To Health" sign are the suggestions that through bowling one finds the rewards of Sport, Friendship, Skill, Competition, Thrills, and Health. Circa 1945. *National Archives of Canada/PA-127414.*

the ten-pin bowling ball too heavy, and the game overly strenuous. However, the relative accessibility of bowling to the masses is perhaps a more likely reason why elite audiences were dissuaded from participating.

Bowling took root in the prairie provinces and expanded rapidly in the early interwar years. Corporate welfare programs promoted leagues representing various types of employers (Canadian Pacific and Great West Life); retailers (Robert Simpson, Eaton's, and R.H. Williams); and manufacturers (John Deere and General Motors).<sup>11</sup> In addition the Co-operative Elevator League had teams of men and women. From a management perspective, recreation was important in giving workers a sense of achievement that may have been lacking on the job, while simultaneously promoting teamwork. It also hindered union organizing campaigns by breaking down the social barriers dividing management and workers.<sup>12</sup> Yet

<sup>11</sup>In Chicago (where the structure of the economy would bear much resemblance to Winnipeg) large employers such as International Harvester began to offer recreation programs from the 1870s until the Great Depression. Company sponsored teams were found in sports such as baseball, billiards, bowling, and football. Paternalism and self-interest had motivated employers to structure leisure time. See Gerald R. Gems, "Play For Pay: Sport and Industrial Recreation In Chicago," *Purview Southwest*, (1991), 105-15.

<sup>12</sup>For information concerning the role of sports and recreation in the struggle for the allegiance of the work-force see Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, "Contested Play: Company, Union, and Industrial Recreation, 1945-1960," *Labor's Heritage*, 6 (Summer 1994), 4-21.



socially, on the prairies, bowling leagues were thought to be the forerunner of service clubs.<sup>13</sup> Bowling was given a boost in September 1921 when an actress from a touring Pantages vaudeville show visited a bowling alley in Regina and enjoyed the game, stirring public interest and opening the door for other women.<sup>14</sup> Operators soon began encouraging women's leagues.

Women's involvement in bowling, and the expanding commercialization of sports in general, represented a growth area for bowling alley operators. The notion of women bowling and playing snooker (games that often operated under one roof), caused a degree of social and perhaps sexual excitement for the young pin-boys. Josh Mayer, a thirteen-year-old Regina pin-boy, recalled that in the late 1920s, "When we weren't busy, we'd get to see Luba Skerlton play snooker. And that was an eye-opener for guys our age."<sup>15</sup> At three cents a string for one bowler, and six cents for two, Mayer made eight dollars to ten dollars per week in what he described as a back-breaking job. Normally he would take a sandwich and a Pepsi and begin his shift behind the pins in the morning when two or three games would be played. In the afternoon the women's leagues would come in and play two games. One pin-boy could handle two alleys that would net him sixty cents. Later in the day Mayer would work five-pin games that paid two cents per bowler. The situation for pin-boys in Ontario was much the same as on the prairies with one pin-boy reporting that he would skip school to work the women's afternoon leagues and stay up until midnight on Friday and Saturday earning a total of from four dollars to four dollars and fifty cents per week.<sup>16</sup>

The working conditions, responsibilities, and ability of pin-boys to effect the outcome of bowling games was best described by Doug Miller, a pin-boy and later bowling alley operator and organizer of youth leagues in Ontario:

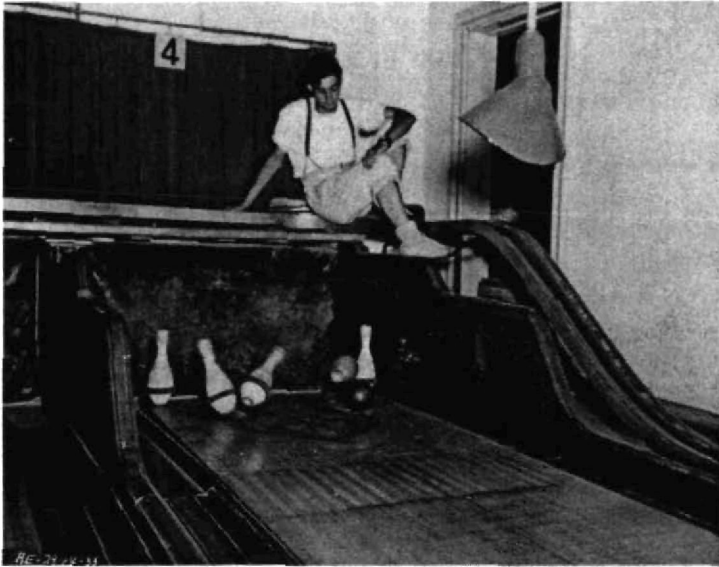
Pinboys had to look after their own lanes in those days. We had to keep them clean, dusted, oiled, and always in top shape with no nails or bumps because open bowlers, especially the

<sup>13</sup>Ned Powers, *Strikes 'n' spares: The History of Bowling in Saskatchewan* (Saskatchewan 1993), 8.

<sup>14</sup>Powers, *Strikes 'n' spares*, 8.

<sup>15</sup>Powers, *Strikes 'n' spares*, 4.

<sup>16</sup>Doug Miller, *At the beginning of youth bowling* (Toronto 1987), 17. With the exception of Quebec, most provinces raised the school leaving age from fourteen to sixteen during the early 1920s. Despite such legislation it is obvious from personal accounts by pin-boys that many "skipped" school to work during the day. There is little reason to believe that a significant number of golf caddies did not also skip school in the early spring and fall in order to earn money. For a detailed examination of the relationship between work and school for working-class teenagers see Craig Heron, "The High School and the Household Economy in Working-Class Hamilton, 1890-1940," *Historical Studies In Education/Revue d'histoire de l'education*, 7 (1995), 217-259. Heron strongly supports the premise that teenage wages continued to be a critical element of the family or household economy during this period.



Pin-boy waits to reset pins as the camera catches a promising strike in motion. R.C.A.F. Convalescent Hospital. 6 August 1945. *National Archives of Canada/PA-65389*.

good bowlers (good tippers), soon got to know who the best pinboys were. Working the major [bowling] leagues, you soon learned who to knock over the odd corner pins for or who to set the head pin just ahead of the spike for, this of course made it almost impossible to get a strike. Each boy kept track of games or lines bowled and at 12:00 on Saturday night we got paid, less whatever number of Cokes we had at five cents each through the week or chocolate bars which were also a nickel. The manager, I can't remember his name, always shorted us 25 or 30 cents. It doesn't seem like much now, but to earn 30 cents, you had to set 20 lines or about one and a half hours of bowling on two lanes.<sup>17</sup>

Bowling alley operators, it would appear, had their own version of the company store based upon the pin-boys' seeming addiction and consumption of colas and candy bars. Although pin-boys worked and consumed confectionery products at the bowling alleys, the hours that youth were allowed to bowl were generally restricted. As late as 1940, the operators of bowling alleys in Regina went to city council in a failed bid seeking to open their premises to boys and girls fourteen and over until 6 p.m., and to boys and girls sixteen and over anytime during the evening hours. Youth therefore were increasingly viewed as potential consumers of recreational services by bowling alley operators. Some city councilors compared the bowling alleys to pool halls, alluding to a noxious reputation for gambling. Others were concerned that not all parents would have a pocket full of two-bits, and

<sup>17</sup>Miller, *At the beginning of youth bowling*, 17.

therefore distinctions of access would arise between children in relation to their parents' ability to provide the necessary pocket money.<sup>18</sup>

*Pin-Boys: "Strikes 'n' Spares"*

A popular bowling location in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, was the "Bowlerdrome" which had eight lanes and was located above a furniture store. One bowler recalled that prior to the standardization of pin and bowling ball sizes, the owner of the Bowlerdrome would not throw out bowling balls after they became chipped. Instead they would grind down the balls until they were smooth and before long they would often be as small as a softball.<sup>19</sup> It was frugal behavior such as this by the owner of the Bowlerdrome that led to the first pin-boy strike. As in the case of caddies, pin-boys were often asked to perform work for which they would not be paid, underlining the potentially exploitive nature of the work. In March 1932 the six pin-boys who worked at the Bowlerdrome refused to shovel snow in front of the bowling alley without remuneration and consequently were fired. Thus Canada's first pin-boy strike was settled "in favour of the employer" when the boys were "terminated" the next day.<sup>20</sup>

The paternalistic beneficence of welfare capitalism exhibited by large employers such as Canadian Pacific, in part through the establishment of bowling leagues, was not extended by the owners of bowling alleys to their pin-boys.<sup>21</sup> Within a week of the unsuccessful and spontaneous pin-boy strike in Prince Albert, twenty-four pin-boys at Chapman's Bowling Alley in Vancouver went out against a reduction in ten pin piece rates from 3 cents per set to 2 cents per set. Ernest Chapman, the owner of the bowling alley, reported to the Department of Labour that the pin-boys worked between 7:00 and 12:00 each evening, and that to resolve the strike, "White Boys were put in place of Japanese and appear satisfied."<sup>22</sup> Chapman stated that the Japanese "boys had been induced to join the 'Reds'."<sup>23</sup> The *Unemployed Worker* reported on the strike, accenting the importance of class solidarity, drawing attention to the pro-union stand of the young Asian pin-boys and unfortunate role of white youth, recruited as scabs:

<sup>18</sup>Powers, *Strikes 'n' spares*, 69.

<sup>19</sup>Powers, *Strikes 'n' spares*, 69.

<sup>20</sup>National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC), Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 350, File 28.

<sup>21</sup>Welfare capitalism arose out of the labour turmoil of the pre and postwar period and was designed to gain the loyalty of workers through worker-employer cooperation. This was manifested through personnel departments, pension programs, profit sharing schemes, employee benefits, and recreation programs that would dissuade workers from unionizing.

<sup>22</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 350, File 41.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

The Workers Unity League, which is organizing these workers, has always stressed the unity of the whole working-class, regardless of race, color, or creed.

Oriental workers have repeatedly shown that they will organize solidly with the white workers and fight for conditions. It is not the Oriental worker that is a menace to living standards, but the unorganized worker.<sup>24</sup>

Communist Party organizations, in the early 1930s, continually challenged prevailing ideas of racial hierarchy, taking considerable pride in organizing minorities of colour.<sup>25</sup> The pin-boys were being represented by the Union of Amusement Workers of Canada, affiliated to the WUL. Most often led by communists, the WUL has been credited with developing new unions and strategies of class action during the early years of the Depression.<sup>26</sup> By 1932 the WUL had organized 40,000 workers in Canada, a substantial feat at a time when the labour movement was dormant. As the product of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), the WUL was theoretically a revolutionary trade union centre, attempting the formation of industrial unions in opposition to the craft-based Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. Although the role and place of the WUL within the CP was often ill-defined, the intent was that it would lead the economic struggles of Canadian workers. Among its responsibilities was the guidance of the National Unemployed Workers' Association; the establishment of a workers' defence corps to protect demonstrations and picket lines; the direction of youth sections in the unions; and lastly, the formation of the Workers' Sports Association. Employers often knew that the state would back them in refusing to recognize the "revolutionary" WUL, due in large measure to its affiliation with the foreign RILU. Despite its bold and novel approaches the WUL left behind an uneven record of achievements, which came to a halt as it was disbanded by Comintern dictate in 1935.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, through the Union of Amusement Workers of Canada, pin-boys sought the restoration of wages, union recognition, and the abolition of the Japanese "Boss" system. The "Boss" was most often an individual from a minority of the same ethnicity or "race" dominating the workforce who would act as an intermediary supplying labour to employers below the prevalent wage of "white" workers.

