ON THE FRINGES:
CAPITAL AND LABOUR IN THE FOREST
ECONOMIES OF THE PORT ALBERNI AND PRINCE GEORGE DISTRICTS,
BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1910-1939

by

Gordon Hugh Hak
B.A. University of Victoria 1978
M.A. University of Guelph 1981

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in the Department
of
History

© Gordon Hugh Hak 1986
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
April 1986

All rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without permission of the author.
APPROVAL

Name: GORDON HAK

Degree: Ph.D.


Examining Committee:

J.I. Little, Chairman

Allen Seager, Senior Supervisor

Michael Fellman, Supervisory Committee

Robin Fisher, Supervisory Committee

Hugh Johnston, Department of History

Gerald Friesen, External Examiner
Professor, History Department
University of Manitoba
PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis, project or extended essay (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

On the Fringes: Capital and Labour in the Forest Economies of the Port Alberni and Prince George Districts,

British Columbia, 1910-1939

Author:

(signature)

Gordon Hale
(name)

April 14, 1986
(date)
ABSTRACT

The Port Alberni and Prince George districts of British Columbia experienced the beginnings of an extensive forest industry at about the same time, the second decade of the twentieth century, and both regions were destined to become substantial lumber centres. Yet in their early period of development, before the major changes of the 1940s, the two communities had distinct growth patterns: by 1939 the Port Alberni district had emerged as a prosperous lumber-producing centre housing an active, coordinated working class while the Prince George district remained an economic backwater with a weak forest industry base, an ill-formed class, and quiescent labour movement.

Simple economic or geographic explanations do not begin to address the complexity of the histories of the two regions. Only by closely examining the lumber companies, the sawmill workers, the loggers, and the broader community can the local historical contexts be understood. Further, exogenous factors such as western Canadian working-class initiatives, the role of the provincial state, and the shifting international lumber trade must also be taken into account. Business decisions, union drives, strike action, and political structures were all intertwined in shaping the development of these fringe areas of the province. By comparing the two forest districts this thesis not only highlights the various elements that interacted in creating the forest economies and forest-based communities, it also sheds light on the development of British Columbia's most important industry and the history of the western Canadian working class.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Allen Seager for supervising this thesis. Professors Michael Fellman and Robin Fisher were very helpful in commenting on a number of drafts of the manuscript. Conversations with Ken Bernsohn, Bob Hawkes, Jack Gillbanks, Otto McDonald, and Mark Mosher helped clarify some issues, as did spirited discussions with Wayne Wood and Michael Atkinson. Norman Hak kindly drew the map for this presentation and Frank Leonard offered encouragement by sharing his observations on the life of a graduate student. Throughout this project Joanne Finnegan contributed timely advice and convinced me that there was light at the end of the tunnel. I would also like to thank Professor Alan A. Brookes who some years ago encouraged me to pursue doctoral studies. All errors of fact and interpretation in this thesis are the sole responsibility of the author.

Financial support was provided by a C.D. Nelson Memorial Graduate Scholarship, administered by Simon Fraser University, and a doctoral fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part One</th>
<th>The Business of Making Lumber and the Social Context of Production</th>
<th>27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>Empire Building in the Alberni Valley</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>Precarious Existence: The Forest Industry in the Prince George District</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>Community Loggers, Tie Hacks, and Sawmill Workers</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Two</td>
<td>Class and Class Conflict in Two Forest Economies</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>Wage Slaves and Boss Loggers in the Alberni Valley</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter V</td>
<td>Towards Class Cohesion: Loggers, Mill Workers, Community and the IWA in the Alberni Valley</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VI</td>
<td>&quot;Line Up or Roll Up&quot;: The Lumber Workers Industrial Union in the Prince George District</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VII</td>
<td>Unemployment, Communists, and the CCF in the Prince George District in the 1930s.</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td></td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### MAP AND FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAP</th>
<th>The Port Alberni and Prince George Districts</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIGURE I</td>
<td>Timber Scaled in British Columbia, 1912-1940 (in thousand board feet)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURE II</td>
<td>Average British Columbia Lumber Prices, 1918-1940 (per thousand board feet)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

During the first decade of the twentieth century the forest industry emerged as the most significant sector of the British Columbia economy. Between 1901 and 1910 the amount of lumber cut in the province increased by almost 400 percent. The 26,500 workers in the logging, sawmill, and wood manufacturing workforce constituted almost thirteen percent of all provincial workers in 1911. The chief forester of British Columbia noted in his 1914 report that half of the payroll of the province was derived from the forests. He also commented that the forest industry "employs more labour, distributes more money, consumes more supplies, produces more wealth and public revenue than any other Provincial industry, and it is one of the strongest influences promoting the opening-up and settlement of new undeveloped regions."  

The forest industry has not relinquished its primary place in the British Columbia economy. In 1972 the forest industry accounted for 50 percent of the census value-added by all manufacturing in the province. With over 84,000 employed in the forest industry directly, over 42,000 working at jobs in the transportation, construction, and supply industries which are dependent on the forest economy, and another 126,000 in the service sector that caters to the workers and families directly and indirectly tied to the forest industry, it was estimated that more than one quarter of those employed in British Columbia in 1972 owed their livelihood to the forest industry.  

Three major actors have contributed to shape the contours
of forest exploitation in the province: capital, labour, and the state. The first important surge in capital investment came during the Laurier years. Railway construction and the settlement of the Canadian West in the years from 1896 to 1913 stimulated an almost insatiable demand for lumber, and capitalists recognized that manufacturing wood products in British Columbia had become a profitable undertaking. The buoyancy of the prairie market, however does not completely explain the migration of capital to British Columbia in the early years of the twentieth century. Rapidly diminishing timber resources in the American Midwest and in central and eastern Canada in the late nineteenth century spurred a search by established timbermen to locate new areas where they could apply their expertise and sustain the profitable existence of their lumber firms. In the first decade of the century capital, especially from the United States, poured into the province to exploit the rich timber resources.4

The movement of capital to British Columbia spawned the migration of labour to work in the logging camps and sawmills. The aggressive campaign by the Laurier government to induce Europeans, Britons, and Americans to emigrate to Canada was ostensibly geared to provide homesteaders for the prairies, but the importance of immigrant workers for western Canadian industrial development was not lost on federal policy makers.5 Between 1896 and 1914 some three million immigrants entered Canada and the migration continued through the 1920s. It was from this labour pool that companies drew many loggers and millworkers. Together, the influx of capital and labour enabled
the British Columbia forest industry to achieve prominence in the provincial economy by 1911.

The provincial government controlled the vast majority of timber land in British Columbia and by setting the terms by which forest exploitation occurred the state played an important role in the destiny of the forest industry. Over 95 percent of provincial timber land is still owned by the Crown. In the nineteenth century the provincial government experimented with various methods of allocating timber to lumber operators. In two large grants in the 1880s timber land was sold outright. The Railway Belt, which followed the Canadian Pacific Railway line, and the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Belt, located on Vancouver Island, were alienated as concessions to railway builders. The E&N Belt contained some of the most valuable timber in the province. By 1912, however, a system of forest tenure had developed in which the Crown retained ownership. The system had been created piecemeal and the result was an extremely complicated method of allocating timber to lumber operators. Timber licences, timber sales, pulp licences, pulp leases, pulp sales, and small crown grants were just some of the ways in which timber was distributed. Each form of tenure specified different rights and responsibilities for the timber holder. The Forest Act of 1912 attempted to standardize the tenure system but revisions were often implemented on an ad hoc basis. The government's goals were to stimulate investment, establish local manufacturing plants, and at the same time, secure revenue for provincial coffers; these aims were not always compatible.

The provincial government also influenced the development
of the forest industry through its constitutional prerogative to enact social legislation and its control over the judicial system and the provincial police force. The passage and enforcement of laws regarding unemployment relief, worker accident compensation, minimum wages, hours of work, medical insurance, and union recognition were, in the period under discussion, for the most part the responsibility of the provincial government. Moreover, in conflicts between employers and employees in the forest industry the behaviour of the police force and the courts was often instrumental in determining the outcomes. The provincial state, then, provided the framework for economic expansion and the profitable exploitation of the forests while facing pressure from workers and the public to ensure a decent standard of living for forest workers and their families. The resolution of these contradictions was a major task of governments in British Columbia in the early twentieth century.

The history of British Columbia's most important industry has not received the serious attention that it deserves. Monographic overviews are more colourful than analytic and do not probe the complexities of the industry's development. Unfortunately, there is also a dearth of scholarly work on particular issues, studies which could provide a base in framing a more comprehensive understanding of the history of the industry. The important works that do exist are prone to generalizations and undervalue significant elements in the industry's growth.

One approach to the development of the provincial forest
economy focuses on the fact that lumber production is a "staple industry." In this model, production takes place near the resource in isolated, outlying areas, facilities are owned by firms based outside the regions, capital and labour are imported, and the final goods are sold in export markets. Some or all of these features are common to a number of important Canadian industries, and the "staples approach" is a well-worn theme in Canadian historiography. One exponent of the staples approach has claimed that in many respects Canadian history "is simply the history of fish, furs, lumber, wheat, and so on." The general emphasis of the loosely-defined staples approach is on markets and technology, and the social context of production and class conflict in resource regions are rarely examined. A more theoretical interpretation, the "staples thesis," has also been forwarded as an analytic device by modern economists, but it tends even more to ignore the peculiarities of resource production in different industries and in particular settings.

W.A. Carrothers' 1938 essay on the British Columbia forest industry is written from the perspective of the staples approach. Carrothers notes the topographical and climatic features in British Columbia and discusses the technological feats which were necessary to surmount these obstacles and begin the profitable production of lumber. This emphasis on technological determinism ignores capital formation and the creation of a forest labour force in British Columbia. Likewise, the social context of production and conflicts between workers and employers in the resource industry are overlooked.

More recent histories eschew theoretical models and
emphasize the perspective of one or the other of the three major players in the provincial forest economy. G.W. Taylor's *Timber* extolls the role of the lumber barons in developing the forest industry, and Donald MacKay's *Empire of Wood* celebrates the history of one of the major forest companies, MacMillan Bloedel. Provincial government policy is discussed by Ken Bernsohn in *Cutting Up the North*, a book that deals with the interior of the province and is strongest in discussing the years after World War II. Aspects of labour's experience in the forest economy have not escaped the attention of historians. Myrtle Bergren, in *Tough Timber*, tells the story of the early years of the International Woodworkers of America in British Columbia from a Communist perspective. But her account is largely oblivious to economic developments, concerned only with the coastal region, and casts little light on union initiatives before 1930. In the most recent and fullest history of the IWA, *One Union in Wood*, Jerry Lemboke and William B. Tattam concentrate on the factional struggles within the union that led to a split between communist and anti-communist blocs in 1948. In explaining the roots of the division they rely, however, on the broadest of socio-economic generalizations, citing the timing of capital investment and the character of immigration as key features in the pre-IWA era that generated the radical, militant tone of the British Columbia district of the union in the 1940s.

Historians have commented, albeit briefly, on the forest industry work force in the larger context of the development of the western Canadian working class. Concerned with radicalism
and militancy, they have pointed out a number of features that contributed to the particular nature of the western Canadian working class in the early decades of the twentieth century. David Bercuson has emphasized the brutal working and living conditions experienced by workers in a frontier environment where class divisions were clearly drawn in isolated, staple-producing communities. Paul Phillips has argued that the boom-and-bust cycle of primary production in the West forced employers to think in the short rather than the long term, thus treating their workers with less consideration than central Canadian employers. Other writers have noted the zeal of committed activists in the West, the infusion of radicals from Europe into western Canada in the first decades of the twentieth century, and the marginal social position of resource workers in society. While all these observations are important, their hypotheses remain to be tested in the specific context of the forest industry.

There are, then, significant weaknesses in the historical literature, and important questions remain unexplored about the provincial forest industry, especially regarding the years before World War II. While regionalism is an important theme in understanding British Columbia's history in a national context, the regional divisions within the province have not been studied in depth, a feature of particular significance to the forest industry. The Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island, the Kootenays, the northern coastal region, and the northern interior of the province experienced capital investment at different times, catered to different markets, and drew on distinctive
labour pools. Even more obviously, ecological factors, accessibility of transportation facilities, and different product lines all contributed to the distinct growth patterns of the lumber economies in the different areas of the province. The forest industry was far from monolithic. The Great Depression, for example, witnessed an important transition for coastal operators, as they carved out new markets in Great Britain to replace the sagging American lumber market. Interior operators were unable to find such relief. In 1936, Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island sawmill operators could rightly claim that business was reasonably healthy. Their counterparts in Cranbrook and Prince George would have found such a statement ludicrous. This central theme of uneven development within the province has not been pursued.

A second weakness in the historiography of the forest industry is the little knowledge we possess of individual forest companies, especially of the small and medium-sized firms that were predominant in the first three decades of the century. Despite a few uncritical corporate histories of successful firms that grew to dominate the industry after World War II, little analysis has been done of the reasons for success and failure. It is crucial to examine those companies and sectors that enjoyed, at best, marginal survival in order to appreciate the many variables involved in developing a profitable forest operation.

The actual communities that have been dependent on the forest industry have also escaped the notice of British Columbia historians. The community approach illuminates far better than
regional generalizations the importance of class conflict in the forest industry, especially in the non-union era prior to the establishment of the International Woodworkers of America in 1937. That there was strike activity and union organization around 1920 is well known to specialists, as is the importance of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union in connection with the One Big Union. Why and how these conflicts subsided and the impact of these early organizational drives on future working-class initiatives are less clearly understood. The larger question of why industrial unionism developed so late in the forest sector, in comparison with the mining industry, for example, has not received the close scrutiny that it deserves. Considering the importance of the forest industry and the lumber towns to the provincial economy it would be expected that social composition, class lines, and hierarchies of power would be main themes in the social history of British Columbia. Unfortunately, such is not the case.

Politically, too, forest industry workers seem to be absent from the historical landscape. Early socialist activity appears to have been restricted to Vancouver and the mining areas in the Kootenays and on Vancouver Island, and regions dependent on the forest industry do not play any meaningful role in the history of socialist and labour politics in British Columbia before 1940. Is this merely the result of neglect on the part of historians? If not, what features of forest industry communities and the forest work force inhibited the development of class-based political action? The political nature of the working class in the province's most important industry is surely a very
significant dimension of British Columbia's past.

What is needed to address these issues is an integrated approach that brings together the diverse elements and situates them concretely in their historical context. A clearly-defined field of study and a meaningful interpretive framework would provide the basis for exploring the many facets of the provincial forest industry. The community study is such a vehicle. Forest-based communities experienced the insecurities of staple production, the clashes between capital and labour, and the effects of government policy. Understanding how companies, workers, and townspeople acted and reacted at the local level would shed much light on the larger development of the forest economy in the province.

This study examines two British Columbia lumber-producing districts in the years from 1910 to 1939. Port Alberni and Prince George remain two of the most important forest-based communities in the province and their rich histories are still unmined. Both districts experienced the beginnings of an extensive lumber industry at the same time, the second decade of the twentieth century. The Port Alberni and Prince George districts were of similar size and at the same level of economic development and it is thus possible to isolate and evaluate variables that shaped their economic development. Comparing and contrasting the two regions highlights important features of forest industry development.

The Port Alberni and Prince George districts are also significant as to a large extent they were representative of the two major forest regions in the province. The Alberni Valley was
part of the coastal region. The mills had access to the water-borne export trade and produced lumber of high quality from large, high-volume trees. Douglas Fir was the most important species in the area. These trees ordinarily attained a height of from 175 to 200 feet and a diameter of from three to six feet, and not infrequently trees up to 250 feet in height and from six to nine feet in diameter were logged. In 1939 a giant timber was felled at Great Central Lake. The butt measured nine feet and the first log weighed twenty-five tons, or more than a ton a foot. The tree was 225 feet in length and contained 43,000 board feet of wood.

The Prince George district was part of the interior region, known as the short-log country. The main tree species was Engelmann Spruce and they averaged from 18 to 36 inches in diameter and from 80 to 100 feet in height. Interior mills produced lumber of lower quality and smaller dimension and they did not have easy access to port facilities. Forms of timber tenure, levels of capital investment, the sources of capital and labour, and the social composition of the work force also differed in the two areas. The histories of the Port Alberni and Prince George districts, then, force recognition of the diverse regional growth of the provincial forest industry.

In 1910 neither district had a substantial forest industry but over the next decade this situation changed appreciably. In 1920 the Alberni Valley could boast of a large mill in Port Alberni and a major mill at Bainbridge, as well as many smaller mills in the district. In the Upper Fraser area large mills were situated at Giscome and Hutton, and there were sixteen smaller mills strung out along the Canadian National Railway line to the
east of Prince George. Both districts seemed destined to become expanding lumber centres over the next decades.

In the Alberni Valley this future was realized. The Alberni Pacific Lumber Company expanded its Port Alberni operations in the 1920s and 1930s. The Bloedel, Stewart & Welch Company, in conjunction with partners, established a large plant at Great Central Lake in 1925 and ten years later they opened another mill, this time in Port Alberni. By the mid-1930s Port Alberni was second among British Columbia ports in the export of lumber. It had become a flourishing lumber centre.

The Prince George district, on the other hand, travelled a much rockier road. The 1920s were difficult economically and conditions became even worse during the depression of the 1930s. Many mills went bankrupt and even the large mills were closed for extended periods as they struggled to cope with weak market conditions. The large mill at Hutton burned down in 1925 and the owners decided not to rebuild. The operation at Giscome, after a change of ownership, managed to weather the 1930s but the years were not prosperous. While the Port Alberni population was growing by leaps and bounds, Prince George was experiencing a net loss of residents.

Until the early years of the twentieth century there was little economic activity at the confluence of the Nechako and Fraser Rivers. Throughout the nineteenth century there was only a Hudson's Bay Company post and an Indian community at Fort George. It was the building of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway that stimulated settlement and economic development in the area. In 1909 two townsites were established by rival land companies.
Fort George and South Fort George both proceeded to sell townsite lots to speculative buyers throughout the world. The Grand Trunk Pacific, however, decided to develop its own townsite which it named Prince George. In 1914 the railway arrived and Prince George became the most important of the three towns. The following year Prince George was incorporated as a city and in 1921 its population had reached 2,053. Over the next decade the city's population rose marginally to 2,479, but by 1941 the number of residents had dropped to 2,027.

Settlement began in the Alberni Valley in the mid-nineteenth century. Farming and small lumber operations sustained the local population. In 1911 the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway extended a line to the head of the Alberni Canal and townsite speculation began in earnest. Two contiguous towns were soon incorporated: Port Alberni in 1912 and Alberni in 1913. Port Alberni had the best harbour facilities and soon emerged as the dominant city. In 1921 the population of Port Alberni was 1,056 while Alberni housed only 540 residents. Twenty years later the population of Port Alberni had risen to 4,584 and that of Alberni to 1,807. The large sawmills were located in Port Alberni.

Port Alberni and Prince George were the largest towns in their respective districts, but nearby milltowns were also significant in the lumber economies. In the Alberni Valley a small community was established at Bainbridge to house millworkers and families. In 1920 there were perhaps seventeen houses for married couples, bunkhouses, and a school. In the mid-1920s a company town was built at Great Central Lake. Bungalows, a school, a community hall, a church, bunkhouses, and
a post office were all part of the "instant town" created by the lumber company. Sproat Lake was also the site of a lumber community in the Alberni Valley. Besides milltowns there were also logging camps scattered throughout the area which provided temporary homes for bush workers.

Unlike Port Alberni, Prince George was not important as a sawmill or logging centre. Rather, forest operations were situated along the Grand Trunk Pacific (later called the Canadian National) Railway to the east of Prince George. The railway followed the Upper Fraser River and logging operations rarely penetrated the woods more than four miles from the railway tracks. This thin strip of accessible spruce forest was known as the East Line and stretched some 100 miles to the east of Prince George. The most important lumber communities along the East Line were Willow River, Giscome, Sinclair Mills, Hutton, Longworth, Penny, and Dome Creek (see map). In 1919 Hutton had a population of about 400, and contained a number of homes, a school, a store, and a hospital. The smaller communities usually had a school, a hall, and perhaps a billiard parlour and a small hotel. While lumber production was minimal within the confines of Prince George city limits, the town's prosperity was heavily dependent on the fortunes of the forest industry. Prince George was the distribution point for supplies and labour destined for East Line operations. Moreover, the city's beer parlours, motion picture theatres, and shopping facilities offered social opportunities and excitement for men, women, and children living in the smaller communities to the east of the city.
Chronologically, the years from 1910 to 1939 were an identifiable period in the histories of the forest industries in the Port Alberni and Prince George districts. Timber speculation, the arrival of railways, and the beginnings of intensive lumber production occurred during the 1910s. Developments in the next two decades were to a large extent the playing out of cards dealt between 1906 and 1917.

The 1940s brought extensive changes to the two lumber economies. In 1938 Bloedel, Stewart & Welch began studies to discover the feasibility of a pulp mill at Port Alberni; after construction delays during the War, pulp production begin in 1947. The MacMillan Company built a plywood plant at Port Alberni in 1942 and it employed 200 workers. Company timber holdings and the scope of logging operations were also increased during the early 1940s. In 1936 the population of Port Alberni was about 3,000; by 1948 this number had more than doubled. Changes in the Alberni Valley forest industry were qualitative as well as quantitative with the major companies developing integrated forest operations producing a diversified line of products.32

In the Prince George district the number of mills rose dramatically from 14 active operations in 1939 to some 140 in 1944. Most of these new mills were marginal operations, small portable sawmills, employing three or four men, and begun with minimal capital investment. The areal base of logging operations expanded beyond the confines of the thin strip along the Canadian National Railway line due to the increased use of trucks and the mobility of portable sawmills. The ad hoc growth of the East
Line forest industry continued after the Second World War as the American demand for lumber for houses provided an expanding market.  

The Port Alberni and Prince George forest economies were complicated social and economic environments that do not lend themselves easily to traditional historical approaches. External variables such as national immigration patterns, capital investment strategies, fluctuating lumber markets, government timber tenure policies, and established political institutions influenced local developments. National or international labour organizations, such as the Industrial Workers of the World or the One Big Union, also made their presence felt in the two regions. Locally, business decisions made by logging and sawmill operators, strikes by forest industry workers, the nature of work in the woods and in the mills, community ethnic and occupational structures, and the leading role of small businessmen and professionals in political and social life were key ingredients in creating the local histories. This intersection of diverse local and extra-regional factors in concrete historical settings defies simplistic historical explanations and interpretations. Studies concentrating on specific aspects of community development such as urban elites or trade unions can certainly illuminate, but they cannot do justice to the delicate interplay of the multitude of variables involved in shaping the histories of the forest economies.

To penetrate the historical totality of the development of the two districts demands an analytic approach that has the flexibility to encompass the complexities of the regions and the
rigidity to organize the diverse elements and allow for meaningful interpretation. The notion of class formation is well suited to this task. Class formation is simultaneously the observable reality of social and economic relations in a historical context, and a dynamic, ongoing process whereby the working class continually redefines and reshapes itself through adjusting to changing economic circumstances, immigration patterns, and state policies, and to the developing nature of economic and social relations in the local environment. The study of class formation integrates isolated local economies with larger social, economic, and political frameworks, incorporates the diverse elements that shaped community histories, and provides an avenue for analysis.

The forest industry working class is the primary focus, but in order to understand the nature of this work force it is necessary to explore in detail other actors in the regional settings, giving due respect to their particular historical roles and agendas, for they played key parts in delimiting class development. Capital was the most important variable in moulding class formations in the frontier forest economies. The decisions made by businessmen to invest in logging and sawmill operations drew workers to these isolated areas, and the success of operators in turning a profit dictated the size and stability of the work force, as well as the economic opportunities for small businessmen and professionals located in Port Alberni and Prince George. Further, employers organized the production process which turned standing timber into saleable lumber, set wage levels, and often directly controlled the living conditions of
workers. It is difficult to overestimate the role of capitalists in the process of class formation.

While Port Alberni and Prince George were forest-based communities, they were not single industry towns. Farmers and railroad employees were significant in the northern interior, and fishermen and longshoremen were identifiable groups in the Alberni Valley. Moreover, small businessmen, doctors, lawyers, and building contractors were influential in both regions. The forest industry work force must be seen in this larger social context. Loggers and sawmill workers did not operate in a vacuum, and their behaviour had to take into account local power structures. A study of class formation must incorporate this broader community setting.

The nature of the forest industry work forces themselves were shaped by the number of workers involved, the geographical distribution of lumber workers in camps and milltowns, the migration patterns and ethnicity of workers, the divisions between loggers and millworkers, the participation levels of forestry workers in the political process, and the degree to which lumber workers were integrated into local societies. Further, extra-regional organizations such as the IWW, the OBU, the Lumber Workers Industrial Union, the Socialist Party of Canada, the Workers Unity League, the Communist Party of Canada, and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation were crucial in initiating and sustaining working-class activism. This complex interplay between indigenous factors and outside variables is an important part of the history of class formation in the Port Alberni and Prince George districts. Workers chose vehicles of
protest that had relevance in local circumstances, and the
success and longevity of particular forms of activities were
dependent on the particular class formations in the two areas.

The study of class formation, then, provides a broad
perspective for community histories. Economics, business, social
structure, politics, unionization, ethnic patterns, and national
institutions fall within its ambit. The working classes in the
two forest economies are necessarily situated in the larger
historical reality, and through the prism of class formation
local history begins to reveal itself.

This thesis is divided into two parts. Each part contains a
brief introduction and separate chapters on the Port Alberni and
Prince George districts. The first section traces the economic
development of the forest industries in the two areas, discussing
the sources of capital investment, the forms of timber tenure,
the organization of the production process, and the waxing and
waning of volatile markets. Individual company histories are
treated in some detail in order to understand strategies employed
to cope in a highly vulnerable market and to evaluate the reasons
for success and failure. The structure of the forest industries
in the two districts, in terms of levels of capitalization,
markets, and sizes of firms, is also examined in depth.
Attention is also paid to outside forces such as lumber prices
and shifting markets to emphasize both the rapidity of economic
fluctuations and the significance of factors beyond local control
in shaping development in the Port Alberni and Prince George
districts. Detailed information on companies and the economy
offers much in itself to our knowledge of the forest industry and
British Columbia business history, but, more importantly, it is crucial in understanding the local community and working class. Capital set the tone for development and the way in which the two forest economies were created shaped the type of work force needed, the social structures of the communities, and the response of workers in job action, unions, and politics. A final chapter in the first section sets the forest industries in a larger social context. Ethnicity and migration patterns of workers, the nature of work in the woods and mills, and the relationship of forest industry workers to the broader working class and the larger community in the Port Alberni and Prince George districts are examined. This chapter not only shows the class divisions created in the fringe, resource economies but also provides the social framework in which class conflict in the forest industry took place.

The second section explores this class conflict at the job, in union organizations, in struggles against being jobless, and in political action. Detailed examination of class conflicts both exposes class formations and emphasizes the role of workers in creating their own destiny. Three features are important to note in this respect. First, the Port Alberni and Prince George districts followed different paths in working-class and political protest, shaped by the distinct economic structures and class formations in the forest industries. In the 1930s, for example, communist activists in the Alberni Valley were struggling to establish a union in the forest industry, while in the Prince George area the communists were leading a movement of unemployed workers. Second, the political and union ideas and organizations
were imported from outside the two regions and faced special problems in adapting to local circumstances. Third, segmentation within the working class and relations between workers and the petty bourgeoisie were important factors in shaping the forms of protest in each area.

The thesis does not conclude with a resounding crescendo. There was no great, victorious strike, no firmly established union, nor the election of a socialist or communist to political office in the late 1930s. Yet this lack of a concluding dramatic episode does not detract from the main theme. Particular social and political institutions are not the protagonists in this tale. Rather, capital, labour, and the process of class formation are at centre stage. The ebb and flow of class relations and the changing responses of workers and employers to new economic circumstances provide the drama.
Notes


5. Donald Avery, "Dangerous Foreigners": European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932 (Toronto, 1979), Chapter I.


24. Ibid., p. 589.


27. Ibid., pp. 583 and 588.


29. **Western Lumberman** (February 1926), p. 21.


32. Donald MacKay, *Empire of Wood*, Chapters IV and VII.


34. Bryan D. Palmer uses class formation and social formation as key elements in explaining the history of the North American working class. Palmer performs delicate theoretical surgery in separating social formation, the political, economic, and social conditions in a capitalist society, from class formation, development particularly related to the challenge from the working class. The distinction, as Palmer notes, is by no means simple: "Social formation and class formation are ... reciprocal developments, bound up in their own mutuality. If the former is decisive in setting the limits within which the latter unfolds, those limits are constantly changing and adapting to further accommodate and hedge in the latter." Palmer, "Social Formation and Class Formation in North America, 1800-1900," in *Proletarianization and Family*
History, ed., David Levine (Orlando, 1984), p. 288. See also Palmer, Working-Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980 (Toronto, 1983). For our purposes the use of the idea of class formation alone is more satisfactory, for we can include community social formations within its scope.
PART ONE

The Business of Making Lumber
and the Social Context of Production

Typical to frontier staple industries, capital, expertise, machinery and methods of production were all imported into the Port Alberni and Prince George districts. This migration of capital and expertise in the early decades of the twentieth century reflected a major structural change in the North American lumber industry. In the late nineteenth century high-quality, easily accessible timber resources in Ontario and the American Midwest were becoming scarcer. Lumbermen were forced to explore seriously the possibilities of migrating to hitherto untapped areas in the northwest of the continent, and the forests of the Alberni Valley and the northern interior attracted the attention of speculators and lumber producers.

Shifting markets also influenced the decision to establish plants in the fringe areas of British Columbia. In the years after 1896 the Canadian prairies "became the most dynamic element in the country's economic growth."¹ The rush of immigrants and the establishment of a wheat economy created a great demand for lumber to be used in the construction of houses and farm buildings. British Columbia lumbermen prospered and investments were predicated on the seemingly unending growth in the prairie economy. In the Port Alberni and Prince George districts, timber tenures were secured, railways were constructed, and sawmills were established.

The prairie market, however, did not prove to be unfailingly
hospitable to British Columbia lumber. In 1913 a severe
depression set in, a depression that was particularly oppressive
in the prairie provinces, and plans for frontier forest
exploitation in British Columbia were abruptly arrested. After
1916 the economy recovered and continued to provide a strong
market for lumber producers until the early 1920s, when once
again an economic downturn caused shrinking markets, dropping
prices, and the curtailment of production. If by 1924 the
prairie market was re-established it did not provide the healthy
profit margins of the post-War boom for lumber companies, and in
the depression of the 1930s this market collapsed completely (see
Figures I and II).

After tentative beginnings in the years just before World
War I, lumber industries were established in the Port Alberni and
Prince George districts in the boom years after 1916. Despite
the vagaries of fluctuating prices sawmills increased production
in the 1920s, and in 1928 Alberni Valley mills cut 137,000,000
board feet of lumber while East Line mills produced 105,900,000
feet. During the depression of the 1930s, however, the two
regions parted company in terms of production levels. The Prince
George district forest economy was devastated by the world-wide
downturn and by the end of the 1930s production was still less
than half that achieved in 1928. Lumber companies in the Port
Alberni district followed a different path and in contrast to
global trends managed to overcome the low prices and shrinking
traditional markets. By the end of the 1930s the Alberni Valley
was breaking production records, expanding plant facilities, and
experiencing a degree of prosperity. The Port Alberni and Prince
FIGURE I  Timber Scaled in British Columbia, 1912-1940
(in thousand board feet)

Source: British Columbia Forest Branch, Annual Report, 1940 (Victoria, 1941), p. F63.
FIGURE II  Average British Columbia Lumber Prices, 1918-1940
(per thousand board feet)

Coastal Region

Interior Region

Sources: Fort George Forest District, "Annual Management Reports," 1917-1940, Public Archives of British Columbia (PABC), GR 1441, B3401, f. 027391; Vancouver Forest District, "Annual Management Reports," 1920-1941, PABC, Roll 1237, f. 027636; Exhibit 220, Royal Commission on Forestry, 1944-5, Proceedings, PABC, GR 520, v.13, f.11; Gordon R. Munro, "The History of the British Columbia Lumber Trade, 1920-1945," B.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1956, p. 142. It should be noted that none of these sources provides a complete account of lumber prices. Further, the sources often disagree on the average lumber price in a particular year. The prices here are estimates, but they do show the main trends in the years from 1918 to 1940.
George districts had similar early histories but by the beginning of World War II one area was a leading lumber producer in the province while the other was an economic backwater.

The distinct growth patterns of the forest economies within these two regions and the responses of companies to the insecurities of the staple market can be attributed to a number of factors in the histories of the industries. Business expertise was a major distinguishing feature of the districts, especially in the years from 1916 to 1923. In the Alberni Valley the dominant lumber company was flexible in reacting to market changes, made wise management decisions, and developed a profitable enterprise. The two largest mills established along the East Line were not similarly blessed with "sound" management. Built either near poor stands of timber or with undue attention to mill construction, the two plants experienced serious difficulties soon after they entered the lumber trade. As such they were not able to take advantage of the post-War economic boom and accumulate profits to weather the inevitable drop in prices. When the recession struck in the early 1920s these companies were unprepared and faced hardships from which they could not recover. These failures did not encourage investors to back new plants in the area.

Levels of capitalization and the size of firms also differed in the two regions. In 1928 the districts cut approximately the same quantity of timber, but in the Alberni Valley production was dominated by two large companies while along the East Line a number of small mills produced a major portion of the lumber. These poorly-capitalized operations were barely able to withstand
monthly fluctuations in lumber prices let alone the crisis of the 1930s. Large firms, with financial backing and political clout, survived best in the volatile lumber trade.

The commitment of owners was a further factor that differentiated the two areas. In the Port Alberni district companies made large financial outlays on timber and production facilities, and Alberni Valley operations were integral parts of corporate plans. Interior investors were much more tentative. Even the larger plants made little investment in securing a steady, long-term timber supply, and logging and sawmilling operations were often only peripheral concerns of the owners. Eastern lumber traders established mills to produce for their customers, but in hard times withdrew capital from the Prince George area to shore up investments closer to home. In another case, a major pulp mill project almost went into construction in the district during the 1920s. The backers were central Canadian capitalists with interests in pulp and paper facilities in Ontario and Quebec. In the late 1920s financial difficulties in central Canadian pulp and paper circles threatened operations in which these investors had interests, and capital was withheld from the Prince George project. The plan was never rejuvenated. The Alberni Valley was the focal point for lumber firms operating there; the Prince George district was a peripheral area of operation, vulnerable to decisions made in centres far from the place of production and made with the interests of the company, not the local area, foremost in mind. By the 1930s much of the Prince George forest industry was locally owned, but low lumber prices and shrunken markets neither attracted serious investors
nor allowed for significant local capital accumulation.

Ecological factors also influenced the development of the two forest industries. The coastal climate in the Alberni Valley permitted companies to operate throughout the year. This gave them more flexibility in adjusting to fluctuations in market conditions. A drop in prices could be met by an immediate curtailment of production and the dismissal of workers. As soon as the market rebounded, production in the woods and in the mills could be resumed. In the interior, however, logging was a winter occupation while milling was done in the spring and summer. If lumber prices dropped in January mill owners had to decide whether to continue logging in order to feed their mills in anticipation of rising lumber prices later in the year, or to curtail logging operations abruptly, gambling that the return on lumber later in the year would not cover production costs. Unsold lumber in the mill yards or low prices in the fall could spell financial disaster. Interior lumber firms were less resilient in responding to market changes than their coastal counterparts. Moreover, wood volume per acre of forest was higher in the Alberni Valley and companies could afford to invest in machinery for logging operations. Increased mechanization meant lower production costs, higher productivity, and more profit. In the interior wood volume per acre was lower and the introduction of expensive machinery was not feasible as the costs were prohibitive. Horses remained the main power source throughout 1920s and 1930s.

A third feature that distinguished the two regions was the marketing strategy of the lumber firms. During the 1920s
producers in both areas began to ship large portions of their cut by rail to the eastern United States. Alberni Valley mills also began to take advantage of their port facilities, making forays into the waterborne export trade. In the late 1920s Alberni Valley mills joined sales organizations in order to market their products more effectively. In the 1930s the sales agencies, with the help of the provincial government, managed to establish themselves in a new market, the British Isles. Trade agreements with Britain in 1932 and an aggressive marketing campaign undertaken by the companies and the provincial government provided coastal operators with purchasers and allowed them to prosper in the 1930s. Interior mills sold their lumber individually and in the 1930s their lack of organization and political influence left them stranded to weather the depression on their own. Despite pleas to the provincial government and plans to utilize port facilities at Prince Rupert, interior operators were unable to gain entrance to new profitable markets.

Lumber firms in the Port Alberni and Prince George districts operated in a volatile export market. Companies in the Alberni Valley managed to cope and even prosper in this environment through astute business decisions, deployment of large amounts of capital and commitment, and effective use of the government and their sales organizations. Interior mills could not overcome the inherent instabilities of resource production and the individual mills rode the economic waves without life jackets. In the late 1930s the forest economy of the northern interior was in an unhealthy state; the primitive production of railway ties by small outfits and local farmers remained an important component
of the area's forest industry.