<sup>24</sup>"YMCA Supplies Scabs," *Unemployed Worker*, 12 March 1932.

<sup>25</sup>John Manley brings this out in his article "'Starve, Be Damned!' Communists and Canada's Urban Unemployed, 1929-39," *The Canadian Historical Review*, 79 (September 1998), 466-491, 480.

<sup>26</sup>Bryan D. Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour* (Toronto 1992), 229, 245.

<sup>27</sup>Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond* (Toronto 1988), 104-106. Also see Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years Of The Communist Party Of Canada* (Montreal 1981); and John Manley, "Communists And Auto Workers: The Struggle For Industrial Unionism In The Canadian Automobile Industry, 1925-1936," *Labour/Le Travail*, 17 (Spring 1986), 105-134.

Bosses would discipline the workforce acting as an overseer while receiving a cut of the wages earned.

On 16 March 1932 fourteen of the young Japanese pickets at the struck Chapman's Bowling alley in Vancouver were arrested on a charge of obstructing traffic and vagrancy, and brought to trial after spending seven days in jail. The *Unemployed Worker* reported that one youth was tried first as a test case and that the crown witnesses consisted of Ernest Chapman, "three flatfeet," and a civilian. The Canadian Labor Defence League succeeded in defending those charged.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, it was noted in the *Unemployed Worker* that, "Even in a strike of this modest scale, the State forces are brought in to defeat the workers."<sup>29</sup> Police had been present at the strike scene for a week. The WUL was successful in gaining a resolution from the Trades and Labor Council protesting to the City Council and Police Commission the "brutal and unwarranted attack of the Cossacks, and the RCMP on the demonstrators."<sup>30</sup> However, there was not enough solidarity to endorse and sustain the strike at the Trades and Labor Council. Support for the strike was achieved, however, through the endorsement of the local Building Trades Council.

The *Vancouver Sun* commented that, "The bowling alley management state they had no trouble in replacing all the Japanese and other strikers with a full staff of white boys who were glad to get the work."<sup>31</sup> Newspaper reports confirmed that strike breakers were recruited through the government employment agency while the *Unemployed Worker* stated that, "The YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] supplied scabs who were brought in by automobile guarded by a large force of police."<sup>32</sup> Throughout the 1930s both the YMCA and the CP were assiduously courting the youth of Canada. The Young Communist League (YCL) sought to discredit organizations such as the YMCA and the Boy Scouts, "capitalist" organizations regarded as competitors for the attention of youth. In *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* Bruce Kidd notes that the YCL regularly "exposed" the YMCA for its role in suppressing workers in India, China, and Korea. Additionally the YMCA, as was the case in Vancouver, was the object of derision for strike-breaking and masking the fundamental antagonisms of class relations in North America through programs such as the Railway Y operated by the large railway companies.<sup>33</sup> Class

<sup>28</sup>For information on the important role of the Canadian Labor Defense League see J. Petryshyn, "'Class Conflict and Civil Liberties': the origins and Activities of the Canadian Labor Defense League, 1925-1940," *Labour/Le Travail*, 10 (1982), 39-64. For information on state repression of the Communist Party see Lita-Rose Betcherman, *The Little Band: 1928-1932* (Ottawa 1983).

<sup>29</sup>"Pickets Arrested," *Unemployed Worker*, 19 March 1932.

<sup>30</sup>"Trades Council Refuses Support To Strike," *Unemployed Worker*, 19 March 1932.

<sup>31</sup>"Police Go To Pinboy Strike," *Vancouver Sun*, 11 March 1932.

<sup>32</sup>"YMCA Supplies Scabs," *Unemployed Worker*, 12 March 1932.

<sup>33</sup>Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport*, 167.

tensions within the YMCA in dealings with the unemployed are evident in the following report from the Ottawa YMCA:

There is a difficulty created by the presence in the lobbies of lads and men who have come in from the "jungle" or the freight train, and are "bumming a wash." Surely this is a work which the YMCA ought to be doing to help them, but the "regular customers," or in other words, the paid membership, do not feel exactly comfortable—fellows are "held up" at the door of the "Y" for the price of a meal and a bed and sometimes the threat of what may happen if they don't get their request goes all too far.<sup>34</sup>

The contrast in goals between the YCL and the YMCA could not have been more stark in their respective attempts to deal with the unemployed. The "Y" came to regard relief measures as the responsibility of "other agencies" and instead focused "on trying to fill the enforced leisure time of youth with positive and useful activities."<sup>35</sup> Hence the YMCA's euphemistically named "Leisure Time League" was founded in Calgary in 1931, and quickly spread across the country. Yet even the Y soon realized that such nebulous activity was not a substitute for work. Consequently the focus was shifted to job opportunities and "employment bureaus" were organized. In addition the Y helped found the Canadian Youth Congress and raised money for it appealing to "well-to-do business men, often unsympathetic with 'radical youth,' for financial support of the congress."<sup>36</sup> Given the operational, ideological, and paternalistic leanings of the Y, it is little wonder that they eagerly supplied scabs for the management of Chapman's Bowling Alley.

What, then, were the inherent merits of the pin-boy organizing campaign for the WUL and its affiliated organizations? One of the intentions of the YCL was to aid the WUL organizing drive by creating factory sport leagues. Writing in the *Party Organizer* Dave Kashtan stated that:

There are thousands of young and adult workers who belong to factory teams in some of the most important industries where the [Communist] Party has as yet no contacts whatsoever. These teams are utilized by the employers as a weapon of keeping down the militancy of the workers.<sup>37</sup>

Kashtan went on to suggest that the YCL organize sport clubs alongside the WUL's "Revolutionary Trade Unions" and build up the Workers' Defence Corps. The YCL believed all recreational activity should be explicitly linked to the class struggle. Moreover, whatever the individual merits of the organizing campaign among pin-boys, the WUL may have viewed the plebeian atmosphere of bowling alleys such as Chapman's as a beachhead from which to recruit proletarian youth.

<sup>34</sup>Murray Ross, *The Y.M.C.A. in Canada: The Chronicle of a Century* (Toronto 1951), 383.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 385.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 389.

<sup>37</sup>Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport*, 168-69.

Simultaneously they could advance issues of racial equality and trade unionism and create alternative factory sport clubs/leagues while discrediting recreation programs established through welfare capitalist factory leagues. Significantly, Chapman operated four other bowling alleys in Vancouver whose organization would have provided the WUL with a solid base from which to launch such an ambitious campaign. However, after more than three weeks of intense struggle against the judicial system, the police, and the employer, the campaign to organize Chapman's faltered.

Although the WUL was unsuccessful in gaining recognition in Vancouver, this did not prevent other pin-boys organized by the WUL from going on strike. Late in 1932 pin-boys employed at the Piccadilly Bowling Alley in Winnipeg walked out and gained a half-a-cent increase per set, amounting to a substantial increase of two dollars a week.<sup>38</sup>

By the time of the next pin-boy strike in 1937 the WUL had been disbanded due to the changing policy dictates of the Comintern. This strike took place in Winnipeg at the Central Bowling Alley. Pin-boys had walked out and picketed the premises after one of their number was fired for "alleged faulty work." They refused to return to work until he was reinstated. The *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that the boys claimed the dismissal was unreasonable and that the charge against fourteen year old John Garbolinsky of "being rough" was unwarranted. Two days of picketing brought rather spectacular results: "Then the boys, headed by the small dark lad who had been fired, returned and placed several demands before him [Morris Halter, the proprietor], one of which was that he would not come near his place of business."<sup>39</sup> Henceforth all disciplinary action was to be taken by the manager of the bowling alley, and all complaints by the owner concerning pin-boys were to be handled through the manager. In addition the pin-boys earned an increase in rates from five to six cents per game.

Quebec also witnessed a series of disputes in the fall of 1939. In contrast to the previous strikes, this one was obviously pre-planned, and took place at Verdun Bowling.<sup>40</sup> The *Canadian Press* reported that:

Something new in strikes-not the kind where all the pins are knocked over-has been found at a bowling alley here.

Seventeen pin-boys at the Verdun bowling alleys reached up in unison yesterday, switched off the lights, swept the pins away and walked off, announcing they were on strike. They wanted their pay increased from two and a quarter cents to two and a half cents a line.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 353, File 156.

<sup>39</sup>"Bowling Alley Boys On Strike Make Queer Demands Of Employer," *Tribune*, 6 April 1937.

<sup>40</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 402, File 118.

<sup>41</sup>"Pin Boys' Strike Delays Tourney," *Toronto Telegram*, 4 October 1939.

The metaphors were not lost on the manager Arthur Therrien. With a bowling tournament scheduled to begin, the wage increase was granted. Ominously, however, "The boys returned to work last night but Therrien said the matter was not yet settled."<sup>42</sup> Yet before Therrien could take any retribution, pin-boys at other bowling alleys in Montreal began whipsawing management. On 29 October ten pin-boys ceased work at the Pine Bowling Alley in downtown Montreal and demanded a wage increase from two, to two-and-a-half cents a "string."<sup>43</sup> Management agreed to concede the increase if other bowling alleys did the same. A third conflict in Montreal lasting eight days in mid-November at Kerry's Recreation and Bowling alley was unsuccessful in raising the amount per string, suggesting perhaps that the employers had banded together in an informal alliance to prevent wage increases and put a stop to the disruption of pin-boy agitators.<sup>44</sup>

The last recorded strike took place in February 1940 in Leamington, Ontario, where pin-boys were earning two-and-a-half cents a line. The strike appears to have been a half-hearted affair. The manager of the bowling alley, H. Beaupre, reported that the pin-boys were playing around and he had to regain their attention several times. Consequently "they just got peeved about me doing so. At 9:00 when they were supposed to set up for [the] other league they wouldn't go to work unless I paid them 1 cent more per line." The four boys left and he immediately hired four more. In his report to the Department of Labour he stated that "they didn't care whether they worked or not."<sup>45</sup> He may have been correct since the pin-boys could, at this date, have been able to find alternative employment in the expanding job markets of wartime circumstances. A chapter in the history of class relations in bowling had come to a close.

### *Caddies and Class Struggle: The Social Setting*

Pin-boys were far from the only youngsters employed in leisure activities to strike during the depths of the Depression. Unorganized caddies demonstrated an even stronger inclination to walk off the job. Between 1932 and 1939 caddies struck across the country on at least nineteen occasions, withdrawing services in demands for increased wages and improved working conditions. The first dispute occurred at Vancouver's Jericho Country Club in April 1932, and involved 25 caddies protesting a wage reduction from 75 cents per round of 18 holes to 60 cents. The conflict came to the attention of the DOL through the *Unemployed Worker*. In a letter to the editor "A Caddie" commented that the club had attempted to reduce the rate of pay and the caddies refused and went home while, "The poor parasites had to carry their own bags that day. Finding they couldn't get scabs to come from

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 403, File 148.

<sup>44</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 403, File 149.

<sup>45</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 404, File 21.



any other golf course they phoned us up and told us to come back."<sup>46</sup> So ended Canada's first successful caddy rebellion.

The caddy's comments in the *Unemployed Worker* illustrate the social and class gulf that existed between golfers and their caddies. Class oppositions have traditionally been the hallmark of golf in Canada, with caddying being the only opportunity for young working-class males to enter the sport. The first golf club in Canada and on the continent was founded in Montréal in 1873 by expatriate Scots. The purpose of such golf clubs was "the promotion of golf, lawn tennis and other sports and games, and such social features as the Board of Directors may from time to time deem suitable."<sup>47</sup> The sport was nevertheless not simply a recreational endeavor, but was distinct in a variety of ways. Unlike most other sports, golf was not necessarily a young man's game and was therefore often a lifetime sport. More importantly, prior to the 1930s, social and economic criteria limited participation in golf to the upper classes. For example, initiation fees at the St. Charles Country Club in Winnipeg were \$750.00 in 1912, while membership at the Toronto Golf Club was dependent on previous attendance at private school (preferably Upper Canada College), and adherence to Anglicanism.<sup>48</sup> Equally exclusive was the admission procedure requiring nomination by existing members and review by a committee before being placed before the membership in a secret ballot. In Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa, membership tended to be hierarchical and homogeneous and was therefore limited to a small segment of society.

The "privileged" character of golf registered in other ways as well. Historically sporting and commercial activities on Sunday have always been controversial. Golf

<sup>46</sup>"Caddies Win Strike At Jericho Golf Course," *Unemployed Worker*, 23 April 1932, NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 351, File 55.

<sup>47</sup>Robert Ness Balsillie, ed., *Fraser's Golf Directory And Year Book* (Toronto 1923), 145.

<sup>48</sup>Allan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport, 1807-1914* (Toronto 1987), 33. In *Sport In Canadian Society* by Ann Hall, et al. (Toronto 1991) it is stated that sports such as golf, racquet sports, sailing, and equestrian are still largely confined to the upper and upper-middle classes, 163. National team athletes are far more likely to come from upper-income families. Gender, ethnic, and racial barriers also continue to exist. Bruce Kidd has commented that "The effect of sports is also to perpetuate patriarchy by powerfully reinforcing the sexual division of labour." See Bruce Kidd, "Sports and masculinity," in M. Kaufman, ed., *Beyond Patriarchy: Essays by Men* (Toronto 1987), 255. In addition, sports programming available for females is generally more narrow than that available for males.

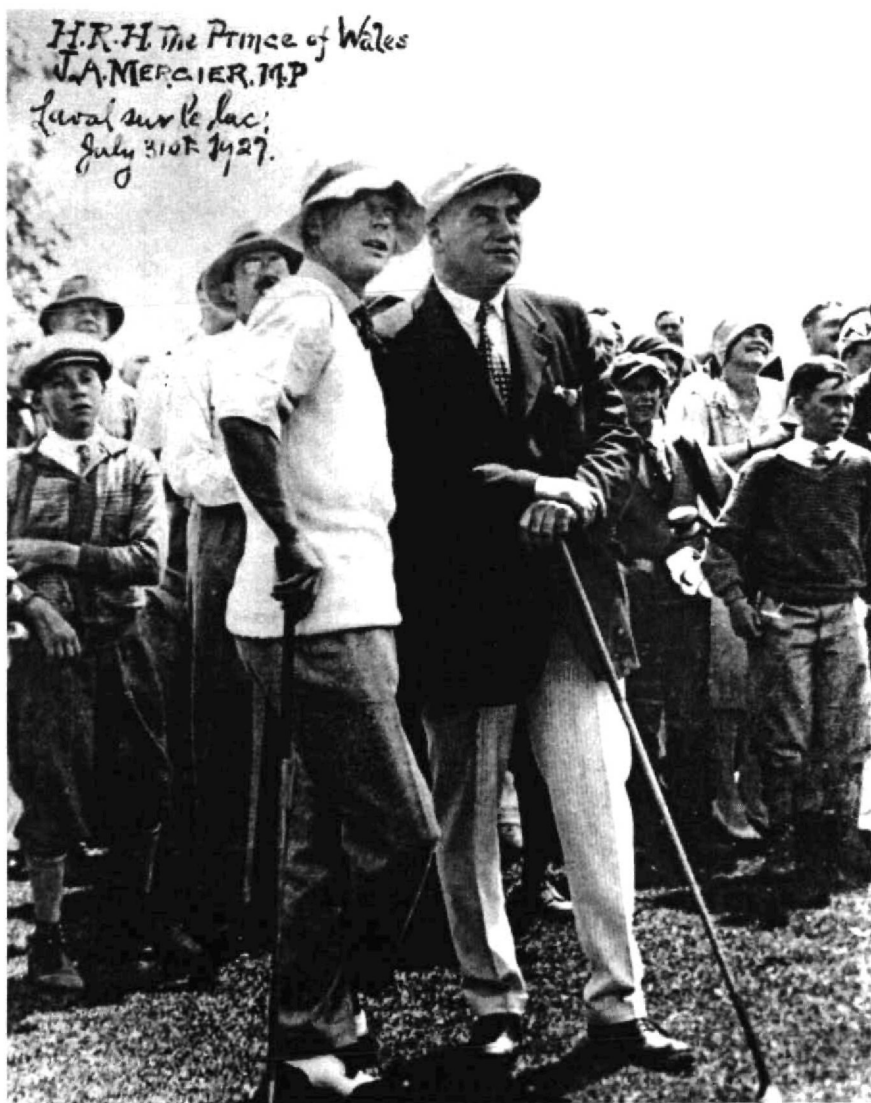
Race has, of course, long been a major divide in golf, and it was only in 1961 that the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) took steps to overcome racial exclusion which had effectively barred the participation of African-Americans. Though a few black professionals did compete successfully on the PGA tour, it was not until the phenomenal success of Tiger Woods in the late 1990s that an African-American profile in the sport was achieved. Equally important, it was only very recently that the PGA began pressuring golf clubs sponsoring its tournaments to admit black members. See F. Finley McRae, "Hidden Traps Beneath The Placid Greens: A History Of Blacks In Golf," *American Visions*, 6 (1991), 26-29.



Prime Minister Robert Borden completing swing, circa 1920-1937. *National Archives of Canada/PA-117658.*

was no exception. Craft unions, and later socialist organizations, were at the forefront of public campaigns against Sunday restrictions on recreation.<sup>49</sup> In 1895 four members of the Toronto Golf Club were charged with playing golf on a Sunday. However, the distinction of class appears to have provided them with a reprieve from the civil and social strictures placed on other sports. They were acquitted when the judge ruled that golf was not a noisy game similar to those proscribed by law such as the traditional working-class sports of football or baseball. Yet down to the interwar years many golf clubs made perfunctory concessions to the supporters of the Lord's Day Act by not employing caddies on Sundays. Women were also not allowed to play golf on Sunday mornings at many

<sup>49</sup>Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport*, 19, 148.



Admiring crowd watches His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, and J.A. Mercier, Member of Parliament. Almost hidden among the crowd, their respective caddies can be seen to the immediate right and left wearing their hats and ties shouldering the golf bags. Laval sur le lac, Quebec, 31 July 1927. *National Archives of Canada/PA-61945.*

clubs and perhaps the assumption and expectation was that they would be attending church services with the children.<sup>50</sup>

To a greater extent than in Canada, in the United States golf was initially an adjunct to the elite country clubs that developed in the 1880s where sports such as croquet, cricket, lawn tennis, fox hunting, and polo predominated. It was not until the late 1880s that distinct golf clubs began to develop, importing equipment from Montréal.<sup>51</sup> Yet no matter when they were founded a conspicuous lack of class and ethnic diversity was a fundamental characteristic of the golf and country club in North America. Taken together or singularly, one's gender, religion, ethnicity, or economic credentials alone were never sufficient to guarantee entry into the exclusive world of the golf and country club. As Peter Levine has recounted, just as genteel golf clubs barred Jews and set fees limiting their clientele by social class and financial place, predominantly German-Jewish clubs of the 1920s in the vicinity of New York City followed similar practices. "The goals were undeniably clear-to demonstrate their own credentials for acceptance by a dominant upper-class, white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant elite and to distance themselves from the waves of East European Jewish immigrants living and toiling in urban ghettos who seemingly threatened to overrun America and their place in it."<sup>52</sup> However, as late as the early 1930s, East European Jews were barred from the German-Jewish Hillcrest Country Club of Los Angeles. Film moguls including Louis B. Mayer, the Warner brothers, and Adolph Zuker were considered to be tainted by their social and geographic origins. Thus in reference to Hillcrest, Groucho Marx was left to quip that "I wouldn't be a member of any club that would have me."<sup>53</sup> Whether in the United States or Canada the golf and country club was obviously far removed from the images of breadlines and soup kitchens associated with the Depression of the 1930s. The most comprehensive history of golf in Canada described the opulent atmosphere at the golf clubs in the following manner:

<sup>50</sup>For details on restrictions on playing time for women see "visitors' privileges" in Balsillie, *Fraser's Golf Directory*, 19-95.

<sup>51</sup>See John Steele Gordon, "The Country Club," *American Heritage*, 41 (September/October 1990), 75-84.

<sup>52</sup>Levine suggests that German-American Jews were less concerned about anti-Semitism than the opportunity to distinguish one kind of Jew from another. They objected that clubs which barred them "include at one swoop all Jews, those socially desirable and those who in any gathering of the refined might be de trop." The golf and country club offered them an opportunity to distinguish themselves from other Jews in the hope that it would ease their admission into an elite Protestant culture familiar with the golf clubs utility for both social distancing and social acceptance. See Peter Levine, "The American Hebrew Looks at 'Our Crowd': The Jewish Country Club in the 1920s," *American Jewish History*, 83 (1995), 27-49, 31, 33.

<sup>53</sup>Levine, "The Jewish Country Club", 47-48.