The first two chapters of this section trace the business history of the forest industry in these two regions; the third chapter in this section looks at the workers involved in the forest industries and the communities in which they lived. The towns and camps in the Port Alberni and Prince George districts were reliant on the forest industry and catered to its needs. People and institutions had to be imported to sustain the industry in these outlying regions, and while they were geographically isolated from large metropolitan centres, the communities reflected the values and institutions of the larger society. For example, Port Alberni and Prince George in 1914 could boast Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches, fraternal lodges, active Liberal, Conservative, and Socialist party organizations, and local Boards of Trade. Further, there were branches of national banks and agents selling Ford automobiles, Massy-Harris and International Harvester farm equipment, insurance policies, and Pat Burns' meats. In the two resource communities merchants and professionals dominated local social and political affairs, but there were other important groups. In the Alberni Valley fishermen and longshoremen made contributions to community life, while farmers and railway workers made their presence felt in Prince George. But forest industry workers, despite their economic importance, did not meld easily into community social life. They were often migratory with permanent residences in different locations or nowhere at all, ethnically distinct from the social elite, and possessed distinctive job cultures. There was also a division within the
forest industry work force. Loggers and sawmill workers performed distinct tasks and lived in separate environments. Chapter III examines these and other themes in the social history of the forest work force; if the social relations described are static it is because the dynamics of class relations will be explored in later chapters.
Notes


CHAPTER I

Empire Building in the Alberni Valley

On 22 June 1912, the 100 workers of the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company sawmill at Port Alberni climbed atop a string of railway cars to pose for a photograph. On the ground stood the president and managing director of the company. A large banner fixed on the side of one boxcar proclaimed the significance of the occasion: these were the first cars of lumber to be shipped by rail from the west coast of Vancouver Island. The lumber was destined for retail yards in the Canadian prairies, and both workers and management felt confidence in the future of lumber production in the Alberni Valley.¹

The potential for economic exploitation of the area's forests had long been realized. In the 1860s a sawmill operated at the head of the Alberni Canal. Specializing in ship's spars and capable of producing 20,000 board feet per day, the mill had a short existence. The logging off of accessible timber and the return of the bulk of the British trade in timbers to southern American ports at the end of the Civil War forced the closure of the Alberni operation.² During the 1890s a paper mill was put into production, using rags and waste paper to manufacture its finished product. This operation, too, was short-lived and closed in 1896.³ A few small sawmills were constructed in the 1890s and the first years of the new century, producing lumber and shingles for the rural community that was developing in the valley.⁴

In November, 1904, four brothers formed a corporation called
the Barclay Sound Cedar Company. Robert Wood had come to the valley in 1892 to install machinery at the paper mill. In 1905, Robert, his three brothers, and one other partner began operating a small sawmill and shingle mill in what became Port Alberni, turning out 25,000 board feet of lumber per day and employing ten men. Most of the logging for the Barclay Sound Cedar Company was done in and around Port Alberni townsite. Besides local sales, the firm was able to ship lumber to Vancouver and Victoria. Because of the irregularity of cargo ships coming into the Alberni Canal, the company was forced to charter ships to carry their products beyond the perimeters of the valley. In 1908, Carlin, Meredith and Gibson bought into the company, and the following year the Wood brothers sold their interest to the new partners. This mill later became the foundation of one lumber empire in the Port Alberni district.5

While lumber production was at a modest level in 1910, interest in Alberni Valley timber was intense. The expanding prairie market, the myriad of North American railway projects, the depletion of forest resources in the American Midwest, and the anticipated completion of the Panama Canal stimulated investor interest in British Columbia timber. Speculators and lumber operators, mainly American, rushed in to claim timber rights in expectation that the value of these rights would rise. By 1907 the Rockefellers had acquired over fifty thousand acres of choice fir and cedar in the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway Belt, including eleven thousand acres on Ash and Dixon Lakes, near Alberni.6 The Red Cliff Lumber Company, of Duluth, Minnesota, purchased 22,287 acres of timber land between the Alberni Canal
and Great Central Lake from the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway in the spring of 1907. Red Cliff was not only a timber-holding company, as it operated sawmills in the American Midwest, and the announcement by W.E. Knapp, general manager of the company, in late 1907 that his firm would erect mills in the Alberni area costing a million and a half dollars and employing 500 men seemed to assure the beginning of substantial lumber production in the valley.\(^7\) In 1909 a director of the Red Cliff Lumber Company promised a big mill within the next five years.\(^8\) The president of the firm visited Alberni in the summer of 1911 and assured the townspeople that a large manufacturing plant would be built as soon as the Panama Canal was completed and rail transportation reached the west coast of Vancouver Island.\(^9\) The arrival of the railway in December 1911 and the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, however, failed to bring these promises to fruition. Despite the promise of large-scale, American investment, the real beginnings of intensive lumber production came from sources closer to home.

In 1909, M. Carlin, R.W. Gibson, and T. Meredith secured controlling interest in the Barclay Sound Cedar Company. Carlin was president of the Columbia River Lumber Company of Golden, British Columbia. Gibson was president of the Anglo-American Lumber Company of Vancouver, the Gibson Lumber Company of Winnipeg, and the Beaver Lumber Company which operated some seventy retail yards in the prairie provinces. Meredith held executive positions in the Anglo-American Lumber Company, the Davidson-Fraser Lumber Company of Moose Jaw, and the Farmers' Trading Company of Yorkton. In May 1910 the new owners bought up
$15,000 worth of town lots and suggested that a new large mill was planned for the company's waterfront property beside the Barclay Sound plant.10

In August these plans solidified. A giant merger brought together four British Columbia sawmill concerns: the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company (Port Moody), the Anglo-American Lumber Company (Vancouver), Gibbons Lumber Mills (Arrow Lakes), and the Barclay Sound Cedar Company (Alberni). The new corporation was capitalized at $5,000,000 and was to be known as the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company. M. Carlin was president, R.W. Gibson and J.D. McArthur were the vice-presidents, and Thomas Meredith was the general manager. Five prominent western Canadians sat on the board of directors. The new concern controlled 135 square miles of timber, 25 of which were on the Alberni Canal. No expansion was deemed necessary for the mainland mills, but the company announced plans to build a large export mill at Port Alberni as soon as the E&N railway line was extended from Nanaimo to Alberni. The Barclay Sound mill was to be converted to a shingle mill.11

Construction on the Canadian Pacific mill began in October 1911, the machinery arrived in December, and the new mill began producing lumber in March 1912. The capacity of the mill was over 75,000 board feet per shift, and a planing mill and dry kilns were part of the operation.12 In June 1912 the first railway shipment left the plant for the prairies over the E&N extension which had been completed seven months earlier. The company's timber limits were situated one and a half miles from the mill and a logging railway was built to deliver the logs.
Weist Brothers, an Oregon firm, had the contract to log the estimated five year supply of timber. By July of 1912 the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company had invested nearly a million dollars in the Port Alberni area, Weist Brothers were logging a contract at a price of a half a million dollars, and the logging and milling operations were distributing $20,000 monthly into the local economy.13

For the next two years the company prospered. The prairie market absorbed the bulk of the mill's production, but foreign orders, such as 1½ million feet of lumber to China in 1914, kept the mill running to capacity. In March 1914 running time was extended from ten to twelve hours per day, and, following expansions in milling and logging facilities, production reached 120,000 feet per shift.14

In the summer of 1914 the nation-wide depression caught up with the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company. Particularly in the Canadian West, 1913 to 1916 were difficult years. Railway construction had slowed or ceased altogether; farmers faced low prices and drought. British Columbia lumbermen lost their primary market, and companies which had expanded during the pre-depression boom years found themselves overextended with creditors knocking at their door. In August 1914 the Port Alberni mill shut down and in October its affairs were turned over to a receiver. The other holdings of the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company in British Columbia met a similar fate. Despite pleas for freight rate reductions and lower labour costs, the company was unable to re-open its Port Alberni plant.15

After being closed down for a year and a half, the Canadian
Pacific mill was finally put back into production in 1916. Howard A. Dent, of the Dent Lumber and Shingle Company, and A.W. Mylroie, of the Anchor Supply Company, both of Seattle, leased the mill from the receivers in early 1916 and took over the plant on the first of March. The new company, called the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company, also acquired timber, and Weist Brothers were contracted to do the logging. On 10 March 1916 the Alberni Pacific mill began operating at full capacity.  

The plans of the new firm were decidedly different from those of the previous owner. Instead of relying on the prairie trade, Dent and Mylroie were determined to shift the emphasis to the export cargo trade. In 1914 the provincial chief forester stressed the need for British Columbia lumbermen to penetrate foreign markets. William Bowser reiterated this sentiment in a speech given on his accession to the premiership in 1915: "As the matter stands to-day, we have surpassing wealth of timber, an immense investment in manufacturing plants and every facility, save one, for large development. We have no shipping and overseas market." British Columbia's export trade, however, was slow to develop. Tonnage was not readily available during the First World War, and gaining access to foreign markets was not easy and demanded aggressive salesmanship. Moreover, the resurgence of the prairie economy in the last years of the War created a handy market which, for a time, readily absorbed British Columbia mill production.

Dent and Mylroie began producing for the Alaskan lumber trade in 1916. To overcome the shortage of tonnage and the irregularity of freighter service from Port Alberni, they
purchased the steam schooner "Southcoast" from a San Francisco captain. The schooner, pulling a barge, was able to transport over one million board feet of lumber. Arrangements were also made with a Seattle steamship company to make periodic stops in Port Alberni on its run to Alaska. Orders were secured from the United States government for lumber to be delivered to military bases in Alaska. Dent and Mylroie also owned lumber yards in Anchorage which would take shipments from the Port Alberni plant. In April 1916 the first cargo load of lumber left Port Alberni for Alaska. With the release of tonnage after the War, the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company was able to expand the scope of its export trade. Fully 90 percent of the company's business was in the export market in 1921. California, Peru, Chile, and Australia were the main purchasers. Not all years saw such a high percentage of lumber being sent by ship as high prairie prices frequently directed lumber westward via the railway. The flexibility of the Alberni Pacific mill in catering to either the rail or waterborne trade proved to have been an astute managerial decision.

The ownership structure of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company changed in September 1916 when H.A. Dent acquired the interests of A.W. Mylroie in the firm. In 1918 the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company became a subsidiary of the Red Cliff Lumber Company. The rich timber tracts of the Duluth company merged with the sawmill facilities controlled by Dent, ensuring the longevity of the milling operation. The Red Cliff company owned 24,000 shares in the restructured APL, while Dent controlled 5,995 shares. Dent remained operations manager at
Port Alberni. In February 1921, APL bought the mill that they had been leasing since 1916 from the liquidators of the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company.

Even while leasing APL had been upgrading its plant and increasing its productive capacity. In 1921 the mill was producing 95,000 board feet per shift and employed 120 men.23 The company also began to do their own logging. They purchased logging equipment, including a locomotive, rolling stock, seven donkey engines, and loading and rigging equipment, from Weist Brothers in 1918.24 Thus, by 1921 the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company was an impressive operation, running an efficient mill, owning large timber reserves, and managing its own logging camps. In 1922 the sawmill underwent further renovations and capacity was increased to 160,000 feet per ten-hour shift. When demand was high the mill put on two ten-hour shifts and turned out an average of 250,000 feet per day. To meet the increased mill production, woods operations also had to be expanded to bring the requisite timber to the mill. In the summer of 1923 the new, improved mill and logging operations were using twice as many men as formerly; 250 men were employed in the mill and 100 in the woods.25

The successful Alberni Pacific Lumber Company was bought out in the summer of 1925 for three million dollars. The deal included the mill, logging operations, and one billion feet of crown-granted timber. Howard Dent returned to Washington, leaving the new owners a profitable, well-established manufacturing enterprise.

While the Alberni Pacific mill was the largest concern in
the valley, there were six other sawmills and four shingle mills located in the area in 1925. Most of these were small milling operations, employing three to eight men, and running intermittently during the year according to the dictates of the lumber market. The valley's shingle industry was not large in comparison with the sawmilling business. In 1925 the Alberni Canal Shingle Company and the Greatex Shingle Company employed 30 men each when in operation. 26

Besides APL there was one other major sawmill concern in the area in the early 1920s, a company which was innovative but short-lived. In March 1918 a new mill went into production at Bainbridge, six miles from Port Alberni. The plant had a capacity of about 80,000 board feet daily and employed 75 men in the mill and the woods. The sawmill was geared for cutting long timbers and was able to handle 125 foot logs. Only one other mill in British Columbia was capable of cutting such large logs. The Bainbridge Lumber Company was owned by Clarence Hoard of Victoria. Logging for the mill was done by Hoard's brother Sam and Jim Flaherty in the vicinity of Bainbridge. 27

Clarence Hoard, a civil engineer, was involved with the Victoria shipbuilding industry. He was associated with Cholberg Shipyards and became president of Victoria Shipowners Ltd. in 1920. Hoard's projection for the Bainbridge mill was to use it to supply long timbers for ship construction and to participate in an expected boom in British Columbia's shipbuilding industry; wartime initiatives by the federal government seemed to presage strong support for the nascent industry. In 1920 about 30 percent of the Bainbridge mill's cut was being sent to Victoria
to be used by Cholberg Shipyard in the construction of four wooden barquentines for Victoria Shipowners Ltd. The project was being assisted to the extent of $700,000 by the federal government, and in early 1921 the first vessel, the "S.F. Tolmie," was launched. It was the first ship built entirely by Vancouver Island capital and labour, made from Island timber, and designed for carrying Island lumber. Unfortunately for the local shipbuilding industry and the dreams of Clarence Hoard the experiment was not a financial success. The federal government took over Victoria Shipowners in the summer of 1921.28

Following the shipbuilding venture Clarence Hoard began promoting another scheme. Equipment was installed at the Bainbridge mill to produce a new type of silo at the rate of 2,000 a year. Hoard had obtained the patent for a silo that was made completely of wood and was self-adjustable to weather conditions through the natural contraction and expansion of the wood. He felt that markets in Canada, the United States, Australia, and Argentina could be developed and that the new venture would absorb a large part of the Bainbridge mill's production.29

The silo was relatively successful but did not force an expansion of the milling and logging facilities at Bainbridge. In 1926 the mill still had a production capacity of 80,000 feet per day and employed 100 workers. The operation closed in October 1927. The easily accessible timber had been logged and the company could not afford to purchase more land. To continue would also have necessitated the expensive alternatives of geographically extending logging operations or moving the
sawmill. Due to lack of financing and lack of commitment the company decided to fold and Hoard left the lumber business.\textsuperscript{30}

The Bainbridge Lumber Company and the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company had established the Alberni Valley as a lumbering centre in the years before 1925, but growth had been neither steady nor even. Fluctuating lumber prices, rising production costs, and variable freight rates made each year an adventure for lumber operators. The boom years of 1916 to 1920 and the relatively healthy economy in the years from 1922 to 1929 were sandwiched between times of financial hardship. The depression of 1913-1914 devastated the British Columbia lumber industry and in 1916 production in the province had fallen to 60 percent of 1910 levels.\textsuperscript{31} Companies, such as the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company, went bankrupt. The resurgence of the prairie trade after 1916 and federal initiatives in securing European orders began a boom period for British Columbia lumber makers. Production levels and lumber prices rose dramatically. In 1919 Howard Dent remarked: "Never before, I believe, in the history of the B.C. lumber industry had the situation developed when side lumber had brought the price of special cutting orders. It is an indication of what is ahead for the industry when the tremendous building campaign assumes its full scope in both the U.S. and Canada."\textsuperscript{32} The prairie demand had become so high that Dent had curtailed the amount of his trade that went to Alaska.\textsuperscript{33} Nineteen-twenty was the banner year for the British Columbia lumber industry, establishing records for production and price levels.\textsuperscript{34} The depression of 1921 brought to an end the post-War prosperity. Both Alberni Pacific and Bainbridge Lumber closed
their plants for extended periods in 1921. After 1921 British Columbia lumber production increased yearly until 1929, and average lumber prices climbed to $27.79 per thousand board feet, f.o.b., in 1923 and remaining in the $20-24 range until the end of the decade (see Figure II). 35

During the last half of the 1920s the lumber industry in the Alberni Valley expanded. New mills were built and production levels increased. While the new mills were oriented toward the rail trade, progress was made in expanding the cargo facilities at Port Alberni. The economic climate allowed steady growth in the area's forest economy.

Dent's Alberni Pacific Lumber Company was purchased in 1925 by a British timber importing firm, Denny, Mott & Dickson. Three British Columbia timbermen, F.R. Pendleton, Aird Flavelle, and M.A. Grainger, were appointed directors of the new company which was called the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company (1925), Ltd. These three men had considerable experience with the British Columbia lumber trade, both in government and in private companies. In 1922 they had formed the Timberland and Management Co. of B.C., a firm which became Messrs. M.A. Grainger & Company in 1925. This firm managed the APL operations for the British owners.

In the fall of 1925 the APL mill began running two eight-hour shifts each day, 36 a practice which continued into the 1930s. The 1925 cut was almost 42 million board feet and the mill employed 248 men; in 1926, 258 men produced over 55 million board feet. Production reached 80 million board feet in 1928 and topped 100 million in 1929. 37 Logging operations were
extended to meet the demands of the mill. A new camp was established at Underwood Cove in 1928, and a logging railway was built to this timber tract which was expected to provide logs for six years. A large portion of APL lumber was shipped by water to the Atlantic coast of the United States, California, Japan, and Australia.

A second major lumber firm entered the Port Alberni district in the mid-1920s. In early 1925 the Bloedel, Stewart & Welch corporation and the King-Farris Lumber Company announced that they had purchased eleven thousand acres of timber near Great Central Lake from the Canadian Pacific Railway for a price in the neighbourhood of $500,000. As part of the deal the CPR was to construct 6½ miles of railway from Port Alberni into the Great Central Lake area where the syndicate would build a large sawmill. The new company was called Great Central Sawmills Ltd., with Bloedel, Stewart & Welch controlling 60 percent of the firm.

The Bloedel, Stewart & Welch Company had been active in the British Columbia forest industry since 1911. Julius Harold Bloedel was born in Wisconsin in 1864. He graduated from the University of Michigan and 1889 went west to Washington, eventually becoming a bank president in the Bellingham area. In 1897 he joined with J.J. Donovan and Peter Larson and organized the Lake Whatcom Logging Co. Larson, a wealthy lumberman, supplied the bulk of the capital. Larson died in 1907 but the company continued and extended its logging and milling operations. The company became Bloedel-Donovan Lumber Mills and soon they operated four sawmills, three shingle mills, a sash
and door factory, and a box factory. Bloedel managed the mills and directed sales; Donovan ran the logging camps and railways.

In 1911, fearing the loss of tariff protection against Canadian imports, Bloedel sent men to cruise timber in British Columbia. Donovan was not interested in Canadian timber, and Bloedel allied with railway contractors Patrick Welch and John W. Stewart to form Bloedel, Stewart & Welch in July of 1911. Bloedel owned one half of the firm and the others one quarter each. The company begin logging at Myrtle Point and in 1920 purchased timber at Union Bay on Vancouver Island, establishing a logging operation there. Four years later they purchased the Shull Lumber and Shingle Company mill in Vancouver, one of the largest shingle mills in the world. Another major timber purchase at Menzies Bay in 1925 further expanded the company's Vancouver Island operations. Until the project at Great Central Lake was put into production, Bloedel, Stewart & Welch was not involved in manufacturing lumber.

In January 1926 the first shipment of lumber left the Great Central mill, bound by railway for Quebec. The Great Central plant had a daily capacity of 125,000 board feet and employed 100 men, but by 1929 capacity had been increased to 165,000 feet daily. The yearly cut of the mill rose from 23½ million board feet in 1926 to 44 million in 1929. The company primarily produced lumber for the rail trade. Not having port facilities, and having contracted with the Canadian Pacific Railway as part of the 1925 timber purchase to ship a percentage of the mill's output via the railway, Great Central Sawmills catered to the North American market. Timber holdings in the Alberni Valley
were extended in 1927 when Bloedel, Stewart & Welch purchased 35,000 acres of land at a cost of $2\frac{1}{2} million. The property was owned by the Hill-Quinn estate of Saginaw, Michigan, and was located in the Great Central Lake, Sproat Lake, and Alberni Canal areas.\textsuperscript{44} In 1928 Great Central production was fourth largest among Vancouver Island sawmills. Alberni Pacific Lumber Company ranked first.\textsuperscript{45}

In 1929 nine sawmills operated in the Alberni Valley. Besides the large Alberni Pacific and Great Central mills, Sproat Lake Lumber Company had a daily capacity of 50,000 board feet and R.B. McLean's sawmill could produce 25,000 board feet per day. The other mills were much smaller and operated only sporadically. Total valley lumber production in 1929 was 173,238,000 board feet. Sixty percent of this was cut by Alberni Pacific, twenty-five percent by Great Central Sawmills, and eleven percent by the Sproat Lake mill.\textsuperscript{46}

By 1929 manufacturers had established an expanding, commercial lumber trade, but the following decade brought rapid changes and challenges to settled business patterns. The world-wide depression and the imposition of an American tariff on Canadian lumber caused production to decline and unemployment to rise in the early 1930s. However, possessing financial resources to survive the lean years and political influence, the companies managed to meet the loss of the American trade by establishing a new market in the British Isles. By the end of the decade the major firms had far surpassed the achievements of the 1920s and the Alberni Valley was solidly entrenched as a major lumber centre in British Columbia. The ability of the
companies to stave off bankruptcy and even expand during the 1930s was indeed a significant feat.

Until the summer of 1930, Vancouver Forest District sawmills continued to run at high production levels. The first six months of 1930 showed an increase in the lumber scale over the same period in 1929. Producers felt that the depression, foreshadowed by the stock market crash of October 1929, was only temporary. After June of 1930 camp after camp closed and mill production slowed. This trend continued throughout 1931 and 1932. Vancouver Forest District lumber production decreased by 42 percent between 1929 and 1931.47 Average lumber prices, f.o.b., dropped from $24.44 per thousand in 1929 to $12.01 in 1932.48

In the Port Alberni district the Alberni Pacific mill closed in the summer of 1930 for two weeks and when it re-opened fewer employees were taken back. Over the next years lay-offs were commonplace. In June of 1932 the same mill closed for almost four months and when production resumed it was at a lower level with fewer employees. Logging camps remained closed until November.49 Great Central Sawmills endured a similar experience and the mill was shut down for many months in the winter of 1932-1933.50 Great Central logging camp production dropped by 46 percent between 1929 and 1932.51 Sproat Lake Lumber Company went bankrupt in 1930 and was sold to two Albertans. The company was re-organized as Sproat Lake Sawmills and began to produce lumber. Market conditions forced the mill to close from the summer of 1931 until the summer of 1933.52
The malaise in the British Columbia lumber industry was not solely due to poor world-wide economic conditions. A change in the province's traditional market also contributed to the downturn. The American Smoot-Hawley Tariff went into effect in 1930, posting a duty of $1.00 per thousand against Canadian lumber. This was followed in 1932 by an additional excise tax of $3.00 per thousand, making a prohibitive impost of $4.00 per thousand against British Columbia lumber. Considering that lumber prices in 1932 were about $12.00 per thousand, British Columbia producers faced a bleak future in their most important market. In 1929, 55 percent of British Columbia lumber shipments went to the United States; in 1933 only 6 percent travelled that route. The tariff barrier was reduced by half in 1935, but the importance of the American market to British Columbia producers did not return to previous levels. Only 16 percent of British Columbia's forest production was sold in the United States in 1939.

The response of British Columbia lumber producers to the disappearance of the American market was to seek new customers overseas. In this quest the lumber companies were aided by initiatives from the federal government. Prime Minister R.B. Bennett was eager to gain preferential treatment for Canadian products in the British market in an attempt to ease the dismal economic conditions at home. At the Imperial Economic Conference, held in Ottawa during the summer of 1932, Bennett negotiated a few concessions from Britain, including an agreement whereby Canadian lumber would get free access into the United Kingdom market, while non-Empire lumber producers would
be faced with a ten percent tariff. If the agreement seemed straightforward on paper, it was not in practice. In the late 1920s the Soviet Union began to sell increasing amounts of lumber in the United Kingdom, and by 1931 she supplied fully one-quarter of Britain's needs. The British government was reluctant to sever this Soviet trade link, and despite specific reference to non-Empire lumber producers in the Ottawa Trade Agreements, Britain refused to act decisively to curtail Soviet imports.

British Columbia lumbermen and the federal government reacted with alarm to the lack of British resolve, fearing total exclusion from the United Kingdom market. Denny, Mott & Dickson, one of Great Britain's largest timber firms and owner of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company, led the campaign against a large Russian lumber contract negotiated in late 1932. Mixing sentiments of Empire solidarity with economic self-interest, C.E. Denny took his cause to the British people and demanded that the British government take action:

The public may give casual thought to this purchase but it is unlikely to realize the deeply sinister effect it may have in the future.... Unquestionably Russian state-controlled and state-aided competition continues to press down labor costs to the starvation level outside Russia, diminishing the cutting of timber and accelerating the closing of mills. The time must come when Russia will have achieved a virtual monopoly and then the United Kingdom will naturally be forced to pay excessive prices.54

In Canada, lumber producers and federal and provincial governments worked hard to force adherence to the Ottawa Trade Agreement.
Finally, the British government made an informal arrangement with the Soviets which resulted in a reduction of Soviet lumber imports in return for higher prices for Russian timber. This allowed Canadian producers access to a sizeable share of the British market, and British Columbia lumbermen pursued this advantage with vigour. In 1931 the province shipped less than 100 million feet of lumber to the United Kingdom. By 1933 this figure had risen to over 271 million and in 1936 it reached 666 million. The percentage of British Columbia lumber shipped to the United Kingdom increased from 7 percent in 1929 to 40 percent in 1933 to 63 percent in 1939, almost a mirror-image of the pattern in shipments to the United States. Despite the steadily-growing importance of the United Kingdom, the spectre of increased Russian penetration into British Columbia's most important market continued to haunt provincial lumber producers.

Tariff arrangements and government intervention were not sufficient in themselves to guarantee the British market, for consumers had to be persuaded that Canadian lumber was a quality product. In cultivating sales the industry and the provincial government worked closely together. The B.C. Loggers' Association and the B.C. Lumber and Shingle Manufacturers' Association, employer associations that included the major coastal logging and sawmill concerns, had set up the Joint Trade Extension Committee in 1929 to expand British Columbia's share of the world lumber trade. The government provided half the costs of the committee and the two associations put up the other half. The work of this committee was extremely important in
increasing British Columbia lumber sales in the United Kingdom. An envious American lumber industry journalist commented with admiration in 1938 on the success of British Columbia lumber in Great Britain:

It was not wholly the result of tariff changes, trade agreements or lower production costs. Conservative British buying customs are not changed that easily. Colonials and foreigners look pretty much alike to British buyers. We see no reference to the vast sums of money Canada spent to build this market; to the hard work of her trade commissioners, both public and private; to the publicity campaigns waged in Great Britain; to the fact that British Columbia lumbermen have taught England to use North American frame construction and red cedar shingles; to the technical exhibits maintained in England to acquaint customers with the properties of British Columbia woods; and to the fact that British Columbia House at No. 1 Regent Street is virtually a clearing house for lumber information. 59

As well as in the United Kingdom, British Columbia also increased its share in other foreign markets. The amount of lumber shipped to Australia quadrupled between 1928 and 1938 and shipments to South Africa doubled. 60 Furthermore, sales in China, South America, Mexico, and Central America increased in the 1930s. The depression years witnessed the diversification of the destinations of British Columbia lumber shipments, and with the partial return of the American market, the industry found itself on solid footing by 1939 and production levels were higher than those of 1929 (see Figure I). Lumber prices, however, did not experience such substantial growth.

In the Alberni Valley the beginnings of the resurgence of the lumber industry in 1933 and the re-orientation of trade towards Great Britain and other overseas markets proved
auspicious for local producers. The harbour facilities in Port Alberni and the rich store of high-quality fir timber allowed the companies to take advantage of the new circumstances. Capital investment increased and new mills and logging camps sprang up. Despite the depression the lumber economy returned to health.

The Alberni Pacific Lumber Company underwent substantial changes in the mid-1930s. The company constructed a second sawmill in Port Alberni in the summer of 1933, and the new mill began producing lumber in October, producing 100,000 board feet per day and employing 70 men. With increased production and improved markets, APL turned a profit in 1934 and the depression became a thing of the past. The ownership of the company also changed. Denny, Mott & Dickson was primarily a timber-trading firm and as their Alberni Valley timber reserves began to dwindle in the 1930s they lacked the resolve to extend their timber holdings and remain in the lumber manufacturing business. In the late 1920s serious negotiations had taken place with J.H. Bloedel, and if the price had been right Denny, Mott & Dickson would have sold the lumber company. By 1934 the decision whether to purchase more timber or sell the APL operation became more pressing. The directors of the firm were divided on what action to take, but in 1936 Denny, Mott & Dickson solved their dilemma and sold the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company for 1.7 million dollars.

The company that took over the APL operation was headed by H.R. MacMillan, a man experienced in the ways of the British Columbia lumber industry. MacMillan had first come to British
Columbia in March 1907 to cruise timber near Powell River, but after a short stay returned to the United States to complete a forestry degree at Yale. In 1908 he joined the forestry branch of the Department of the Interior in Ottawa, and in 1912 he accepted an offer to become British Columbia's first chief forester. Always aware of the importance of building an export market, MacMillan was an excellent choice to go to Britain in 1915 as a special trade commissioner under the auspices of the federal government to secure lumber orders. In 1916 MacMillan resigned as chief forester. After a short stint with the Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing Company at Chemainus, MacMillan joined the Imperial Munitions Board to procure wood for military use. In 1919 MacMillan began his own firm, and with Montague Meyer, a leading British timber importer and wholesaler, as a partner, he established the H.R. MacMillan Export Company.

During the 1920s the lumber brokerage company made contacts throughout the world selling British Columbia lumber. The firm opened offices in New York, Portland, and Seattle, and in 1924 formed the Canadian Transport Company to charter ships and thus assure tonnage for lumber shipments. The MacMillan company also began buying sawmills and investing in logging operations, most notably the Canadian White Pine Company in 1926. Montague Meyer sold his interest in the firm in 1927, leaving MacMillan as the principal owner and W.J. VanDusen as a secondary partner. The purchaser of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company was well-established in the British Columbia lumber industry and possessed an abundance of capital and expertise.
To feed the mill the new owner also acquired a large timber reserve in 1936, purchasing timberland that had been staked by the Rockefeller interests in the early years of the century. The timber, located in the Ash River Valley, assured the mill a log supply for 25 years and cost the MacMillan company 2.6 million dollars. The timber, mill facilities, and logging operations had cost 4.3 million dollars.67

The Bloedel, Stewart & Welch operations also underwent changes in the years after 1933. By the fall of 1933 Great Central Sawmills was running full bore. A new logging show had been opened up with the construction of five miles of logging railroad track and the mill was using two shifts.68 The company also built a new sawmill in Port Alberni and began logging the Hill-Quinn tract at Franklin River. The large mill began producing lumber in February 1935, had a capacity of 200,000 feet per eight-hour shift, and provided employment for over 500 men in the milling and logging operation.69

In March 1935, Bloedel, Stewart & Welch merged all of its British Columbia interests into one organization, with headquarters in Vancouver. B.M. Farris' shares in Great Central Sawmills were purchased and the Great Central Lake operation was integrated into Bloedel, Stewart & Welch. The new corporation owned 2.5 billion feet of standing timber at Great Central Lake, Franklin River, and Menzies Bay, ran logging operations at each of these three sites, operated two sawmills, and owned the 24-machine Red Band Shingle mill at Vancouver.70

The waterborne export trade had become the cornerstone of the Alberni Valley lumber economy. In 1936 the Bloedel, Stewart
& Welch mill in Port Alberni sent 107,140,000 board feet of lumber, 91.7 percent of total production, to customers by ship. The rail trade took 6 percent of production and local sales accounted for 2.3 percent of the mill's output. At the Great Central mill 52,225,000 board feet, 70.2 percent of production, went to the waterborne export trade, 27.7 percent was shipped by rail, and 2.1 percent was consumed by the local market. Prices for lumber in the rail trade were from two to four dollars per thousand higher than export prices, but the rail market was small with little room for expansion. In 1936 Port Alberni became the second largest lumber export port in British Columbia. Vancouver ranked first and New Westminster third. During that year 213 deep-sea vessels carried 283 million board feet of lumber out the Alberni Canal.

The development of the lumber industry in the Alberni Valley from 1910 to 1939 can be divided into three phases. The first stage, from 1910 to the mid-1920s, saw the intrusion of extensive capital investment into manufacturing plants in the area. Dependent primarily on the North American rail trade, but making important inroads into the waterborne export trade, companies were able to sustain profitable enterprises. The years from 1925 to 1932 witnessed the entrance of new capital into the district and the expansion of production facilities. Markets remained similar. While the Alberni Pacific plant emphasized the export trade, Great Central Sawmills was geared for the North American rail market. The years after 1932 saw wholesale changes in the Alberni lumber economy. The dramatic increase in the importance of the United Kingdom as a consumer
shifted the balance between the rail and waterborne trade. Mills produced for the overseas market. More large-scale capital investment also entered the valley and the district became an important cornerstone in the provincial forest economy.

The lumber firms in the Port Alberni district were exceptionally successful in avoiding the pitfalls inherent in the staple economy. Able management and large financial resources were crucial in maintaining a healthy lumber industry in the valley. Companies were made up of three facets: timber holdings, production facilities, and sales organizations, and each of these components had to be managed effectively. Capital was needed to acquire timber and large timber reserves were essential to ensure the long life of the sawmills. Logging and milling operations also required a large capital investment as coastal woods operations were heavily mechanized and initial expenditures on logging equipment were high. To begin producing lumber in the Alberni Valley a company had to have large financial reserves. Well-capitalized firms were better able to withstand fluctuations in the marketplace and to gain the ear of politicians. In selling lumber the help of the provincial government was an important variable in entering new markets. Heavy capitalization, then, was important not only in entering the lumber industry but also in surviving the vicissitudes of the lumber markets.

The possession of standing timber was essential to the long-term success of a manufacturing plant. H.A. Dent's Alberni Pacific Lumber Company attained a degree of permanence only
after merging with the Red Cliff Lumber Company which possessed vast tracts of timber land in the valley. Bloedel, Stewart & Welch and the MacMillan company acquired thousands of acres of timber to ensure the longevity of their conversion plants. Without a sure supply of timber, companies did not invest in manufacturing facilities. Timber was expensive, and companies spent more money buying timber than they invested in production operations. When the MacMillan company entered the Alberni Valley in 1936, 61 percent of their initial investment was in timber.

Timber tenure in the Alberni Valley was different from that found in most other regions of the province. The Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway Belt incorporated a large portion of eastern Vancouver Island, including much of the Port Alberni district. The north-south boundary of the E&N Belt crossed the Alberni Canal some nine miles to the east of Port Alberni. The land in the Belt had been ceded by the provincial government to the Dunsmuir railway interests in the 1880s, and resources therein became the property of private owners. While the provincial government developed a complicated procedure for distributing crown-owned land to lumber manufacturers, the land in the E&N Belt was almost completely beyond government purview. E&N Belt timber owners held all the authority inherent in laws regarding property rights. For lumber operators outright ownership of timber land gave them security of tenure. Capital investment could be planned with the knowledge that timber was under their control and beyond the whims of the government and the public. The rise of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in the
1930s further strengthened the resolve of private timber holders to protect their property rights. In 1938 the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company owned 41,000 acres in the Alberni area, 99 percent of its holdings in the valley, and Bloedel, Stewart & Welch owned 15,000 acres, about 42 percent of the timber it controlled in the district.\textsuperscript{73}

Converting timber to lumber was also an expensive undertaking in the Alberni Valley because sawmills had to run their own logging shows and because the type of logging demanded heavy outlays of capital. Logging and sawmilling were done by one company in the Port Alberni district. Great Central Sawmills, the Alberni Pacific Lumber Companies, and Bloedel, Stewart & Welch all owned and operated their own logging outfits. This was not a universal practice in the coastal lumber industry. In fact, on the east coast of Vancouver Island and along the coast of the Lower Mainland it was more common for logging and milling operations to be done by separate companies. In that region logging firms owned timber or acquired rights to it and did the logging. They then offered the logs for sale on the Vancouver Log Market and the various sawmill firms bid for the logs at an auction. The sawmills did not fear a shortage of logs as the large number of logging companies ensured a steady supply. In the Alberni Valley it was not feasible for a company to be engaged only in logging or only in the sawmill business. A company that only logged would have needed a large number of mills in the area to compete for the logs and thus ensure competitive prices, or it would have had to have had access to the Vancouver Log Market. There were not a
large number of sawmills in the area that needed logs and the distance to Vancouver and the perils of the Pacific Ocean off the west coast of Vancouver Island inhibited the development of logging companies catering to Lower Mainland mills. To have invested capital in a sawmill in expectation of a number of logging companies coming to the area to provide cheap, long-term log supplies would have been equally foolish. To exploit the forests of the Alberni Valley a company had to control timber, operate its own logging outfits, and run a sawmill.