Most old fans of the game remember the 1930s with nostalgia. To them, the game had a charm and simplicity long since lost to commercialism. It was played for the most part in the true spirit of amateurism, as part of a small, exclusive world, in a setting of champagne and iced tea, hampers of cold cuts, watercress sandwiches, corks popping, gusts of laughter, the distant click of the Kro-flite, the cries of "good shot"; a world of multi-coloured skirts, ribbons, blazers, white flannels, straw hats, striped tents flapping, bright parasols shading the summer heat.<sup>54</sup>

Despite the social and economic limitations to access, by the 1920s golf was becoming one of the most popular participation sports in Canada. In 1925 there were 380 golf clubs in Canada, and by 1930 this number had expanded to 700. Although still predominantly the exclusive preserve of the wealthy, the sport was coming within reach of the middle-classes through the construction of "public" golf courses.<sup>55</sup> The first public golf course was opened in Edmonton in 1914, and by 1925 there were fifteen such public links in Canada.<sup>56</sup> These courses provided "cafeteria" golf on the basis of pay as you play.

#### *The "Employment" Relationship*

Like the modern game of golf, the term "caddy" originated in Scotland, and had been adopted from the French "cadet." In Scottish usage of the 18th century a caddy was a boy who alternatively acted as a porter, commissionaire, ran errands, and acted as general porter and dog's body. To comprehend the evolution of caddying it is crucial to understand its relationship to the golf, or club, "professional." In addition to the caddy shack, the "pro" shop had traditionally been a "bastion" of working-class culture on the golf course.<sup>57</sup> The first known professional was hired by the St. Andrew's golf club of Scotland in 1863. Although most often a proficient

<sup>54</sup>Barclay, *Golf In Canada, a history*, 220.

<sup>55</sup>Ronald Lappage, "The Canadian Scene And Sport, 1921-1939," in Maxwell and Reet Howell, eds., *History of Sport In Canada* (Champaign 1981), 245.

<sup>56</sup>See Kevin B. Wamsley, "Strangers in the 18th Hole: The Evolution of Golf in Edmonton and the Establishment of Canada's First Municipal Golf Course, 1896-1914," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*, 20 (1989), 1-14.

<sup>57</sup>Todd W. Crosset, *Outsiders In The clubhouse: The World Of Women's Professional Golf* (Albany 1995), 213. For example David Black, who was born in Troon Scotland in 1883, apprenticed as a club maker and emigrated to Canada in 1906 to become the professional at the Outremont Golf and Country Club. He continued to work as a professional in Canada until his retirement in 1945. Another caddy turned pro was George Cummings who was born at Bridge of the Weir, Scotland in 1879. He caddied from age ten to fourteen and then joined the Forgan firm in Glasgow to learn clubmaking. At age sixteen he became the professional at the Dumfries Golf Club and in 1900 emigrated to Canada to become the professional at the Toronto Golf Club where he trained many caddies until his retirement in 1950. Both Black and Cummings won many golf tournaments in Canada. See Kavanagh, *History of Golf in Canada*, 86, 93.

golfer, the professional did not "tour" in the modern sense. At that time the professional was the general groundskeeper, and more importantly the craftsperson of both golf balls and clubs which were made primarily from wood.<sup>58</sup> Scottish club makers dominated the profession until the late 19th century when mass production began to erode their position. Like the professional, traditionally the senior caddy was capable of undertaking most tasks, from making clubs to keeping greens. He would also carry the clubs of distinguished members. Caddies were said to use the royal "we" when giving advice to a player unfamiliar with the course.<sup>59</sup> The caddy in Scotland was in essence an apprenticing professional. As the flow of immigrant professionals from the United Kingdom to Canada declined in the 1930s, the position of the club professional was increasingly filled by Canadians who came from the ranks of the caddies. James Barclay noted that, "Their careers had a common pattern. They came from families that could not afford to join private clubs, so they would start out caddying at a city club...."<sup>60</sup> For a few, then, caddying was a form of apprenticeship leading to a professional career in golfing. Increasingly the club pro only repaired golf clubs and had the exclusive right to sell golf equipment on the premises which was often his primary source of income.<sup>61</sup> He also toured as the professional golf circuit developed and became more lucrative. As the club pro was professionalised, the caddy as apprentice was debased, and his primary task became that of a service person who carried the clubs of golfers and undertook ancillary duties.

The expansion of golf during the 1920s and 1930s witnessed the heyday of the "schoolboy caddy" and, "Many came from families where the money they earned caddying was needed to help make ends meet."<sup>62</sup> The social and economic portrayal of caddying and the nature of the employment relationship varied, depending on whether one was a caddy or the manager of a golf course. Managers insisted that caddies were not employees even though a strict regimentation and deportment criteria was in place to govern their behavior in dealings with clients.<sup>63</sup> Caddies had to report immediately to the "caddy master" for service and wait in or near the caddy shelter until summoned. "Any caddy carrying or going fore for a member, except when told to do so by the Caddy Master, will be dismissed from the grounds for a longer or shorter period."<sup>64</sup> The "tariff" for caddying was normally determined

<sup>58</sup> Pat Thomas, *The Royal and Ancient Game* (Edinburgh 1980), 102.

<sup>59</sup> J.A. Cuddon, *The International Dictionary of Sports and Games* (New York, 1974), 185.

<sup>60</sup> Barclay, *Golf in Canada, a history*, 311.

<sup>61</sup> The Canadian Professional Golf Association constitution of 1938 stated that members would receive "the entire profits on the sale of golf balls, clubs, and accessories, and repairs for members of the club to which he is from time to time attached." Members of golf clubs were not allowed to sell golf balls to a fellow member. See Kavanagh, *History of Golf in Canada*, 7.

<sup>62</sup> Barclay, *Golf in Canada, a history*, 220.

<sup>63</sup> Balsillie, *Fraser's Golf Directory*, 150.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

annually by the Greens Committee and a schedule of rates posted in the club house and the caddy shelter. Caddying, then, was a form of piece-work and generally caddies would collect their fees from the caddy master at the end of each day. The rules prohibited members from paying caddies directly and they were "not allowed to receive anything in excess of their regular remuneration."<sup>65</sup>

Attendance records were kept on the basis of time of arrival, and weekday, or weekend service. The attendance rules for caddies were in place to encourage an adequate supply when the golf courses were under the most intensive use and encouraged or contributed to a constant supply of surplus labour with the "market" favoring the erstwhile employers. Caddies deemed to be guilty of deviant behavior were docked several days attendance. The importance of attendance was that it was also the basis upon which gratuities were divided. Instead of direct tipping a subscription list would be opened and at the end of the season be divided among caddies based on attendance and "good behaviour." The abolition of the no tipping rule was to become a common grievance of the caddies. Despite protestations by managers that they did not "employ" caddies, managers obviously held a great deal of discretionary power in relation to discipline, and the assignment or withholding of work.

As with any other regulations, rules governing the behavior and working conditions of caddies would be followed to a greater or lesser degree depending on the specific culture of the golf club and the disposition of those responsible for managing the caddies. Yet, as the caddy disputes demonstrate, control of the labour process was an increasingly contentious issue. The aforementioned rules governing the behavior of caddies were an important mechanism of employer control over the labour process designed to make the caddies subordinate to authority.

#### *Caddy Conflict: Strikes and Bogeys*

As noted earlier, the first caddy conflict took place in Vancouver, in 1932, a short successful affair. Most caddy work stoppages had similar origins and were caused by a desire for greater control over the labour process. Issues of importance included wage determination, tipping rules, the weight of golf bags, the undertaking of unremunerated tasks, and the assignment of caddies to players. General working conditions and benefits were also important. The most common times to strike were when wage reductions were threatened and during special tournaments when pressure could be applied. The position of caddies in the workforce often became a central issue and was perceived and portrayed as ranging from "boys" earning spending money to married men supporting a family.

The second caddy dispute in Canada occurred at the Sarnia Golf Club in June 1932 when a reduction of 5 cents per 18 holes was introduced, cutting the rate to 55 cents. As reported by the *Labour Gazette*, the strike by 45 male caddies ended

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 150.

the same day on the understanding that the former rate of 60 cents per round would be restored. The *Toronto Telegram* commented that it was "a real honest-to-goodness strike with pickets 'n' everything. Today when a group of prospective strikebreakers showed up at the club house, they found the erstwhile bag carriers on picket duty. When they attempted to start work they were ousted from the grounds by the strikers."<sup>66</sup>

In May 1934 twenty caddies walked out at the (Fort) Erie Downs Golf and Country Club and newspaper reports stated that "the ladies had to carry their own bags around the course in the first women's golf tournament of the season."<sup>67</sup> Caddies demanded a return to the dollar a round paid in 1931, in place of the prevailing depressed rate of 65 cents. The club offered to pay 75 cents but refused to return to the former wage.<sup>68</sup> Caddies elsewhere were also demanding similar restorations of previous rates. One week later in Toronto 85 caddies at the Lambton Golf and Country Club ceased work and demanded \$1.00 per round instead of the usual 50 cents. It was common to pay one dollar per round during championships and club officials explained that the game in question was merely an inter-club match. The strike was called off after the manager promised to take the matter up at the first meeting of the "Committee."<sup>69</sup> In mid-June 1934 60 caddies at the York Downs Golf Club in North York struck for an increase from 50 to 60 cents per round during weekdays, and 75 cents on weekends. "The boys" decided to walk out after they placed their demands with the greens committee, which then failed to offer a reply within a week.<sup>70</sup> The last dispute of 1934 took place at the Toronto Golf Club. The *Toronto Worker* reported that 75 caddies walked out demanding an increase from 60 to 75 cents per round and the "restoration of privileges that have been taken away, as well as the abolition of the no-tipping rule".<sup>71</sup>

Only one strike was reported in 1935, taking place at the Cornwall Golf and Country Club. The Secretary Treasurer of the club reported to the Department of Labour that "A little dissatisfaction set in and we have at the moment a new lot of

<sup>66</sup>"Caddies Stage Strike," *Toronto Telegram*, 30 June 1932. NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 348, File 52. Although the Worker's Unity League was not mentioned in connection with the strike, it may not be coincidental that the caddies demonstrated a high degree of resilience and organization and that the WUL was extremely active in Southwestern Ontario.

<sup>67</sup>"Caddies Go On Strike Demand Dollar-a-Round," *Ottawa Morning Journal*, 25 May 1934. Golf had become a popular "ladies sport" and women often organized their own clubs. See Kevin Jones, "Sport and Games From 1900-1920," in Maxwell and Reet Howell, eds., *History Of Sport In Canada*, (Champaign 1981), 185.

<sup>68</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 362, File 115.

<sup>69</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files Vol. 362, File 126.

<sup>70</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files Vol. 362, File 138.

<sup>71</sup>"Golf Caddies Go On Strike," *Toronto Worker*, 25 August 1934. NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 364, File 193.



boys."<sup>72</sup> The treasurer had minimized the disruption caused by the strike, since only four caddies returned to work. The boys were between ten and sixteen years old and had walked out in protest against work they were expected to do around the club house and the course when not caddying. They were willing to assist in cleaning the facilities and cutting the lawns, but "they object strongly to being asked to pick weeds from the greens."<sup>73</sup> Caddying fees were not an issue and caddies earned between five dollars and nine dollars per week. The strike highlighted the ambiguity of the caddies' position in the youth workforce. In his letter to the DOL, the treasurer insisted that, "For your information we would state that the Club does not employ Caddies." Yet time and again the issue causing discord was other duties that the young laborers were required to perform for which they would receive no remuneration other than the presumed privilege to caddie.

The brief economic buoyancy of 1937 stimulated a flurry of strikes across the country, caddies being no exception to the increased activity in the wider labour movement. In Saint John, New Brunswick, caddies went out on 6 June and in Kitchener, Ontario, they followed suit 2 days later demanding increases in rates per round from 50 to 75 cents. Caddying resumed when they were promised that a comparison would be made of rates at other clubs.<sup>74</sup>

The most heated caddy dispute of 1937 took place at the Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club Ltd., when caddies walked out on 27 June seeking an increase from 50 to 75 cents per round, and \$1.25 for carrying two golf bags. One hundred and forty nine out of one hundred and fifty registered caddies walked off the job.<sup>75</sup> "Strike headquarters" was located at a hot-dog stand half a mile north of the Hunt Club. The spokesman for the strikers, Donald A. Stewart, along with other caddies, stopped youths who passed along the road leading to the club and persuaded them not to caddy. Stewart denied any force was being used and stated that only vocal persuasion was being applied. Meanwhile Hunt Club management suspended all caddies who participated in the strike. J.E. Lavoie, the club secretary, and Harry Towlson, the club professional, met with the strike committee and informed them that anyone who wished to work would have to re-apply and an ad was placed in the Ottawa papers for caddies. They would be trained and replace any caddies who did not re-apply and have their applications accepted.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>72</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 371, File 128.

<sup>73</sup>"Caddy Strike Still On Cornwall Club May Take on Inexperienced Boys," *Montreal Gazette*, 17 August 1935.

<sup>74</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 387, File 150.

<sup>75</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files Vol. 388, File 171. Newspaper reports suggested that 150 caddies were registered with the club. However, it would appear that approximately 50 caddies were inactive. The club reported to the Department of Labour that 75 of the caddies were on strike out of 100 who were active. All newspaper accounts acknowledged that only 3 caddies turned up for work.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*

On the second day of the strike "Tempers flared and fists were swung — some of the latter reaching their mark" during picketing of the golf course.<sup>77</sup> Striking, and non-striking caddies, along with club members, engaged in a series of clashes. Seventy striking caddies were on hand and the trouble began when a group of thirty strikers demanded that Bobby Bayne, one of three non-striking caddies, surrender his golf bag and "throw in with them." The strikers confiscated his golf bags when he refused to relinquish them. He attempted to continue and was assisted by Harry Towlson, the club professional, Stan Home the assistant pro, and Earl Clapp the "caddy master." Caddies jumped on Clapp and held him until "a stalwart member of the club — a well known professional hockey player — entered the fray and clouted one of the caddies."<sup>78</sup> At that point, "fortunately a number of the striking caddies cautioned their fellows to keep cool and the fight subsided."<sup>79</sup> Another non-striking caddy, Phil Boivin was hit a number of times during a battle in front of the club house. Norman Therborge, a striking caddy, was arrested and held in jail overnight. He was released the next day on twenty dollars bail. The strikers remained on the scene until 9:00 in the evening, "shooting craps" near the club house and discussing the day's events.<sup>80</sup> That evening Lavoie stated "that the county police had assured the club officials that they would give protection to the club property and to any caddies regularly employed. Assurance was also given that picketing would be prevented."<sup>81</sup> Striking caddies were black-listed and their names "stricken from the professional department records...."<sup>82</sup> The Chief of the Carleton County police was as good as his word and went to the strike headquarters the next morning and informed the strikers that no interference with any caddy would be tolerated, and the police would continue to patrol the road bounding the club. The police confiscated picket signs that stated, "Caddies on strike for 75 cents a loop."<sup>83</sup>

The strike drew considerable editorial comment from Ottawa newspapers. The *Ottawa Evening Journal* noted in an editorial entitled "The Caddy And His Boss," that the sport over the years had changed and so had the caddy's job. Golfers, for

<sup>77</sup>"Come to Blows When Strikers Beset Caddies," *Ottawa Morning Citizen*, 29 June 1937.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 388, File 171: In Ben Hogan's biography it was stated that "If the caddies were not working or hitting golf balls, they might be shooting dice, their money in baking powder cans by their knees. They had to be careful however, because the club manager, James C. Kidd, who was called "Captain," naturally, was a stern Scotsman who did not approve of gambling, cursing, or drinking. There was a long list of offenses for which Kidd would ban a caddy from the club." See Gene Gregston, *Hogan: The Man Who Played For Glory* (Englewood Cliffs [New Jersey] 1978) 26.

<sup>81</sup>"Come to Blows When Strikers Beset Caddies," *Ottawa Morning Citizen*, 29 June 1937.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*



Pair of golfers putting on a green as a caddy holds the flag and bag of golf clubs. Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club circa 1925. *National Archives of Canada/PA-44800*.

instance, formerly carried half a dozen clubs in a light cotton bag. However, the introduction of “balanced sets” and a few extra clubs in a leather bag “put it in the heads of caddies that theirs is no longer a light occupation calling for small remuneration.”<sup>84</sup> Undoubtedly it was correct that sets of golf clubs were becoming heavier. During the interwar period professional golfers were paid by golf club manufacturers to endorse clubs and were remunerated on the basis of each club they carried. The *Oxford Companion To Sports And Games* noted that, “This led to the practice of professionals, or their long suffering caddies, carrying up to 30 clubs at a time and so, in 1938, the authorities fixed a legal limit at 14 clubs.”<sup>85</sup> Amateurs were of course always eager to mimic their mentors and thus a bursting

<sup>84</sup>“The Caddy And His Boss,” *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 30 June 1937.

<sup>85</sup>John Arlott, ed., *The Oxford Companion To Sports And Games* (Oxford 1975), 422. Increasingly “high-tech” design has become more significant in golf as rules standardizing performance have been adopted. Manufacturers have focused on improving capability within those parameters. See Jay Stuller, “Better Golfing Through Chemistry,” *American Heritage of Invention and Technology*, 9 (1993), 46-53.

golf bag had apparently become the hallmark of the avid learner. It was further stated in the editorial that the modern golfer:

Rather than themselves carry around a load that, after two or three holes on a hot day, seems to weigh half a ton, many golfers would turn to some other amusement. The clubs weigh just as heavy to the caddy and his mental upset when his employer continues to make atrocious shots [and] is not lessened by the fact that he must remain silent. Nor is a constant hunt for balls in the rough any more pleasing to him. Perhaps if the payment for caddies were graded on the weight of their load-and the mileage covered in a game-employer and employed would be better satisfied.<sup>86</sup>

Whatever the physical and mental anguish inflicted on the caddies, the editors of *The Ottawa Evening Journal* clearly thought caddying was an occupation and that the golfer was the employer.

In response to the day's events, Donald Stewart stated that a committee of strikers would confer the next day with Paddy Draper, President of The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, and if they were successful in organizing the Hunt Club, other golf clubs would be unionized. Ernie Wakelam, assistant professional at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club retorted that, "No one could get to first base here," and when asked of the possibility of organizing said that "the caddy-master was also a special constable with authority to eject any unwanted persons from club property."<sup>87</sup> As he was described by the newspapers, Stewart certainly qualified for ejection. The *Ottawa Evening Journal* commented that he was, "A glib-tongued fellow, [and] is said to have been a 'barker' with the carnival that recently played on Cartier Square."<sup>88</sup> Previously Stewart had been a caddy at the Congressional Country Club in Washington, and a dozen years before that had been a caddy at the Hunt Club, although club officials denied this. Stewart therefore was likely in his mid-twenties. The *Ottawa Morning Citizen* reported that Stewart, who had worked at the Hunt Club for one week, was approached by the other caddies who asked him to be their leader in the strike and he stated he was definitely not the originator of the strike. Despite repeated attempts by the club professional, Harry Towlson, to get the strikers back on the job, "the strikers were adamant."

The *Ottawa Morning Citizen* had the most amusement from the dispute and wrote a satirical editorial entitled "Col. Bogey on Caddy Strike" that reflected the social class and attitudes of club members. The fictitious Col. J. Stymie Bogey had resigned from one club when the players' committee raised his handicap from seventeen to nineteen, and from another when the caddy sneezed as he was putting

<sup>86</sup>"The Caddy And His Boss," *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 30 June 1937.

<sup>87</sup>"Striking Caddies Urged to Submit Demands to Club," *Ottawa Evening Citizen*, 28 June 1937.

<sup>88</sup>"Caddy Arrested Strike at Hunt Club," *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 29 June 1937.

on the eighteenth green.<sup>89</sup> He blamed the strike on foreign agitators and suggested that the caddies would soon be asking for over-time:

What did you say? Would I carry a heavy bag of clubs for three or four miles on a hot day for 50 cents? What's that got to do with it? I'm not a caddy! The trouble is that the younger generation don't know the value of hard work, thrift, and clean living, expostulated the colonel, as he took another sip at his preluncheon whiskey-and-soda.

"Why," he went on, warming to his subject, "when I won the Rambungwa challenge Cup in India in 1899, we paid caddies four annas, and they were d—thankful to get it! What's that? This isn't India? Of course it isn't India, but, by gad, Sir, if we don't maintain discipline and put agitators in their place, the country will go to the dogs, Sir. I tell you Sir, it's all stuff and nonsense, this strike business."