Producing lumber also demanded expensive machinery and equipment, and in comparison to the interior of the province and central Canada, coastal operations were much more capital intensive. The production process was relatively straightforward and changed little in the years from 1910 to 1939. The process began in the bush and except for times of fire or heavy snowfall, logging operations could run year round. Fallers cut the trees down, using saws and axes, and buckers limbed the trees and cut them into log lengths. It was not until the late 1930s that power saws begin to change the traditional practices of fallers and buckers.74 Once the logs were cut they were yarded by cables and steam-powered donkey engines to a landing. After 1915 high-lead logging replaced ground yarding, and by means of spar trees, cables, and engines one end of the log was lifted into the air and hauled to the landing. At the landing the logs were loaded onto railway cars and then transported to a siding beside a sawmill and unloaded into a mill pond.

From the mill pond a chain conveyor carried the logs up to the sawmill and placed them on a saw carriage. The log then
passed through a large band saw which took off the outer bark and slabs. The saw carriage returned, the log was repositioned, and another side was ripped. After the log was roughly squared it was cut into crude planks. The planks then travelled by conveyor to a number of circular saws which cut the rough planks into varying widths. After going through the edger the lumber was trimmed to required lengths. If needed the lumber passed through the resaw where it was ripped into smaller widths which did not include imperfections. The rough lumber was then sent through a planing machine which smoothed the surfaces. Finer lumber was first dried in steam kilns before running through the planer. The lumber was then ready to be shipped to customers. At each stage of the operation men were required to run the machines or manually assist mechanical devices in setting the logs or lumber in proper positions.75 While this sketch of logging and milling procedures suggests a smooth flow between the different phases the reality was much different. Breakdowns were common, infuriating the men who had to physically deal with the problems and costly to the operators desiring maximum production.

Once the lumber had been manufactured it had to be sold. In the 1910s and 1920s individual Alberni Valley companies were closely connected to selling agents. The board of directors of the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company linked the firm with three prairie lumber selling concerns. Robert Gibson, for example, was first vice-president of Canadian Pacific Lumber and president of Beaver Lumber Company, which operated some seventy lumber yards in the Canadian West.76 Howard A. Dent had close
connections to retail yards in Seattle and Anchorage, and Denny, Mott & Dickson was itself a lumber selling company. After the mid-1920s Alberni Valley mills became affiliated with large sales organizations which marketed the products of a number of coastal mills. In 1926 APL, along with seven other prominent British Columbia lumber producers, formed Coast Sawmills Ltd. to market their lumber in the prairie provinces. In the 1930s two large lumber brokerage firms dominated the selling of British Columbia overseas. The H.R. MacMillan Export Company and the newer Seaboard Lumber Sales fought fiercely to control British Columbia's export trade, especially to the United Kingdom. Bloedel, Stewart & Welch and the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company (1925) were members of Seaboard, which by the late 1930s became the largest exporter. It was in part the bitter struggle between Seaboard and the MacMillan company that prompted H.R. MacMillan to purchase the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company in 1936. Seaboard was increasingly becoming the sales agent for more and more British Columbia lumber producers. MacMillan needed lumber to sell and thus purchased the manufacturing facilities in Port Alberni in order to retain the markets his company had established throughout the world.

As we have seen, the provincial government was active during the 1930s helping coastal lumber operators market their products. Criticism of government-industry co-operation in trade extension came from a curious source. The H.R. MacMillan company, disgruntled with the activities of the B.C. Lumber and Shingle Manufacturers' Association, withdrew from this employer group in 1928, joining a much smaller organization called the
Western Lumber Manufacturers' Association. No love was lost between these two associations, and the Western Lumber Manufacturers became extremely critical of provincial funds being used to aid the marketing schemes of a rival organization. The Western Lumber Manufacturers' Association was not able to secure financial support from the provincial government.\(^8^0\)

The beginning of the Second World War in 1939 caused insecurity in world markets and uncertainty in the availability of tonnage and access to foreign markets. Mills in the Alberni Valley cut back their production.\(^8^1\) The curtailment proved to be temporary and the liquidation of timber intensified during the War. The MacMillan and Bloedel companies prospered and expanded their logging and milling operations, building on bases which had been established during the 1920s and 1930s. Heavily capitalized firms, experienced operation managers, effective marketing, and political influence had spelled prosperity and had allowed the companies to cope with the vicissitudes of the lumber economy and even overcome the global downturn of the 1930s.
Notes


2. See James Morton, The Enterprising Mr. Moody, the Bumptious Captain Stamp: The Lives and Colourful Times of Vancouver's Lumber Pioneers (Vancouver, 1977); W. Kaye Lamb, "Early Lumbering on Vancouver Island," The British Columbia Historical Quarterly, 2, 1 (1938), pp. 31-53; Lamb, "Early Lumbering on Vancouver Island," The British Columbia Historical Quarterly, 2, 2 (1938), pp. 95-121. The foot board measure represents the equivalent of a board one foot square and one inch thick. It is a measure used to gauge the quantity of wood in both lumber and logs and is not known for its precision. A sawmill which cut 25,000 feet would have produced a stack of lumber roughly 25 feet long, 8 feet high, and 10 feet deep. A tree 6 feet in diameter and 250 feet tall would yield roughly 12,500 board feet of lumber. See "Woods Work," Whistle Punk, 1, 1 (Spring 1984), pp. 22-23.


9. Ibid., 3 June 1911.

10. Ibid., 7 May 1910.

11. Ibid., 3 September 1910; Western Lumberman (September 1910), p. 20.


15. Port Alberni News, 17 March 1915; Alberni Advocate, 9 October 1914.


22. Public Archives of British Columbia (hereafter PABC), Company Registration Files, Department of the Attorney General, Roll 29, f.3700.


29. Pacific Coast Lumberman (August 1921), p. 33; Port Alberni News, 30 July 1924.


32. Pacific Coast Lumberman (June 1919), p. 41.
- 71 -


34. **British Columbia Lumberman** (June 1937), p. 33.

35. Ibid., p. 30; Exhibit 220, Royal Commission on Forestry, 1944-5, Proceedings, PABC, GR 520, v.13, f.11. F.o.b. (free on board) indicates that the price includes loading the lumber on the ship or train at the point of shipment.

36. **Port Alberni News**, 7 October 1925.


38. **Western Lumberman** (February 1928), p. 642.


40. MacKay, **Empire of Wood**, pp. 66-80; **Western Lumberman** (October 1924), pp. 8, 38 and 40; **British Columbia Lumberman** (March 1935), pp. 63-65.

41. **Port Alberni News**, 27 January 1926.


44. **Western Lumberman** (November 1927), p. 545.

45. **British Columbia Lumberman** (February 1929), p. 29.


49. **Port Alberni News**, 19 June 1930; 17 July 1930; 29 September 1932; 3 November 1932.

50. Ibid., 13 April 1933.


54. Daily Province, Vancouver, 7 January 1933, collected in PABC, GR 441, v.320, f.2.


57. PABC, GR 441, v.313, f.11; PABC, GR 441, v.320, f.2.


59. The Timberman (July 1938), collected in PABC, GR 1222, v.139, f.6.


61. Port Alberni News, 12 October 1933.


63. M.A. Grainger to C.F. Denny, 11 December 1929, PABC, Grainger Papers, Add MSS 588.


65. West Coast Advocate, Port Alberni, 17 September 1936.

66. MacKay, Empire of Wood, Chapters 2 and 4 and passim.


68. Port Alberni News, 5 October 1933.

69. West Coast Advocate, 24 March 1934; 27 September 1934; 28 February 1935; British Columbia Lumberman (March 1935), pp. 63-70.

70. West Coast Advocate, 14 March 1935.

72. West Coast Advocate, 7 January 1937.

73. British Columbia, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Department of Trade and Industry, "A Submission to the Royal Commission on Forestry: A Statement showing the amount of timber held under all types of tenure, by individuals and firms in the Province of British Columbia during the years 1938 and 1944," 3 volumes, PABC, GR 181.

74. B.C. Loggers' Association, Directors, Minutes, 19 September 1933, 22 December 1936, 16 February 1937, UBC, COFI Papers, v.1, f.2.


76. Western Lumberman (September 1910), p. 20.


78. MacKay, Empire of Wood, Chapter 6.


81. West Coast Advocate, 21 September 1939.
In 1910 a group of American capitalists announced ambitious plans for a site on the Upper Fraser River in the northern interior of British Columbia. They had acquired large blocks of land and planned to build an industrial empire in what was then an unsettled area. Part of their project included the building of two railways and a town to be called Fraser City. Herman J. Rossi, head of the syndicate, said that the timber resources of the region would form the core of the economic development: "The company will speedily erect large and modern saw and planing mills at Fraser City. An extensive logging railway will form part of the saw mill equipment, and we are likewise considering the construction at a later date of a pulp mill of large capacity."

"Fraser City," however, never became a reality.

The history of the forest industry in the Prince George district before World War II was as much a story of plans gone astray as it was of successful development projects. Yet a lumber industry did develop, spawned by the economic boom in the prairie region after 1916, and throughout the 1920s the sawmilling and logging industry expanded and attained a degree of prosperity. The area's forest economy declined in the 1930s, and while a few firms survived the depression, they bore little similarity to the giant enterprises which had been created in the Alberni Valley.

The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway arrived in Prince George in
1914 and the first inklings of lumber production were closely tied to the construction of the railway and the "boosting" of the adjacent townsites. Lumber was needed in the building of the railway and for the local construction boom of the years from 1910 to 1915. As houses, stores, and farm buildings were erected in anticipation of sustained economic growth, the demand for lumber kept the mills extremely busy. Two mills were especially important in supplying lumber in the initial construction of Fort George, South Fort George, and Prince George. The companies that ran these operations were not solely lumber concerns but were also interested in real estate, retail trade, and transportation.

In August 1910 the Northern Lumber Company began cutting lumber, and by December the mill was running at full speed, employing 26 men. The company had been formed by W.F. Cooke and Russell Peden. Cooke had been born near Hull, Quebec, and had moved west in 1890; Peden was a native of Winnipeg. In 1911 the partners built a mercantile store in South Fort George, and the next year George E. McLaughlin, another native Canadian, joined the firm. A new, larger sawmill, complete with planing equipment, was built and a second retail store was established, this time in Prince George. In 1914 the company employed 100 men in their mill, retail stores, and on their steamboat "Quesnel."

The Northern Lumber Company was shipping lumber to the prairies by 1916 and another sawmill was built at Willow River. This mill was smaller than the South Fort George operation and employed 40 men when it was running. In February 1917 the Willow River mill was shipping one to two cars of lumber daily to the prairies. McLaughlin bought out his two partners in 1919 and
four years later he sold the lumber company. The firm had been a successful operation and profitable for its owners.  

The second South Fort George sawmill operation was run by the Fort George Lumber and Navigation Company. Nick Clark, owner of the firm, set up a portable sawmill in September 1909, and in the following year he built a new mill capable of cutting 25,000 board feet per day. In 1910 the company also purchased two river steamers which were added to the one already plying the waters of the Fraser River. However, the expansion of the Fort George Lumber and Navigation Company was too rapid and the firm went bankrupt.

The assets of the company were bought by a group of Winnipeg capitalists in the spring of 1911. The new owners included J.D. McArthur, railway contractor, F.A. Thompson, president of the Lumbermen's Insurance Company, Allan J. Adamson, president of Western Trust Company, Dr. J.K. McLennan, secretary-treasurer of J.D. McArthur's Edmonton, Dunvegan & B.C. Railway, R.L. Hay, president of the Moose Mountain Lumber Company. C.E. McElroy became the local manager of the firm. The purchasers anticipated securing railway construction contracts and for this river boats and sawmills were necessary. J.D. McArthur had a charter to build a rail line from Edmonton to Fort George, via the Peace River area, and the South Fort George operation was expected to supply transportation services and lumber. This railway line, however, never came close to Fort George. Under McElroy the mill was kept in operation until 1916.

The tentative beginnings of lumber manufacture were closely tied to railway construction and the local construction boom
which ended in 1915, but even in this early period one feature of later development was evident. Capital and expertise were drawn mainly from the Canadian prairies, a trend which continued in the 1910s and 1920s. Along with eastern Canadian investors and businessmen from the American Midwest, prairie capitalists and companies which had strong bases in the Canadian West colonized the Prince George district and set the tone for forest exploitation. Operators in the traditional stronghold of the provincial lumber industry, the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island, had little or no interest in the forests of the northern interior.

The area to the east of Prince George, which was to become the home of the region's forest economy, did not attract permanent manufacturing facilities until the late years of World War I. The announcement of the construction route of the Grand Trunk Pacific through the northern interior was made in 1906, spawning a flurry of timber cruises and the acquisition of timber limits on speculation that the value of the timber would increase dramatically with the completion of the railway. The construction of the line along the Upper Fraser River in 1913 necessitated the setting up of small portable sawmills to cut railway ties and lumber for bridge construction, but no large, permanent mills were established. The completion of the railway in 1914 opened the timber reserves of the Upper Fraser to the prairies, but the depression in this year discouraged capital investment. Only the recovery of the prairie economy after 1915 stimulated capitalists to proceed with the construction of lumber manufacturing plants. Three operations dominated the East Line
lumber industry in the years from 1915 to 1930: the mills at Hutton, Giscome, and Sinclair Mills.

The Western Farmers' Lumber Company, a subsidiary of the United Grain Growers' Grain Company, of Winnipeg, purchased timber limits on the Upper Fraser in 1913. The reaction of Lower Mainland and Kootenay lumber operators was alarm. The prairie farmers had become dissatisfied with British Columbia lumber prices and had decided to guard against what was perceived as undue profits by British Columbia lumber firms by building their own facilities. The lumber operators feared that they would succeed. The *Nelson Daily News* had a more sanguine outlook on the plans of the UGG:

> A few more mills so operated would be sufficient to demonstrate to the prairie farmers that if they are paying more for their lumber than they think they should, this is not because the lumber men of this province are making an undue profit on their output. They will find that the cause of the undue high price of lumber is to be found elsewhere than in big profits by the manufacturers. They must look elsewhere for relief if it is to be obtained.

The experience of the UGG operation proved this observation correct.

It was not until 1917 that the UGG began to build their sawmill at Hutton, some 60 miles to the east of Prince George. The mill cost $150,000 and had an operating capacity of 80,000 feet per day. The company put in a short logging railroad and purchased a 47-ton Shay locomotive in 1918. As the owners found out, a logging railroad was not economically sound in interior forests because of the low timber volume per acre. The mill began producing lumber in the spring of 1918, and in January
of the following year over 300 men were employed in the company's mill and logging operations.11

The company wanted to ship lumber directly to farmers who were shareholders in the UGG. By 1920 it became evident that the strategy of the company was flawed. Farmers often could not take advantage of buying lumber directly from the UGG, for the lumber had to be purchased in railway carloads and ordered in advance, as the UGG did not have a full complement of retail yards. Further, prairie lumber dealers resented the activities of the UGG in trying to circumvent the established lumber sellers, and they refused to handle lumber manufactured at Hutton.12 A second problem that the UGG faced was the realization that the timber they had purchased near the mill was mainly defective cedar and hemlock. They had located the mill in the wrong place.13 By the early 1920s, UGG directors were regretting that they had embarked on a lumber mill in the northern interior of British Columbia. They continued to operate, however, until fire destroyed the plant in 1925.14 The UGG decided not to rebuild the mill and over the next two years they sold off their logs, lumber stocks, and machinery. The town of Hutton disappeared from the map.

The second large operation on the Upper Fraser was organized by A.C. Frost of Chicago, and this mill too was plagued by inexperienced management and unsound business decisions. Frost, who had built the Chicago and Milwaukee Interurban Railway, began purchasing timber in British Columbia during the first decade of the century. In 1912 or 1913 Frost became associated with the Willow River Lumber Company, which gained rights to 28 square miles of timber land on the Upper Fraser River. Chicago and
Cadillac, Michigan, capitalists were the principals in this syndicate. The Willow River Lumber Company erected a small sawmill in the summer of 1914, catering mainly to local settlers. In the spring of 1915 the company employed 35 men.

The Willow River Lumber Company announced in the fall of 1916 that it was removing its small mill from Willow River to Giscome, six miles to the west. The mill would cut lumber for a large new plant which was to be constructed at Giscome. The company was re-incorporated under a dominion charter as the Giscome Lumber Company, and in August 1917 the mill turned over for the first time. Capacity of the mill was 100,000 board feet per ten-hour shift.

Unfortunately, the operation was ill-starred and was in the hands of a liquidator by the following spring. An engineering error made it necessary to make extensive changes to the $500,000 plant. The big mill of the Giscome Lumber Company had been built on mud flats which provided very poor footing for the heavy plant. When the frost went out of the ground in the spring of 1918 the mill settled. It was a very expensive procedure to remedy the error. The concrete slab which supported the mill had to be broken up, piles driven into the mud all around the foundation, the concrete slabs relaid, and the entire mill rebuilt.

Instead of profiting on his investment in the buoyant lumber market of the years 1918 to 1919, Frost was plagued with financial troubles as he tried to fend off creditors and get the mill back into production. In the fall of 1921 the mill began logging operations in anticipation of the re-opening of the mill.
in the spring. Frost's financial affairs, however, were not yet healthy; workers who had been logging for the company were clamouring in April 1922 to receive wages for their winter's work. In May 1922, Frost sent $7,000 to pay the loggers, promising that a further $13,000 would follow shortly. Frost was in the east seeking financial backing. Finally, on 7 July 1922, the sawmill began to operate. The company had been re-organized as Giscome Spruce Mills, with A.C. Frost as president. The capacity of the new mill was 140,000 feet in ten hours.

Frost had regained control of the Giscome operation, but he did not keep it long. In 1923 the company was sold to the Winton interests, a lumber firm based in Minneapolis. The company had recently operated a lumber manufacturing business in northern Saskatchewan, and thus had experience producing lumber in the Canadian north. The mill was upgraded and five miles of logging railway were constructed. The new name of the company was Eagle Lake Sawmills, and in the spring of 1925, 150 men worked in the mill and another 100 in the woods operation. The Winton's operated the sawmill for seven years. Then, in 1931, a company representative visited Giscome and announced that market conditions dictated that Eagle Lake Sawmills was to remain closed until further notice.

A third major operation along the East Line during the 1920s was established by the Sinclair Spruce Company. The firm was organized in 1924 as a subsidiary of the Sherman Lumber Company of Potsdam, New York, a company which had a number of lumber yards on the prairies. The principals in Sinclair Spruce were
W.H. Sinclair, Herbert Paterson, and Don McPhee. In 1925 the company bought the operation of E.B. Bashaw near Dewey. The mill was enlarged, capacity was increased to 50,000 feet per nine-hour shift, and 100 to 200 men, according to the season, were employed. Don McPhee, late of the Red Deer Lumber Company of Barrows, Manitoba, was the resident manager. The site of the mill became known as Sinclair Mills, and with the demise of the UGG operation, Sinclair Spruce became the second largest producer on the East Line.\(^{27}\)

While the sawmills at Hutton, Giscome, and Sinclair Mills were the largest plants, the backbone of the northern interior lumber industry was a string of smaller mills situated along the East Line. In 1917 there were ten mills with a daily capacity of 20,000 to 30,000 feet operating or under construction, and in 1923 there were sixteen mills of this size operating, including two in Prince George. The total cut in 1923 was 78.5 million board feet; 23 percent of this production came from Eagle Lake Sawmills and 19 percent was produced by the UGG operation at Hutton. Approximately 58 percent of East Line lumber production came from the smaller mills.\(^{28}\) In 1929 Eagle Lake Sawmills produced 24 percent of the year's cut and Sinclair Spruce 14 percent. Thirteen other mills provided the rest of the year's production.\(^{29}\) Tracing the histories of a few of these smaller mills, both survivors and failures, in the 1910s and 1920s illustrates the tentative nature of their existence.

In the fall of 1917 Aleza Lake Sawmills started up a 30,000 board foot capacity mill at Aleza Lake. A.K. Shives, owner of the operation, was from a New Brunswick sawmilling family and had
worked for the Forest Branch in British Columbia. Shives, however, was a poor businessman and the company was soon in financial trouble. On 3 November the sawmill was destroyed by fire. Shives left the northern interior lumber business.30

Hugh Blackburn and P. Hasselfield, of Bannock, Saskatchewan, purchased the mill site and timber of Aleza Lake Sawmills. The new firm, Northland Spruce Lumber Company, brought their sawmill from Bannock and began producing lumber, employing 55 men in their sawmill and logging operations. On 25 November the sheriff seized the properties of the company. The firm owed creditors $140,000, half of this to a Winnipeg branch of the Bank of Commerce and $20,000 to workers in wages. The assets of the company were then sold off.31

In 1923 Al Johnson purchased a sawmill at Willow River and moved it to Hansard. This plant was previously owned by George McLaughlin's Northern Lumber Company. Associated with Johnson were his brother and his son, and they put the 40,000 feet per day mill in operation. On 17 November 1926 the mill was destroyed by fire, and the next year the company built a smaller manufacturing facility. By 1929 the company was deep in debt and being squeezed by a prairie lumber firm which wanted to take over the operation. But the Johnsons managed to survive.32

J.E. Meyers and J.F. Campbell had operated a sawmill near Fort Steele in the Kootenays for many years when in 1922 they purchased timber limits situated three miles to the west of Prince George. Their firm, Cranbrook Sawmills, brought its mill from the Kootenays and in 1923 began producing 35,000 feet per day. They employed 80 men in the woods and mill operations. On
19 May 1924 the mill was destroyed by fire. The mill was valued at $30,000 and insured to $20,000, and in the summer of 1924 a rebuilt plant had the firm producing lumber again. In 1928, because of a diminishing timber supply, the company purchased timber and the Red Mountain Lumber Company sawmill at Penny on the East Line. This mill was destroyed by fire in 1932 and quickly rebuilt. In 1933 Meyers bought out his partner, and the firm continued to produce lumber.\textsuperscript{33}

At the turn of the century, Sandy McDougall migrated from the Ottawa Valley to the Kootenays. He erected a sawmill at Fernie and produced lumber for a number of years. In 1916 he moved his operation to Croyden, twenty miles east of Tete Jaune. A fire destroyed his timber at Croyden in 1917, and he re-established at Shere, some 30 miles to the west. The company, Etter & McDougall, which included Eugene Etter and Sandy's son Jack, lost their mill to fire in 1924 but the plant was rebuilt. In 1926 the firm expanded and opened a sawmill at Willow River. This plant was destroyed by fire in 1932 and Jack McDougall and Eugene Etter moved to Winfield, Alberta, where they carried on in the lumber business.\textsuperscript{34}

The small firms along the East Line, often family operated and similar to family farms, were tenuous concerns. They were extremely vulnerable to economic fluctuations, fire, and the depletion of nearby timber stocks. Mills were frequently bought, sold, moved, and closed. Despite the relatively healthy lumber trade of the 1920s, the narrow profit margin of the poorly-capitalized operations allowed for little long-term security.
Small mills and large mills alike felt the changes of economic developments in the prairies and the eastern United States. Prices in 1917 averaged $21.00 per thousand board feet, f.o.b., for shiplap, siding, and small dimension lumber. Demand was strong and the closeness of the timber to the mills allowed for a good profit, if the firm was properly managed. In 1919 the average price for the season was $23.00 per thousand and near the end of the year even higher prices were obtained. Considering that production costs for a thousand board feet of lumber was approximately $16.50, operators were optimistic about the future. Inroads had also been made into the United States market and in 1919, 50 percent of East Line lumber was shipped there. 35

The year 1920 promised to be even better. During April and May lumber prices reached $40.00 per thousand for rough, green spruce. Logging and milling costs were about the same as the previous year and the mill owners could make good profits. In late June and early July, however, signs of an impending slump became evident. Purchases fell and prices dropped to as low as $16.00 per thousand. In September 1920 a 35 percent increase in freight rates brought production to a standstill. Two mills went into receivership. 36

In December 1921 the mill operators received relief when freight rates were reduced by 20 percent. The new rates, coupled with a decline in bush and mill wages of 35 to 50 percent and an increased demand in the prairies and the United States, stimulated production, and by the fall of 1922 the lumber industry along the East Line had turned around. 37 In 1923 production levels remained high with almost 90 percent of the
lumber being shipped to points east of Chicago in the United States. Prices averaged $20.00 per thousand board feet and the area produced 37.5 million feet of lumber.\textsuperscript{38}

Lumber production in the Fort George Forest District rose to over 70 million board feet in 1924, and by 1928 the figure had increased to over 100 million. Lumber prices averaged between 18 and 20 dollars per thousand in the years from 1924 to 1929, although there was a great variation in prices among different grades of lumber. In September of 1928, for example, top-grade lumber fetched $42.00 per thousand while a lesser grade was worth only $14.00 per thousand. Shipments to the prairies took an increasing amount of East Line lumber during the 1920s, and in 1929 approximately 21 percent of the cut was shipped to the Canadian West. The eastern United States continued as the best customer, absorbing about 68 percent of production in 1929. Eastern Canada bought 6 percent and 5 percent was sold locally.\textsuperscript{39}

Most mills along the East Line turned a profit in the years from 1923 to 1929. Prices and demand remained strong and operators successfully kept production costs down. Operations, however, remained precarious. A fluctuation downward in prices or an increase in freight rates would send a number of firms into bankruptcy. Such a possibility was a day-to-day reality for East Line mill owners. Profits were not substantial enough to allow any company to expand its facilities into a large operation to efficiently and steadily manufacture wood products. Nor was large-scale capital investment drawn to the area. A major manufacturing operation, with political influence, large capital resources, and extensive sales connections, would have stabilized
the area's economy and perhaps cultivated an off-shore export trade. Instead the East Line, dominated by petty producers, remained a peripheral, underdeveloped industrial region.

There was, however, one major initiative towards establishing the Prince George district as a significant production centre. During the 1920s pulp and paper production in central Canada expanded dramatically to feed the American newspaper market. Optimistic capitalists began to consider British Columbia forests in their plans, and the northern interior attracted central Canadian pulp and paper interests. A well-financed syndicate had purchased timber limits along the Upper Fraser in 1911 and in the 1920s the feasibility of pulp production was seriously explored. The 1911 syndicate had purchased 280 square miles of timber land in the area. The president of the company was Senator W.C. Edwards of Ottawa, and the vice-president was Alex McLaren of Buckingham, Quebec. Both men were experienced and wealthy lumbermen. The directors of the firm were Wm. Molson, president of the Molson's Bank, D.C. Cameron, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, Wm. Wainwright, second vice-president of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, W.H. McWilliams, president of the Monarch Lumber Company, H.M. Price of Quebec, and J.W. Farrell and J.M. Mackie of Montreal. The company had the authority to issue five million dollars in stocks and bonds. Initially, the syndicate had plans for a large sawmill in the region but the economy dictated that they postpone the project.

If there was little activity along the Upper Fraser, much was occurring in eastern Canada. The syndicate reorganized and
redefined its plans for the northern interior of British Columbia. The principals in the new Fraser River Timber Syndicate were Angus McLean, president of the Bathurst Lumber Company of New Brunswick, Frank Jones, president of the Canada Cement Company, as well as Alex McLaren, Senator W.C. Edwards and Gordon Edwards. Others associated with the syndicate were Molson MacPherson, Lord Beaverbrook, Sir Charles Gordon, and Maurice B. Preisch. A survey was made of timber along the Upper Fraser and it was decided that a pulp mill could operate profitably in the regions. These bastions of the Canadian lumber and business establishment then proceeded to present their plans to the provincial government.43

In December 1920 the Fraser Syndicate wrote to T.D. Pattullo, the Minister of Lands, outlining their plans. Stage one of the project was the construction of a chemical pulp mill to produce at least 100 tons daily and a sawmill with a daily capacity of 100,000 board feet per day. The estimated cost of these two facilities was three million dollars. Stage two involved the building of a three million dollar pulp and paper mill. Before proceeding, the Fraser Syndicate expected the government to meet certain requests. They wanted free use of the Fraser River east of Prince George for driving and storage, the right to dam small streams tributary to the Fraser, pulp licences covering at least 170 square miles, the Royalty Act amended to take account of increasing wages, and the equalization of royalty rates in the northern interior with the lower rates of the coastal region.44 The government was keen to see the project proceed. During 1921 the Forest Branch cruised timber on the
Upper Fraser to find a suitable 170 square miles of timber. Negotiations also went ahead, and by the end of 1921 the government had made substantial concessions to the Fraser Syndicate. Stumpage rates were fixed for thirty years, a thirty-year supply of timber was to be paid for only as cut, and ground rentals were set at half the price of ordinary timber licences. Moreover, royalty was reduced on sawlog timber to the cheaper pulp royalty. The Fort George District forester encouraged the government to meet the Fraser Syndicate's demands: "I certainly believe conditions in this Northern Interior, which are very bad and will always be bad until a permanent industry is established, justifies the Government in making pretty heavy concessions to get these men interested in immediate development. This skinning of timber lands by shoe string sawmills is a crime."46

In Prince George, meanwhile, the Fraser Syndicate was investigating sources for waterpower and locations for the manufacturing plants. Three sites for the operations were being scrutinized and all were within a mile of Prince George. Engineers examined the Willow and Nechako Rivers for hydro-electric power potential. In the summer and fall of 1921 the citizens of Prince George were confident that the area was about to become a pulp and paper centre.

In the winter of 1921-1922 the optimism dissipated. The Fraser Syndicate began to push for new concessions. They wanted a fixed, long-term royalty rate, as well as fixed stumpage fees. Pattullo was not prepared to fix the royalty on pulp timber which would rob the government of revenue from the expected increased
value of pulp timber over the succeeding thirty years. The new demands of the Fraser Syndicate, however, masked a more fundamental problem. When, in late 1920, the company became interested in the project most of the financing had been arranged. The depression which set in during the following year caused the retrenchment of investment capital in Canadian business circles and businessmen moved to shore up established operations in central Canada. In October 1921, Angus McLean noted that it had become much more difficult to raise capital than it had been a year before. The death of Senator Edwards in 1921 also stalled proceedings. He had promised to put one million dollars into the scheme, but the trustees of his estate were not willing to invest in the project. The Fraser Syndicate used the royalty issue to stall the government and maintain the concessions and pulp timber it had been granted while it scrambled to raise the requisite funds to proceed. Over the next four years the Fraser Syndicate and the government bickered, often petulantly, but the project remained on the back burner.

The reaction in Prince George to the shelving of the project was extreme disappointment. When negotiations began to break down in late 1921, a newspaper editor wailed that "one fact is certain, and that is that should these negotiations fail, it would have been far better for Prince George and for the Fort George district, if this undertaking had never been heard of." As the local citizenry reflected on the role of the government in the loss of the pulp mill, secession from British Columbia became a topic of discussion on city streets.
In 1926 the pulp and paper mill plans were revived. F.P. Jones, Angus McLean, and a new partner, H.G. Gundy, visited Prince George and announced that the project would go ahead. The cost of the venture was not 30 million dollars. The syndicate purchased large real estate holdings near Prince George as possible sites for the mill, one site cost one hundred dollars per acre. The syndicate was serious in its intentions and had secured the capital to realize its aims. Further, a new Royalty Act had set terms more favourable to the pulp interests on the cost of timber.

Yet the pulp and paper plant was never built. The Canadian pulp and paper industry that was centred in Ontario and Quebec experienced dramatic changes during the 1920s. Investment in the industry increased by 375 percent between 1919 and 1928 and production rose by 220 percent, resulting in a major crisis of overcapacity and price cuts. The Prince George project, backed by capitalists with close links to the central Canadian pulp and paper industry, would only have accentuated these difficulties. As Angus McLean noted in 1928: "To commence operations under such conditions would add to the existing burden and so depress the price as to put it down to a figure below the cost of production and delivery." The depression of the 1930s put an end to any plans for a major pulp and paper development at Prince George, and in 1932 the Fraser Syndicate was in liquidation. The hopes and dreams of the 1920s had been dashed.

Another project for the Prince George area was also discussed during the 1920s. Though not as expansive as the pulp and paper plan, this proposed sawmill had strong financial
backing and would have done much to anchor the area's lumber economy. The architect of this development was J.D. McArthur, a Winnipeg capitalist and railway builder. Born in Ontario, McArthur arrived in Winnipeg in 1879. Beginning as a small sub-contractor on the Canadian Pacific Railway construction during the 1880s, McArthur by 1910 was a major Canadian railway contractor. He had built a large part of the CPR's Crow's Nest branch and 750 miles of the Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Northern main lines in the West. Besides railway construction, McArthur was also interested in sawmilling and timber holding. He was associated with the Fort George Lumber and Navigation Company, the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company, which owned a mill at Port Alberni, and the Northwest Lumber Company sawmill in Edmonton.58

In 1921 the J.D. McArthur Construction Company purchased 23 timber limits at Mud River, 20 miles west of Prince George. McArthur planned to take out 250,000 railway ties over the winter and to build a small sawmill at the mouth of the Mud River in the following spring.59 In April 1922, McArthur secured agreement from the Indians at the mouth of the Mud River to purchase 40 acres of their 97-acre reserve as a site for the sawmill.60 These plans, however, quickly changed, and on 4 July 1922 McArthur announced that he had purchased a section of land within Prince George city limits. Here he was going to construct a sawmill with a daily capacity of 150,000 feet per day, a duplicate of the mill that he operated in Edmonton. The reasons for the change of the mill site from Mud River to Prince George are unclear, but a number of possible explanations present
themselves. McArthur had had problems driving logs down the Mud River in the spring of 1922 as log jams had frequently formed.\textsuperscript{61} A second possibility was the appeal of the campaign spearheaded by the Prince George city council to entice McArthur to locate in the city. The presence of a large pool of labour, access to timber along the Upper Fraser, and favourable terms offered by the city may have made the Prince George site preferable. A third possibility is that McArthur was speculating on the fortunes of the Fraser Syndicate. The land McArthur purchased in Prince George was being seriously considered by the syndicate as the location for their pulp and paper mill. McArthur could proceed with his sawmill plans knowing that his holdings could also potentially be sold at a profit. Probably all three considerations figured into McArthur's decision, but future behaviour suggests that the third reason was of paramount importance.

McArthur proceeded extremely slowly with his Prince George project, and no action was taken until 1926. In July of 1926 McArthur promised quick beginnings on construction work of a large sawmill, and a railway spur was built from the CNR main line to the mill site. Preparations were also begun on the log mill pond.\textsuperscript{62} It was probably more than coincidence that McArthur's renewed activity occurred at the time when the Fraser Syndicate was reviving its pulp project.\textsuperscript{63} On 10 January 1927 McArthur died in Winnipeg, and with him died the schemes and plans for the Prince George sawmill.

If the 1920s were the years of hope for the Prince George district, then the 1930s were the years of despair. The
depression devastated the lumber economy along the East Line. The log scale for the Fort George Forest District in 1929 was almost 103 million board feet. In 1930 production dropped to 50 million board feet, a decrease of over 50 percent. The log scale decreased a further 54 percent to 23.5 million board feet in 1931, and dropped by another 35 percent in 1932 to 15 million board feet. Markets disappeared but lumber prices fell as well. The average price of $20.21 per thousand board feet in 1929 dropped to a low of $10.50 per thousand in 1932.64

After 1932 conditions improved slightly but never approached the levels of 1929 until the 1940s. Production in the district climbed to 29 million board feet in 1936 and 46 million board feet in 1937. Average prices rose to $16.54 per thousand in 1936 and reached $17.50 per thousand in 1937.65 A slight downturn in prices and production in 1938 and 1939 reminded operators that prosperity was elusive; it was not until the Second World War that the Prince George forest economy was revitalized.

The collapse of the prairie economy and the imposition of an American tariff against Canadian lumber caused the curtailment of production and the shutdown of many sawmill operations. In February 1934 Wallace N. Jaeck, owner of the Longworth and Bend Lumber Companies, wrote to members of the provincial government giving his assessment of the situation on the East Line. This letter, both pathetic and comprehensive, poignantly illustrates the predicament of northern interior mill operators:

Gentlemen:

Undoubtedly you know that hardly a mill in the interior of British Columbia is operating, or has operated but very little, in the past three years, due of course to no market or too
low prices.

The high tariff had kept us out of our principle (sic) market, the United States, leaving us only the Prairie and Eastern Canadian trade, and this is not sufficient to keep the mills in their own localities running....

Most of the mills in the interior of B.C. are privately owned and in most cases all each owner has. It is a personal affair the same as the farmer, and should be considered the same.