Informed that "loyal" caddies would be induced to work if the strike was continued, and that schoolboys would soon be available, Col. Bogey's face lighted up. "That is as it should be," he said, "those who want to work should be given work, and the rest should be dismissed. By gad, Sir, they should get these newfangled ideas about unions out of their heads. In my day, Sir, everybody was contented with his lot, and nobody thought of going on strike. What this country needs, Sir, is a return to reason and common sense."<sup>90</sup>

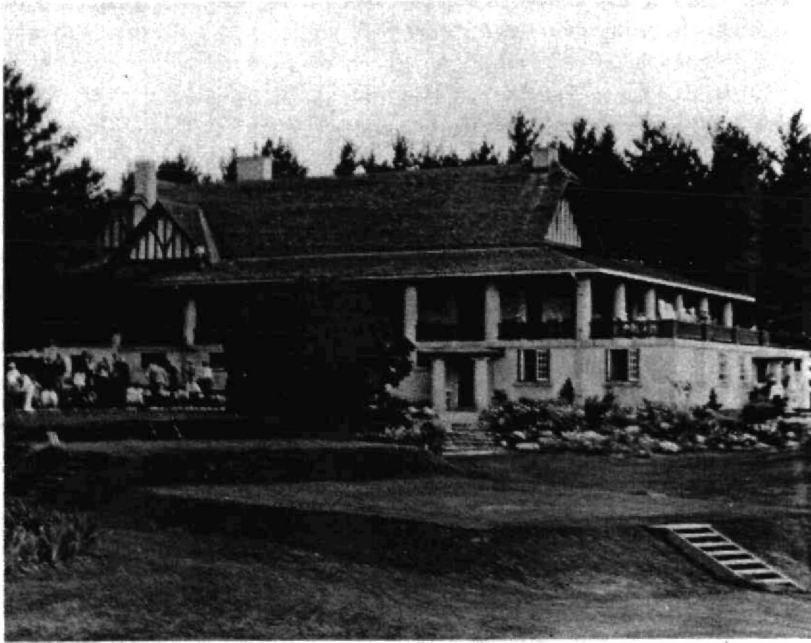
The editorial raised two key points: the paternalistic relationship between golfers and caddies; and that with the end of the school year approaching the Hunt Club was planning on using schoolboys to break the strike. The prevailing attitude of club members supported Col. Bogey, many expressing indignation at the strikers, declaring that they would carry their bags all season rather than be dictated to by the caddies.<sup>91</sup> The manager reported to the DOL that the conflict had been "promoted by a comparatively strange caddie," Donald Stewart. The strike had been "a blessing in that it gave the club a chance to clean out about a dozen who were taking advantage of generous treatment."<sup>92</sup> The benevolent role of paternalism was also

<sup>89</sup>"Stymie" is the equivalent of "snooker" in pool. A player was said to be "stymied" when his opponent's ball lay in the path of his own on the green. "Bogey" is the score that is taken at each hole by a scratch golfer, that is a player with a handicap. In the United Kingdom course ratings were by the "bogey." The player who could match the score was a bogey man (devil, goblin, or bugbear). In modern usage a bogey is one over par, and designates, for players of quality, a poor score on a hole.

<sup>90</sup>"Col. Bogey on Caddy Strike," *Ottawa Morning Citizen*, 29 June 1937. The first golf courses outside the British Isles were established in India, with the founding of the Royal Calcutta in 1829, and the Royal Bombay in 1842. They reflected the progress of Britain's imperial history. Often the clubs were founded by officers of Scottish regiments.

<sup>91</sup>Hunt Clubs, like country clubs in the United States, were the most prestigious sporting clubs in Canada and generally limited to areas of strong British upper-class influence such as Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto. They attempted to mimic the lifestyle of the aristocracy and military elite. See Metcalfe, *Canada Learns To Play*, 33. These influences, real or imagined, are reflected in the editorial.

<sup>92</sup>"Caddies' Strike Was Soon Ended," *Ottawa Morning Citizen*, 2 July 1937.



Palatial surroundings of the Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club with men's and women's tees in the foreground. Circa 1925. *National Archives of Canada/PA-44801*.

suggested in Lavoie's comment that the boys were very well treated and allowed to play golf in the morning, and given a banquet at the end of the season, in addition to being treated courteously at all times.

Stewart thought caddies should receive a weekly minimum wage, and that if wages were increased they could go off the relief rolls. Stewart commented "that many of the caddies were married men on relief, and that the average weekly earnings amounted to approximately \$5.75."<sup>93</sup> He also stated that more than 60 per cent of the caddies were married or had dependents and found it difficult to maintain their homes. The caddies wished to appeal to residents of the Capital in not allowing school age children to caddy at the club and thus destroy the effectiveness of the strike. "Caddying is the only means of livelihood for these men and they feel that it should not be taken away from them by school children. We do not want to be considered as boys who come out to earn our spending money." Stewart was

<sup>93</sup>"Caddies' Strike Latest Trouble In Labor World," *Ottawa Morning Citizen*, 28 June 1937. As many commentators have noted, the paradox of youth workers in a competitive labour market is that the greater the degree of exploitation of children's cheap labour, the less likelihood of adults receiving adequate compensation for their work.

attempting to emphasize the professional nature of caddying and that it was the primary wage for many men. Management responded by stating that "the club believes that revenue derived from caddying is not sufficient to support a man and his family and was not intended for such purposes."<sup>94</sup>

The employment of married men became a contentious issue in the strike. Stewart's tactics indirectly played into the hands of the employer, who suggested that the problem was with the married men, and that they could not expect increased wages since caddying was only intended to be part-time work for "boys" to earn spending money. In addition, one of Stewart's stipulations had been that "no married men [were] to be employed." Therefore due to the married man's eligibility for relief, and the single man's ineligibility for relief, single men such as Stewart were being squeezed out of the labour market by school boys and family men. This situation reflected the tensions in the labour market and the role of relief in indirectly depressing wages. The respective groups (boys, single men, and married men) undercut one another and this worked to the advantage of the golf clubs and their members.

A central issue in the strike, then, was the relationship between income available through relief and income available through work. Single women, and single men such as Stewart, were ineligible for relief and therefore had to subsist on whatever wage employment they could find.<sup>95</sup> In Ontario those fortunate enough to collect relief had to pass through a rigorous set of criteria, including proof of marriage, twelve months residency in the municipality, and proof that they were British subjects. Once those criteria were established they would receive the equivalent of one week's wages (\$28.80) every 2 months. Municipal food vouchers were available and ranged from three dollars and fifty cents to eight dollars and fifty cents weekly for a family of five. The Ontario Medical Association estimated a family of five would require an absolute minimum of from six dollars to seven dollars per week. Yet the Ontario government set the maximum food allowance for a family of five at five dollars per week. Responsibility for relief was increasingly centralized during the Depression, with ceilings placed on the amount of money being transferred from the Provincial government to municipalities. The amount of

<sup>94</sup> Many social historians have noted the importance of youth employment inside and outside the home in working-class families in terms of maintaining the family wage. This pattern was also present in the 19th century as noted in John Bullen's article "Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth Century Urban Ontario," *Labour/Le Travail*, 18 (Fall 1986), 163-187. Also see: Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival In industrializing Montreal* (Toronto 1993); Bettina Bradbury, ed., *Canadian Family History* (Toronto 1992).

<sup>95</sup> See chapter 3, "How Much Is Enough? Creating a Social Minimum In Ontario, 1930-1944," in James Struthers, *The Limits of Affluence: Welfare in Ontario, 1920-1970* (Toronto 1994), 77-116. For information on the development of the Canadian welfare state see James Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914-1941* (Toronto 1983).

funding for relief in a municipality was determined by the provincial government, while employers were required to forward paylists to local relief departments to improve the detection of unreported income.

Provincial cutbacks in welfare spending and increased scrutiny of recipients by municipal governments also aided the Hunt Club in its attempt to break the caddy strike. Early in 1937, rather than introduce a property tax increase to meet the shortfall from provincial relief payments, the City of Ottawa fired 40 female social workers and replaced them with 11 male "detectives" to eliminate "chisellers."<sup>96</sup> *The situation for married strikers became more precarious when a detective from Ottawa's relief department visited the club house on the second day of the strike and was given a list of all registered caddies.*<sup>97</sup> This was compared to relief rolls to determine whether they had been reporting their earnings. For the second time the state had entered the dispute and indirectly aided the employer. Club management hoped to break the strike the following week when school closed for the summer. The club's professional commented "That some of the finest caddies were school boys."<sup>98</sup> No married men were re-engaged by the Hunt Club and the strike fizzled as school boys replaced the strikers.

No sooner had the Hunt Club strike ended, however, when the largest, and longest caddy conflict of the Depression (lasting eleven days) began on 1 July 1937. This strike at the Royal York Golf Club in Toronto involved 500 caddies. Ninety-nine caddies signed a petition asking for wage increases from sixty cents to seventy-five cents a loop and "more pleasant working conditions."<sup>99</sup> Those improvements were the right to play one round of golf a week, the provision of eating facilities, and restrictions on the number of caddies.<sup>100</sup> The *Toronto Star* reported that "No trace of any caddy could be found in the countryside around the club today."<sup>101</sup> Bob Cunningham, the club professional, suggested that club members were enjoying golfing without caddies, and that many golfers only hired caddies out of social custom and it was refreshing not to be bothered by them. H.C. Annis, the club secretary, stated that club members would carry their own clubs before giving in to any strike and that, "When the caddies go home with no cash their parents will soon put an end to the Strike."<sup>102</sup> His comment implies that working-

<sup>96</sup>Struthers, *The Limits of Affluence*, 96. As recounted in James Struthers *The Limits of Affluence* the mayor of Ottawa claimed that women were "good for social work," however male 'investigators did better work than women; they were not interested in social service but in seeing that those on relief gave the city the right information and reported their earnings.'

<sup>97</sup>"Come to Blows When Strikers Beset Caddies," *Ottawa Morning Citizen*, 29 June 1937.

<sup>98</sup>"Caddies' Strike Latest Trouble In Labor World," *Ottawa Morning Citizen*, 28 June 1937.

<sup>99</sup>"Caddies Watch Club Members Heave Sticks," *Toronto Clarion*, 3 July 1937.

<sup>100</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 389, File 180.

<sup>101</sup>"Golfers Carry Own Clubs As Over 100 Caddies Strike," *Toronto Star*, 6 July 1937.

<sup>102</sup>*Ibid.* Cynthia Comacchio suggests that many immigrant parents did not recognize the Canadian tradition of paying "board" and preferred to control all their children's earning



class children turned their earnings over to their parents. This clearly suggests the important role that income from caddying played in supplementing family income and that club management was willing to use this as leverage to force the caddies back to work. Annis further commented that letting the boys play golf regularly on the course was out of the question. One club member confided to the *Toronto Star* reporter that, "We like to see the boys get a good deal but, hang it all, if you once let boys of this age get their own way there'll be no holding them from now on."<sup>103</sup>

The *Toronto Globe and Mail* reported that 100 grinning caddies placed themselves across the road from the course and watched the members toil while only a half-dozen caddies continued to work. It was also noted that, "in evidence of the members' sudden realization of how much work caddying entails, the professional shop housed numerous bundles of clubs, left in the lockers by members who weeded out their collections of weapons before they toted their bags themselves."<sup>104</sup> The caddy strike committee consisted of Gordon Martin, Harry Todd, Hugh Halliday, and Ab Woodley. They stated that every other club paid better fees, yet they also acknowledged that many club members paid a "good amount" including the tips. However, "there are lots of tightwads who pay the exact fee. We think it is not enough for a four hour job, lugging 30 or 40 pounds of clubs and being sworn at lots of the time. The ones who swear at us are the tightwads."<sup>105</sup> Other grievances included the fact that they were not allowed to eat at the club house and were forced to wait until six o'clock each day before collecting their fees. Bob Cunningham, the club professional, said this was necessary to keep the boys on the premises while members were still arriving, otherwise they would vanish after collecting pay from early rounds.