We have many difficulties and handicaps here which mills east of us and on the coast do not have, which puts us in a bad way. For instance, we are nearly all one shift mills, 9 to 10 hours, and only running a few months in summer. We do our logging in the winter in a farm-like manner, so we have the heavy cost of feeding and caring for our stock the rest of the year. Our ground, being swampy and hilly, makes cost of logging very expensive, and we must put in long hours in order to accomplish anything.

We also have to contend with heavier freight rates on both incoming and outgoing freight.

We have no export market so far, and if we did we would have to overcome a freight rate of about $7.00 per M [thousand] and extra charges to get to vessel's side.

Our trees are small and full of limbs which produce only a common and low grade lumber and we must take the corresponding price.

We have no large cities closer than 500 miles from which to get labor, so it costs extra to induce labor, when needed to come here. Our logging season is short, and we cannot work in stormy weather as we use horses, so we must assure a man plenty of work before he will come.

On this Prince George-Jasper line there is not a log being taken out this winter and hardly a man working, most of them being on relief at big expense to the government.

As your new government is about to start functioning, we are asking you to consider us in drafting and making new laws so as not to cause us more hardships which might prevent us operating, but that you will do everything you can to help us get started again, and keep ahead of the sherif (sic). Two mills have recently left this line because of drastic labor laws here.

You will agree that a live industry is
worth more than a dead one and if we can get going and not be molested by a lot of laws other provinces don't have, it will relieve the government of a big share of their relief problem in the interior and save the day for us.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration of this matter and hoping for a big co-operation, I am,

Yours very truly,
Wallace N. Jaeck.66

Caught in the vice of a shrinking market, the East Line operators sought government aid. The market offered no flexibility and so mill owners requested the government to provide cheap timber, relaxed labour laws, and lower freight rates. Without a lumber market and break-even prices, however, the industry might operate but it would continue to flounder. The provincial government, for its part, did little to ameliorate the conditions on the East Line.

The saviour of the coastal lumber trade, the increase in the share of the British Empire market, had no effect on the interior industry. Interior mills were situated miles from port facilities and freight rates to Vancouver were prohibitive. The Pacific Great Eastern railway did not connect Prince George to Vancouver until the 1950s. Moreover, coastal operators and the provincial government had cultivated a trade for Douglas Fir in Britain, not for spruce, the mainstay of the northern interior industry. In late 1934 the Prince Rupert Chamber of Commerce began a campaign to increase overseas shipping from their port. If government subsidies and permission for log export had been granted, and markets aggressively pursued, interior operators might have found an outlet for a quantity of logs and lumber in China and Japan.67
In 1936 the association representing East Line mill operators approached the provincial government for help in re-establishing business connections in the United States and eastern Canada, links that had been severed in previous years because of the minimal amount of lumber that had been shipped. Noting that the government granted the coastal lumber industry $50,000 per year to be used for trade extension, they requested $2,000 for northern interior mill operators. They also wanted the government to lead the fight for lower freight rates. The government was sympathetic to the argument that interior freight rates were unfair in comparison to recently reduced rates from the coast and lent its voice to the protest placed before the federal Railway Commission. Unfortunately, East Line mill owners secured neither trade links nor lower freight rates.

While the lumber industry was in dire straits during the 1930s, the larger firms managed to expand their holdings modestly, preying on the small operations that were unable to withstand the economic downturn. Two local lumbermen took over the large mill at Giscome that had been abandoned by its Minneapolis owners. During the late 1920s Eagle Lake Spruce Mills, owned by the Winton brothers, was the largest concern in the Prince George district. It provided lumber for the Winton's sales agencies. In 1931, as has been noted, the owners decided to close the plant indefinitely. A year later they sold the company to Roy Spurr and Don McPhee. Spurr and McPhee equally split 75 percent of the shares, while the Wintons retained a minority holding of 25 percent of the company. In 1938 the Wintons sold their interest in the company to Spurr and McPhee.
The new owners had close ties to the Prince George forest economy, and were committed to their East Line firms. Roy Spurr, who had been a small contractor during the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, had made enough money to enter the lumber business. He owned and operated the Red Mountain Lumber Company at Penny and was a shrewd, careful businessman. In 1928, a boom year for interior lumber operators, Spurr sold his Penny mill. Having chosen an auspicious time to sell, he collected a significant block of capital which served him well in the cash-starved depression.

In 1932 Spurr, along with Don McPhee, who had been associated with the Sinclair Spruce Lumber Company since 1924, purchased Eagle Lake Spruce Mills. The Wintons were eager to bail out of their Giscome operation and sold "at a ridiculously low figure." With the mill Spurr and McPhee acquired 7 million board feet of lumber and 17 million feet of logs. As one observer remembered, the logs in the mill pond were worth what the mill sold for, "and there was enough lumber in the yard to pay for the mill again; so they got a wonderful bargain. They made money from the start." The sale caused consternation among other East Line operators as Eagle Lake lumber was put on the market at a lower price than the other mills could afford, thus depressing further an already weak market.

As the 1930s progressed McPhee and Spurr expanded their operations. They acquired the Longworth Lumber Company after that firm declared bankruptcy in 1935. The firm was renamed Upper Fraser Spruce Mills and a new 40,000 board foot capacity mill was constructed near Hansard in 1936. During 1937 the three
mills controlled by Spurr and McPhee had assets of 1\\text{\$}\text{ million} dollars and in 1939 accounted for almost sixty percent of Prince George district lumber production.\textsuperscript{75} If Spurr and McPhee dominated, they dominated a very small kingdom indeed. The 1930s had not been kind to the northern interior lumber industry.

Like firms in the coastal region, interior producers needed timber, manufacturing processes, and sales operations. Timber was secured from the provincial government, mainly in the form of timber sale licences. These gave operators access to timber for a specified number of years but not ownership rights. Mills, which normally held a very limited amount of timber, relied on the government to allot the necessary timber when it was needed. Small operations, because of their low investment in sawmill facilities, were prepared to relocate when nearby timber sources were depleted. In 1938 Eagle Lake Sawmills held 1,923 acres in timber sale licences, but most operations held less than 500 acres.\textsuperscript{76} Timber holdings in themselves were not a valuable asset for a lumber firm.

The pulp mill proposal of the mid-1920s had spawned a rush on timber sale contracts. Sawmill owners feared that the projected pulp timber reserve would encroach on their traditional supply areas, and timber sales tripled between 1925 and 1928.\textsuperscript{77} Mill owners wanted to ensure the long-term viability of their enterprises. With the depression and the end of the pulp mill plan, the timber holdings became millstones around the necks of the lumber operators. The timber sale licences had been purchased with a ten percent deposit and the stumpage price had been calculated with the expectation that lumber prices would
rise. Some of the contracts were for as long as twenty years. The depressed lumber economy made it impossible and uneconomical to continue payments, and by 1932 most of these licences had reverted to the crown. The mills returned to "buying on a hand-to-mouth operation ... dependent on the Government to supply their needs." 

The process of converting standing timber to lumber in the northern interior was more closely related to practices found in central Canada than those employed in the coastal region of British Columbia. In 1926 Wallace N. Jaeck returned from a business trip to the eastern United States which included a visit to the Ford automobile plant in Detroit:

> The thought which impressed Mr. Jaeck after watching the Ford machine for several hours was the transformation which could be worked in the lumber industry of British Columbia if something in the nature of Henry Ford's endless chain in production could be introduced, so that there would be no stop from the time the tree was felled until the finished product was ready for the market.

Jaeck was, of course, dreaming. Climate, geography, and biology all contributed to inhibit an endless flow or production. For the most part, logging was unmechanized, done with horses, and performed in the winter, while sawmilling was a summer occupation. While experiments were tried in using increased mechanical power in logging, the depression of the 1930s arrested initiatives to transform the production process.

Before 1930 most logging was done in the winter. The trees were cut by a crew made up of three men, two sawyers and a limber. These interior job classifications were the equivalent of coastal fallers and buckers, respectively. The next stage was
the hauling of the logs from the logging chance to the mill or to a waterway from where the logs could be driven to the mill. Normally, logs were skidded by horses to skid roads where they were loaded on sleighs and pulled by horses to the appropriate landing. Sufficient snow was necessary to successfully transport the heavy loads of logs. 80

Experiments in different methods of hauling logs were made by some of the larger operations. Before 1925 Hutton Mills and Eagle Lake Mills each had laid a few miles of railroad track and hauled logs on railroad cars. However, the value and volume of timber per acre was not sufficient in the northern interior to cover the heavy expenditures involved in constructing logging railroads. In 1926 Eagle Lake Mills installed a steam skidder in their operations to replace horse teams in loading logs on railway cars. 81 The Giscome operation was also innovative in introducing the use of catapillar tractors to haul loads of logs during the 1924-1925 winter season. 82 Yet even by the mid-1930s the use of tractors was still uncommon in northern interior logging operations. 83 During the 1930s trucks were also introduced but it was not until the early years of World War II that the truck and tractor became normal equipment in the woods. 84 Before 1939 logging was primarily unmechanized and dependent on horse power.

For a successful season logging operators needed a cold winter with frozen waterways and a sufficient snow base in order to haul the logs. Too much snow entailed expensive ploughing and snow shovelling on logging roads. In late 1927 the district forester assessed recent logging seasons in terms of climatic
factors:

The winter of 1923/4 brought fairly favourable weather conditions for logging. 1924/5 was less favourable and 1925/6 almost disastrous. Soft ground in the woods did not freeze and there was not enough snow for hauling. 1926/7 was better again. The present season 1927/8 started off well with severe frosts before snowfall giving a good hard bottom, but we already have more than three feet of snow and logging will probably be largely discontinued all along the line almost immediately. The importance of this weather feature to the logging industry in this District cannot be over-estimated.*

During the 1930s summer logging became more prevalent, using plank roads to support the heavy loads of logs travelling over soft ground.86

Milling logs into lumber was usually done during the spring and summer. The mills were situated on water, and the logs were drawn from the mill pond into the plant. The logs then passed through a series of saws which cut the wood to specified dimensions and lengths. The lumber was sorted into grades and either transported to a planing mill to be finished or immediately stacked in the mill yard to dry. The lumber was then ready to be shipped to market.

In selling lumber northern interior mills operated independently. The plants of the United Grain Growers, Sinclair Spruce, and the Winton family were set up especially to serve established retail and wholesale markets, but as we have seen with the UGG mill, connections did not ensure sales. In the majority of cases lumber was sold in a haphazard manner. Wholesale jobbers worked out of Prince George and travelled up and down the East Line purchasing carloads of lumber for brokerage firms. Mill owners, too, went on the road to peddle
their wares, making trips to the prairies, central Canada, and the eastern United States in order to locate customers. In good times sales were made easily and at high prices, but an economic downturn meant an immediate drop in sales and the curtailment of sawmill production.

At various times East Line sawmills were affiliated with employer associations which included Kootenay and northern Alberta sawmills. The members of these associations met and discussed labour problems, freight rates, and government regulations but rarely developed into sales organizations. One exception was the formation of Mountain Manufacturers Sales in 1927. This organization united Eagle Lake Spruce Mills with three Kootenay lumber firms. The experiment was short-lived. Interior lumber manufacturers were tied to the rail trade of the prairies and the eastern United States and there was little room for trade extension. Northern interior, Kootenay, and northern Alberta lumber manufacturers competed amongst each other, as well as with other American and Canadian producers, to supply this well-defined, if volatile market, and co-operative sales devices provided few advantages. East Line operators were unable to overcome the instabilities of the North American lumber trade, and as such their fortunes rose and fell with changing circumstances completely beyond their influence.

While lumber production was the cornerstone of the Prince George district economy, a second forest industry was also significant in providing employment and bringing money into the area. This was the railway tie industry. In constructing a railway line approximately 2,600 ties were needed for each mile
of track, and once a line had been built, maintenance and replacement of worn ties required about 200 ties per mile of track yearly.\textsuperscript{88} Despite repeated attempts to develop metal and concrete ties, wooden ties served the needs of the railway best. Their advantages over metal and concrete types included better insulation for rails, resiliency in absorbing the shock of rolling stock travelling over them, and higher levels of corrosion resistance.\textsuperscript{89} It was to the forests, then, that railway companies turned to supply their ties.

During the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific through the Fort George district thousands of ties were taken from the bush on each side of the line, but with the end of construction the need for ties fell precipitously. In 1918 tie production again became important as the Grand Trunk Pacific began to let orders in the area to supply ties to be used throughout Canada. In 1922, 436,199 ties were produced in the Prince George area. Some contractors had large orders to fill: William Coop produced 75,000 ties and David Jennings took out 50,000 ties near Giscome. Prices paid by the railway depended on the quality of ties.\textsuperscript{90}

The Grand Trunk Pacific and its successor, the Canadian National Railway, were the sole purchasers of the ties. Each fall they set the price, the quality levels, and the quantity required from the contractors. Once a head contractor received his contract he either set up camps of his own to take out ties or let portions of the order to sub-contractors. In 1921 head contractors received 85 cents for Number 1 ties, but sub-contractors were paid only 68 cents. The district forester noted that "subs in many cases realized little better than wages out of
their contract. The Head Contractor on the other hand, with one or two exceptions, made excellent profits." The tie hacks, the men who actually made the ties, were paid about 23 cents per tie in the employ of either head contractors or sub-contractors. The tie industry was heavily weighted for success at the top.

The production of ties was very similar to logging. Working in the winter, from November to March, the tie hacks felled the trees, usually Lodgepole Pine, and then hewed them into railway ties. A man, working with hand tools, could produce approximately 30 ties per day. The ties were then hauled by horses and sleighs to railway sidings where they were picked up by the railway in the spring.

Settlers in the area often took out small contracts, but the railway preferred to deal with large contractors. They paid homesteaders 10 cents less per tie than the large contractors. In 1926 the difference was reduced to 6½ cents after an intensive lobby by district farmers. During the 1930s the CNR directed much of their tie requirement to sawmills along the East Line, further limiting the participation of small operators.

The CNR had a monopoly on the local tie industry and contractors or settlers were forced to accept the terms laid down by the railway. Prices and quantities fluctuated and the grading regulations were changed, but ties continued to be taken out. In the 1938-1939 season only 140,699 ties were produced in the region and these fetched extremely low prices. People involved in the tie industry did not become wealthy. In depressed times, however, any cash was welcome and contributed to the area's economic survival.
While the tie industry was important to people living in the Prince George district, it was a marginal industry and offered no potential for sustained economic growth; it was the lumber and pulp industries that held the promise of regional prosperity. The lumber companies in the years before 1940 operated in a difficult economic environment. They were small firms and economic downturns, falling prices, and mercurial markets made long-term growth a difficult achievement. Operators were unable to insulate themselves to any degree from the ravages of the 1930s, and as such the region's economy floundered.

Large capital investment had not come and a more mature forest economy had not developed. The opportunity of the years after World War I had been squandered by inexperienced mill owners who made poor business decisions. The most ambitious plan was shelved due to developments in the central Canadian pulp and paper industry. The Fraser Syndicate promised a degree of stability for the region, employment, and increased timber values. In 1921 the district forester noted the importance of the pulp mill and accurately predicted the consequences if the project failed to materialize: "It may be definitely stated at this time that if the anticipated establishment of a pulp and paper industry does not materialize, the District will be faced with a long period of depression and virtual stagnation."95 The failure of the pulp project doomed the district to a peripheral economic sphere, dependent on the fortunes of small-scale lumber firms operating in a changeable North American lumber economy. Considering the depths of the collapse of the 1930s, it is noteworthy that some of these firms survived at all.
Notes


2. Fort George Herald, South Fort George, 20 August 1910; 3 December 1910; 16 December 1911; 21 January 1914; Prince George Herald, 28 May 1915.

3. Prince George Star, 6 October 1916; 30 January 1917; 23 February 1917; Citizen, Prince George, 7 May 1919; 1 November 1923.


5. Fort George Herald, 11 March 1911; Western Lumberman (July 1911), p. 62; Fort George Tribune, 25 July 1914; Western Lumberman (May 1921), p. 31.

6. Lumberman and Contractor (June 1906), p. 12; (September 1907), p. 15; (October 1907), p. 32.

7. Western Lumberman (April 1913), p. 49.


10. Western Lumberman (June 1918), p. 35.


16. Prince George Post, 6 March 1915.

17. Prince George Star, 6 October 1916.

18. Western Lumberman (September 1917), p. 25.


21. Ibid., 14 April 1922.

22. Ibid., 12 May 1922.

23. Western Lumberman (July 1922), p. 43.


25. Citizen, 21 May 1925.


30. Western Lumberman (October 1917), p. 53; J.M. Gibson, oral interview by C.D. Orchard, October 1960, transcript, College of New Caledonia Library; Citizen, 7 November 1922.

31. Citizen, 27 September 1923; 1 December 1927; British Columbia Lumberman (February 1924), p. 57.

32. Citizen, 1 November 1923; 18 November 1926; C.D. Orchard to P.Z. Caverhill, 11 September 1929, PABC, Add MSS 840, v.2, f.7.1; Fort George Forest District, "Annual Report," 1931.

33. Western Lumberman (January 1923), p. 28; Citizen, 17 May 1923; 22 May 1924; 25 August 1932; British Columbia Lumberman (December 1928), p. 36; (June 1933), p. 29.

34. Western Lumberman (November 1916), p. 23; Prince George Star, 11 May 1917; Citizen, 22 May 1924; 11 February 1926; 23 June 1932; 25 October 1934; 22 April 1937; 26 May 1938.


37. Western Lumberman (March 1922), p. 86; Fort George Forest District, "Annual Report," 1921; Citizen, 14 February 1922, 5 December 1922.


41. Western Lumberman (February 1912), p. 30.

42. Western Lumberman (September 1917), p. 27.

43. Citizen, 12 November 1920; 26 May 1938.

44. Fraser Syndicate to T.D. Pattullo, 14 December 1920, PABC, Add MSS 3, v.12, f.2.

45. Memorandum, P.Z. Caverhill to T.D. Pattullo, 8 December 1921, PABC, Add MSS 3, v.12, f.2.

46. P.S. Bonney to P.Z. Caverhill, 29 October 1921, PABC, Add MSS 3, v.12, f.2.

47. Western Lumberman (January 1921), p. 40.

48. Western Lumberman (July 1921), p. 35.


51. Citizen, 28 October 1921; Pacific Coast Lumberman (June 1923), p. 49.


53. Citizen, 18 November 1921.

54. Ibid., 2 September 1926.

55. Ibid., 26 May 1938.


59. Citizen, 22 November 1921; 20 December 1921.
60. *Citizen*, 18 April 1922.

61. Ibid., 23 September 1926.

62. Ibid., 29 July 1926; 20 January 1927.

63. Ibid., 13 January 1927.

64. Fort George Forest District, "Annual Reports," 1933 and 1938. The Fort George Forest District was a geographical division used by the British Columbia Forest Service and included the Quesnel and Peace River regions within its wide boundaries. However, the bulk of lumber and tie production occurred in the East Line/Prince George district.


67. Prince Rupert Chamber of Commerce to the provincial government, 26 September 1934; 28 September 1934; 11 December 1934, PABC, GR 1222, v.3, f.3.

68. P.E. Wilson to Honourable Wells Gray, 7 April 1936, PABC, GR 1222, v.10, f.3.

69. Memorandum to the Premier, 24 March 1936, PABC, GR 1222, v.10, f.3.

70. Company Registration Files, Department of the Attorney General, British Columbia, PABC, Roll 235, f.13078.

71. J.M. Gibson, oral interview by C.D. Orchard, October 1960, transcript, College of New Caledonia Library.


76. British Columbia, Bureau of Economic and Statistics, Department of Trade and Industry, "A Submission to the Royal Commission on forestry: A Statement showing the amount of timber held under all types of tenure, by individuals and firms in the Province of British Columbia during the years 1938 and 1944," 3 volumes, PABC, GR 181.


79. Citizen, 28 October 1926.


87. Western Lumberman (June 1927), p. 279.

88. Western Lumberman (June 1928), pp. 793-5.

89. Western Lumberman (August 1928), p. 866.

90. Fort George Forest District, "Annual Reports," 1922 and 1925.


CHAPTER III

Community, Loggers, Tie Hacks, and Sawmill Workers

Port Alberni and Prince George provided the most important community environments for social and political interaction in the two regions. Despite the economic and numerical significance of people involved in the forest industry, they did not dominate local affairs. Rather, merchants and professionals set the tone for life in the two districts. Lumber operators, absorbed in business affairs at their mill sites and oriented toward their corporate headquarters, were as such aloof from community developments. Workers in the forest industry tended to be transient, uneducated males, ethnically distinct from the local elites, and living and working in outlying areas.

The Port Alberni and Prince George districts were resource areas but they were not single industry communities. Other primary industries were also present in the two regions: fishing in the Alberni Valley and farming in the Prince George area. Further, and closely related to the primary industries, were the transportation and longshoring sectors. What is important to note is that workers within these occupational groups operated in distinct spheres. Ethnicity, skills, job cultures, location of residences and work, and employers were all factors which isolated the workers in particular groups. Even within the forest industry loggers and sawmill workers inhabited different worlds. The resource regions, then, did not in fact exhibit stark class lines pitting a united working class against a few large employers. The reality was much more complex. The
composition of the working class, intra-class relationships, and the role of small businessmen and farmers shaped the social context or production and class development in the two regions.

In 1911 the monopolistic British Columbia canning industry invaded the Alberni area when Wallace Fisheries purchased the Kildonan Cannery at the west end of the Alberni Canal. Wallace Fisheries was one of the three largest fish processing enterprises in the province. Other canners operated on the west coast of Vancouver Island, but Wallace Fisheries possessed the economic and political clout to control the area's canning industry. In 1918 a businessman made an application to the federal government requesting permission to construct a salmon cannery in Port Alberni, but Ottawa refused the application on the grounds that the cannery already on the canal (Wallace Fisheries) could more than handle the available fish. Local fishermen, municipal officials, and townspeople were incensed at the decision and a newspaper editor commented that "there is a growing feeling of resentment against the apparent policy of pandering to the Wallace interests."¹

For fishermen the power of Wallace Fisheries, which undermined their competitive leverage to raise fish prices, was only one of a series of issues that plagued their attempts to earn a decent living. The depletion of fish stocks, the use of seine nets, corruption in the federal ministry which oversaw the fisheries, the favouritism shown to canners over fishermen, the legal restrictions that prevented fishermen from selling their catch in the United States, and the fear of a Japanese takeover of the fishing industry were all hotly debated issues. Agitation
by the fishermen of the west coast of Vancouver Island forced a federal inquiry into the local fishing industry in 1919. The report of the Ebert Commission, which was submitted in 1923, did little to remedy the complaints of the fishermen. In 1918 fishermen formed an association, which maintained itself in various guises for the next decades and fought for the fishermen's issues. There were strikes in 1931, 1933, 1934, and 1935 to secure better prices for fish, and wrangling with the canners, the federal government, and the Japanese Canadian fishermen were perennial features of the west coast fishing industry.

The fishing industry did not intersect with the lumber industry. Port Alberni was primarily a distribution centre for the west coast fisheries. The canneries were situated on the Pacific coast and fishermen resided mainly in small coastal communities such as Bamfield, Ucluelet, and Tofino. Logging and sawmilling were centered nearer to Port Alberni. Politically, the fishermen looked to Ottawa, which had jurisdiction over the fisheries, and were actively involved in federal election campaigns. Participants in the forest industry were politically linked with Victoria, as their industry was a provincial concern. Elections in the area were distinct in their themes: in federal elections candidates swore their allegiance to the fishermen while in provincial elections the concerns of lumber workers were given a higher profile.

As Port Alberni began to ship more and more lumber on ocean vessels to export markets, longshoremen became a recognizable part of the local work force. The sawmills and longshoring
companies, such as Empire Stevedoring, West Coast Stevedoring, and V&V Stevedoring, hired men to perform the arduous task of loading lumber into ships. While the longshoremen worked on the docks close to the sawmill and workers with lumber, the stevedores had their own union and were part of the British Columbia waterfront, not sawmill, work force. In the fall of 1923 Port Alberni longshoremen, as members of the International Longshoremen's Association, participated in the province-wide waterfront strike. H.A. Dent, operator of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company, the only export mill in Port Alberni at the time, attempted to keep the mill in operation and secured strike-breakers from Chemainus to load the lumber into ships. However, Dent could not find enough experienced stevedores to maintain normal shipping. The two-month dispute ended in failure for the union and the Port Alberni waterfront returned to routine activities.\textsuperscript{5}

Port Alberni longshoremen did not maintain their militancy. In late March, 1934, 125 Port Alberni waterfront workers, the majority of local longshoremen, met in the community hall to form the Alberni District Waterfront Workers' Association, a "company union." The Empire Stevedore Company had initiated the formation of the ADWWA, fearing that local workers would be drawn into the strike which was imminent on the Vancouver waterfront. Organizer from Vancouver had been holding meetings in Port Alberni, and the employers moved to head off this initiative. When the strike hit the Vancouver docks in the summer of 1935 Port Alberni longshoremen remained at work.\textsuperscript{6}
At the centre of commercial activity in the valley were the business communities of Alberni and Port Alberni. Merchants, lawyers, bankers, and doctors formed a group that dominated local political and social life. These people served the needs of workers in the resource industries. Major company business which demanded legal, financial, sales expertise was done in Vancouver. Businessmen and professionals in the Albernis owned their small firms but were dependent on the fortunes of the primary extractive industries. The communities developed no significant manufacturing facilities beyond those of the forest and fishing industries.

Loggers were only tenuously connected to the more permanent Alberni Valley population. In the first years of intensive timber exploitation, when the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company arrived in the valley, the Weist Brothers Company of Oregon was given the contract to bring the logs out of the woods. The firm brought with them many American loggers, especially those with special skills, to do the logging, and they returned to their homes in the United States when they were not employed in the camps. However, after H.A. Dent took over the lumber operation and began to do his own logging the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company began recruiting loggers from employment agencies in Vancouver. Vancouver was the distribution centre for almost all loggers in the coastal region. Men working in the Queen Charlotte Islands, Vancouver Island, and the Lower Mainland were sent to their jobs by Vancouver employment agencies. For many loggers who worked in coastal camps, Vancouver was their main place of residence, and when they quit, were discharged, or were
laid off they returned to the city. By 1920 the logging camps of the Alberni Valley drew predominantly on this labour pool. When the camps opened after a closure due to market or weather conditions there was a rush from Vancouver to Island logging operations. On 3 January 1937, after the traditional Christmas shutdown, over 700 loggers left Vancouver to reach camps in the vicinity of Campbell River and Port Alberni. Vancouver Coach Lines in Nanaimo dispatched twenty-two bus loads of men that day and were further compelled to charter a special railway train to transport men to their destinations. Coastal loggers operated in an extended geographic economic region. Their skills were transferable from camp to camp and a man could work in the Alberni Valley one season, Campbell River the next, and later in the Queen Charlotte Islands. Loggers may have been transient but their movement was restricted to the coastal region of British Columbia and their home base was Vancouver. While at work they lived in camps away from the towns. A short break in production might mean a visit to Port Alberni, but any lengthy shutdown would prompt a journey to Vancouver. There was a group of loggers that did make their permanent homes in Port Alberni and Great Central Lake, but for the most part loggers participated only peripherally in local communities.

Ethnically, the loggers were distinct from the majority Alberni Valley population. A Presbyterian missionary who was active in coastal logging camps during the 1920s noted that "in many crews the majority of the men do not claim English as their mother tongue." The provincial logging work force was dominated by non-British Europeans. In 1931, 36 percent of British
Columbia loggers were of British origin, while 52 percent were of non-British European origins. Scandinavians constituted almost one-quarter of the provincial logging work force.\(^{10}\) In 1938 an instructor from the Frontier College who was working in Bloedel, Stewart & Welch's Camp 3 at Great Central Lake, a camp of some 140 men, calculated that 50 percent of the crew was British or Canadian, 20 percent Scandinavian, and 20 percent Italian, Russian, and Polish.\(^{11}\) People of Japanese and Chinese origin were also significant, constituting some ten to twelve percent of the district's logging work force.\(^{12}\)

The general population in the Alberni Valley was not so divided. Seventy-two percent of people in the area in 1931 were of British origin and 14 percent were non-British European. Only 6 percent of the population was of Scandinavian origin,\(^{13}\) and the Scandinavians were concentrated in the area's logging camps.\(^{14}\) Moreover, the figures suggest that people of British origin were predominant in valley sawmills. Loggers, then, tended to be ethnically distinct from the bulk of sawmill workers and from the general population.

Loggers were considered unskilled workers but there was a job hierarchy within the industry. A high school information booklet on career opportunities described work in the logging industry in 1937 as follows: "The work done by most of the men in lumber camps can be learned by any average man who is physically strong and healthy. No particular aptitudes or abilities are needed by the beginner, nor is much education necessary."\(^{15}\) Yet within the industry there were a variety of jobs and in terms of skill and wage, a ranking of workers. The
highest paid and most skilled were the head riggers, hook tenders, head loaders, and locomotive engineers. In 1923 they were paid from $7.50 to $9.00 for an eight to nine hour day. During the same year the rigging crews, donkey engineers, and firemen made six to seven dollars per day, while fallers, buckers, head boommen, head cooks, and loading crews made five to six dollars per day. It should be noted that fallers and buckers often worked for piece rates. Other bush workers were paid from $3.75 to $5.00 per day. In 1939 the wage scale was similar. Camp workers paid room and board which varied between $1.25 and $1.50 per day in the 1920s and 1930s. The number of days that a logger could work depended on market conditions, weather, and the plans of the company that employed him, but in a good year a coastal logger could work over 250 days in a year.

After the early 1920s camp conditions for loggers were generally good. In the large camps of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company and Great Central Sawmills the facilities for loggers were well kept and well stocked with basic amenities. Here is a description of Camp 3 at Great Central Lake in 1938:

This camp is quite modern as camps go. Each bunkhouse is in two parts, and capacitates eight men. Each has a central heating unit, and all have electric lights. The newer bunkhouses have cupboards for the men's clothes, and all have individual beds rather than mere bunks. The washhouse offers hot and cold water, showers, and facilities for washing and drying clothes.

For recreation there is besides the gymnasium, a weekly show, and the men themselves have a social and sports committee. Several of the men have radios, and there are always plenty of magazines and papers. The company provides a well stocked commissary and mail is received at least
three times weekly. The lake, of course, offers swimming and fishing. 19

If accommodation in the camps became relatively comfortable, work in the woods never did, and death and severe injury remained common occurrences. In the ten-year period from 1927 to 1936, inclusive, 509 loggers were killed in British Columbia while at work and another 1,642 were totally or partially disabled. 20 In 1928 alone 34 loggers were killed, in 1933 there were 23 deaths, and in 1937 over 50 British Columbia loggers lost their lives. 21 The rate of death in the bush began to increase dramatically in the late 1920s. As a member of the Workmen's Compensation Board noted in 1932: "At one time the average used to be one killed for every 50 million feet of logs, now this has increased to one killed for every 40 million feet." 22 Loggers blamed the rising death rate on a number of factors: "Logging is a 'hazardous occupation' because of the speed-up, the evident disregard of safety regulations, the unorganized state of loggers, the obvious policy of the boss-logger to change the personnel of camps to prevent organization." 23 The Workmen's Compensation Board offered a similar analysis of the situation: "'Speeding up,' the use of high-powered machinery, coupled with the employment of non-English-speaking people and the nature of the ground over which logging operations are conducted have combined in making logging the most costly of our industries from an accident point of view." 24

In 1931 the Workmen's Compensation Board was forced to increase premiums paid by logging companies to meet the rising accident rate. 25 The operators refused to admit that speed-up
and machinery were the main causes of accidents and death in the woods. Instead, they put the blame on the incompetence and carelessness of individual loggers. The Loggers' Association's Annual Report in 1929 commented that "the education of our employees must be continued and intensified, particularly when it is clearly shown that 90% of these fatal accidents occurred under circumstances which the man or his fellow worker had entire control." In 1936 the association launched a feeble and insulting campaign to improve safety in the woods. The operators initiated a safety drive whereby coastal camps competed with each other to attain the best safety record. For every accident-free day the company donated one cent to charity:

Large posters have been placed in conspicuous places in all the camps, which, in addition to giving the men employed full particulars of how they can benefit charity by avoiding risk, adjures them always to "Watch their Steps;" to "Think Safety;" to "Work Safety;" and to "Make their Heads save them from Accidents." Without addressing the fundamental problems of faulty machinery, poorly-trained and inexperienced workers, and the relentless push for faster production, the campaign was doomed to be ineffective.

The first death in post-1911 Alberni Valley logging operations occurred in the spring of 1918 when a 30-year old chaser was crushed by a 30-foot log. Three months later a 17-year old fireman on the APL locomotive fell under the train while doing shunting and was killed. In the summer of 1919 a 28-year old logger was killed when struck by a tree; a year later a 30-year old Swedish APL hook tender was struck by a tree, his
skull was smashed, and he died. A 24-year old chaser was killed by a swinging log in the summer of 1923, a bucker was killed by a falling tree in April 1924, and a Norwegian hook tender at the Great Central Lake camp was killed in the fall of 1926. A 48-year old head loader was killed in 1927 when he was crushed between the loading boom and a log. In the middle of October 1927 three accidents, two of them fatal, occurred on three successive days: a 45-year old donkey engineer at Bainbridge was killed by a falling spar tree, a 47-year old logger was crushed between two poles, and another man survived being hit by a log. In 1929 a 21-year old loader was killed, in 1930 a 44-year old logger had his skull crushed, and in the following year a 28-year old rigging slinger was fatally injured. A bucker was crushed by a tree in 1934 and a 24-year old head rigger was killed in 1935. In 1936 a 30-year old Danish faller was killed at Franklin River, in 1937 a Japanese faller was crushed under a load of logs, and in 1939 a Finnish logger was killed by a falling tree. These examples are by no means the total of logging fatalities in the Alberni Valley before 1940, but they do illustrate that death was an ever-present feature of working in the bush.

Loggers lived in a separate world in the Alberni Valley. Their unique job culture and ethnic composition made them outsiders. Working in camps, linked to Vancouver by social, family, and job connections, and tied to the larger community of coastal loggers, the men had few roots in the particular geographic setting in which they happened to be working at the time. The world for loggers was larger than the Alberni Valley; it encompassed the whole coastal region.
Millworkers were more closely tied to the communities in which they lived. The big mills in Port Alberni and Great Central Lake could operate year round when markets were strong, and workers who lived near the plants could expect to work for a good portion of the year. Yet turnover was high in the mills as single, unskilled millworkers often endured only short tenures in the plants. A millworker noted in 1938 that "Port Alberni up till the present has been a three-way town: those coming; those here; and those going; in other words a shanty town." While there was a high turnover of workers, there was also a core of persistent residents, usually the more skilled and better paid, who maintained a continuity and interconnections with the broader community.

The mill work force was made up of sawmill workers and shingle mill workers, and both occupational groups contained a high percentage of Chinese and Japanese workers. The shingle industry in Port Alberni was small. In the early 1920s only about ten percent of mill workers were in shingle plants, and with the expansion of sawmill operations by the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company and Bloedel, Stewart & Welch after 1925, the proportion of shingle workers became even smaller in the total mill work force. People of British origin were dominant in the plants, but Chinese and Japanese made up a very significant proportion of the work force and the ratio was higher in the mills than in the logging camps. In the province as a whole in 1923, 39 percent of sawmill workers and 54 percent of shingle workers were Chinese or Japanese. The percentage in the Alberni Valley was even higher: 53 percent of the 340 sawmill
workers and 64 percent of the 42 shingle workers.\(^{32}\) Over the next few years this ratio dropped to about 40 percent but the number remained significant.\(^{33}\)

Within the sawmills there was a gradation of jobs based on skill and experience. Of the over 25 job classifications in sawmills and their planer departments, sawyers and filers were the highest paid, earning over $1.10 per hour in 1923; setters, edgermen, tallymen, trimmers, millwrights, machinists, blacksmiths, carpenters, and pipe fitters were paid in the medium range, earning between 50 and 70 cents per hour; while doggers, boommen, oilers, graders, feeders, and teamsters made between 40 and 47 cents per hour. Common labour was paid less than 40 cents per hour.\(^{34}\)

Workers in the sawmills did not have the high death rate of the loggers, but mill machinery was dangerous and fingers, hands, and arms were vulnerable. In 1916 an APL planerman had his arm badly squeezed between rollers when his hand was caught on the board being fed into the machine. In 1923 "a valve, or something, failed to work, a cable snapped, and the big log carriage in the Alberni-Pacific sawmill did not stop as it should have stopped on a backward run.... With three Japanese workmen aboard, the heavy conveyor shot, with the speed of a torpedo, past its point of reverse, made an awful splash in the water of the Alberni Canal, and sank to the bottom." The workers managed to rescue themselves. An oiler at Great Central Sawmills in 1926 "got his right hand caught in a cog wheel, and his hand, wrist, and lower part of the forearm were badly lacerated." The arm was later amputated. In 1931 a Chinese worker was killed when he
fell from a pile of lumber and fractured his skull. In 1937 another Chinese worker died when he fell from a conveyor at Great Central Sawmills.35

Sawmill workers, who lived in Port Alberni and often owned houses, had the opportunity to participate in municipal politics. Along with merchants, fishermen, tradesmen, doctors, and small logging contractors, sawmill employees contested local elections. The politically active mill workers were the skilled and more highly-paid employees such as mill tradesmen and lumber markers. Bert I. Hart, for example, was the head filer at the Alberni Pacific sawmill and served as a Port Alberni alderman in 1919 and 1920.36

Loggers, who resided in outlying camps for temporary periods, did not participate in municipal politics and were best known to local residents as frequent visitors to local brothels and beer parlours. As a newspaper editor noted in 1936:

It is almost safe to say that few British Columbia towns of less than 5,000 population have as many police court cases as has Port Alberni. Almost every Monday morning and often during the week the police blotter is cluttered up with minor cases usually involving liquor or disorderly conduct, and almost invariably the defendant is a logger or fisherman in town for the week-end for a bit of well-earned recreation or relaxation, call it what you may.37

When loggers were missing from the job the foreman had the local beer parlours searched to locate the absent men.38 The infrequent initiatives to upgrade the city's moral standards were quickly squelched by the remonstrances of local businessmen. Loggers contributed to the local economy by patronizing the stores of Port Alberni merchants and if legal restraints were
tightened, loggers would take their business to nearby Nanaimo. The exuberance and tastes of visiting loggers were as such tolerated by the local citizenry.

Workers, businessmen, and professionals coexisted in the Alberni Valley and contributed to local life in varying degrees. The more permanent and better educated small businessmen dominated political and social affairs, but fishermen and sawmill workers also participated. Loggers only entered community life as names in the court records. The owners and directors of the two major lumber companies lived in Vancouver, and resident managers in Port Alberni and Great Central Lake remained aloof from local concerns. They belonged to the larger world of business and if they had political needs they dealt directly with the provincial cabinet.

The social structure in the Prince George district was similar to that found in the Alberni Valley. A core of merchants and professionals set the tone of community life, and resource workers with distinct job cultures and social environments rounded out the population. While in the Alberni Valley longshoremen and fishermen were significant occupational groups besides forest industry workers, in the northern interior farmers and railway workers were important contributors to local economic and political life.

The people of Prince George and the surrounding area perceived of the northern interior as an extension of the prairies, and they looked to the creation of an agriculturally-based economy as the key to stability and progress. The slow beginnings of the forest industry and its rocky history in the
1920s and 1930s further reinforced the notion that the path to prosperity was through agricultural development.

Farmers did come to the northern interior. In the Salmon River Valley, the Mud River Valley, and at Beaverly, Nichol, Isle Pierre, Reid Lake, Pineview, and near the small East Line lumber communities, farms were established. The farmers came from the prairies and the north-central United States. Some were wealthy. In 1917 a farmer arrived from Ebenezer, Saskatchewan, with 18 horses, 16 cows, 1 stallion, and 1 pedigree bull. Five railway cars were needed to haul his farm equipment, not including the stock.  

Farming traditions and institutions were brought to the northern interior. During the spring of 1923 ten farmers participated in a building bee, erecting two log houses and two barns in a period of three weeks. Farmers were active boosters of their home areas. Salmon River farmers were especially aggressive in trying to entice settlers to their valley; they assigned locaters to help prospective settlers and sent out brochures boasting the merits of farming in the Salmon River Valley. Farmers' Institutes were present from the earliest years of settlement, and by 1924, there were seven institutes in the district. Besides providing a forum for economic issues of interest to farmers, the institutes were instrumental in organizing summer picnics, sporting events, and the annual fall fair in Prince George.

As a well-organized group with clearly defined concerns, farmers were an important force in provincial politics in the area. Government financial assistance, settlement projects, and
experimental stations were requested by farmers in election years, but the demand for roads in rural areas was the most significant issue. Road building fulfilled two needs for farmers. First, roads connected isolated farms with markets and social amenities. Second, road construction put cash into the pockets of farmers as it was the farmers that built the roads and received the wages from the government. In 1917 a Giscome farmer gave his perspective on provincial politics: "There is nothing in politics for us fellows. What we want is roads. We will help the Party that helps us." The change of government in 1928 caused consternation among some area farmers. Twenty-six settlers at Reid Lake, who had all voted Liberal, found themselves without seasonal road work because of the patronage network of the new Tory regime. The Reid lake Liberals sent a resolution to the Minister of Public Works in Victoria asking that road work be assigned to local people without regard to political preferences. In 1929 and 1930 a dispute erupted between local farmers and the Prince George business community. The businessmen wanted the government to improve the highways in order to encourage tourists to travel to the northern interior. Farmers were outspoken in decrying the proposal, arguing that government money should be spent on rural roads, not highways. A Chief Lake farmer was adamant in his support of rural roads: "The 'producer' is the backbone of the country--not the 'tourist.'" Farming in the northern interior was closely tied to the fortunes of the forest industry. The lumber camps were the best markets for agricultural produce. Not only did farmers provide
food for workers, they also sold hay to logging and tie camp operators to feed the horses involved in the production process. In good times, the forest industry was able to absorb all the farm products of the district.\textsuperscript{47} When J.D. McArthur established a large tie camp at Mud River, local farmers were overjoyed:

> The company's advent was not anticipated, with the result that such supplies of feed as were on hand were cleaned out at a good figure. The demand was equally good for all kinds of vegetables. As the lumber company intends to continue operations in the valley for the next few years the farmers will prepare themselves to take care of the new market this year... All signs point to prosperity in the Mud River Valley during the next few seasons.\textsuperscript{48}

Prince George district farmers were well organized, were heeded by provincial politicians, and constituted a significant element in the social life of the regions. Their prosperity was linked to the forest industry, but their investment in money and labour on their farms did not allow them to relocate when the lumber market declined. They formed a persistent core in the area's social, economic, and political affairs.

A second important group in the region were the railway workers stationed in Prince George. In the years from 1915 to 1939 the city of Prince George had either a few small sawmills or no sawmills at all within its boundaries, and the Grand Trunk Pacific, later called the Canadian National, Railway was the largest employer in the city. The railroad workers, especially the skilled engineers, firemen, conductors, and trainmen, were completely integrated into society in Prince George. Having come to the area from central Canada or the midwestern United States in order to receive job promotions, the literate, English-
speaking railroaders forged a job-centred, community-minded social group.

The skilled railway workers brought with them a pride in their jobs, a sense of social status, and a commitment to the community. Nick Salvatore's examination of an American railroad town, Terre Haute, Indiana, in the years from 1870 to 1900, where skilled railroad men were respected in society and forged a culture around the themes of community and manhood, in many ways speaks for the railroad workers in Prince George. In fact, many northern interior railway workers had grown up and worked in similar settings. Thomas Allen, who was a locomotive engineer in Prince George in the mid-1920s, began his career on the railroad in Chicago in 1899. W.H. Null, another engineer, was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1869. George Abbott worked for railroads in Pittsburgh, St. Alban's, Sioux Lookout, and Winnipeg before becoming a GTP engineer in Prince George.

The job culture of North American skilled railroad workers permeated life in Prince George. Railroaders were active members of social organizations such as the Elks, Masons, and Oddfellows. They sponsored sporting events and in 1928 formed the CNR Social and Athletic Association. They contributed time and money to local projects such as schools and playgrounds, and entered decorated cars in city parades. Perhaps the most appreciated contribution to the city's social life were the dances that they staged. In 1915 the Order of Railway Conductors put on a ball that attracted 400 people and illustrated the pride that the men had in their work. Two members of the Order, dressed in conductor's uniforms, punched all tickets as the
guests arrived. On the tickets were printed the destination of the evening's journey--Satisfaction. The programmes were in the style of a railway order sheet, and a miniature railway signal lantern flashed green when dancing was to begin. A ball sponsored by the locomotive engineers on Christmas night, 1923, featuring a midnight supper, a seven-piece orchestra, and a small locomotive erected on the ballroom floor, was attended by all local luminaries, including the mayor.

The railroaders were also active in provincial and municipal politics. George Abbott, an engineer, contested the Prince George mayoralty in the 1920s, and his wife was elected as a school trustee. Railway employees were elected as aldermen and school trustees throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and they held executive positions in political parties, especially the Liberal party, during the 1920s. In the 1930s they formed the cornerstone of the new Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in the Prince George district. The members of the railroad brotherhoods were an integral part of life in Prince George and held responsible social and political positions.

A third significant group of residents was made up of small businessmen and professionals. Many had arrived in the area during the boom years from 1910 to 1915, established businesses, made money, and invested in property. For the next twenty-five years they waited for the expected economic expansion which would bring prosperity to both the community and themselves. At times they were impatient with the lack of progress in the district and castigated their neighbours for failing to invest in local manufacturing plants. A creamery, foundry and machine shop, sash
and door plant, and sawmill were ideas bandied about in 1927 as opportunities for Prince George investors. "This business of remaining inactive year after year, waiting for the other fellow to come in from the outside and lift the problems from our shoulders is not likely to materialize, for the very good reason that the other fellow has his own difficulties to contend with."56 Another citizen agreed with this analysis: "The seeming leaders have always reminded me of Micawber--looking for somebody to come and give us prosperity.... Prince George has spent money to send delegates to the coast, booklets, etc., looking for outside help, but never a cent to help herself."57 While outside capital established a creamery in Prince George during the 1930s, local businessmen rationally chose to remain selling agents for merchandise manufactured in central Canada and the United States, and for insurance policies backed by large outside companies. This business and professional group dominated the region's social, political, and associational life.

The owners and managers of the sawmill operations were only tangentially linked to the Prince George business community. Their concerns were located along the East Line, geographically distant from Prince George, and as such neither they nor their families were able to participate in activities in the urban centre. If the mill was relatively close to Prince George, the manager and his family sometimes resided in the city. W.K. Nichols, manager of Eagle Lake Spruce Mills in the 1920s, lived in Prince George, and he and his wife were active in local society.58 M.S. Caine, who established a sawmill in Prince George in 1929, unsuccessfully ran for mayor in 1939. Yet
northern mill operators, because of the nature of their work which demanded their presence in isolated camps and milltowns, were largely on the periphery of the organized political and social life of the area.

As well as farmers, skilled railway workers, businessmen, and professionals, workers in railway construction and maintenance and in the forest industry also made their presence felt in the northern interior. These workers were beyond the pale of the "polite" society described above. The jobs were low paid, work and living conditions were usually abysmal, and the work was not secure or long-lasting. The workers were drawn from the mass of immigrants who invaded Canada from Europe in the years from 1896 to 1930. The population of the Prince George census district in 1931 reflected their heterogenous ethnic composition; fully 40 percent were non-British Europeans.59 These people provided the labour in railway gangs, tie camps, and logging operations.

Railroad construction brought the first boom to the northern interior. On 20 November 1911 Grand Trunk Pacific construction entered British Columbia, some 300 miles to the east of Prince George. In the spring of 1912 the GTP set up headquarters in South Fort George in preparation for the arrival of the steel and to co-ordinate the 4,000 workers building the grade from the east. The work along the Upper Fraser River was dangerous, dirty, and poorly paid, and the cost of living was high.60 By the spring of 1913 there were already about 1,000 navvies in South Fort George and lodging was at a premium. The men camped outdoors, waiting to obtain work on construction crews. The
bartenders at the Northern Hotel were the busiest men in town, joked one newspaper editor, several having broken the index fingers of their right hands punching the cash registers. The immigrant railway workers, living in squalor in tents and shacks, were a curiosity to the local townspeople. The *Fort George Herald* invited "the student of human nature to see some of the raw 'bohunk' product in its native habitat," by strolling among the workers' camps.

In January 1914 the steel reached Prince George, and 1,000 spectators braved freezing temperatures to witness the arrival of the first locomotive from the east. For the construction workers, some continued west to complete the building of the railway, some remained to build the bridge over the Fraser River and labour on the construction of the GTP roundhouses and shops, and other awaited the beginning of construction work on the Pacific Great Eastern Railway.

In the spring of 1915 work became scarce in the district and unemployment became a serious issue. Especially problematic was the fate of some 500 immigrants, described as Russians, who were stranded in Prince George when construction on the Pacific Great Eastern line was halted in early April. As these men had not been paid by the contractors, they were destitute. They came to Prince George, lived in shacks in or around the city, and were given food by the local government. The citizens of Prince George soon became chagrined at supporting these construction workers, claiming that many were undeserving of charity. Further, the men were becoming a menace to the community, congregating on city streets and blocking traffic as they waited...
their food orders. A solution was proposed whereby provincial government funds would be provided for needed road improvements in the area and the unemployed workers would be put to work. The proposal held much appeal for Prince George citizens: it would rid the city of an eyesore, contribute to economic development, and weed out the deserving from the undeserving poor. The unemployed construction workers made no contribution to the debate. The plan was never put into practice and by the end of the month the workers had dispersed to seek jobs in more hospitable climes.\textsuperscript{64} Twenty years later the unemployed would be less passive in the face of a lack of work and the qualified benevolence of municipal and provincial governments.

The forest industry that developed in the northern interior was labour-intensive and vulnerable to rapid changes in the continental lumber trade. A drop in the market meant an almost immediate suspension of milling and logging activities and unemployment for workers. Bankruptcies and mill fires further ensured the tenuous nature of work in the forest industries. Even in a buoyant economy the seasonal rhythms of log, tie, and lumber production guaranteed that workers would not be employed year round. The industry needed a flexible work force that would tolerate frequent lay-offs and would be available for start-up on sudden notice. It was not the personal attributes of the workers but the structure of the industry that dictated the transitory behaviour of the men and their erratic work histories.

In 1938 some 1,660 men were employed at some time during the year in the area's forest industry. Of these 820 were involved in milling and logging, 580 in making ties, and 260 in taking
out poles, posts, and cordwood. Only 22 percent of the 820 men in the logging camps and sawmills worked over nine months in the year, another 21 percent worked six to seven months, and the majority, 38 percent were at work for four to five months. Nineteen percent worked three months or less. The tie industry offered even less steady employment: 84 percent of the 580 tie workers were employed for one to two months in 1938. Work in the forest industry was erratic.

While operators preferred to hire experienced men, labour shortages often forced tie and logging camps to run with newcomers. According to a government official in 1928, "fully one-half of the men offering as tie-makers were without experience and there was great difficulty in placing them. Some of them got fired so often during the season that they now have some doubt in their own minds as to whether they are tie-makers or not." There was a similar situation in logging operations. Loggers, sawmill workers, and tie hacks could learn their tasks relatively easily, and an operator could run with just a few knowledgeable people in key positions. The lumber operators considered their workers equal in worth to unskilled railway maintenance workers: "There is absolutely no reason for giving the logger in this country more than the mill man. Exactly the same class of labour as our loggers is now employed on extra gangs by the CNR for a ten-hour day at twenty-five cents per hour."

The northern interior forest industry was intertwined with the prairie labour market. From July 1923 to February 1924 the government-operated Employment Bureau supplied Kootenay and
northern interior lumber operators with 5,048 men. Of this number only 376 men came from the Lower Mainland of British Columbia and 4,672 were drawn from places in the prairies. East Line operators had to compete with prairie farmers to obtain workers in the fall when logging and tie-making began. It was only after the end of the harvest in November that the labour requirements of the forest operators were satisfied. These transient workers provided the flexible labour force needed in the forest industry.

Another source of labour for the camps was the local farming community. Working on their farms during the summer, farmers would work for logging or tie companies during the winter. Their experience with horses made them a valuable asset to woods operations. Caroline Buchi remembered the importance of the tie industry when she and her husband, Gustav, began farming near Prince George in the mid-1920s: "When the house was finished, we had 50¢ cash money left. To make a few very necessary dollars, Gustav went haying for a neighbour, and got $3 for a 16 hour day. In the winter he made railroad ties with a broad axe. When we made enough money to pay for the land, he made more ties so we could buy a team of horses and a sleigh." Farmers, desperate for cash, worked as loggers and tie hacks during the winter as they aspired to become successful independent rural operators.

Besides the migratory loggers and tie hacks and the local farmers, there was also a small, more permanent work force in the sawmill towns such as Giscome, Aleza Lake, Hutton, Penny, and Longworth. These were sawmill workers who were able to work for most of the year doing maintenance and odd jobs when the mill was
not running. Often family men, they integrated into the small communities that perhaps contained a hotelkeeper, storekeeper, mill foreman, and bookkeeper as well as the mill workers. These men developed a commitment to the community and a loyalty to the companies that employed them.

Because of the seasonal and irregular nature of work in the forest industry it is difficult to analyze the wages and standards of living of workers meaningfully. Mill workers were paid by the hour, tie hacks by the tie, and as the 1920s progressed, loggers were more frequently paid on a piece-rate basis. Suffice it to say that wages only allowed for a minimal standard of living if employment could be secured for a large portion of the year. Martin S. Caine, a tie and sawmill operator in the 1920s and 1930s, was asked how his mill labourers survived on the wages that they were paid. He replied: "I do not know. Young fellows could get by. A man with a family could not." Yet somehow they did.

Jobs in the sawmills and camps were dangerous, and injuries and death could occur. In 1922 a mill worker at Aleza Lake was injured by a piece of wood thrown back by the edger. The fragment embedded in the muscles of the upper part of his left thigh and a doctor removed the piece of wood which was the thickness of a lath and 4½ inches in length. A sawyer at the Red Mountain Lumber Company in Penny was killed in 1923 "when he was thrown upon the saw and had his body severed from the top of his head to his hips." A Willow River mill worker fell in 1927 against a saw "which cut a gash in his breast about a foot long, which severed the flesh and muscles, narrowly missing the vital
Logging and tie-making, too, were dangerous, but work in the interior forests was not nearly as risky as work in the coastal region where the trees were larger and more machinery was used. A tie hack at Willow River broke his left leg when he was hit by a falling tree in 1923, a Longworth logger was killed in 1925, and a Penny logger was fatally injured while falling in 1928.78

The camps established by logging and tie operators were intended to serve only for a short period of time, and little money or energy was expended in erecting facilities that provided any conveniences. Sanitation was abysmal and camps were susceptible to outbreaks of disease. The influenza epidemic of late 1918 was especially deadly in East Line camps.79 For workers who had experienced life in railway construction camps, prairie harvest fields, or in primitive northern interior homesteads, the conditions in East Line camps were familiar.80

That squalor and hard work were commonplace did not make camp life comfortable for the men. Working in isolated camps, the men were separated from family and friends. For example, Vincent Machac died in Prince George in 1921. He had been working in bush camps for eight years and throughout that period sent any extra money that he made to his wife and two children in Vienna.81 Camp life was also a lonely experience. Superficial friendships, fellow workers who spoke a variety of languages, subhuman living conditions, and a sense of anomie permeated the culture of tie hacks and loggers. The testimony of Andrew Heimerl at the inquest into the death of a fellow logger, John
Harrison, in 1928 provides insights into the fragile social experience of camp workers:

I work in Bolen's Camp, Giscome, as a decker. I have been working in the bush there for four days. The man that got killed had worked there for four days too. I only knew Harrison four days. I have worked in the bush before--last winter. Harrison worked two years in the bush before. We lived together in the same bunkhouse, but not on the same side. We all started to work on the 24th December and worked all morning, then we had lunch inside and worked again in the afternoon. It was making a skidway we were doing and after it was finished we started to swamp and make a road.... I heard the tree fall.... I saw the horses coming back, but I could not see the teamster, Harrison.... We went over and lifted him up from the ground, with other men who were working on the other side of the road.... I came back with the boss and the sleigh and took Harrison back to the camp. I do not know the boss's name.... I am a German. I have been in Canada since July one year ago. My partner (August Schepen) is here three years next spring.... There were five men in our gang, the two other men were sawing. The other men were two hundred yards away when the accident happened from where the tree fell. I do not know what nationality the other men are, but they talk Polish, I think.... I do not know if Harrison has any family. I do not think so. He has no wife. He was always talking about travelling around the country, Vancouver, Prince Rupert, (etc.). He had been in Ontario three or four years, because he had worked in the same bush as me. He never said he belonged to Ontario. I do not know what caused the tree to fall--maybe the roots and the stumps were rotten.82

The camp workers were part of a national labour market made up of the dispossessed. They were a multi-national, transient mass of rootless workers who travelled the land labouring at a series of distasteful, short-term jobs.
At times, despair in their isolation overtook workers, who took their own lives. In 1929 John Pavkoveck, a 30-year old native of Czechoslovakia, who was working in the bush near Longworth, cut his own throat with a razor: "In a search of the papers of the deceased letters were found including one evidently from a wife residing in Europe. In this the woman upbraided the man for his failure to bring her to Canada and suggested that he had probably found some one to take her place. This is believed to have been the cause which led Pavkoveck to take his life." Ole Ellingsen, a Norwegian tie hack, also found the life of a bunkhouse to be unbearable. He took his own life and left his worldly belongings to relatives in Norway.

In the fall, before the tie and logging seasons, and in the spring, when the work was done, the camp workers congregated in Prince George. The numerous beer parlours, gambling dens, and brothels were their favourite haunts. To the local residents, loggers and tie hacks were a breed apart, a group that invaded their civilization at particular times of the year, men who were a necessary and undesirable by-product of a lumber economy. As one logger remembered: "The whores were the only real friends we had. They'd talk to us even when we were broke. They were outsiders too." Along with the small communities of Chinese, Blacks, East Indians, and Native Indians, the camp workers only impinged on the dominant society through the judicial system, where crimes related to alcohol, gambling, and prostitution were processed. Socially, politically, and culturally the bush workers were on the fringes of the reigning society in the northern interior.
Forest industry workers in the Prince George and Port Alberni districts inhabited a particular niche in society. Separated from the local elites and other groups of workers, and internally divided between loggers and sawmill workers, forest industry workers formed an isolated and relatively powerless group within the regional staple economies. Their economic and job complaints found little sympathy with other members of the population, their transient work habits made organization difficult, and their political clout was minimal. In the resource economies of the two districts the working class was fragmented and the lumber workers themselves did not form a strong, cohesive unit able to exert power and influence their lives at the local level. Job cultures, not geographic settings, were more important in uniting workers and to generate political and economic change forest industry workers had to look beyond the perimeters of their regions for institutions, organizations and ideas capable of having an impact in their daily lives.
Notes

1. Port Alberni News, 27 March 1918; 22 May 1918.

2. Port Alberni News, 20 November 1918; 27 November 1918; 18 December 1918; 5 February 1919; 12 February 1919; 28 February 1919; 19 March 1919; 21 May 1919; 3 December 1919; 7 January 1920; 19 May 1920; 16 June 1920; 19 October 1921; 14 March 1923.

3. Ibid., 20 November 1918.

4. Ibid., 24 September 1931; West Coast Advocate, Port Alberni, 18 May 1933; 11 May 1934; 18 April 1935.

5. Port Alberni News, 10 November 1923; 24 October 1923; 7 November 1923; 12 December 1923; British Columbia Federationist, 12 October 1923; 19 October 1923; 26 October 1923; 23 November 1923; ILWU Local 500 Pensioners, "Man Along the Shore!" The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront (Vancouver, 1975), pp. 50-54.


7. James Clark to the Attorney General, 24 March 1914; Port Alberni Constable to Chief Constable, Nanaimo, 19 April 1914, Public Archives of British Columbia (hereafter PABC), GR 1323, B2103, f.3393-1-14.

8. B.C. Lumber Worker, 6 January 1937.


20. B.C. Lumber Worker, 8 December 1937.


23. West Coast Advocate, 17 November 1938.


34. Rate of Wages per Hour Paid, 1924, PABC, Add MSS 3, v.17, f.6.
37. **West Coast Advocate**, 19 November 1936.
38. M.A. Grainger to C.F. Denny, 30 March 1928, PABC, Grainger Papers, Add MSS 588.
40. **Prince George Star**, 20 April 1917.
41. **Citizen**, Prince George, 10 May 1923.
45. **Citizen**, 13 June 1930; 14 August 1930.
47. J. Wilson to G.S. Pearson, 21 August 1934, PABC, GR 1222, v.4 f. 4.
48. **Citizen**, 21 March 1922; 28 March 1922.

50. *Citizen*, 8 June 1939.


53. *Citizen*, 16 February 1928.


55. *Citizen*, 20 December 1923; 27 December 1923.

56. *Citizen*, 5 May 1927.


61. *Fort George Herald*, South Fort George, 15 March 1913.


64. *Prince George Post*, 10 April 1915; 24 April 1915; *Prince George Herald*, 9 April 1915; 23 April 1915; 30 April 1915.


68. J. Wilson to G.S. Pearson, 21 August 1934, PABC, GR 1222, v.4, f.4.

69. Memorandum to the Honourable Minister of Labour, 7 April 1924, PABC, GR 1323, B2197, f.L-327-13.
70. *Citizen*, 2 August 1923; 21 February 1924; 4 November 1926; 29 July 1926.


72. Caroline Buchi, Pioneer Tapes, Cassette 29A, transcript, Prince George Public Library.

73. For wages paid for various jobs in the Prince George district forest industry, see Fort George Forest District, "Annual Reports," 1920-1940.

74. Martin S. Caine, oral interview by C.D. Orchard, October 1955, transcripts, College of New Caledonia Library.

75. *Citizen*, 18 July 1922.


77. *Citizen*, 19 May 1927.


79. *Ibid.*, 1 November 1918; 8 November 1918.


PART TWO

Class and Class Conflict in Two Forest Economies

The first section discussed the business side of the forest industry and sketched the social formations in the Port Alberni and Prince George districts. Two themes emerged: the success not of small operators but of a few well-capitalized firms with government aid in coping in a volatile staple economy and the fragmentation of the working classes in the two districts. In the discussion workers may have appeared as inert suppliers of labour power and the historical development of class relations in the two regions may have appeared static. This section explores the dynamics of class relations, the role of workers in class formation, the responses of employers to working-class challenges, and the political enthusiasms in the two forest economies before World War II.

The logging industry did not have a tradition of union activism in North America, and close personal relations between employers and employees in small, seasonal operations had been characteristic. With the migration of capital to the coastal forests of British Columbia and the adoption of new logging practices this paternalism was no longer tenable. Coastal operations ran year round, employed large crews, were highly mechanized, and came to resemble impersonal factories rather than family concerns. Further, the workers in the industry were recent European immigrants, often Scandinavians, who perceived of themselves as wage earners rather than as spirited lumberjacks engaged in a seasonal pastime. Employers failed to recognize the
changing nature of work and workers in the coastal forests and that loyalty could no longer be secured from workers facing low wages and terrible living conditions. In 1919 coastal loggers organized a union and launched a series of strikes. Alberni Valley loggers, as part of the coastal logging work force, participated in this movement and coordinated a number of strikes in 1919 and 1920. The lumber companies were surprised by the militancy of their logging work forces, but quickly regained their composure and acted to deal with the new situation. Coastal logging operators united to form a solid front against the nascent organization and devised strategies to keep their camps non-union. Most importantly, they instituted an effective system to screen all workers hired in coastal operations. Blacklisted union activists could not find work in the camps and the union disintegrated. The blacklist not only defeated the union, it kept the camps relatively free of activists throughout the 1920s.

Sawmill workers in Port Alberni did not participate in the strike activity of 1919 and 1920. For one thing, the loggers made little attempt to include them, but more significantly, the nature of the sawmill work force was such that union agitation was difficult. A core of sawmill workers lived in Port Alberni, especially the better-paid, more skilled workers, and as homeowners and participants in local community life, they retained loyalties to the companies that employed them. Transient sawmill workers did not have a social and cultural centre in Vancouver, as the loggers did, and neither were they bound by the geographic confines of the coastal region.
Unemployed loggers gathered in downtown Vancouver to discuss issues and find work; unemployed sawmill workers disappeared into the unknown. Yet, Port Alberni sawmill workers did have grievances, and rather than seeking redress through industrial action their concerns were aired in the political arena. The local member of the provincial legislature was the champion of initiatives to shorten working hours, establish a minimum wage, and lessen the number of Chinese and Japanese immigrants working in the sawmills. In a predominantly British population, where local politicians and sawmill workers mingled on city streets, the political stage seemed the appropriate place to effect change.

The Alberni Valley lumber companies defied the depression of the 1930s, increasing production levels and expanding the scope of their operations in the years after 1933. Yet even with a healthy market share, operators feared a reversal. Competition from the Soviet Union and the United States, the possibility of changing trends in tariff policies, and the vagaries of customer consumption levels were threats that mill owners took seriously. Moreover, while production levels increased during the 1930s, lumber prices did not rise dramatically. In a staple market there was no long-term security, and producers in this unstable, competitive industry tried at all times to keep production high and costs low. Unions, wage increases, and expenditures on workers' safety were variables that employers felt they had to control to maintain their market share.

The 1930s brought a restructuring of the working class in the Alberni Valley. In 1934 a logging strike swept across
Vancouver Island. With a reinvigorated union and public support, the loggers struck for a share of the companies' new-found profits and improved safety conditions in the woods. Alberni Valley camps were pivotal in this struggle. The strike was lost by the workers, but the union survived. The loggers also began to recognize the importance of the sawmill workers in achieving a strong union. Sawmill workers were ripe for unionization. The construction of new mills by the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company and Bloedel, Stewart & Welch in the mid-1930s increased the size of the local sawmill work force. Further, the companies were intent on keeping costs low and production high. Increased mechanization, low wages, and speed-up in the sawmills made it evident to workers that only through organization could their jobs be made more humane. Mill workers became active in the struggle for a union, and by the end of the 1930s loggers and sawmill workers formed a united force against the employers, with support in the community and from workers in other areas of the province. Class lines in the Alberni Valley were more clearly drawn by 1939.

The lumber industry in the northern interior was also the scene of strike and union activity in the years 1919 to 1920. Low wages, abysmal living and working conditions, and the momentum of the union drive in the coastal region spawned strikes in sawmills, logging camps, and tie operations. Organizers attempted to create a strong union of all lumber workers along the East Line. However, the drive was not sustained. Internally, the reluctance of local farmers who worked in the camps during the winter weakened the organization. Externally,
the downturn in the lumber economy in the early 1920s undermined the union. Unlike the coastal region, operators did not need to launch a repressive campaign to crush the union; economic conditions served their purposes just as well. The poor economic circumstances of small interior operations could neither create a cohesive working class nor sustain a strong union movement. With the defeat of the union the forest workers remained diffuse, geographically isolated, and unreceptive to organization.

The union activists in the northern interior were suspicious of participating in politics. Migratory workers could make little impact in elections, and the socialist and labour political parties in Prince George were developed by small businessmen, farmers, and skilled railway workers. Forest industry workers in isolated camps and milltowns made little contribution to the area's political life.

If during the 1920s the area's forest industry workers and working class were fragmented, small in number, and uncoordinated, in the 1930s their circumstances deteriorated even further. The failure of the lumber companies to remain viable in the economic downturn undermined the fragile working class that existed in the region. There was no question of unionizing the work force; it was obvious that the companies had little to offer workers. The region's economic underdevelopment and state of crisis in the 1930s made it evident to some that solutions had to be found in the larger social and economic system. Unemployed workers organized in protest, becoming increasingly radical in their attempts to secure work and wages from the government. This radical ferment had its roots in the ethnic groups and
ideals that had fueled the post-War union drive in East Line camps. A second strain in working-class action coalesced in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, a development which grew out of the labour and socialist enthusiasms of farmers, small businessmen, and railway workers in the 1910s and 1920s. But neither of these political groups offered answers to the main problem that faced the district: the collapse of the forest industry. Theirs was the politics of protest, a recognition that capitalism had failed in the northern interior.

Class development and conflict in the Prince George and Port Alberni districts took place in the context of the broader Canadian political economy, especially with regard for the Canadian West. As we saw in section one, capital and labour on the fringes of British Columbia were closely connected to this larger world. Port Alberni workers and employers had intimate links with Vancouver; Prince George with the prairies. Developments in western Canada as a whole had important implications for class formation in the two outlying regions.

Western Canada was the focus of much labour agitation in the first two decades of the twentieth century, culminating in 1919 with the Winnipeg General Strike and the formation of the One Big Union. Railway workers, miners, and urban workers were active strikers in the years before 1914, and the War years intensified the organization of workers. Inflation and manpower shortages after 1916 increased union membership to new heights and labour militancy increased proportionally. Moreover, the federal government's rejection of union participation in war-time decision-making alienated many working-class leaders, and the
number of strikes increased as workers sought to gain their share of war-time wealth from profiteering manufacturers. In British Columbia the number of labour disputes increased four-fold between 1916 and 1919 and the number of man days lost increased by five times.\(^1\) In May 1919 the metal trades workers in Winnipeg struck in a long-standing attempt to secure collective bargaining. With the support of the city's labour council a general strike was called which began on May 15th. For six weeks the strikers held out in a highly-polarized, tense atmosphere. Sympathetic strikes were organized in cities throughout Canada, including Vancouver.\(^2\)

In 1919 the Western Canadian union movement also moved to divorce itself from the over-arching Canadian house of labour, the Trades and Labour Congress. More radical than eastern leaders, prone towards industrial rather than craft organizational structures, and numerically weak in comparison to eastern organizations, western union leaders met in Calgary in March 1919 to discuss the formation of new labour congress. Out of this convention was born the One Big Union, an organization dedicated to syndicalism and the general strike, supportive of the Bolshevik Revolution, and averse to the exclusionist craft unionism that dominated the Trades and Labour Congress.\(^3\)

The enthusiasms of post-War union organizations helped spawn the first serious union drive among forest industry workers in British Columbia. In January 1919 the B.C. Loggers Union was formed with headquarters in Vancouver. In July 1919 the new union voted to affiliate with the One Big Union and changed its name to the Lumber Workers Industrial Union. By October the
LWIU had a membership of over 10,000 and by the end of the year the number had climbed to 17,000. In 1919 and 1920 the LWIU led strikes in British Columbia lumber camps over the issues of wages, working conditions, and the recognition of union camp committees. There were some 39 strikes by provincial lumber workers in 1920 alone.4 The LWIU, however, was a short-lived organization.

In 1920 tension between OBU and LWIU leaders reached the breaking point. The OBU feared the numerical strength of the LWIU would allow it to dominate OBU proceedings. At the second convention of the OBU, held in Port Arthur in October 1920, delegates refused to grant accreditation to Ernest Winch, secretary of the LWIU, and further passed a resolution which defeated the maintenance of the OBU organizational structure along industrial lines, forcing workers to affiliate directly to the OBU and not through their respective industrial unions, such as the LWIU. In 1921 the LWIU voted to secede from the OBU.5

The LWIU also experienced internal organizational difficulties. The supporters of the Industrial Workers of the World formed a strong, often dissentient, constituency within the LWIU. The IWW itself could quite rightly claim the loggers as their jurisdiction. Formed in Chicago in 1905, the IWW was committed to radical syndicalism and, as Bill Haywood proclaimed, "founded on the class struggle, having in view no compromise and no surrender, and but one object and one purpose and that is to bring the workers of this country into the possession of the full value of their toil."6 IWW delegates began penetrating western Canada in the first decade of the century. They appealed to
miners, harvesters, railway construction workers, and loggers, in the main, workers who were of little interest to the craft unions of Canada and the United States. In British Columbia, IWW delegates organized loggers in the Lower Mainland and the Kootenays but made their most significant breakthroughs with the construction workers building the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk Pacific Railways. Primitive living conditions, unsafe work, and low pay were the common complaints that rallied transient workers to the IWW cause. The IWW, with its call for militant industrial unionism and direct job action, its distrust of government and even socialist politics, its unwillingness to sign contracts with employers, its appeal to foreign-born, migrant workers, and its cry for revolution, caused consternation among government and traditional trade union leaders. Repressive government and employer measures, coupled with the end of the railway building boom and the economic depression in 1913-1914, led to the disintegration of the IWW in British Columbia. Yet, while the organizational structure of the IWW disappeared in the 1910s, IWW delegates continued to haunt logging camps, and with the revival of union organization in 1919, individual "Wobblies" were prominent in the LWIU membership. Bitter and prolonged conflict between the LWIU leadership headed by Ernest Winch and the pro-IWW members provided a constant challenge to LWIU unity.

In the early 1920s the LWIU, beset by internal and external organizational problems, quickly disintegrated as a body. By 1924, LWIU locals were almost non-existent and small, IWW-led locals were the only remnants of a once large lumber workers' union. Dorothy Steeves points to the split with the OBU as the
most serious factor leading to the demise of the LWIU; Paul Phillips emphasizes the ramifications of the economic slump beginning in 1920, while David Bercuson notes that "internal division between pro- and anti-IWW factions, the state of the lumber economy and the continuing drive of the operators against trade unionism took their toll." 

Forest industry workers in the Port Alberni and Prince George districts had participated in the growth of the LWIU. The Prince George LWIU was dominated by IWW proponents while Alberni Valley lumber workers were more closely linked to LWIU headquarters in Vancouver. Rank-and-file workers in both districts were primarily concerned with securing better working conditions and wages. The failure and demise of the LWIU in these two regions was not primarily due to political factionalism; it was rooted in the power of the companies, the structure of the industry, and the division of labour within the lumber workforce. Workers fought for immediate issues and the defeat of the LWIU was achieved at the local level.