In many respects the dynamics of the strike in Toronto reflected those of Ottawa's Hunt Club fight the week before. Both strikes hinged on the difficulties of asserting caddying as an occupation, and the potential of youth, single men, and married men on relief to undercut one another for employment. H.C. Annis, the club secretary, stated that:

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while returning some spending money. Although a breakdown of immigrant children and "Canadian" children is difficult to discern accurately in relation to those engaged as pin-boys and caddies, it is likely that these same trends were also common, particularly since admonitions by employers suggested that parents would force their children back to work. See Comacchio, "Dancing to Perdition: Adolescence and Leisure in Interwar English Canada," 10-11. Additionally, Jane Sygne's article on the transition of youth from school to work indicates that with few exceptions, nearly all working-class youth turned their wages over to mothers who then gave them spending money. See Jane Sygne, "The Transition From School to Work: Growing up Working Class in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Hamilton, Ontario," in K. Ishwaran, ed., *Childhood And Adolescence in Canada* (Toronto 1979), 249-269.

<sup>103</sup>"Golfers Carry Own Clubs As Over 100 Caddies Strike," *Toronto Star*, 6 July 1937.

<sup>104</sup>"Caddies on Strike For Increased Fee," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 2 July 1937.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*

Several parents have telephoned us to make the boys get back to work at the present fee. A few of these older boys are married and they begged for the work because they were on relief. After a few weeks they become possessed of the idea that it is a regular man's job and that they should get big wages. At that, many of the boys have made \$17 and \$18 a week.<sup>106</sup>

As in Ottawa, the City of Toronto had also hired a team of special investigators to purge its relief rolls, and therefore married caddies collecting relief faced increased scrutiny. Although both the younger and older caddies showed an equal tendency to strike, blame was most often placed on the older caddies. In his report on the strike, E. N. Compton, the Toronto representative of the DOL, reflected the bias of the club manager by suggesting that the problem was with a few older boys who were intimidating the rest. Compton commented that the average age of caddies was sixteen, "but they were asked to take on some more boys and these were 20 and 21 years of age and it is these older boys who are married who are stirring up the trouble."<sup>107</sup> On any given day the services of 350 caddies were used and caddies averaged \$12.00 to \$13.00 a week for "three loops a day" including tips.

The strike ended after eleven days, and although unsuccessful in terms of monetary gains, the caddies were conceded a free round of golf once a week, and were allowed to purchase their lunch from the club house. Seemingly insignificant, free playing time was extremely important, representing the only opportunity for working-class youth to enjoy the sport and to improve skills in the quest to become professionals. It had been the norm that on Mondays, particularly on public courses, golf was available free for youth and caddies. The tradition of turning the public golf course over to these groups has virtually disappeared, and with it easy access to the sport.<sup>108</sup>

An unrecorded dispute took place in July 1937 at the Rosedale Golf Club in Toronto. The arrogance of the club secretary was reflected in his refusal to fill out a DOL questionnaire concerning the strike and his insistence that, "Caddying is not an occupation, and is merely regarded as a casual means of earning good pocket money during the summer months."<sup>109</sup> One hundred caddies dropped their bags and quietly walked off the course demanding seventy-five cents per round and that tipping be allowed. The no tipping rule perhaps reflected the parsimonious nature and avarice of the elite. The caddies left two pickets at the club house to keep company with the two police constables called to guard the property.<sup>110</sup> In July 1937, caddies in St. Thomas, Ontario claimed that the Depression was over and went on strike demanding a return to their former wages of 75 cents for 18 holes

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 389, File 180.

<sup>108</sup>Crosset, *Outsiders in The Clubhouse*, 213.

<sup>109</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 389, File 181.

<sup>110</sup>"Rosedale's Laddies Drop Bags, Strike," *Toronto Star*, 3 July 1937.



Golf Club House, Cobourg, Ontario. Caddies in the foreground displaying their wares.

in place of the 50 cents they were receiving.<sup>111</sup> Before the month was out 35 caddies struck in Cobourg and gained an increase of 10 cents per round.<sup>112</sup>

The operators of the Senneville Country Club of Montréal also declined to fill out the DOL forms when 150 caddies dropped their golf bags and left the course telling Col. G.G. Archibald they were striking. The Senneville police were called to chase a few of the strikers off the grounds and “a rush call was put in for spares and members of the golfing fraternity were spared the arduous labor of carrying their bags on their own shoulders.”<sup>113</sup> In October, Montréal’s *La Presse* reported that M. Terreault, president de la Commission d’urbanisme de Montréal, was summoned to the municipal golf course (at Parc Maisonneuve), where caddies had occupied the greens just as a club tournament was set to begin. They were seeking an increase from 45 cents a round to 60 cents per tour.<sup>114</sup> When Terreault arrived at the course he was surrounded by caddies and obliged to negotiate a raise in pay to 60 cents per round for experienced caddies.

<sup>111</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 390, File 218.

<sup>112</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 388, File 211.

<sup>113</sup>“Striking Caddies End Senneville Walkout”, *Montreal Gazette*, 3 August 1937. NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 391, File 221.

<sup>114</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 393, File 332. Maisonneuve Park was Montreal’s first public golf course.

No further disputes were reported until the summer of 1939, when caddies in Halifax and Dartmouth walked out seeking an increase from 35 to 50 cents per round, which was granted.<sup>115</sup> The regional nature of the Canadian economy was reflected in the lower rates paid to caddies in Quebec and Nova Scotia. The *Halifax Herald* wrote an editorial entitled, "The Laborer's Hire," suggesting that caddying was a good and healthful job for boys and when they were out on the links they were in "good company" and not getting into "bad company" somewhere else. It was further suggested that the only problem with golf was that "we haven't yet solved the riddle of working and playing golf at one and the same time."<sup>116</sup> The editorial stated that:

COLLECTIVE bargaining has spread to many lands and many human activities and lately the ancient and honourable game of golf has had a taste of it. This week the caddies at a local course, (following similar demonstrations at other courses) struck for more pay and certain adjustments in the matter of "personnel."

Well why not? If their elders have the right to strike-as they have-why not the caddies? By the law of this Province collective bargaining is a perfectly proper and legitimate method of improving the condition of labor, and if the caddies want to strike for "less work and double pay" that is their privilege."

The last caddy strike of the Depression occurred in Winnipeg in August of 1939 and resulted from the demotion of a caddy from class "A" to class "B" by the manager of the St. Charles Golf and Country Club, a result of a complaint of a "minor infringement" from a club member. This demotion meant a decrease in pay of ten cents per round and the other caddies refused to work, resenting the action by management. Although the walkout was complete, the strikers were unsuccessful in having the caddy reinstated at the higher level.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>115</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 401, File 53; and File 52. In 1924 caddies at the Halifax Golf and Country club threatened to strike unless the fee for caddying was raised from 20 to 25 cents per round. See Kavanagh, *History of Golf in Canada*, 80.

<sup>116</sup>"The Laborer's Hire", *Halifax Herald*, 22 July 1939. Superficially it is perhaps correct that golfers have not been able to fully combine golf with work. However sport and leisure activities of the wealthy are often the venue where business deals are conducted. As John Steele Gordon has recounted "In the first great business deal of the twentieth century, Charles Schwab, at the St. Andrews course in Hastings-on-Hudson, persuaded Andrew Carnegie, a Scotsman and passionate golfer, to sell out to J.P. Morgan in 1901 and allow the formation of U.S. Steel. While many clubs have maintained strict rules against bringing out business papers in the clubhouse, what conversations go on on the golf course is up to golfers." See John Steele Gordon, "The Country Club," 79.

<sup>117</sup>NAC, Department of Labour, RG 27, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Vol. 402, File 94.

*Conclusion: Youth Labour, Technology, and Mass Culture  
as reflected through Pin-boy and Caddy Strikes*

For the labour movement, the 1930s witnessed historic high levels of unemployment. Yet, clearly during the Great Depression, and in step with the broader labour movement, youthful working-class pin-boys and caddies were determined to actively resist employers' demands for concessions. Their militancy demonstrated an ability and willingness to organize themselves into relatively cohesive units, and take strike action regardless of region, ethnicity, race, and language. As previously noted, strike issues included the employment relationship, union recognition, increases rather than reductions in pay, minimum wages, gratuities, timely payment of wages, restrictions on the number of workers, discipline in the workplace, refusal to undertake unpaid work, the weight of golf bags, and access to free golf.

Labour organizations that the caddies and pin-boys approached in their attempts to unionize reflected the distinctive cultures of the workplace and the nature of the labour process. While pin-boys were aided by the Worker's Unity League which was attempting to form industrial unions as an alternative to the skilled craft unions, caddies sought out the craft oriented Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. The WUL played a pivotal role in initiating the strikes by pin-boys, and to a lesser extent those of caddies. In contrast to the WUL's aggressive attempts to organize youth workers, the TLC was passive. When the Hunt Club caddies approached the TLC about forming a union in 1937, the director of organizing told the *Ottawa Morning Citizen* that the caddies would have to make an application which would then be "studied" by Paddy Draper, the head of the Congress.<sup>118</sup> At that time, the TLC was in a state of relative paralysis, fending off the tentative incursions of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). With the disbanding of the WUL in 1935 communists focused their energy on working within the emerging industrial unions of the CIO where they often became the core organizers.

Over the course of the Depression it would appear that "boys" had gradually been partially displaced by young men, both single and married, who were competing for the available caddying positions. Occupations such as caddying became an important income supplement for young married men on relief, and the primary income for single men (who were ineligible for relief). Superficially the changing demographics of caddies were an important reason for the increase in militancy. Yet it would be misplaced to attribute the increased militancy entirely to older workers. Evidence of their involvement in caddy strikes is only available for two of the nineteen conflicts that occurred. Significantly, however, those two strikes at the Hunt Club in Ottawa, and the Royal York in Toronto, were also the longest and most disruptive. In the other caddy and pin-boy strikes the "boys" involved were most often under sixteen years of age. However, pin-boys, despite their young age, were also capable of sustaining long and bitter strikes as demonstrated by the

<sup>118</sup>"Come to Blows When Strikers Beset Caddies," *Ottawa Morning Citizen*, 29 June 1937.

conflict at Chapman's Bowling Alley in Vancouver, where a key factor was the "racial" solidarity of Japanese youth.

Youthful workers' incomes were significant for their families. Earnings for pin-boys varied from four dollars to ten dollars per week, while caddies made from six dollars to fourteen dollars, depending on the number of hours they were engaged.<sup>119</sup> Evidence for caddies strongly suggests that much of the income would be turned over to their families. There is little indication to suggest that pin-boys did otherwise. With the Ontario Medical Association's estimate of a minimum of from six to seven dollars per week required for the nutritional needs of a family, the income of caddies and pin-boys would make a significant contribution to the domestic economy.