Politically, socialism and labourism were strong currents in the western Canadian working class. Both had deep roots in British Columbia politics. In the first years of the century British Columbia was the dynamic centre of the Canadian socialist movement which was imbued with radical Marxism. In 1903 the Socialist Party of British Columbia secured nine percent of the provincial vote, electing two members to the legislature, and the radical socialists maintained a presence through the First World War. Yet in Prince George and Port Alberni it was the more moderate labourite politicians, seeking legislative reforms to
improve the lives of workers, who maintained a continuous thread, albeit tenuous, of working-class political activism from 1910 to 1930. 13

During the crisis in the world economy in the 1930s working-class movements revived across Canada, and an aggressive challenge was launched against both the state and employers. Unemployed workers organized to defend themselves against the ravages of poverty and joblessness, new political parties were formed with platforms intended to ease the suffering of workers and farmers and to guard against future economic collapses, and a new continental labour congress, which stressed industrial unionism and sought to organize assembly-line and unskilled workers, was founded. For employers and provincial and federal governments, the depression posed serious questions and challenged reigning assumptions about the operation of the Canadian economy. Change, however, was slow in being realized. Despite heated debates between different levels of government and within the Canadian business community about who was responsible for providing for the unemployed and how the crisis could be overcome, there was no economic, political, or social transformation. 14 Working people, in and out of work, weathered the depression years and shaped their own solutions and organizations to address their very real problems.

In exploring class relations in the 1930s, the role of the Communist Party of Canada is important. The CPC began as an organized entity in 1919 and brought together a small group of left-wing activists who had belonged to a number of working-class political movements. Throughout the 1920s the party
maintained a presence in Canada despite internal factionalism, ethnic conflicts, and difficulties in applying the policies of the Communist International to the Canadian situation. In the years before 1928 the party was involved in penetrating established working-class organizations and making contact with a broad spectrum of workers. In 1928 this policy changed. The Comintern decreed that the collapse of world capitalism was imminent and that workers should be organized for revolution. Communists in Canada moved out of the established trade union movement and set up their own unions. They also engaged in a bitter struggle with social democrats and non-communist reformers in the political arena. According to the communists, reformism only served to prop up the capitalist system by masking the excesses of capitalist inequalities and injustices, thus pacifying the working class and inhibiting radical change. Social democrats and traditional unionists incurred the vitriolic abuse of communist militants until the coming of the Popular Front in 1935.15

In late 1929 the Communist Party of Canada established the Workers Unity League (WUL) to coordinate "red" trade union activities across the nation. The WUL was a dual labour congress completely separate from the Trades and Labour Congress, and throughout the first half of the 1930s the WUL gained affiliate unions in mines, factories, and work and relief camps throughout Canada. Strikes of coal miners in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, metal miners in Manitoba and Quebec, a strike by furniture workers in Stratford in 1933, and a Vancouver dock-workers strike in 1935 were all led by WUL affiliates.16
WUL, however, was short-lived. In 1935 Comintern policy changed in response to communist miscalculations in developing strategies to counteract the rise of European fascism. The world communist movement now declared that a "People's Front" was necessary to defeat fascism, and in Canada the WUL was disbanded and communist organizers began to work within the broader trade union movement to effect stronger working-class consensus. 17

Coincidental with the change in communist policy was the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization, later the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), in the United States. Led by John L. Lewis, of the United Mineworkers, the CIO advocated organization along industrial lines and aggressive campaigns to organize mass-production workers. The CIO was born within the craft-dominated American Federation of Labor in 1935, but conflicts led to a split between the two groups by 1937. 18 In Canada the enthusiasm associated with the newly-founded CIO helped organizational drives after 1936. The Oshawa auto worker strike in early 1937 established the CIO presence in Canada. Communist organizers, who had made inroads into the factories in previous years, played prominent roles in bringing new locals into the CIO fold. 19

Besides being active in the Canadian union movement, communists also played a leading role in organizing the unemployed in the years from 1930 to 1935. In the early 1930s the WUL created the National Unemployed Workers Association (NUWA) to coordinate agitational activities among jobless workers. The NUWA led struggles to increase relief payments, to counter evictions of workers from their homes, to lobby for
non-contributory unemployment insurance, and to protect the rights of workers to demonstrate publicly their dissatisfaction with prevailing conditions. Agitation in the relief camps was also undertaken by the NUWA. These camps, set up to house single, unemployed men away from major population centres, generated resentment among the young men who felt they were wasting their lives away within them. Relief camp unions and strikes were organized, the agitation culminating in 1935, in the On-to-Ottawa Trek. The trek was violently halted in Regina on Dominion Day 1935, when the RCMP and trekkers clashed.20

While the CPC was active politically in the 1930s, the most influential political movement of the 1930s that appealed to Canadian workers was the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. After a number of meetings among farmers, labour politicians, and socialists, a conference in Calgary in 1932 officially launched the CCF. Despite the implacable enmity of Communists, Liberals, and Conservatives, the socialist platform of the CCF found sympathy among Canadians, British Columbians in particular. The CCF became the Official Opposition in British Columbia with seven members in the 1933 provincial election; in the national election of 1935, the CCF polled 33.6 percent of the popular vote in British Columbia, compared to 31.8 percent for the Liberals and 24.6 percent for the Conservatives.21 The CCF, with its broadly-based appeal to a wide spectrum of workers, farmers, and small businessmen, managed to carve out a place for itself in federal and provincial politics during the 1930s.22

Events in the United States, in Europe, and in prairie and central Canada, which altered the warp and woof of political and
trade union movements in Canada, were felt in the forest economies of the Prince George and Port Alberni districts. In Prince George and in East Line communities and camps economic stagnation and unemployment were the key features of the 1930s. Relief camps were set up along the East Line to hold unemployed workers, but the municipal, provincial, and federal responses to the pleas of the needy were insufficient. In the relief camps and among the unemployed in Prince George the NUWA and the Communist Party were active in the struggle to ameliorate the conditions of those without work. Port Alberni also faced the problems of unemployment in the early 1930s, but with the recovery of the coastal lumber trade after 1933 unionism became the major issue in the Alberni Valley. A re-organized Lumber Workers Industrial Union, revived in the late 1920s under communist leadership, led the union drive, until its merger into the CIO-affiliated International Woodworkers of America in 1936-1937.

The intersection of national movements and organizations with the changing social formations in the northern interior and the Alberni Valley created the context of class conflict. But the ability of radical ideas and workers' institutions to take hold in the resource regions depended on the level and nature of class formation. The following two chapters trace class relations in the Alberni Valley from 1910 to 1939; two further chapters explore developments in the northern interior.
Notes


8. Bercuson, Fools and Wise Men, pp. 165-166; Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, pp. 56-57.

9. Steeves, Compassionate Rebel, p. 60.


13. For a broad perspective on labourism in Canada, see Craig Heron, "Labourism and the Canadian Working Class," Labour/Le Travail, 13 (Spring 1984), pp. 45-76.


CHAPTER IV

Wage Slaves and Boss Loggers in the Alberni Valley

In 1913 a provincial Royal Commission on labour toured British Columbia, holding sessions in a number of communities. Strikes by coal miners, railway workers, and railway construction gangs had alerted authorities to the discontent brewing among British Columbia workers. The mandate of the commission was to ascertain the conditions and problems of working people and to make recommendations to ameliorate relations between owners and employees.

The peripatetic commission held sessions in Port Alberni in February 1913 and called witnesses to comment on local labour conditions. Richard J. Burde, the mayor of Port Alberni, gave his opinion on the poor quality of "Hindu" and Chinese labour and recommended that British and American immigration be encouraged and that the immigration of Swedes, Finns, Italians, and Russians be curtailed, for "they cost the province too much for the administration of justice."\(^1\) Burde was also asked about labour conditions at the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company's mill in Port Alberni: "I haven't heard any complaints. Things seem to be quite happy as far as I can observe."\(^2\) Asked about conditions in the area's logging camps he replied, "very good.... The men up and down and visitors say that they are exceptionally clean camps along the Canal. Every camp has frame cabins and is pitched somewhere near a creek so that they have running water."\(^3\)

Another witness, James Wilkinson, who was also asked to comment on work in the sawmill, stated that "the only thing I have made
enquiries about is the men working at the Pacific Lumber Company's mill, and they tell me they get $2.50 a day for ten hours." Neither Wilkinson nor Burde had direct experience with logging or sawmill activities in the valley. No logger or mill worker appeared before the commission in Port Alberni.

Throughout the province labour leaders representing workers in various sectors of the economy expressed the fears and concerns of British Columbia workers, but no elected union officials spoke for the men employed in the British Columbia forest industry. Unlike coal miners, railway workers, and tradesmen, lumber workers did not have a tradition of collective behaviour and unionization. Despite a few ineffectual attempts, no long-lasting union organization had penetrated the forest industry. The small size of most sawmills, the itinerant nature of the work force, and the isolation of logging camps inhibited union organization. The lack of union traditions in eastern Canada and the United States in the forest industry centres further undermined the establishment of a lumber union. When the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company began operating in the Alberni Valley, no union delegates from Ottawa, Seattle, or Vancouver followed to organize the men. These places had no strong forest industry unions themselves.

While collectivism was not part of the job culture of lumber workers, loggers did have a rich cultural heritage. The image of the legendary lumberjack pervaded the popular conception of the woods worker. Loggers were characters, individualistic, even idiosyncratic, physically strong, carefree, expert with an axe, beholden to no man. They worked hard and played hard, consuming
alcohol with abandon and frequently coming to blows in the drinking establishments and brothels that they patronized. They were a breed apart, living in their own society with its own rules and customs. As long as they maintained this separateness they earned the respect of the broader community. H. Clare Pentland discusses bush workers in nineteenth-century Canada:

The willingness of the workmen of the staple trades to accept the conditions of employment without much complaint is not easily explicable in terms of pecuniary calculation. Indeed, although these men were paid money for their work and did many things that industrial men do, their behaviour was largely the product of considerations beyond the measures of economic rationality. ... They were efficient, not from devotion to a religion of capitalism but as a matter of personal pride. ... The values that kept them to it were familiarity and excitement. They acquired prestige by exhibitions, not of accumulation, but of strength and daring. ... The direction of men like these were best handled by employers who also felt and understood the pre-industrial values of fellowship, prowess and tradition. Even late in the nineteenth century, the lumber boss who could break a log jam, knock a man down and lead a song, could expect more enthusiastic production than the flabby competitor whose range of interest was from cover to cover of the account book.5

In the early twentieth century British Columbia logging operators tried to perpetuate the image of the logger as hardy, carefree, and unlike other industrial workers. E.J. Palmer, of the Victoria Lumber & Manufacturing Company, reacted strongly to the government plan to impose semi-monthly paydays on the logging industry in 1917:

I have known the logger for forty years now. I know he just can't work if he has a dollar in his jeans. He is better off physically, morally and financially if he is broke. The loggers are in a class by themselves. A
semi-monthly payday in cash will mean still greater disorganization of the camps. With it in operation a man might better be a politician than a logging camp operator.  

At the same time, employers were also proud of their woods work force. The toughness and independence of loggers, their ability to eschew the effete life style of urban workers, and their hard-living were part of a mystique that was reinforced by employers. Even the dangers of the work were portrayed in a positive sense by employers eager to boast about the "manliness" of the loggers: "No one will attempt to deny the fact that logging is a hazardous occupation. It is a man's job in the fullest sense of the expression and one in which the worker is up against Nature in her most majestic moods."  

Employers perpetuated "a tradition that the logger was a special breed. He was big and tough and he could therefore work much harder and faster than anybody else."  

Such sentiments, of course, were advantageous to logging operators. Men who would tolerate, and even revel in the unsanitary camps and the dangerous woods work were an asset to employers. Workers who were transient and pursued a life of independence were unlikely to organize into unions to challenge the authority of employers and the limits on wages.  

By the 1910s the lumberjack image was no longer plausible in the forests of coastal British Columbia. Changes in the structure of the work force and the nature of the industry forged new relations between capital and labour. In 1938 historian A.R.M. Lower registered his disgust with the transformation which had occurred in the forest industry work force:

The mass immigration which had been promoted from 1896 on changed the nature of the
camps. Not all the "stalwart peasants in sheepskin clothing" went on the land; many gravitated to lumber camps, mining camps, and railway construction camps. They furnished a still cheaper force of labor than the French-Canadian, many of them were even more docile than he and they had a still lower standard of living. Most of them had no family ties in the country, no way of spending their leisure and none of them could have the old traditions of calling or of loyalty which had marked the industry.... Nowadays, the camps are filled with nondescript Slavs of several varieties, with Swedes, Finns, down-and-out French from the cities, and the like.

The new workers were driven by economic need and did not adhere to the traditional paternal relationship between employer and employee. They had experienced the brutality of capitalism and had been exposed to radical interpretations of the economic structure, and as time would show, they were not docile.

The logging industry in British Columbia bore little resemblance to the industry in eastern Canada. Coastal camps were able to operate year round and made extensive use of machinery such as donkey engines and railway locomotives. Logging was increasingly coming to approximate work in factories. Companies were also becoming larger and direct relations between bosses and workers were almost impossible in the large outfits. Foremen, managers, and accountants separated the employees from the employers. J.H. Bloedel attributed the rise of union agitation in his American operations in the late 1910s to the breakdown of personal contact between himself and his men. A fictionalized account of Bloedel's life put these words in his mouth: "If we had been able to talk things over among ourselves, as we used to do when we were small, it never
would have happened; and we must see that it never happens again."\(^{10}\) While the conversation was apocryphal, the sentiment expressed was certainly true. During the 1920s and 1930s firms became larger and personal contact diminished even further. Employers had to find new means of maintaining discipline in their work forces.

The final report of the Royal Commission on Labour, presented in 1914, contained comments and recommendations that were relevant to the situation in the provincial forest industry. The commissioners had found that unsatisfactory employee-employer relations existed in larger industries where managers and foremen dealt directly with workers and that "the disappearance of all personal relations seem to be tending to create an ever-widening gulf between the employer and employee, and to promote the organization of labour into unions as the best means of ameliorating the conditions of what is known as the working class."\(^{11}\) The recommendations in the report included the abolition of private employment agencies, a minimum-wage law, a national eight-hour day, strict enforcement of the Public Health Act, and compulsory regulations to raise the living conditions in logging camps.\(^{12}\) The struggles in the forest industry over the following two decades were, to a large extent, aimed at realizing these recommendations.

Attempts at organization in the Alberni Valley forest industry did not begin in earnest until 1919, but an incident eight years earlier illustrates that the area was neither immune to strikes nor isolated from conflicts in other parts of the continent. In October 1911 there was organization for a general
strike in Port Alberni, which at the time had a population of less than five hundred. The agitation began in the logging camp of the Carmichael & Moorhead Company. This firm was clearing the bush from the Port Alberni townsite. On October 11, 1911, the 34 men in the camp went on strike, and tried to induce every other wage earner in town to join them. The walkout, however, remained confined to the Carmichael & Moorhead operation. The strike, led by Henry Frenette, a member of the Industrial Workers of the World, was called to protest the trial being given John J. McNamara in Los Angeles. John McNamara, an official of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Steel and Iron-Workers, and his brother, Jim, were charged with the bombing of the Los Angeles Times building, a blast which killed twenty people. Under extremely questionable circumstances the McNamara brothers had been transported from midwestern cities to stand trial in Los Angeles in October 1911. The North American labour movement interpreted the trial as a frame-up and launched a campaign to raise funds for the McNamara's defense. Much to the embarrassment of organized labour, the brothers pleaded guilty to the charge in December. Despite the guilty plea, the legality of the extradition proceedings were unclear and raised alarm in labour circles.¹³

The workers in Port Alberni were specific in their reasons for leaving work on the 11th of October:

Upon this day, the date intended for the McNamara brothers in Los Angeles, Cal., we the undersigned desire to go on record and protest against the outrageous proceedings of the United States authorities with regard to their arrest, which it had been shown by the report of the commission appointed by
Congress was practically a case of kidnapping and we will emphasize our protest by not going to work today. Those who make the laws should surely obey them.14

This petition, signed by 34 men, was sent to the local newspaper.

On the first evening of the strike a public meeting was held at the corner of Argyle and Kingsway. Henry Frenette spoke to the crowd, arguing spiritedly with a number of trade unionists in the crowd who were antagonistic to the ideals of the IWW. Mrs. Frenette then replaced her brother-in-law on the soap-box and harangued the crowd with a stiff lecture that was recorded by a local newspaperman:

I am an American, that's what I am. I presume I am speaking to a bunch of working men. You are a lot of dopes, you are a bunch of working stiffs. The capitalist is robbing you. Every day you work he makes $8.30 profit on you, and you get just enough to buy the bare necessities of life.

You fellows want to learn something stick around. The rest of you skiddoo. You, you white collared stiff, and you, you fat bellied capitalist; and yes you, you scissor-bill, and you too, you bonehead. I don't think I have anything more to say fellows, but have some sense.15

The strikers returned to work the next day but continued to press other workers to join their cause. On the 13th Carmichael and Moorhead discharged four or five of the men who were agitating. The whole crew then stopped work in protest, and the camp manager dismissed all the workers. The strikers left town the next morning.16 IWW delegates were less visible in the following years in the Alberni Valley, but with the resurgence of labour militancy after 1916 they again made their presence felt.
In Washington and Oregon states IWW organizers were active in a number of major woodwork strikes in the years 1916 and 1917. A strike in 1917 forced intervention by the federal government, and the imposition of the eight-hour work day followed in 1918. While radicalism and militancy had been crucial in making the concerns of loggers, sawmill workers, and shingle weavers known, the actions of the government led to the creation of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, an association dominated by employers and based on the principle of harmony between workers and owners. Radicalism in the lumber industry of the United States had been largely defused by 1918.\(^\text{17}\) There were also strikes by shingle weavers in British Columbia in 1917, as well as attempts to organize a union of all woods workers, but the initiatives did not lead to the foundation of a strong organization.\(^\text{18}\) These currents in working-class militancy were felt in the Alberni Valley. In August 1918 foremen at the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company discovered IWW literature in their logging camp and dismissed a number of workers for union activities.\(^\text{19}\)

The diligent work of IWW delegates and other unionists was not in vain; the formation of the B.C. Loggers Union in January 1919 owed much to their efforts. The headquarters of the Loggers Union, soon to become the Lumber Workers Industrial Union, was in Vancouver, and the organization quickly gained members throughout British Columbia. The timing of the rise of the union among loggers was due both the nation-wide enthusiasm for working-class organization in the post-War years and to the neglect of logging companies in providing decent living and
working conditions for their employees. Camp conditions had not even been elevated to the minimal requirements recommended by the Royal Commission on Labour in 1914. While there were radical political overtones to the new union, the primary thrust of the organization was to uplift standards in provincial logging camps. This basic intent of the organization is clear in its list of demands:

1. That a $5.00 minimum wage be established.
2. That it be a strictly 8-hour day, camp to camp, with time and one-half for overtime, legal holidays and Sundays.
3. The semi-monthly pay act to be strictly adhered to.
4. That no contract, piece-work, or bonus system be permitted.
5. The employer to pay transportation to the job, but if the worker is not put to work or is discharged before having earned twenty-five dollars over and above all expenses, including fare back to town, that transportation both ways be provided by the employer. In every case berth and meals to be provided by the employer.
6. Proper landing facilities, with house adjoining supplied with stove and wood.
7. Transportation from boat or railroad to camp.
8. No bunk-houses be less than 18x24 feet, nor contain more than six iron single beds each, with springs, mattresses, two double blankets, sheets, pillows, and slips, and kept in sanitary condition. The sheets and pillow slips to be washed once a week, blankets once a month, and every time bedding is changed from one person to another. The employers to bear the cost of same.
10. Wash-house, dryrack and bath house installed in all camps.
11. Antiseptic soap and towels to be furnished free.
12. Hot and cold water supplied.
13. Toilet with light, not less than 300 feet from all buildings.
14. Kitchen staff shall be supplied with sleeping quarters separate from kitchen.
15. Sanitary store-room in connection with kitchen.
16. Meat house no closer than 15 feet from kitchen.
17. Earthenware to be used in the place of enamelware, forks, knives and spoons of nickel silver, and diningroom tables to be covered with oil-cloth.
18. Six men at a table.
19. Kitchen utensils to be of copper, aluminium or pressed steel.
20. Sink to be lined with zinc.
21. Buildings for blacksmith and filer shall be built suitable for this work.
22. A reading room to be provided in all camps.
23. The Health Act shall be rigidly enforced in respect to the camp sanitation.
24. All complaints shall be dealt with through the camp committee.
25. We recommend an amendment to Section 4 of the Workmen's Compensation Board requirements for First Aid Service. First Aid--Every employer who is situated more than five miles from the office of a medical practitioner, and employing one or more men, shall at all times maintain in or about such place of employment satisfactory means of transportation to carry all injured workmen to the nearest hospital.
26. Expense of transportation shall be paid by the employer or board of any injured workman.
27. Licensed "First Aid" man shall be employed in camps where there are 10 to 25 men, and an additional one for every 25 thereafter.

The concerns of the loggers were wages, living conditions, first aid services, and the establishment of a union to monitor conditions on behalf of workers. This manifesto, which was sent to all coastal logging operations, remained the goal of the union through the duration of its existence.

The reaction of the logging operators to the B.C. Loggers Union was a mixture of disbelief and disgust. Its simple demands
were termed radical, unrealistic, and immoderate, and many operators refused to recognize the complaints of the men: "Take it from me, the men in most B.C. camps have mighty little to complain about. Their general living conditions are far better than the average rancher or settler enjoys, and their food is altogether superior."21 Another lumberman commented: "They're not suffering unless it's from too much good food."22 Operators branded union organizers as unscrupulous aliens and Bolsheviks, and they wanted them to be deported by the government. Yet in the spring of 1919 logging operators were not too concerned with the B.C. Loggers Union. At a meeting of the B.C. Loggers' Association in late April 1919 an anticipated industry-wide strike and the role of the new union were discussed. The secretary noted that "this did not appear to concern the members particularly, it being felt that a strike at this time would probably do more good than harm."23

The first LWIU-led strike in the Alberni Valley occurred in the logging camp of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company in the summer of 1919. The company had raised the board rate by thirty cents per day without any increase in pay. Men who were getting a monthly wage were placed on day wages and forced to pay board. The men responded by demanding a raise of 50 cents a day for all workers and an improvement in the quality of the food. Because of the buoyant economy and high lumber prices the company was eager to placate the one hundred loggers who walked out on August 2nd. Initially the company approached the headquarters of the LWIU in Vancouver, but the union executive referred the company back to the men on strike. APL representatives met with the
strike and on August 6th the dispute was settled. All demands were conceded to the men. The success of the men was also due to the unpreparedness of the company in the face of union militancy. H.A. Dent, manager of APL, planned only to complete current contracts and then hire a non-union crew, discharging the union activists. For the time being, however, the union was tolerated.

In 1919 the LWIU was helping to forge new feelings of solidarity among Alberni Valley loggers. Columns in the *British Columbia Federationist*, the organ of the LWIU and the One Big Union in British Columbia, were dedicated to camp reports that allowed workers to learn of the conditions of other loggers and to see their localized concerns in a broader context. One correspondent wrote from a Port Alberni camp: "Working conditions here, ten hours per day, six days a week. Grub fair, at 40¢ a meal. Contractor ... has the workers speeded up to the limit. He is certainly an A1 exploiter."

Another writer described conditions in his camp: "The health inspector should call at camp. Bunk houses not properly lighted or ventilated. Floors are not tight, which means the building cannot be properly heated, no place to wash clothes except in bunk house, and no dry room. Contractor is all the time trying to get one man to do two men's work. He frequently hires a man to sling rigging and when he gets him on the job tries to get him to attend the chokers as well."

The smashing of the Winnipeg General Strike in June 1919, and the trials of the strike leaders which followed, elicited sympathy and financial help from loggers in the Alberni Valley.
In December 1919 twenty-one men at the Bainbridge Lumber Company and thirty-four men at the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company contributed to the Winnipeg defense fund. The LWIU also became the focal point for social activities. On 15 August 1919, for example, a "Hard Time Ball" was held at a hall in Port Alberni. The dance was organized by the union and attracted a large crowd. Appropriately, "the men were nearly all attired in rough working clothes while the ladies confined themselves to the plainest of garments." The salad days of the LWIU in the Alberni Valley, however, did not last for long.

On 20 January 1920 the loggers of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company again went on strike and this time the dispute was prolonged and was met by stiff resistance on the part of the company. The strike was precipitated by a wage cut that had become effective on the first of the year. Moreover, the company had introduced a widespread piece-work and bonus system. The union had five demands: the restoration of the wage scale paid from 7 August 1919 to 1 January 1920, company recognition of the union and a closed union shop, the reinstatement of a worker who had been dismissed for union activism, a minimum wage of $5 per day for every worker, and the restriction of bonus and piece work to buckers and fallers.

When the strike dragged on into February, the Port Alberni Board of Trade offered to serve as mediators in the dispute. On the morning of February 15, a committee from the Board of Trade met with union representatives and in the afternoon they spoke with H.A. Dent, head of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company. APL had secured a number of strikebreakers but not enough to operate
at near full capacity. Dent refused to discharge these men but noted that he was willing to rehire most of the men who were on strike. The union men would not work with the strikebreakers.\textsuperscript{31} The loggers were also reluctant to return to work without the protection of a closed shop. Further, after the strike the previous August, the company had rehired all the strikers, but one foreman had "made it so miserable in numerous ways for them they had to quit."\textsuperscript{32} During February 1920 the union had added the dismissal of this foreman to their list of demands. The union and APL were not close to a settlement and despite the intervention of the Port Alberni Board of Trade the impasse continued.

In Port Alberni the strike passed peaceably. As the local newspaper commented, "visitors hardly realize that there is a strike on unless they are told."\textsuperscript{33} On the 16th of February the loggers held a smoking concert that was socially and financially successful. The evening of pep and humour included songs, recitations, jokes, boxing bouts, and stories. The chairman of the meeting was a logger and former police chief in Port Alberni.\textsuperscript{34} Throughout the strike the citizens of Port Alberni were not hostile to the union; if anything they were supportive of their goals.

On 10 March 1920 the strike was settled and the loggers returned to work. The Alberni Pacific Lumber Company agreed to take back any of the strikers required over and above the force employed during the tie-up. None of the union's demands were met.\textsuperscript{35} After the men were back at work the company began to discharge union activists. APL was not direct in dismissing
union men but rather used a number of pretexts, such as the need to reduce crew size because of a curtailment in production, in paring their work force. Union activists, however, were the first to be let go.36

Not all Alberni Valley companies were as hostile to the LWIU as the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company. A small outfit, the Coal Creek Lumber Company, operating some fourteen miles from Port Alberni on the canal, was, according to one of its workers, "100 per cent organized, good union foreman, first-class cook, good board at $1.50 per day. Good accommodation. New bunkhouse being built, top bunks being taken out. Bath house and wash room will be built as soon as possible. Five minutes walk to work. This is no place for stool-pigeons or anyone opposed to the O.B.U."

The union also made inroads into the camps of the Bainbridge Lumber Company, achieving some improvements in camp conditions.38

The failure of the APL strike in early 1920, however, was the beginning of the end for the LWIU in the Port Alberni district. In concert with their counterparts throughout the coastal region, the logging companies had developed an effective strategy to stymie the union drive, and the momentum of the organization began to flounder. As the union weakened, internal factional divisions rose to the surface and pro-IWW sentiment became more prominent. IWW supporters, such as H. Allman, began to voice resentment against the bureaucratic structure of the union developing in Vancouver. Allman wanted the workers in the camps to retain complete control over LWIU affairs, not to relinquish authority to officials in Vancouver: "Yes, fellow-workers, on the job is the place to strike; on the job is the
place to educate your fellow-slaves; on the job is the place to run your union; and from the job is the place to get your officials." Ernest Winch, secretary of the LWIU and a non-logger, did not find such comments reassuring. The weakness of the LWIU was very evident by 1922. Membership had dropped and strike activity was non-existent. In early 1922 the piece-work wages of fellers and buckers at the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company were reduced from 70 cents per thousand board feet to 60 cents per thousand. The British Columbia Federationist, expecting a struggle, warned that "in all probability there will be trouble in this camp before long, and all lumber workers are requested to keep away from this camp until further notice. Give these men an opportunity of making the company kick through with day wages." The Federationist was whistling in the dark. The loggers at APL did not respond to the reduction in wages and the new rates were imposed without opposition.

To understand the disintegration of the LWIU in the Alberni Valley and in the coastal region it is necessary to examine events which occurred in Vancouver and to explore the behaviour of the logging companies in response to the rise of the LWIU. The different reactions of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company to the strikes in August of 1919 and early 1920 offer an important clue to the timing of the beginning of the demise of the LWIU. British Columbia logging companies had been apathetic to the burgeoning LWIU in the spring of 1919, but by the end of the year they had coordinated a number of devices to thwart the initiatives of the union. The effective implementation of these
plans drove the LWIU from the coastal forests of British Columbia. In the summer of 1919 the logging operators began to react to the union drive and moved to address some of the complaints of the workers. Many camp operators gave their men a ten percent wage increase on July 1, and others followed suit in August. In the middle of July the B.C. Loggers' Association met and discussed at length the matter of furnishing the workers with bedding and bunkhouse services. The idea was greeted favourably and the secretary was instructed to get prices on bedding and blankets. Operators were not overly concerned and they underestimated the strength of the union. The settlement of the APL strike in August 1919 was made in this context.

The coastal logging companies did improve the conditions in their camps. Agents of the Provincial Board of Health visited the logging camps and in 1917, reported that while climatic conditions and water supply at camps were almost ideal, these natural advantages were nullified "by the lack of observance of the primary rules of sanitation in camps." In 1919 the report of the Board of Health noted that "one of the most generally needed and very necessary wants of the logger is some manner of having his blankets laundered.... The average logger possesses only one pair. These he gets laundered every time he quits and goes to town ... consequently very often his blankets become infested with vermin." By 1924 the situation had changed and the chief sanitary inspector boasted that "in the matter of sanitary camps for our industrial workers ... British Columbia stands pre-eminently the best on this continent, if not in the world." Hjalmer Bergren, a militant union organizer in the
1930s, began working in logging camps in 1925: "Conditions when I started in the camps weren't too bad; there was all kinds of food. The main problems were safety, wages and individual rights."46

It soon became apparent to the operators that minor wage adjustments and the beginnings of improvements in camp conditions were not sufficient to stem the union tide. In the fall of 1919 the members of the Loggers’ Association decided to make a firm stand against the LWIU and in early January 1920 they declared their unequivocal adherence to the principle of the open shop. The following statement was posted in every logging camp in the coastal region:

1. No discrimination whatever will be made against any man nor be permitted to be made on account of his citizenship, his political affiliation, his religious beliefs or his affiliations or non-affiliation with any lawful organization whatsoever.

2. The Open Shop principle is adopted and will be maintained. This means that no discrimination will be shown either by employer or employee against any man who is law-abiding and who is capable and willing to fill his job.

3. Suggestions from employees will be welcomed at all times and will receive our full consideration, but no suggestion or demand originating outside of our own camp will be considered.

4. Men who do not honor and respect the laws and constituted authority of the Dominion of Canada and the Province of British Columbia and who are not ready to uphold such laws and authority at all times are not desired, and will not be tolerated in the camps.

5. It is the wish and the expectation of the management to work at all times in perfect harmony and good fellowship with the men, and to meet them in a spirit of equity and fairness.
6. It is hoped that all employees will recognize the fairness of the foregoing principles and will give cheerful approval thereto, so that the relations between employer and employee will be those of real co-workers and result in accomplishments of which all may feel proud and, furthermore, will be to the material betterment of all concerned.  

Wrapped in professions of patriotism and the harmony of capital and labour, the logging companies gave notice that they would have no truck with a union. The second strike at the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company began just as the Loggers' Association announced its commitment to the open-shop principle. Thus APL, a member of the association, was firm in resisting the union.

The Loggers' Association was resolute in its position and implemented measures to ensure its enforcement. In the autumn of 1919 the association established the Loggers' Agency at 313 Carrall Street in Vancouver. The agency was an employment office which placed men at jobs in the associations' logging camps. At least 75 percent of coastal loggers were hired through this office, and in the first year of its operation the agency placed 14,995 men in camps. For the year ending 30 September 1922, 17,391 men were shipped to logging camps from the agency. By closely monitoring its work force and hiring only men it felt were acceptable, the Loggers' Association, through the agency, was able to keep union activists out of their logging camps.

Private employment agencies were not popular in British Columbia. The provincial Royal Commission on Labour of 1912-1914 closely examined the operation of private employment agencies. The private agencies found jobs for workers for a fee, but
workers complained about the costs of the service and the unsatisfactory information provided in these offices. Further, organized labour accused the employment offices of being hiring halls for strikebreakers. The commissioners also found the activities of the employment agencies reprehensible and recommended public regulation of employment agencies, or, preferably, government operation of all employment offices. Finally, in 1919 the Employment Agencies Act was repealed and it became illegal for any firm or agency to receive any fee of compensation for providing workers for employers or for furnishing information regarding employment. The provincial government set up its own employment bureaux to distribute labour to employers. The Loggers' Association was undaunted by the new regulations governing employment agencies, for the law exempted the setting up of agencies that provided jobs and information at no cost to workers. The members of the Loggers' Association were free to put up money to establish their own employment agency as long as there was no charge to potential employees. This is what the logging operators did, and since association members operated the majority of the camps in the coastal region, most woods workers were forced to appear at the office on Carrall Street in order to obtain a job.

Herbert J. Hicks was installed as the first manager of the Loggers' Agency. He ran an extremely efficient operation which satisfied his employers and angered union organizers. Hicks had come to Vancouver in 1910, and in July of that year he opened a small employment agency, handling farm hands and general
labourers as well as loggers. In March 1913 Hicks outlined his business credo:

My experience is that the success of an employment office depends on getting the employer the man he wants. If I do not get the right kind of men I will not get any more business from that employer. So when a man rings up and says he wants a certain kind of man we don't send him any other. If I don't send him what he wants he goes elsewhere. 50

In Herbert J. Hicks the Loggers' Association found an experienced man with a healthy business attitude, a man who was capable of putting the ideals of the association into practice. The LWIU, in its own way, also recognized the abilities of Hicks:

The lumber barons could not have selected a better man for their purpose. There never existed anything in human form so lacking in manly principles as this human leech, who had formerly earned his living by selling jobs to hungry slaves at $1.50 or more each. In all respects this thing—it cannot be called a man—fulfilled all the requirements of the association. 51

The key to the success of the agency was its exhaustive and well-organized filing system that kept records on coastal loggers: "The working record of any man is there and his card is his history. Any card can be located in an instant." 52 When an employee left a job in the woods the employer filled out a report form and sent it to the agency. This form noted the reason the man left (quit, laid off, discharged), his work ability (good, fair or poor), his speed (rapid, medium or slow), and his conduct (reliable, unreliable or agitator). The employer also noted whether the man was temperate and if he would be re-employed by the same company again. 53 Any suspicion of union sympathy was dutifully recorded, and considering that there were over 18,000
names on file by 1922, the agency was able to keep union activists away from the logging camps through its complete control over hiring.

The union estimated that by 1922, 1500 members of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union had been blacklisted and forced to leave the region to get a job. 54 These were the best organizers that the union had. The LWIU appealed to the government to close the agency and "compel all lumber companies who require help for their camps to either hire their men from the Government Employment office or through this Union." 55 The loggers called the agency and the blacklist system an "obnoxious stain upon the name of 'British fair play,'" 56 and secured legal opinion which supported their contention that it was a breach of the law for this company to engage in business as employment agents. 57

The government did nothing. The Loggers' Association was approached by government officials with the request that loggers be hired through the public Employment Bureaux, but the operators preferred to maintain their own office and did not wish "to merge their identity with the general mass of employers." 58 The issue was not pursued. In the summer of 1922, it became known that Hicks had been hiring men for companies that were not contributors to the Loggers' Agency and that he had been charging for this service. The government did not act on this illegal activity. The agency thereafter hired men for non-members at no charge and refunded fees already collected for such services. 59 Had the government been resolved to curtail the activities of the agency, this breach of law would have provided an opportunity.
The Loggers' Agency was the cornerstone of the employer's attack on the union in the years after 1919. By effectively blacklisting union sympathizers, agitators were kept out of the camps and those who did find work were forced to be very circumspect in revealing their position on unionism. Not only did complete control over hiring destroy the LWIU, it also allowed operators to maintain the open shop through the 1920s. It was not until the 1930s that a changed historical context revived the union movement, but even then the blacklist system served the logging operators well. For companies like the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company and the Bainbridge Lumber Company monetary contributions to the Loggers' Agency were wise investments that paid substantial returns in social control.

Members of the B.C. Loggers' Association implemented other procedures in the 1920s to manage their workers. The association attempted to create a common front in setting a wage schedule so as to avoid workers playing one company off against another. However, the effect of the blacklist had depleted the number of skilled loggers to such an extent that there were not enough workers available for bush work even in the economically-depressed years of 1921 and 1922. The union estimated that 25 percent of the traditional logging work force had been eliminated by the blacklist and that many "green hands" were being hired. Thus, members of the Loggers' Association found it difficult to unite over wages and often independently raised wages to attract workers.

Coastal logging operators also experimented with industrial councils, piece-work systems, and bonus plans. The Capilano
Timber Company set up an industrial council where representatives of management and labour decided certain issues relevant to plant operations. Wages were exempt from discussion. Bloedel, Stewart & Welch used the council plan as well. The Bloedel operation at Myrtle Point also expanded the piece-work system beyond falling and bucking, a common practice, to include all logging jobs. Another company introduced a bonus system whereby loggers were paid an additional sum of money if production exceeded a level set by the company.  

Throughout the 1920s logging companies experimented with schemes to increase production, secure workers' loyalty to the firms and deflect initiatives for unionization. While workers were at times allowed to participate in minor decisions, the ultimate power rested with management; no threats to traditional managerial prerogatives were tolerated.

The LWIU had all but disappeared by 1923, but its vigorous activities in 1919 had prompted changes in the logging industry. Camp conditions had been upgraded and employers began to pay more attention to the complaints of their workers. But perhaps the most significant occurrence in the years after 1919 was the drawing together of logging operators in the face of labour unrest. The creation of the Loggers' Agency and the success of the open-shop drive exhibited the strength of capital, and the experiments with corporate welfarism and piece-work wages demonstrated the resiliency of the operators in quickly responding to unforeseen circumstances. The coastal logging operators emerged from the disruptive years of 1919 and 1920 as a more cohesive unit and with more sophisticated tools to manage their employees.
Sawmill workers in the coastal region were hardly affected by the activities of the LWIU. These workers were isolated in small mill towns and were dependent on individual lumber companies. The LWIU made little attempt to organize sawmill workers and conditions in the plants remained the same. In the mill of the Bainbridge Lumber Company a worker was injured in 1925, due to unsafe conditions, and the mill hands began to discuss organizing and contemplated strike action. Those involved in these tentative plans were peremptorily dismissed.\textsuperscript{63}

The sawmill companies, however, began to apply the techniques of corporate welfarism to their operations. In 1922 the B.C. Lumber and Shingle Manufacturers' Association instituted the Lumbermen's Educational Classes. These classes, which were designed to improve lumber-grading and tallying standards in coastal sawmills, also offered mill workers an opportunity for promotions within their plants. By attending classes and obtaining a certificate the worker qualified himself for the less physically-demanding jobs of grader or tallyman and for the possibility of obtaining a lower management position.\textsuperscript{64}

The Port Alberni District Lumbermen's Educational Class was not organized until 19 September 1927, when 51 employees from the area's larger mills convened and elected officers.\textsuperscript{65} On 5 May 1928 the class held its first annual banquet; 125 members and friends attended the dinner and watched the presentation of 18 grading certificates.\textsuperscript{66} The educational classes were extremely successful in winning the loyalty and raising the morale of a significant portion of mill workers. Employers were
careful to remind workers of the beneficence of the companies in providing this service:

Deserving of praise, however, as the student may be who attends these classes for the experience he may gain thereby, he must remember that but for the men who make them possible his task of lifting himself out of the rut would be much more difficult.

Not inappropriately have these educational classes been called the "Lumbermen's University." In them, without any fees or red tape, a student can acquire a standing amongst his fellow workers at an easier and cheaper rate than we know of in any skilled occupation.67

Also associated with the educational classes in the Alberni Valley were the formation of the APL Employees' Association and the beginning of annual summer picnics for employees sponsored by the company and the company union. These innovations were spearheaded by the same employees who participated in the educational classes, and the occasion of the educational class banquet in 1928 was used to form the APL Employees' Association.68 The employee committee that organized the first APL picnic at Sproat Lake on 27 August 1927 included many of the men who joined the educational class a year later. The picnic attracted 400 men, women and children.69 In 1928 the summer picnic was organized by the APL Employees' Association, and it too was a huge success.70

The company picnics masked another current of labour activism, more slow-moving but still effective in readjusting relations between workers and employers. While independent unionism made no inroads into Alberni Valley sawmills during the 1920s, political agitation at the provincial level brought minimum-wage and hours-of-work laws aimed specifically at sawmill
workers. The local member of the provincial legislature was the driving force behind the legislation. The laws were intended to improve the conditions of white mill hands and to reduce the proportion of "Asiatics" employed in the plants. The campaign illustrated that political success could be built on appealing to the white working-class electorate and that the sawmill workers were politically worthy of note, even in the 1920s.

The labourite legislative program of the 1920s had its roots in the more radical socialist platforms of activists in the Alberni Valley in earlier years. The socialist cause had been mooted in the district for many years. On February 6, 1909, W.H. Marcon, an insurance agent and realtor, spoke to the Alberni Farmers' Institute, urging farmers to cooperate with workers in the fight for the public ownership of utilities and electoral reforms, such as the introduction of initiative and the referendum. A mock parliament organized by the community in 1911 had Marcon and A.J. Bind, a furniture store owner, representing the socialist point of view. In the spring of 1913, a series of debates was sponsored by Knox Church, ostensibly to discuss religious issues. However, the sessions took on a socialist and political-religious hue. F.J. Lighter, a jeweller and socialist, spoke on "The Case of the Workingman Against the Church," and Reverend A. O'Donnell replied with "The Case of the Church Against the Workingman."

In May 1913 Wallis W. Lefaux, a Vancouver realtor and lawyer, came to Port Alberni and organized a local branch of the Socialist Party of Canada. There were thirteen members at the inaugural meeting of Local 80 of the SPC and the officers elected included A.I. Bind,
F.J. Lighter, and E.A.D. Jones, a building contractor. The Port Alberni socialists brought in speakers and were active in municipal politics. Their links to loggers and sawmill workers were tenuous if they existed at all. The Port Alberni socialists were primarily small businessmen who were respected in the local community and actively associated with their political foes in organizations such as the Board of Trade, the Retail Merchants' Association, and the Masons.

During the First World War labourism emerged as the standard bearer for socialist-minded people in the Alberni Valley. The 1916 provincial election had witnessed a deep split between the radical Marxists in the SPC and those, like veteran SPC legislator Parker Williams, who joined the reform-minded Liberals to oust the anti-labour Conservative regime. After 1916 and through the 1920s, the centre-right wing of the old Socialist Party forged new institutional expressions in independent labour parties and even within the Liberal party. In the Port Alberni district Richard J. Burde was able to carve out a successful political career representing electors inclined towards democratic legislative measures as the proper means of securing a better life for working people.

Burde, born in Michigan in 1871, came to Canada as a child. He began working as a newspaperman and plied his trade with newspapers in Winnipeg, Minneapolis, Chicago, Bellingham, Victoria, Nanaimo, and New Westminster. During the Yukon gold rush he founded, with his brother Frank, the White Horse Tribune. Frank Burd went on to become the publisher of the Daily Province in Vancouver, while, in 1907, Richard Burde moved
195

to Alberni and established the Alberni Pioneer News. Burde became mayor of Port Alberni in 1913, retaining the post until 1915, when he joined the army and went overseas. In Europe he won the Military Cross for valor on the Somme and achieved the rank of major. Burde returned to Port Alberni and in a byelection in January 1919, he was elected to the provincial legislature. Before the War Burde had been a staunch Conservative and the president of the local Tory association. In 1919, however, Burde ran as an Independent-Soldier candidate and was outspoken in advocating pro-labour legislation. In 1924 he was elected as an Independent-Labor candidate and he was instrumental in establishing a local branch of the Independent Labor Party in Port Alberni in 1926. By the 1930s he was sympathetic to the goals of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, at the end of a remarkable trajectory from right to left on the political spectrum.

Major Burde led the battle for labour legislation in the 1920s. In February 1920 he introduced a bill to provide for an eight-hour day in British Columbia lumber mills. He defended his measure in the legislature, arguing that because of the high percentage of Orientals in the sawmills white mill workers were not able to unionize and secure proper consideration for themselves. He felt that the general public did not understand prevailing industrial conditions like the ten-hour day and pleaded that industrial progress proceed along humane lines.

The sawmill companies reacted with alarm to the Burde measure and a deputation of lumbermen was dispatched to meet with the provincial cabinet. The mill operators argued that a federal
commission was currently examining the question of labour hours and that it would be unwise to take provincial action when a federal announcement was pending. The lumbermen felt that an eight-hour law was only workable if it applied in all provinces in Canada. The Liberal government agreed with the operators and the bill was given a six-month hoist; the matter would be re-addressed in half a year's time. Angry at the postponement, Burde claimed that the delay would be viewed by sawmill workers as a tightening of the "grasp of the capitalistic hand upon the throats of the worker." He predicted an angry response from the 17,000 provincial sawmill workers and a decrease in lumber production because of the restlessness of workers.

Over the next years Burde introduced variations of his original bill. The lumber industry claimed that an eight-hour work day would cripple their operations and that workers were not complaining but were glad to work the extra hours. Burde branded the criticisms of the industry as a "lot of junk" and attempted to clarify the bill's meaning: "There seems to be an opinion that if this bill passes no man can work overtime, or if accidents happen the industry will be affected. As a matter of fact, employers and employees, under the bill, could get together and arrange for extra hours of work and provide for emergencies." Burde commented that most provincial industries already operated on an eight-hour day and that the lumber industry "stands unique as a slave-driving industry." A final argument in favour of the bill was that it would reduce unemployment among the white population:
Your manufacturer is not sincere when he says he wants to do away with unemployment. There are men outside the factory gates who are looking for work and men inside working excessive hours. Take two hours a day off your Oriental workers in the lumber industry and give it to the whites who seek work and you will have settled the unemployment problem. 82

Finally, in 1923 the bill was passed. It was to come into effect on 1 January 1925. 83 The B.C. Lumber and Shingle Manufacturers' Association met on 30 December 1924 to discuss the new law and they decided to comply and operate on the basis of an eight-hour day for six days per week. 84

With the achievement of the eight-hour work day, Burde began to press for a minimum wage law. But the bill that he introduced, aimed at the sawmill industry, was primarily intended to exclude Chinese and Japanese immigrants from employment. On 1 November 1926 a minimum wage of 40 cents per hour became mandatory in British Columbia. Since the majority of white mill workers were already being paid at least 40 cents per hour, the new legislation had little effect on them. The expected decrease in Chinese and Japanese employment did not occur and in 1929 there were only two percent fewer "Asiatics" in the lumber industry than in 1926. Quite inadvertently, Burde had done all mill workers a favour; Oriental workers, previously employed at lower rates, now received the minimum wage. In 1929 the Supreme Court of Canada made a decision which effectively declared the minimum wage law ultra vires. 85

In the years after the Great War, working-class protest in the forest economy of the Alberni Valley was voiced in unions, strikes, and political activity. Loggers acted in concert with
their fellow woods workers in the coastal region in 1919 and 1920 to improve conditions and to establish a union. While camp conditions were appreciably improved, coastal logging operators were able to subdue quickly and ruthlessly challenges from workers in logging operations. Sawmill workers, on the other hand, eschewed strikes and unions, embracing instead company-dominated employee associations. However, the concentrated mill worker population in the valley was able to secure the support of local political organizations in the 1920s, and legislative reforms in hours of work and minimum wages for sawmill workers were achieved by the diligence of a Port Alberni labour politician. The party organization was directed by small businessmen, but mill workers yielded enough political clout to make themselves heard in Victoria. In 1929 the Alberni Valley forest industry work force was divided between mill workers and loggers, each group operating in its own sphere. Despite being employed by the same firms, loggers and mill workers had found no common ground.

- 198 -
Notes


2. Ibid., p. 184.

3. Ibid., p. 187.

4. Ibid., p. 175.


6. Western Lumberman (September 1917), p. 36.

7. Pacific Coast Lumberman (February 1921), p. 25.


10. Western Lumberman (October 1924), p. 38.


15. Ibid., 14 October 1911.

16. Ibid., 14 October 1911.

18. **British Columbia Federationist**, 23 July 1917; 17 August 1917; 26 April 1918.


20. **Pacific Coast Lumberman** (August 1919), p. 34.


41. *Pacific Coast Lumberman* (August 1919), p. 34.


51. *British Columbia Federationist*, 13 April 1923.


57. Letter from J.M. Clarke, 13 November 1922.


60. *British Columbia Federationist*, 13 April 1923.
61. **British Columbia Federationist**, 13 April 1923; Minutes of Meeting of Directors of B.C. Loggers' Association, 3 October 1922, UBC, COFI Papers, v.1, f.1.


63. Kaye Dukowski, "Bainbridge Mill and Railroad Show," typescript essay, 1981, Alberni District Historical Society Archives, f.8.9. It should be noted that British Columbia saw and shingle mill workers engaged in many strikes in the years from 1917 to 1919. Major confrontations occurred in March, June, and July of 1919, strikes that were lost and dissipated the enthusiasm of mill workers for unionization. Thus, when the LWIU sought to include sawmill workers within its scope in January, 1920, the organizing campaign was a failure. **British Columbia, Annual Reports of the Department of Labour, 1917-1920; The Labour Gazette, 1917-1920; Western Lumberman (July 1919), p. 37; British Columbia Federationist, 9 January 1920; 12 November 1920.** The strikes and organizational work among mill workers were restricted mainly to the Lower Mainland and had no impact in the Alberni Valley or the northern interior.

64. **British Columbia Lumberman** (June 1936), pp. 30 and 74; (July 1936), pp. 23, 24, 25, and 30.

65. **British Columbia Lumberman** (November 1927), p. 56.


69. **Port Alberni News**, 31 August 1927.


73. **Port Alberni News**, 29 March 1913; 2 April 1913; 19 April 1913; 26 April 1913.
74. *Port Alberni News*, 24 May 1913; 31 May 1913; *Western Clarion*, 7 June 1913.

75. Richard J. Burde, PABC, vertical file. The different spelling of the last name of Richard Burde and the rest of the Burd family was apparently due to a "typographical error that stuck" after it was made about 1900.


78. Ibid., (May 1920), p. 41.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.


84. Minutes, Lumber Branch, B.C. Lumber and Shingle Manufacturers' Association, 30 December 1924, UBC, COFI Papers, v.5, f.3.

Towards Class Cohesion: Loggers, Mill Workers, Community and the IWA in the Alberni Valley

The 1930s witnessed changes in class and conflict in the Alberni Valley. In the early years of the decade unemployment was the major question around which workers gathered, but with the revival of the local economy after 1933, unionization again became a significant issue. Led by communists and with headquarters in Vancouver, loggers initiated a major strike in 1934. Sawmill workers in the valley became more militant and launched a drive for a union in the years after 1935. By the end of the decade both loggers and sawmill workers were united in the International Woodworkers of America, confronting employers together in a union that, with the support of the larger community, would break the open shop in the 1940s.

The collapse of the lumber industry in the early 1930s brought unemployment for loggers and sawmill workers in the Port Alberni district. For many, communists provided a cogent interpretation of the ailments of society and a direction for social change. On August 29, 1931, a communist organizer from Vancouver held a meeting in the Eagle's hall, Port Alberni, and established a branch of the National Unemployed Workers Association. About thirty men joined the association, mainly Scandinavian sawmill workers, and J. Field was installed as organizer and R.D. Tassie, a local chiropractor, became president. Rumours were soon abounding that the NUWA was about to instigate a strike at the APL mill, but the NUWA restricted
its activities to organizational work and soliciting funds from
the local population in aid of strikers at Fraser Mills on the
Lower Mainland. Over the winter the organized unemployed even
built their own hall in Port Alberni. Labour was supplied by
unemployed workers, and local citizens and businessmen
contributed cash and building material. Saturday night dances
and whist drives were held to raise further funds, and in
January 1932 the building was ready for occupancy. The hall
served as a meeting place and as a locale for spirited debates
among the city's workers.

In early February the NUWA organized its first
demonstration and 34 people marched through the city streets,
confronting first the mayor of Port Alberni and then the
government agent in Alberni. They demanded work within 48 hours
or the cash equivalent for married men, as well as work for
single men. A second parade on March 3, 1932, made similar
demands and outlined the national concerns of the NUWA: a
shorter work week, no deportation of foreigners, release of
class-war prisoners, repeal of Section 98 of the Criminal Code,
cessation of interest payments on government bonds, and non-
contributory, state unemployment insurance.

In early March, there was also an ill-conceived attempt to
establish a branch of the Agricultural and Lumber Workers
Industrial Union, an organization closely linked to the NUWA, in
the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company sawmill. The APL mill had
closed down on the 20th of February due to market conditions,
the first shutdown since 1925, and planned to start up on March
3rd. On the morning that the mill was due to open a member of
the LWIU approached the mill management and demanded a ten percent increase in wages for workers. He was promptly dismissed. Pickets went out to guard all roads leading to the mill, but few workers coming to work honoured the lines. Upon arrival at the plant the men were called to a meeting by management. Ross Pendleton, the plant superintendent, addressed the gathering and announced that a strike vote had to be taken before the mill would re-open: it was up to the workers to decide whether the plant would resume operations or not. The men on the day shift voted 146 to 17 to return to work and the majority of the crew entered the plant and began producing lumber. A three-man delegation, none of whom apparently worked in the mill, waited upon Ross Pendleton, but Pendleton said that he would only deal with men employed in his plant. He refused to reinstate the men who were on strike and the man who had demanded the wage increase. For the next two days picketers tried unsuccessfully to dissuade the men from going to work. A strike vote among the night shift had voted 74 to 3 against job action. 7

On Sunday, March 6, 1932, the APL Employees' Association held a meeting to discuss the strike agitation. The meeting passed a resolution that stated that since over 90 percent of the mill work force was unaware of the machinations of the LWIU, the men at work dissociated themselves totally from the strikers. The meeting also voted that the men who had walked out should not be reinstated. There were sixteen strikers from the day shift and eleven from the night side, all of whom were Scandinavians, and the employees' association felt that twenty-
seven out of some three hundred men should not disrupt the operations of the plant. The strike and the union at the APL sawmill had been handily defeated. On March 14, due to market conditions, the company announced a new work schedule; hereafter the mill would only run two five-hour shifts daily. When the world lumber trade continued to deteriorate, the mill closed for four months during the summer of 1932. When it re-opened on September 26, only half of a crew, 78 men, were put back to work. In these circumstances, no union could hope for success at APL.

By the summer of 1932 a second, non-communist association had been formed in the Port Alberni district. The Alberni and District Workers' Association, with headquarters in Alberni, began to represent the unemployed before civic and provincial authorities. The secretary and guiding light in the new association was John Benjamin, district organizer for the revived Socialist Party of Canada. In July and August of 1932 the Alberni and District Workers' Association was beset by internal political squabblings, probably initiated by supporters of the Communist party. On August 8, Benjamin was forced to resign his position, and later in the month the Alberni and District Workers' Association voted to affiliate with the NUWA, which changed its name to the Alberni District Protective Association in 1933. Over the next few years the association organized marches, attacked the manner in which municipal and provincial relief were administered, fought for funds for the dispossessed, organized meetings to discuss the merits of happenings in the Soviet Union, and argued for the
The organization was peaceable and orderly, maintaining a high profile in all issues concerning the unemployed.

But the most dynamic element in the Alberni Valley working class during the early 1930s was the logging work force. The recrudescence of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union under communist leadership, and the revival of the coastal lumber trade after 1933, ushered in a vigorous union drive in the woods. While defeats were more common than victories, the loggers were able to establish a beachhead for unionism and found the International Woodworkers of America, a union that after a faltering start became a dominant force in the British Columbia forest industry. As in the years 1919 and 1920, union agitation in the Alberni Valley was intimately connected to the broader coastal struggle that had its base in Vancouver.

The core concerns of the loggers in the 1930s were union recognition, wages, safety in the bush, and the elimination of the blacklist system. The death rate of loggers in the woods had become a public issue. On December 13, a hook tender at a Great Central Sawmills logging operation was killed at work. An inquest held at Alberni deemed the death accidental, but the coroner's jury added a rider to their report which cast suspicion on the behaviour of the logging operators in industrial deaths: "we feel that the logging companies are not taking stringent enough precautions to protect the lives of their employees." Major Burde, the Independent member for Alberni, took the issue up in the legislature a few months later:
There are altogether too many casualties in the logging industry and juries invariably return a verdict of accidental death. Forty inspectors are sent out by the minister of agriculture to chase the codlin moth. A lawyer is sent by the attorney-general to deal with every man who sells booze after hours. But no lawyer is provided for the widows of loggers who are killed in the most hazardous occupation in the province. When a man goes before a coroner's jury and tells the truth about deficient equipment, he is blacklisted in every logging camp in the country.14

The Lumber Workers Industrial Union began re-organizing in Vancouver in 1928, but it was four years before the union made its presence felt in the Alberni Valley. Company operatives, labour spies, and police detectives monitored the activities of union organizers closely. In March 1932 the LWIU issued strike dodgers from its Vancouver office to dissuade loggers from going to the Campbell River area where labour-management relations were tense, and logging operators were clearly concerned with the new threat. One lumberman "thought that it would be a good idea if a number of [police] officers in loggers' clothes could proceed to the camps, in order that evidence could be obtained against the ringleaders for intimidation."15 The police and forest industry employers were closely aligned in preparing a response to the fledgling LWIU.

Excluding the abortive attempt to launch a strike at the APL sawmill in the spring of 1932, the first initiative for union organization in the Alberni Valley occurred in the fall of 1933, when loggers at Camp 3 of the Sproat Lake Lumber Company struck for reasons that would have been familiar to any logger working in the bush fifteen years earlier. They complained of
poor camp conditions (unsatisfactory food, filthy bedding), the high price of board ($1.20 per day), and low wages in comparison to other outfits operating in the district. The strikers wanted these concerns remedied as well as no discrimination against the men because of strike involvement and the recognition of their LWIU camp committee. The demands were presented to management and a strike date was set for Friday, September 8, 1933. Management agreed to all of the demands except the ten percent wage increase, a demand which the workers agreed to withdraw. Expecting to go to work on Monday, the men spent the weekend away from camp. However, management chose the weekend to discharge a faller and his two partners, and when the men returned to work on Monday they refused to begin work until the men were reinstated. This management declined to do and the LWIU members went on strike, despite the protest of some Camp 3 loggers. The dispute went on for seven days but the terms of the settlement are not known.16

While the LWIU was active during 1933, the efforts of organizers did not achieve real results until 1934, when the coastal lumber economy returned to full production. Over the Christmas shutdown in 1933 members of the LWIU from various coastal camps met in Vancouver to draw up a wage scale for the coming year.17 The schedule was presented to the logging operators, but at a meeting of the B.C. Loggers' Association on January 23, 1934, it was the unanimous opinion of the operators "that the present is not an opportune time to change existing wage schedules and that the best policy is to await developments."18 They did not have to wait long. By the end
of January loggers at Bloedel camps near Campbell River were out on strike for a fifteen percent wage increase, a minimum wage of $3.20 per day, and the recognition of union camp committees. The 1934 Vancouver Island loggers' strike had begun.19

In the Port Alberni district the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company met the threat of an industry-wide walkout by increasing the wages of all mill workers and camp employees by ten percent on the 1st of February. The company stated that the raise was due to increased shipments to the United Kingdom, but the existence of the LWIU no doubt prompted the wage hike.20 Management at Great Central Sawmills pursued a different tack, securing a "gentlemen's agreement" with their workers whereby employees would not take job action pending the results of an investigation into the loggers' strike which had been started by the provincial government.21

The strike did spread to the Alberni Valley. On Tuesday, February 20, 1934, the 97 loggers at Camp 4, APL, quit work after taking a strike vote. Sixty-one voted to strike, four voted against, thirty-one did not vote, and one ballot was spoiled. That Tuesday evening a meeting was held in the camp and a Department of labour representative tried to persuade the men to remain at work, but his efforts were unsuccessful. The following morning the loggers from Camp 4 began arriving in Port Alberni and about fifty of their number proceeded on to Vancouver. This left about twenty married men still at Camp 4 and thirty strikers in Port Alberni.22

On February 21, Glen Lamont, a LWIU organizer from Vancouver, spoke to a crowd of strikers and other lumber workers
in the Port Alberni Workers Hall. He noted that the strike grievances were not necessarily directed against the APL but were a protest against general conditions in the lumber industry throughout the province. The demands of the Camp 4 strikers which were presented to management were identical to those presented by loggers at Campbell River. The preamble to the request for companies to adhere to the LWIU wage scale read as follows:

Whereas the prices of timber have increased steadily during the past months and
Whereas the production of timber was increased during the same period and
Whereas the cost of living is continually increasing and
Whereas our wages have continually been cut since the fall of 1929 with only a small insignificant increase in comparison with the rise in prices and production in the summer of 1933
Be it therefore resolved that we, the undersigned employees of your camps, demand that the following wages and general conditions be put into effect immediately.

Thereafter followed a list of the wage rates demanded for each job performed in the woods. Further demands included no Sunday work, time and a half for overtime, recognition of the union camp committees, abolition of the blacklist, reinstatement of all discharged men, and supplies in the commissaries to be supplied to the men at cost price plus freight charges. 23

Other Alberni Valley camps followed the lead of Camp 4. On February 23, the crew at Camp 3, APL, held a strike vote. The majority decided to remain at work but the rigging crew walked out despite the verdict. Four days later another vote was taken and the men at Camp 3 joined the strike. At Great Central
Sawmills, a vote on February 28 went in favour of the strike and logging operations ceased immediately. By the end of February there were no loggers working for either the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company or Great Central Sawmills, the two largest outfits in the valley.24

The logging operators and the provincial government were not idle as the loggers' strike spread through Vancouver Island camps. Full-page advertisements in provincial newspapers on the first day of March presented the employers' perspective. Besides giving figures on log prices and camp wages, the advertisement made much of the fact that the LWIU was led by communists. Prosperity in British Columbia was predicated on access to the lumber markets in the United Kingdom and a major competitor in this market was the Soviet Union. The advertisement portrayed the LWIU as agents of Moscow:

What British Columbia loses, Russia gains.... Why is it that, coincidental with the reduction of Russia's imports of lumber into Great Britain, strike agitation became active in the logging camps of British Columbia? ... It must be obvious to thinking people, that the ultimate effect of the present logging tie-up, if it continues, will be the transference of payrolls, and expenditures for supplies, etc., from British Columbia to Russia.25

While the Soviet Union was a major competitor, the Russian bogey did not undermine the union's position. Speed-up, death in the woods, higher wages to reflect rising log prices, and the right to union representation remained the main issues of the strike.

The provincial government, for its part, was involved in the strike at an early date, investigating the reasons for the disruption. On February 27, 1934, Adam Bell, the Deputy
Minister of Labour, released a wage schedule for the coastal logging industry that he had devised in an attempt to settle the dispute. Although the wages were lower than LWIU demands, they were higher than those that prevailed in the industry at the time. The schedule set a minimum wage of $2.45 for an eight-hour work day and Bell proposed the curtailment of Sunday work and no employer discrimination against those on strike. The logging companies quickly accepted the terms laid down by Bell. The LWIU was leery of the Bell proposals. The minimum wage was lower than that requested by the union, there was no provision for the recognition of the union by employers, and there was no suggestion to abolish the B.C. Loggers' Association's hiring agency which effectively maintained the blacklist system.

At this juncture public support was with the strikers. A series of articles in the Vancouver Sun by columnist Bob Bouchette in late February and early March were extremely critical of the logging operators. A representative of the federal Department of Labour expressed the feelings of the population in British Columbia: "There is absolutely no question that the operators of our timber industry have foolishly withheld the increases in wages that the greatly enhanced price of logs has warranted for from 12 to 18 months past and a large majority of our best citizens would favour the employers being taught a sharp lesson...." In the first week of March representatives of the LWIU and the six main logging companies involved in the strike met in Vancouver to negotiate an end to the dispute. The Alberni
Valley sent eight LWIU delegates to the meetings, five from APL and three from Great Central Sawmills, while M.A. Grainger spoke for the APL company and Bruce Farris represented the owners of Great Central Sawmills. On March 6, 1934, the operators verbally agreed that there would be no discrimination against the strikers but on the issue of recognition of the camp committees the negotiations met a temporary stumbling block. Five operators agreed to the union request, but Grainger was not in favour of the LWIU-dominated camp committees and wanted to work out a system where camp committee executives would be elected monthly in order to limit LWIU control and increase the efficacy of company machinations. Grainger asked that the meeting be adjourned so that he could communicate with APL owners in London. The union, which had been accused of being subservient to Moscow, made much of Grainger's need to consult "rich capitalists in London." On the following day Grainger agreed to recognize the camp committees as the spokesmen for the workers.

Having achieved a verbal agreement from the operators that there would be no discrimination against strikers and that camp committees would be recognized, the LWIU negotiating committee met with the Minister of Labour and the Deputy Minister of Labour on March 8, 1934, to discuss the government's proposed wage scale. No operators were present. The LWIU informed the government representatives that the Bell proposal, with its $2.45 minimum wage, would have to be ratified by the men on strike. Over the next few weeks the loggers on strike voted
on the Bell wage scale and the results showed an overwhelming defeat for the plan.\(^{30}\)

The logging operators reacted peremptorily to this turn of events. They withdrew their support for the LWIU camp committees and the Bell wage scale, and ended negotiations with the union. The primary reason for the new company position was the fact that since March 7, the logging operators had been trying to organize the Coast Loggers Union, a company union made up of men willing to cross the picket lines. The companies were unduly optimistic that this association would take hold in the coastal forest industry and thus felt confident in taking a strong stance against the LWIU.\(^{31}\)

The failure of the strikers to accept the terms of the agreement reached in early March was the turning point in the dispute. The employers retreated to an intransigent position, and the provincial government, which had attempted to appear neutral, was less reluctant to throw its weight behind the employers after its wage proposal had been rebuffed.

The striking loggers, numbering between 2,000 and 2,500, remained confident that they would prevail. Tag days in Vancouver raised funds to sustain the strikers. In Port Alberni strikers were housed in the Workers Hall and a cookhouse was set up in a nearby cafe to feed the men. Picket lines were maintained but there was little activity there. As a local editor noted, "It is one of the most peaceable and orderly strikes that has ever been known."\(^{32}\) Morale remained high and on April 6, the Port Alberni strike committee promoted an evening of boxing bouts in the community hall featuring boxers
and would-be boxers from the district's logging camps. Throughout March 1934 the companies and the government were content to wait and see what developed.

By early April the situation was becoming more serious. The effects of the shutdown were beginning to have a significant impact on the provincial economy, and businessmen began to pressure the government to put an end to the dispute. Robert Cromie, owner of a major Vancouver newspaper, sent a telegram to Premier Pattullo demanding government intervention, and he promised support "on any reasonable action you take to have [a] showdown ... so long as the matter is cleaned up." Further, logging operators such as APL and Great Central Sawmills that operated sawmills were beginning to fear a log shortage. Throughout most of the strike the sawmills had continued to operate, using stockpiled logs. The closure of the logging camps had shut off the supply of logs and operators worried that their milling operations would soon be forced to stop producing lumber. The strike had to be broken.

The government and logging operators chose Great Central Sawmills as the venue to instigate a showdown with the strikers. With the help of police and strikebreakers Great Central Sawmills resumed logging operations on April 12, 1934. It appears that the provincial government was behind staging the confrontation at Great Central Lake. In a letter dated 14 May 1934, B.M. Farris, vice-president of Great Central Sawmills, wrote to the Attorney General to thank him for the manner in which the police behaved during the incident. The letter mentions George Pearson, the Minister of Labour, and begins as
follows: "When we found that we could resume our logging operations here, as we were requested to do by the Honorable George Pearson, Minister of Lands (sic), we found that we could only do so with Police assistance for the protection of the men and our property." The letter concludes: "We very much appreciate the firm and definite stand you took."

The decision to re-open Great Central logging operations was made on Monday, April 9, 1934. About thirty loggers were recruited in Vancouver to act as strikebreakers. The Loggers' Association had been active in forming the Coast Loggers Union, and it was these men who were enlisted to break the picket lines at Great Central Lake. On Tuesday evening the LWIU headquarters in Vancouver received word that strikebreakers were going to be sent via the Nanaimo boat the next morning at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday morning some six to seven hundred men set up pickets at the Canadian Pacific Railway pier in an attempt to prevent the strikebreakers from embarking. With police protection the strikebreakers got on board without incident, and after arriving in Nanaimo, travelled by automobile to Great Central Lake, escorted by a dozen policemen. They met pickets at Great Central Lake but there was no violence, just name-calling. The strikebreakers then proceeded up the lake to Camp 3. Four other men were transported to the camp in a seaplane chartered by the company and the next day twelve more men were taken to the camp by the same means.

The strikebreakers at Camp 3 went to work on the morning of the 12th and were met by a squad of strikers that had trekked through the forest to halt production. The strikers succeeded
in stopping the work of the strikebreakers, who were protected by two constables, but with the arrival of five more policemen work was resumed. Later, to avoid confrontation, the strikebreakers were sent to the lunchroom while the strikers were loaded onto company boats and transported back down the lake. A few days later the police again drove off a number of strikers who were disrupting the work of fallers and buckers. By April 19, Great Central Sawmills had ninety loggers at work, about half the normal crew size. Workers were paid according to the Bell wage scale.

The LWIU, recognizing the significance of the employers' breakthrough at Great Central Lake, launched a mass-picketing campaign to stop the work in progress. The plan to concentrate on Great Central was arranged in Campbell River on April 18; organizers hoped to draw 300 strikers from Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland to the work site. On the morning of the 19th about 200 men gathered in Parksville, but only 12 had come from Vancouver. The loggers, mainly from Campbell River, then began to march on foot and take turns in truck relays across the Island to Port Alberni. They arrived in Port Alberni that evening and began an arduous journey through the rugged country to Great Central Lake.

On Monday, April 23, 1934, a delegation representing the LWIU at Great Central lake met with B.M. Farris, the vice-president of the company, and demanded that all men then employed be dismissed and that the company recognize the camp and union committees. Farris refused to consider these demands but consented to allow the delegation to speak to those at work
that afternoon. Not surprisingly, the pleas of the strikers were not received sympathetically by the hardened strike-breakers. The strikers then returned to their camp in the woods, where many remained until the end of the month. Except for sporadic harassment, the strikers were orderly and peaceable, no doubt in part reflecting the presence of a large contingent of provincial police.42

The breakthrough at Great Central Lake precipitated the disintegration of the strike. Other camps began re-opening, first with small crews, and then building up to full production levels. Early in May the employees of Camp 3, APL, held a meeting in Port Alberni with a view to ending the strike.43 A full-page advertisement by the fourteen major Vancouver Island logging companies in local newspapers promised the strikers their jobs back at wages ranging from $3.20 to $6.50 per day, but "as to camp committees, no logging business could operate successfully under camp committee dictation."44 On Sunday, May 6, 1934, some seven hundred loggers in Vancouver voted two-to-one to end the strike, and on Monday morning the exodus of loggers from Vancouver to Island camps began. The Alberni Pacific Lumber Company camps re-opened on May 9th, and the Alberni Valley lumber industry was back in business.45

In weighing the outcome of the strike it seems the loggers had won little. To be sure, while the strike was disintegrating the provincial government had set an acceptable minimum wage for the logging industry. The order became effective on April 27, 1934, and all employees in the logging industry west of the Cascade Mountains were thereafter paid 40 cents per hour for an
The minimum wage did not affect the majority of the loggers who were already paid more than $3.20 per day. Further, the strikes had won neither the recognition of union camp committees nor the abolition of the employers' hiring agency.

Tactically, there were weaknesses in the strike. The walkout had begun in the Campbell River district and had spread through Island camps, and the LWIU leadership had neither initiated nor expected the outbreak. The leadership would have preferred to wait until more organizational work had been accomplished before embarking on job action. The decision of the leadership and the membership to reject the settlement offered by the companies and the provincial government in early March was also a highly questionable tactic.

In assessing the strike the LWIU leaders noted five failings. They saw the major mistake as the failure to involve sawmill workers in the dispute. The mills had been able to run for some time while the loggers were on strike, using logs imported from the United States and logs stockpiled in the mill waters. During the dying days of the strike the Port Alberni loggers had pleaded with local longshoremen to "refuse to handle lumber produced by camps using 'scab' labour." The request fell on deaf ears. The Port Alberni waterfront workers, who had been militant and had held fast in the 1923 longshoremen's strike, had organized a company union in March 1934 and had dissociated themselves from their radical Vancouver union centre. There was no solidarity between the Alberni Valley longshoremen and the loggers. Besides failing to enlist the
support of sawmill workers and longshoremen, the LWIU also recognized that a bigger collection of foodstuffs and funds was needed prior to a strike, and that the union had to coordinate militant, swift action to defeat scab herding, such as had taken strikebreakers to Great Central Lake. Two final self-criticisms were that few attempts had been made to enroll women in the drive and that there had been a lack of educational work during the strike, especially in providing speakers to boost the morale of the loggers. With the end of the strike the LWIU moved to establish secure bases in logging camps and lumber communities.