How successful were the youthful strikers and what did they achieve? The strikes were both defensive and offensive in nature, indicating that a degree of strategy and fore-thought was employed. Defensive strikes included walkouts before wage reductions were introduced, while offensive strikes generally occurred when sports tournaments were set to begin. Although the data is often incomplete and imprecise, analysis of the strikes reveals that the youthful workers won more strikes than they lost. Out of nineteen caddie strikes only two were clear defeats, most notably at the Hunt Club in Ottawa, and at the St. Charles golf club in Winnipeg. Results in nine other strikes were inconclusive, in the sense that the DOL did not record any gains or losses by the caddies.<sup>120</sup> The remaining eight strikes were relatively clear victories for the caddies. Pin-boy strikes illustrate somewhat similar results with four losses, four victories, and one inconclusive strike.

By the postwar period there were no longer any strikes by caddies and pin-boys. The reasons for this precipitous decline are likely legion and include a possible general decrease in the kind of community based working-class culture that may well have sustained the struggles of the caddies and pin-boys in the 1930s. World War II was also critical in disrupting the continuity of employment patterns. Caddies and pin-boys would not have been considered essential wartime employees and therefore in many instances would have been absorbed in the formal economy for the duration of the war. Yet undoubtedly a significant cause of the cessation in strikes was technological change, most decisively in the bowling industry. Youth workers in the leisure sports of golf and bowling, like the broader industrial labour force, were affected by technological change in the workplace that led to their displacement.

<sup>119</sup>The high income for caddies (of seventeen to eighteen dollars per week) reported by the manager of the Royal York Golf Club has been left out of the assessment of caddies' average income.

<sup>120</sup>For instance at the Rosedale and Senneville golf clubs the walkouts appear to have been complete, but the newspapers and the Department of Labour did not report the results of the strike.



Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent pulls his golf cart along the fairway demonstrating that by the postwar period even the elite could safely cart their own clubs. With the introduction of pull and electric carts club “employment” of caddies assigned to all patrons was replaced by a voluntary system of patrons requesting caddies if they desired. Circa 1950. Yousuf Karsh/*National Archives of Canada/PA-123992*.

With the introduction of pull and electric carts in the postwar period, the halcyon days of the caddy on the golf course were numbered, and with it the caddy shack and the primary connection between working-class youth and golf. The pull cart was commercialized after the war and became an instant success, and club

“employment” of caddies assigned to all patrons was replaced by a more voluntary system of patrons themselves requesting caddies if they wanted them. In addition the motorized golf cart was perfected and became an important and lucrative source of income for the club professional, especially in the post 1965 years.<sup>121</sup> Reflecting the respective class origins of bowling and golf, professional caddies are still mandatory on prestigious golf courses such as Scotland’s St. Andrew’s, a Mecca of golfers. And, except in rare circumstances, the Professional Golfers Association does not allow golf carts on the PGA circuit where caddies are a regular part of the elite culture.

The gradual decline of the caddy also signaled the passing of the traditional training ground for Canada’s top golfers. James Barclay noted that, “At one time, just about all the top amateur and professional players in the country had learned their skills caddying.”<sup>122</sup> Although no individuals were cited by Barclay, many champion amateur and professional golfers such as Charlie and Albert Murray, Stan “The Man” Leonard, the Huot brothers of Québec, and many others from the pre and postwar period had come from working-class backgrounds and began their incipient careers as golfers by caddying. That caddies were often professionals is partially attested by the fact that when they turned eighteen they were automatically deemed to be professionals in terms of their status in golf championships. When Stan Leonard won the British Columbia Amateur Championship in 1932, officials questioned his age and classified him as a professional, not releasing his trophy until his mother provided his birth certificate proving that he was under eighteen. In the United States, former caddies such as Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson also came to dominate the professional ranks in the postwar period. In contrast, in recent decades winners of the Canadian Amateur Championships have emerged from the ranks of American colleges after receiving golf scholarships. Historically the position of club professional was also a working-class service position, one that is now dominated by those from a country club background thereby eliminating traditional teaching mentors from a working-class background.<sup>123</sup>

The social and technological displacement of the pin-boy occurred more rapidly than that of the golf caddy, particularly in urban centres. For instance the Double Diamond Company invention of the automatic pin setting machine quickly replaced the pin-boy. Few people lamented the extinction of the pin-boy. Nowhere was this attitude more succinctly expressed than in *The Oxford Companion To*

<sup>121</sup>Barclay, *Golf in Canada, a history*, 396. Although the caddy has disappeared in North America, they are still prevalent in many regions of Asia. As the “Asian Tigers” experienced economic turmoil in late 1997 Thailand’s Prime Minister suggested that there was no reason for investors to leave his country when they could get three caddies on any golf course, “one to carry your clubs, one to hold your umbrella, and one to massage your back,” *Globe and Mail*, 1 November 1997, A-1.

<sup>122</sup>Barclay, *Golf in Canada, a history*, 395.

<sup>123</sup>Crosset, *Outsiders In The Clubhouse*, 213.



*Sports And Games*: "Enthusiasm for the game has increased in the years since the Second World War when the automatic pin-spotter increased the pace of playing. In earlier years of the game pin-boys were employed to re-set the pins after each frame, a slow and costly process, and pin-boys tended to be unreliable."<sup>124</sup> A more positive assessment of the pin-boy may be found in contemporary popular culture, through the animated cartoon series the Simpsons, a parody on modern society. In one episode of the show working-stiff Homer Simpson flees his job at the nuclear power plant and heads towards the bowling alley stating that he always wished to be a "pin-monkey." His son, Bart, is ecstatic and states that he will no longer have to be ashamed of his father's job. Homer claims working as a pin-monkey is a dream job in paradise where he will no longer have to perform mind numbing, back-breaking labour. In another episode, "Class Struggle in Springfield," Homer demonstrates his lack of social grace and inadmissibility for membership in the Springfield Golf and Country Club.

Social and cultural historians, to say nothing of their labour and working-class counterparts, may question the veracity or legitimacy of Homer Simpson as the bard of pin-boy youth culture. Yet in the Simpsons we glimpse something of the significance of golf and bowling in the evolution of working class life. Here faint reflections of the social and class dimensions of the bowling and golfing milieu are resurrected through our collective historical memory. These reflections mirror those of the pin-boys themselves, highlighting the ambiguity of class relations within the bowling industry. As noted in the introduction, class distinctions were muted in commercialized bowling. Pin-boy wrath was aimed not at patrons, but rather at the owners of bowling alleys. The first hand accounts of the working atmosphere in bowling alleys by former pin-boys Josh Mayer and Doug Miller, indicate that contrary to Homer's analysis, in leaving his job at the power plant he would not be saved from back-breaking labour. However, their memories of working as pin-boys are recalled with fondness rather than bitterness, and like Homer, they more often than not enjoyed the plebeian social and cultural atmosphere of the bowling alley. This is clearly demonstrated by the popular historical accounts of bowling published by participants, in which the memories of Mayer and Miller are recounted. Although rare, self-published accounts of working as pin-boys are to be found. One will find no such accounts of working as golf caddies. Histories of golf, in contrast to those concerning bowling, are predominantly written by aficionados of the game with caddies largely obliterated or erased from the historical record. We are left with Homer Simpson to remind us of the class distinctions that pervaded the world of golfing. For caddies class distinctions were personalized and highlighted in the world of amateur golf, with the direct, unmediated hostilities of the job an ever-present reality. Caddies regularly described those whom they served in derogatory terms.

<sup>124</sup> Arlott, *The Oxford Companion To Sports And Games*, 92.

Historians have pointed to the increasing significance of mass culture in the life of the working class. It has been tentatively suggested that the initial rise of Fordism in the 1920s and 1940s, with its accompanying disposable income and the birth of mass culture through the commodification of leisure time (spectator sports, mass media, and the entertainment industry), led to a dampening of traditional spontaneous and self-generated working-class leisure and was often inimical to the workers movement and working-class culture.<sup>125</sup> The most obvious distinction of mass culture was that it was most often purchased rather than being participatory and self generated in the community. Although uneven in its development in relation to workers' access and region, the arrival of mass culture entailed the economic appropriation of the cultural realm into the field of consumption, increasing capital's expansive hold over all aspects of life.<sup>126</sup>

The strikes by caddies and pin-boys offer some interesting observations in relation to mass culture and the commodification of leisure time in their respective work environments/sports. It is important to note that working-class youth's introduction to leisure sports (or mass culture), as caddies and pin-boys involved in golf and bowling, was first and foremost as workers, not as consumers. Their work in mass culture accentuated rather than ameliorated the distinctions of their working-class background. Therefore in these sports, which partially represented the developing commodification of leisure time (and whose participants were largely the middle and upper-class), class differences and similarities were generally highlighted rather than subsumed. Indeed civil laws (in the case of bowling alleys), and private rules (for golf courses), explicitly prohibited children from participating as consumers. In the postwar period, as a result of technological changes which displaced youth (and changing social norms that allowed them to participate in some ways in various recreations), future entry to the leisure sports

<sup>125</sup>In chapter five of Bryan Palmer's, *Working-class Experience*, "The Theatre Of Mass Culture: The First Act," it is suggested that the leisure barons marketing the products of mass culture appealed to class instincts yet the products were not imposed but rather filtered through the audiences. Although the issues and dimensions of mass culture are complex and beyond the immediate scope of this paper, David Nasaw's insightful book, *Children of The City: At Work and at Play* (New York, 1985), makes some interesting observations concerning youth workers and mass culture. In his epilogue Nasaw states that only in the field of mass culture (and especially film) were former working-class youth workers able to displace established elites and exert an influence out of proportion to their numbers. During the interwar years they shaped the images and dialogue seen on the screen and are thought to have understood that the public did not want to be challenged through the realm of entertainment and their films generally blurred class distinctions and reaffirmed a belief in capitalism.

<sup>126</sup>*Ibid.*, 231. For an expansive overview of issues related to the contested nature of leisure time and consumer culture in the interwar period in England, France, and the United States see Gary Cross, *Time and Money: The Making of Consumer Culture* (London 1993).

of golf and bowling would be as consumers and not as workers, thereby weakening or obscuring class distinctions and alliances.

Finally the caddy and pin-boy strikes of the 1930s illustrate the important historic and continuing link between the social wage (or relief), and the labour market, in depressing or alternatively upholding wages. The lack of a universal relief policy in the 1930s segmented and pitted the youthful workforce against one another in working-class attempts to make ends meet. Although the service sector component of the economy (and its associated mass culture) now account for an *even greater percentage of the gross domestic product than in the 1930s*, the labour movement has yet to make significant inroads into this sector of the economy and culture where youth workers are concentrated. Organized labour is now attempting to recruit these youth, as is indicated by campaigns to unionize youthful labour in the fast food and retail sector. Will young people be as receptive as pin-boys and caddies were in helping to organize themselves?

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