Employers countered by embarking on a campaign of discrimination, blacklisting, and intimidation to stem union initiatives. The first employer offensive was at the Elk River Timber Company camps near Campbell River, when in late May 1934 three union men were dismissed. Provincial police and special police were stationed in the vicinity to prevent LWIU organizers from entering the camps and to keep the operation running. As one Campbell River logger commented:

A spirit of the utmost intimidation prevails in the camp. The superintendent has instituted a reign of terror in which men are being fired for as much as swearing at a scab. The special policemen are in one bunkhouse separate from the loggers and patrol the camp night and day. "No Trespassing" signs are everywhere, in fact, Camp 8 resembles more a "concentration camp" in Nazi Germany than a logging camp in British Columbia.

The Alberni Pacific Lumber Company was also militant in ridding its camps of union organizers. In June 1934 a number of men in Camps 4 and 5 who had been active in the strike were dismissed. Camp 4 was in the process of being disbanded and the
men were being transferred to Camp 5, and though the two camps possessed a majority of union men, no job action was taken. LWIU organizers were kept from visiting the APL camps and were forced to remain in Port Alberni, communicating with loggers only when they came to town. All union work in the camps had to be done discreetly and labour newspapers were distributed secretly.

On the evening of September 19, 1934, two LWIU organizers succeeded in visiting Camp 5, APL, rowing the twelve miles up the Alberni Canal from Port Alberni. Within five minutes of their arrival a meeting was in progress, and despite the fact that the earlier camp committee had been discharged, attendance was good. They spoke on happenings in Vancouver, collected union dues, and took donations towards the expenses of sending LWIU delegates to the Soviet Union. The meeting also elected a literature agent, and "a unanimous vote was taken to support him in case there was any opposition from the management." The LWIU organizers were confident of the union's strength in Camp 5.

The company responded decisively. On October 2, 1934, the camp literature agent was dismissed and the next day three more men were discharged for attempting to foment a strike over the dismissal of the literature agent. The loggers remaining in camp approached the management and demanded that the four men be reinstated and that the LWIU newspaper be allowed to circulate freely in the camp. The foreman rejected the remonstrations of the men, and on the morning of the 10th of October the loggers held a strike vote. Ninety-nine men voted to strike; fifty-five
to continue working. That afternoon APL general manager, M.A. Grainger, arrived by airplane from Vancouver. He decided to close the sawmill, ignore the strikers, and hire a new crew for Camp 5. On Thursday, October 11, 1934, the strike/lockout began.56

There was no disagreement about the reason for the dispute. A published company statement read as follows:

After the loggers' strike last spring the Company took back every man who wanted to return, without exception.... The men came back on the clear understanding that there were to be no camp committees or organization meetings in camp. If the men wanted to have meetings they could hold them up town at Port Alberni....

A short time ago, two organizers slipped into Camp 5 after dark, held a meeting, appointed a camp organizer and published a statement that the Company knew all about this and was taking no action. When the Company discharged this organizer other meetings were decided upon and the Company taking further action, a strike meeting was held....57

The Alberni Pacific Lumber Company also accused the LWIU of singling out their operation for union activities. APL was short of logs, and had been since the spring strike, and job action at Camp 5 forced the sawmill to cease operations immediately.58

However, the strike was less the result of a union strategy than the concatenation of circumstances and the tough stance taken by a militant employer.

The company convincingly defeated the strike. Early in the dispute the company and the union sought to win the sympathies of the APL sawmill workers. The LWIU quickly printed an open letter to all mill workers and distributed it in Port Alberni. The letter outlined the loggers' reasons for striking and
concluded: "we appeal to you at least to remain neutral in this struggle, or better still, to throw your whole weight behind a fight that is actually your fight too!" The tactic of M.A. Grainger was more effective. On the evening that the strike began the company held a meeting to which it invited all of its sawmill employees and the business people of Port Alberni. Three hundred people attended, and APL speakers convinced the mill employees to remain at work.

The company then re-opened Camp 5 using strikebreakers. On Monday, October 15, 1934, the camp resumed operations, albeit with a small crew. Extra police were brought in to protect the strikebreakers. By the end of the month there were 96 men at Camp 5, and despite difficulties in finding experienced fallers and buckers, which meant less production and heavier expenses, logs were produced. The sawmill had re-opened on the 18th of October with a full crew of 350 men. Camp 3, the other APL logging show, did not support the strike, and the two camps provided sufficient logs to keep the mill in operation. The company ignored the strikers.

The LWIU appealed to the provincial government to intervene, but George Pearson, the Minister of Labour, chose to accept the company's analysis of the situation: there was no strike going on and thus there was no need for government involvement. The government ignored the strikers. The strategy of the company and the government was extremely successful; the strike was called off on the 2nd of December, the strikes were defeated, the union was embarrassed, and the weakness of the LWIU was exposed. The strike had been hopeless from the
The presence of the provincial police was a crucial element in the strike. The strikers were "almost unanimous in placing the responsibility for the loss of the strike upon the Pattullo government and its government bulls." The APL Employees' Association, made up of sawmill workers, was thankful for the arrival of the extra police in Port Alberni, which they felt "certainly cleared up a very ugly situation as strikers were holding demonstrations and trouble would certainly have ensued had not such action been taken." M.A. Grainger was also pleased with the role played by the provincial police and sent a letter to the Attorney General congratulating him on the good judgment and efficiency displayed by the police force. The police were important actors in the conflict, and evaluations of their behaviour reflected the perspectives of the sides involved.

The defeat of the strike at Camp 5, APL, deflated union activities in the Alberni Valley, but in Vancouver and other coastal camps the struggle continued. The forceful response of employers to the strikes of 1934 meant that leading union organizers were unable to secure work in logging shows. The ruthless operation of the blacklist system kept agitators from coastal camps. In January 1935 the LWIU launched an anti-blacklist campaign. The union wanted the government to oversee hiring in the forest industry and to set up an employment agency, with union representation, that would operate in a non-discriminatory manner. In the House of Commons, A.W. Neill, Independent member for the Alberni area, spoke out against the
blacklist system. Neill graphically explained to parliament just how the system could work:

A man may have some words with his immediate boss, a small straw boss, in the dull grey light of the morning when he is rather stiff in the joints. They are both grouchy; their boots are tight; they had been working in the wet the day before; they have a few words and one says something to the other. They are both perfectly good men, but either the boss fires the worker or the worker beats him to it and says he will quit anyhow. A card is then filled out by the foreman when the man leaves, and this card gives his pedigree. One of the questions asked on the card is: "Would you employ this man again?" If he says no, that man's chances of a job in that industry—not with that employer merely but in that industry in British Columbia—is damned for all time. That is the curse of the situation.66

The logging operators were not intimidated by the offensive against the blacklist system, for the provincial government reassured them that the efforts of the LWIU to close private employment agencies would be resisted.67

LWIU militants changed their affiliations in the years after 1934. The new Comintern policy of 1935 led to the disbandment of the Workers Unity League, redirecting communist-dominated unions like the LWIU back into the mainstream of the trade union movement. Accordingly, on December 29, 1935, LWIU delegates from coastal sawmills and logging camps met in Vancouver and endorsed a resolution favouring the merging of the LWIU with the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union, which was affiliated to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners.68 In March 1936 the membership voted on the proposal and it passed by an overwhelming margin. At first glance, the formation of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union of British
Columbia seemed like a positive step. The lumber workers' union was weak in 1936 and the added support of the American Federation of Labor, to which the union was now affiliated, would strengthen the bargaining position of the forest industry workers. Further, membership in the AFL would enhance the legitimacy of the lumber workers' union and help deflect the virulent anti-communist rhetoric which was hurled at the LWIU.

It soon became evident, however, that the new affiliation would not last long. The Vancouver Trades and Labour Council fought to restrict the representation of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union in their assembly; they feared the spreading of the Red influence. At the convention of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners in Lakeland, Florida, in late 1936, the attitude of the traditional unionists was exposed. The carpenters wanted to maintain the craft nature of their organization and refused to grant voting rights to the unskilled and semi-skilled lumber workers. The Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union was relegated to a second-class status within the carpenters' brotherhood.

In the spring of 1937 the vice-president of the United Brotherhood dismissed the lumber and sawmill workers as "a bunch of communists," and the large craft union ordered several Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union locals to turn over members such as painters, truck drivers, and engineers to the appropriate craft unions.

The lumber workers recognized that their presence within the carpenters' brotherhood and the AFL was untenable and began meeting amongst themselves to discuss disaffiliating from the two organizations. The alternative was to join the recently-
formed Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). In July 1937 lumber worker union delegates from British Columbia and the American Pacific Northwest voted to affiliate with the CIO, and this decision was later ratified by the membership. The new CIO union was called the International Woodworkers of America, and British Columbia was District 1 in the international union.\(^73\)

As well as engaging in continental trade union politics, British Columbia forest industry workers also took job action in 1936. From March to May coastal loggers were involved in a series of struggles for better wages and against the discrimination by companies in discharging men. Cowichan Lake was the main focus of the disputes, but ten other logging camps also went on strike. Although some wage increases were gained, no recognition of camp committees was won.\(^74\) The Alberni Valley was unaffected by the struggles, except for a short strike at Sproat Lake Sawmills.\(^75\)

The provincial government maintained a hostile attitude to the lumber workers' union. George Pearson, Minister of Labour, continued to make distinctions between so-called bona fide trade unions and less desirable organizations. The lumber workers' union, according to Pearson, was not a "safe and sane" union,\(^76\) and its leadership was of the "type that is killing the interests of the working man."\(^77\) The government had no interest in furthering the aims of the lumber workers within the union structure they had chosen.

In the mid-1930s union activity in the Port Alberni district was almost non-existent. As one logger at Camp 5, APL, noted in December 1935: "Union activities are what you might
call dead, although there are a number of union men in camp." 78
At the first meeting of Local 2784 of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union, the Port Alberni branch, on July 12, 1936, the president could boast of only 50 members in the local. 79 One year later the membership had risen to 70, 80 and when Local 2784 became Local 1-85 of the International Woodworkers of America in August of 1937, the number of members was about the same. 81

Despite the meagre level of activism there was a positive note to developments in the Alberni Valley. In 1935 a women's auxiliary of the lumber workers' union was formed in Port Alberni. Over the next years it maintained a membership of twelve women, and as well as organizing whist drives, visits to the hospital to chat with lumber workers, Christmas socials for children, and summer picnics, the women also felt that it was important to "get together and organize to be able to fight side by side with the men against the speedup, for higher wages and better all round conditions." 82

The firm stance of Great Central Sawmills and the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company during the 1934 loggers' strike took the wind out of the sails of union activity in Alberni Valley logging camps, and in the second half of the 1930s union agitation in the Port Alberni district was concentrated in the sawmills. The new direction was not the result of a carefully planned program emanating from union headquarters in Vancouver, but reflected changing circumstances in the mills, a larger local sawmill work force, the emergence of a specific issue to unite workers, and the unintended repercussions of government legislation designed to control the behaviour of trade unions in
British Columbia. During the 1934 loggers' strike it was evident that the union had neglected to address the needs of sawmill workers, and in the following years mill hands were welcomed into an organization that had been dominated by loggers. More and more reports from sawmill labourers were printed in the union newspaper and organizers began to achieve a measure of success in the lumber plants.

The main concern of the sawmill workers during the 1930s was speed-up, the move by management to increase the amount of work done by the men. In 1933 the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company constructed a large plant in Port Alberni and in the following year Bloedel, Stewart & Welch began production at their new facility in Port Alberni. Both of these plants were powered by electricity throughout, designed to achieve the utmost in efficiency, and equipped with modern machinery. The increased use of mechanization meant that workers were forced to keep the pace set by the machines. Management had control over adjusting the speed of the work process by manipulating the rate at which the wood passed through the conversion plant, and for the owners the faster lumber was produced, the happier they were. Mill hands were forced to maintain the highest speed humanly possible. Coupled with traditional measures of managerial discipline, such as the exhortations of foreman and the threat of dismissal, the increased use of machinery made heavy demands on workers.

The men in the mills became disenchanted. A Bloedel employee noted in 1935 that:
the main grievance is the speed-up, for which this mill is famous.... The foremen are the slave-driving type and hound the men continually....

As long as the machinery is running, the men have to be on their jobs, and since the mill is started about five minutes before the whistle blows at starting time and is kept running about the same length of time after the quitting whistle goes, the company steals somewhere around half a day each month from every member of the crew.84

An employee of the APL mill voiced similar complaints about machinery and foremen in 1936:

One day while there were two of us taking lumber off for the pony edger, the men next to us were pulling off slabs. The lumber was coming so fast that we could not keep up with the chain. Now let me tell you, we were working real hard when the boss came around, but still could not take off all that we should have, before it passed us. The boss, seeing this, sure got nasty about it, telling us to work still faster than we did, but in no nice manner either.85

The speed-up in the sawmills gave the men a particular grievance for discussion and a new realization of potential benefits in unionization.

In December 1937 the provincial government inadvertently gave a boost to local organizers when it passed Bill 94, the Industrial Disputes Conciliation and Arbitration Act. While elements of organized labour in British Columbia slammed the legislation as "an absolute negation of all the rights and privileges that trade unions have enjoyed ... for over 70 years," the IWA local in Port Alberni took advantage of the new legislation to launch an organizing drive among sawmill workers.86 Just as John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, had taken advantage of President Roosevelt's
1933 trade union legislation to increase UMWA membership by claiming that the President endorsed unionization, so too did Port Alberni IWA organizers present Bill 94 to sawmill workers as an expression of the government's support of the union, thereby giving their cause an air of legitimacy.87

The government's intentions were rather more complex. George Pearson, the Minister of Labour, drafted the bill as a response to the burgeoning CIO. Pearson felt that as soon as labour conditions "stabilized" in the United States, the CIO and the AFL would make strenuous efforts to organize British Columbia workers. "During this attempt," he argued, "industry will suffer tremendously in this Province, through strikes, unless we are prepared to meet it."88 Bill 94 was designed to provide a bureaucratic framework to manage industrial disputes with the least possible effects on the economy. Provisions for compulsory conciliation and arbitration before any strikes or lockouts could occur were the main features of the bill. The measure also gave sanction to unions which registered with the government and followed specific regulations, but, as Port Alberni sawmill workers were to learn, the bill was vague in defining what role was to be played by the government when an industrial plant was organized for the first time.89

In May 1938, Local 1-85 organizers began an aggressive campaign to entrench the union in the major Port Alberni sawmills, interpreting Bill 94 as giving workers the legal right to organize.90 With the help of organizers from the United Mine Workers of America in Nanaimo and from the British Columbia Coast District Council of the IWA, activities were stepped up in
the first week of June. On Saturday, June 4, 1938, the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company and the Bloedel, Stewart & Welch Company struck back. Seventy-five men were dismissed from the two mills. The companies gave the business recession as the reason for laying off the men. The union cried discrimination, as most of the men discharged were labour activists. That evening a joint committee of workers from the two mills met, and the sixty people present decided to fight and nominated bargaining committees for both mills "which were immediately placed on the prepared lists calling for the signatures of the employees to endorse its selection. When the meeting adjourned all present, despite the fact that it was Saturday night, immediately went out on the streets on the signature campaign."91

The next day delegates from the mills, accompanied by a UMWA organizer, interviewed Labour Minister Pearson in Nanaimo, and according to the union, Pearson told them that if a reasonable number of men, say 100, applied for a conciliator, the Department of Labour would appoint one. Pearson later changed his position and demanded that a petition containing the signatures of 51 percent of the mill workers before the government would intervene. While union organizers sought the signatures of mill hands, the companies circulated a petition calling on the men to sign as follows: "We, the undersigned, will not join any union affiliated to the CIO."92 Without the involvement of the government to supervise a fair vote on unionization, the IWA had no chance for success. Pearson, however, refused to intervene. Adam Bell, the Deputy Minister of Labour, discussed the situation with the employers and not
the workers, even though the union claimed to have secured the signatures of over fifty percent of the 650 mill workers in the two plants, and the government accepted the perspective of the companies.\textsuperscript{93}

Local 1-85 was not alone in its struggle with the lumber companies and the provincial government. At rallies held in Port Alberni, the president of the provincial IWA, an organizer for the Pacific Longshoreman's Union, a CCF member of the legislature, a Trades and Labour Congress delegate, and a local minister all spoke on behalf of the union. The mayor of Port Alberni also promised to give mill workers whatever assistance he could.\textsuperscript{94} The \textit{B.C. Lumber Worker} stated that the Port Alberni City Council, the Board of Trade, and the Young Liberal Association requested that a government commissioner be sent in to investigate the situation.\textsuperscript{95} The claim seems probable; after all, the men were not demanding unionization, but rather a fair, democratic vote to determine whether a union was supported by a majority of the mill workers. The struggle of the sawmill workers and the IWA had become a community struggle, but the government did not respond and the organization of Port Alberni mill hands became a dead issue.

The importance of the behaviour of the provincial government in industrial disputes, in providing police protection for strikebreakers and in passing legislation that affected workers and employers at the workplace, might have been expected to precipitate working-class victories in the political arena in the Alberni Valley. The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation emerged as the major opposition party in the area
during the 1930s, but internal disputes imported from other parts of Canada weakened the appeal of the CCF to valley workers. In the provincial elections of 1933, 1937, and 1941 the region sent Liberals to Victoria. In 1933 and 1937 the Port Alberni district was part of the Alberni-Nanaimo riding that elected George S. Pearson to the legislature.

To a large extent the success of the Liberals was due to the dissension within the local CCF organization. In 1935 there was a deep division among Comox-Alberni CCF clubs in the nomination of a candidate for the federal election. The provincial executive of the CCF in British Columbia was forced to dispatch a two-person investigation committee to try and sort out and ease the rivalries. In 1937 another serious dispute arose over the decision made by the CCF not to act in a "popular front" with the communists. After a series of charges were exchanged between the various factions within the CCF, the executive of the party in British Columbia held trials to settle the claims of the disputants. A.M. Stephen, who wanted the CCF to collaborate with the communists in a "popular front," was expelled from the party. Despite the verdict, Stephen decided to run in the 1937 provincial election under the CCF banner. The CCF did not run a candidate against Stephen, but neither did it give him any organizational or financial assistance. Even with the confusion Stephen drew 3,129 votes in the election, only 487 fewer than the victor. In 1941 the CCF candidate was Charlie Michell, who had been chairman of the Port Alberni joint bargaining committee during the attempt in 1938 to organize the sawmill workers, and he was narrowly defeated by the Liberal
candidate. Michell was a sawmill worker and the first direct representative of this group of workers in politics at the provincial level.

In 1939 circumstances for workers in the mills and in the woods were in one sense similar to what they had been ten years earlier. In the sawmills management had control over wages and the production process. As a mill worker noted in 1939:

> Things are just beginning to break around here, a wage cut has been pretty general throughout the APL mill, not all at once, because the workers might wake up, but in spasms....

> An automatic rig called a "stool pigeon" has been installed in Bloedel's. The carriage operates a pendulum in the office and when there is a holdup on the carriage the boss in the office knows immediately. I believe this "stool pigeon" has been installed to intimidate the workers all over the plant as it can be placed on any machine.

In the woods the blacklist system still operated efficiently, despite the protests of A.W. Neill in the House of Commons and the IWA in British Columbia. Loggers continued to face death on the job; in 1938, 63 British Columbia loggers were killed while at work. In 1939 the IWA was weak in British Columbia, most of its resources having been lost in the bitter, protracted dispute at the Blubber Bay quarries on Texada Island.

The forest industry companies appeared firmly in control of their work force on the eve of World War II. The 1934 loggers' strike had compelled the logging companies to polish their tarnished image. The chairman of the board of directors of the B.C. Loggers' Association boasted in early 1937 that:
the improved relations between the logging industry and the public, and the better feeling that now prevails between the employee and employer in the industry ... is the direct outcome, to a great extent, of the adoption of a well planned policy of public relations which was urged following the labour disputes in 1934.... It is my opinion that the logging industry today stands as high in public regard as any other commercial activity in the Province. This is in marked contrast to the general public disfavour towards the industry which existed a little more than a year ago.105

In the Alberni Valley the major sawmill concerns continued to provide educational classes in grading and tallying for their employees which held out the promise of upward mobility within the firm and explained to employees the difficulties the companies faced in the world lumber trade.106 The logging companies coordinated safety drives to make loggers conscious of dangers in the bush,107 while at the same time pushed for production and provided only what was necessary in the way of safe equipment. The companies also sponsored, in conjunction with loyal employees, yearly parties at Christmas and picnics in the summer. On August 12, 1939, 1,100 employees and family members travelled to Parksville to attend a large APL picnic.108 Thus, through a mixture of paternal benevolence, appeals to loyalty, threats of dismissal, the push of foremen, and the support of the provincial government, forest companies produced lumber and expanded their operations during the 1930s.

Yet at a deeper level the situation had changed in the Alberni Valley. Sawmill workers and loggers were acting together with the IWA, and they had support from other people in the community, people such as members of churches, trade
unionists, and politicians. Further, in Charlie Michell a local activist had emerged to lead workers in union and political circles. Port Alberni organizations were no longer merely appendages of institutions based in Vancouver. The success of the lumber firms in the 1930s had created a large, cohesive working class in the Alberni Valley, and by 1939 a more defined, united class formation had emerged. The Port Alberni district had become a divided society with workers confronting large employers in a mature industrial setting. The fragmentation of earlier years had been largely overcome.
Notes


4. Ibid., 11 February 1932.

5. Ibid., 3 March 1932.


8. Ibid., 10 March 1932.

9. Ibid., 17 March 1932.

10. Ibid., 22 September 1932; 29 September 1932.

11. Ibid., 21 July 1932; 28 July 1932; 11 August 1932; 1 September 1932.

12. Ibid., 16 March 1933; 23 March 1933; West Coast Advocate, 27 April 1933; 10 August 1933; 17 August 1933; 21 September 1933; 5 October 1933; 18 January 1934; 22 February 1934; 1 March 1934; 9 March 1934.


16. Port Alberni News, 14 September 1933; West Coast Advocate, 14 September 1933; 21 September 1933; 12 October 1933; Strike report, Canada, Department of Labour, PAC, RG 27, T2967, v.356, f.104.


19. Strike report on Vancouver Island loggers' strike of 1934, Canada, Department of Labour, PAC, RG 27, T2970, v.359, f.23.


21. West Coast Advocate, 22 February 1934.

22. Ibid., 22 February 1934; 1 March 1934.

23. Ibid., 22 February 1934.

24. Ibid., 1 March 1934.


26. LWIU Minutebook, Note on meeting of negotiating committee and boss loggers, 7 March 1934, UBC, Harold Pritchett-IWA, District Council No. 1, Papers (hereafter Pritchett Papers), v.1, f.1; West Coast Advocate, 8 March 1934; B.C. Lumber Worker, 25 April 1934.


29. LWIU Minutebook, Report on negotiating committee meeting with Minister of Labour, 8 March 1934, UBC, Pritchett Papers, v.1, f.1.

30. B.C. Lumber Worker, 19 March 1934.

31. Hugh Thornley to F.E. Harrison, Department of Labour, 22 March 1934, PAC, RG 27, T2970, v.359, f.23.


33. West Coast Advocate, 5 April 1934.

35. B.M. Farris to Gordon Sloan, 14 May 1934, PABC, GR 1323, B2302, f. L-125-3 (1933), emphasis added.

36. Ibid.


38. B.C. Lumber Worker, 25 April 1934; Myrtle Bergren, Tough Timber, pp. 46-47; West Coast Advocate, 12 April 1934; B.C. Lumber Worker, 14 April 1934; "History of Logging Strike," typescript report, 1934; S.G. Smith to G. Pearson, 12 April 1934, PABC, GR 1323, B2302, f. L-125-3 (1934).


40. West Coast Advocate, 19 April 1934.

41. S.G. Smith to G.S. Pearson, 12 April 1934, PABC, GR 1323, B2302, f. L-125-3 (1934).

42. West Coast Advocate, 26 April 1934; "History of Logging Strike," typescript report, 1934.

43. West Coast Advocate, 3 May 1934; "History of Logging Strike," typescript report, 1934.

44. West Coast Advocate, 3 May 1934.

45. Ibid., 10 May 1934.


47. West Coast Advocate, 22 February 1934.

48. B.C. Lumber Worker, 5 June 1934.

49. West Coast Advocate, 26 April 1934.

50. B.C. Lumber Worker, 5 June 1934.

51. General meeting of the B.C. Loggers' Association, Minutes, 22 May 1934, UBC, COFI Papers, v.2, f.2.

52. B.C. Lumber Worker, 5 June 1934; 19 June 1934.

53. Ibid., 19 June 1934.

54. Ibid., 31 July 1934.

55. Ibid., 29 September 1934.
56. West Coast Advocate, 11 October 1934; B.C. Lumber Worker, 13 October 1934; Strike report, Canada, Department of Labour, PAC, RG 27, T2975, v.365, f.227.

57. West Coast Advocate, 11 October 1934.

58. Ibid., 11 October 1934.

59. B.C. Lumber Worker, 13 October 1934.

60. West Coast Advocate, 18 October 1934; B.C. Lumber Worker, 30 October 1934.

61. West Coast Advocate, 18 October 1934; 25 October 1934; Port Alberni News, 6 December 1934; B.C. Lumber Worker, 30 October 1934; 10 November 1934; 22 December 1934.


63. Telegram from B. Maloney to the Honourable Gordon Sloan, 23 October 1934, PABC, GR 1323, B2302, f. L-125-3 (1934).

64. M.A. Grainger to the Honourable Gordon Sloan, 6 November 1934, PABC, GR 1323, B2302, f. L-125-3 (1934).

65. B.C. Lumber Worker, 7 January 1935.


68. B.C. Lumber Worker, 4 January 1936.

69. Ibid., 22 August 1936.

70. Ibid., 16 December 1936.

71. Ibid., 16 June 1937.

72. Ibid., 2 June 1937.

73. For a discussion of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union and the early years of the IWA, see Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam, One Union in Wood: A Political History of the International Woodworkers of America (Madeira Park, B.C., 1984), pp. 30-74.

74. B.C. Lumber Worker, 14 March 1936; 1 May 1936; 30 May 1936; Myrtle Bergren, Tough Timber, pp. 90-97; Strike report, Canada, Department of Labour, PAC, RG 27, T2985, v.376, f.44.
75. West Coast Advocate, 14 May 1936.
76. B.C. Lumber Worker, 9 November 1935; 28 March 1936.
77. Ibid., 25 November 1936; 16 May 1936.
78. Ibid., 21 December 1935.
79. Ibid., 18 July 1936.
80. Minutes, Annual Convention, B.C. Coast District Council, July 10th and 11th, UBC, Pritchett Papers, v.1, f.8.
81. B.C. Lumber Worker, 1 September 1937; 15 September 1937.
83. Port Alberni News, 12 October 1933; West Coast Advocate, 12 October 1933; British Columbia Lumberman (March 1935), p. 69; B.C. Lumber Worker, 16 March 1935.
84. B.C. Lumber Worker, 18 October 1935.
85. Ibid., 9 December 1936.
86. Memorandum presented to the British Columbia cabinet by the executive of the TLC, 24 June 1938, PABC, GR 1222, v.1222, v.142, f.7.
89. Pearson to Pattullo, 30 September 1937.
90. B.C. Lumber Worker, 10 May 1938; Strike report, Canada, Department of Labour, PAC, RG 27, T3005, v.397, f.92.
91. B.C. Lumber Worker, 7 June 1938; West Coast Advocate, 9 June 1938.
92. B.C. Lumber Worker, 14 June 1938.
93. Ibid., 14 June 1938.
94. Ibid., 21 June 1938.


98. British Columbia, Statement of Votes by Electoral Districts, 1928-1945 (Victoria, 1946?).

99. Ibid.

100. B.C. Lumber Worker, 21 March 1939.


102. B.C. Lumber Worker, 10 January 1939.

103. Ibid., 17 January 1939.

104. Ibid., 4 December 1938; Myrtle Bergren, Tough Timber, pp. 112-122; Grant MacNeil, The IWA in British Columbia (Vancouver, 1971).


108. West Coast Advocate, 17 August 1939.
"Line Up or Roll Up"; The Lumber Workers Industrial Union in the Prince George District

On a Friday evening in June 1912, South Fort George businessmen held a banquet for the railway contractors building the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway along the Upper Fraser River. One of the contractors chose the opportunity to address the gathering and speak on the labour problems which were then threatening the construction program. He spoke of what he called the "won't work" element who followed construction camps and incited lawlessness among workers. The contractor advised the local citizenry to keep these undesirables from the area, and later the local newspaper editor promised "the order of foreign agitators known as 'I Won't Works' a warm reception should they attempt to spread their perniciousness doctrine of lawlessness here.... The law-abiding industrial class will receive a warm welcome to the town, but the disturber, the bootlegger and the tinhorn will find this climate decidedly unhealthy should he attempt to ply his trade in South Fort George."¹ The strike on the GTP led by the Industrial Workers of the World materialized in August of 1912, but the area affected was far to the west of South Fort George.² The provincial police and the contractors were able to maintain industrial peace until the railway arrived in Prince George in 1914.

IWW members and sentiment travelled with the steel from Edmonton to the Prince George district, and although they were
not visible, IWW delegates continued to spread their message in ensuing years. Among workers in the forest industry which developed after 1917, the IWW found sympathetic ears. The formation of the provincial B.C. Loggers Union (later the Lumber Workers Industrial Union) in January 1919, provided an organizational structure which harnessed the enthusiasms for unionization. IWW sentiment was prominent in the local branch of the LWIU that was formed in the Prince George district.

The nature of the forest industry along the Upper Fraser River was familiar to union organizers steeped in IWW theory and tactics. The operations were small and poorly capitalized, camp conditions were abysmal, and a large percentage of the workforce was transient. Moreover, the seasonal nature of the northern interior forest industry allowed for the effective use of direct job action as employers had to respond quickly because of the shortness of their season. From 1919 to 1922 the Lumber Workers Industrial Union led a campaign to organize the forest industry workers in the Prince George district. The LWIU was first defeated in the sawmills and then in the logging and tie camps. The declining economy, the ambivalence of farmer-loggers to unionization, the disintegration of the One Big Union and the provincial LWIU, and the effective responses of the operators all contributed to the disappearance of the lumber workers' union. By 1924 the local branch of the LWIU was barely surviving, and though many forest industry workers continued to carry IWW cards, they were unable to launch an organizational offensive. In the mid-1920s the IWW members were full of arguments and complaints, but their tone was friendly and their
impact negligible. Despite the radical, militant promise of 1919, union organization of the forest industry in the northern interior had proven to be a failure.

In the spring of 1919 a Vancouver organizer with ties to the One Big Union and the B.C. Loggers Union travelled to Prince George to coordinate union activities in the area. Tom Mace was a coastal logger involved in Vancouver political and union working-class movements. Influenced by Jack Kavanagh, Mace had become a member of the Socialist Party of Canada in 1916. In March 1919 Mace attended the Western Labour Conference in Calgary. This convention recommended the establishment of the One Big Union and the holding of a general strike on June 1, to win the six-hour work day. Mace returned to Vancouver, and after communicating with Ernest Winch, secretary of the B.C. Loggers Union, he left for Prince George to begin organizational work. Mace, a socialist with strong IWW influences, wasted little time in approaching Prince George district lumber workers, and in late March he called a mass meeting to bring together loggers and sawmill workers.

While Mace brought the organizational structure of the B.C. Loggers Union to the northern interior, local workers had already begun to challenge the lumber companies. The management of the United Grain Growers' sawmill at Hutton was especially worried by the restlessness of the men and the talk of unionization. In April 1919, Mark DeCew, the mill manager, posted the following sign at various places in the mill yard:
OWING TO MANY THREATS HAVING BEEN MADE BY
PARTIES OF BOLSHEVIKI INCLINATIONS TO
EITHER BURN OR DESTROY OUR MILLS AND LUMBER
THE COMPANY HAVE CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY TO
PLACE ARMED GUARDS TO PROTECT THEIR
PROPERTY. EMPLOYEES WILL KEEP AWAY FROM THE
YARD OR MILL AFTER SEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE
EVENING, EXCEPT THOSE ACTUALLY ENGAGED IN
REPAIRS. TRESPASSERS ON THE COMPANY'S
PROPERTY AFTER SIX O'CLOCK DO SO AT THEIR
OWN RISK.5

After posting the warning and the guards, DeCew wrote to the
British Columbia police detachment in South Fort George to ask
whether it was necessary to have guards sworn in as special
constables and if they needed to have special permits to carry
firearms.6 The deputy inspector in South Fort George promptly
replied that DeCew's misgivings were well grounded and suggested
the means by which the illegal procedures could be easily
remedied. The armed guards only had to appear before the
stipendiary magistrate in South Fort George and the necessary
oaths would be administered and weapon permits issued. The
deputy inspector also offered to give the guards "a few
'pointers' covering duty of this nature."7 With the blessing of
the provincial police the UGG had established a private army at
Hutton.

The Loggers Union did not launch a military offensive or
employ guerilla-warfare tactics, but rather, their agenda
called for the more peaceable strategy of a strike. The strike
began on June 3, 1919, and coincided with the beginning of the
general strike in Vancouver. Workers in Vancouver had walked
out to show sympathy for those in Winnipeg who had been on
strike for over two weeks. The Winnipeg General Strike ended on
June 26th and the Vancouver strike continued until July 3rd.8
Besides the strike of northern interior lumber workers, the clash in Winnipeg had also affected railway workers in Prince George. On May 27, 1919, the entire staff of the local Grand Trunk Pacific shops, as well as freight, baggage, and office employees, left work on orders from their respective union headquarters in Alberta to show sympathy for the Winnipeg strikers. The Prince George railway workers began to return to work on June 25, 1919.

The strike of the lumber workers in June 1919 was a confusing affair. Initially, the strike was precipitated by the desire to show solidarity with Canadian workers in the protest against events occurring in Winnipeg. Only after the strike had begun did the union present demands covering local issues. The lumber workers wanted an eight-hour work day at the same wage previously paid for ten hours and the reduction of the price of board from $1.20 to $1.00. Further, loggers demanded improved camp conditions and the enforcement of regulations set out by the provincial board of health.

The strike did not completely shut down the East Line forest industry. A few sawmills and logging camps were forced to close and others operated at low production levels. Strikebreakers were imported from Edmonton and Winnipeg, and coupled with local strikebreakers, they were able to keep most of the mills and camps running, albeit at reduced output. By early July the number of strikers at union headquarters in Prince George, where food and accommodation were supplied, was dwindling as men returned to work or left the district. Mills and camps began to return to normal production, and the effect
of the walkout was becoming less and less significant. In mid-July the strike was declared over by the union. None of the union’s demands had been met.¹²

In retrospect, the strike’s failure is understandable. The action was premature and rooted in enthusiasm rather than a strong organizational base. Mace, the organizer, arrived in March, and the strike occurred less than six weeks later, prompted by events in Winnipeg and Vancouver. The intransigence of the employers in ignoring union demands undermined the weak organizational structure, and the collapse of the nation-wide protest associated with the Winnipeg General Strike dampened the spirits of East Line strikers.

The union noted another cause for their failure in the Prince George district, namely, the farmers who worked part-time in the bush to secure cash to upgrade their struggling farm enterprises. A writer in the British Columbia Federationist identified farmer-loggers as:

one of, if not the greatest, factor at the present time in keeping down wages, in maintaining long hours and abominable camp conditions. This is amply proven by innumerable reports coming in from the short log districts, and the failure of the Prince George district to attain all its demands during the recent strike was almost entirely due to this weak-kneed, uneducated element.¹³

Another correspondent from the Hutton area opined that the large proportion of farmer-loggers in the district undermined the attempts of full-time loggers to secure working conditions equal to those found in coastal camps.¹⁴ Northern interior farmers carving out homesteads in a hostile environment were often
heavily in debt, worked long hours on the farm, depended on earning hard cash in the woods, and could not uproot and move, like full-time loggers, if their services in the bush were no longer needed. Many farmers lived in shacks and suffered for decent food and they did not find conditions in the logging camps especially dismal in comparison to conditions on their home farm. Further, farmers were dependent on the good graces of mill operators as the lumber camps were the best consumers of their home-grown produce. Antagonizing the controllers of this ready market for milk, hay, meat, and vegetables was not a good business strategy. Struggling to become land-owning businessmen, the farmers were not agreeable to the working-class enthusiasms of the B.C. Loggers Union.

The failure of the strike in June and July of 1919 did not diminish the ardor of union organizers. As one union member declared: "Do not conclude that because we have seen fit to call the strike off for the present that our organization is out of business. We are now starting in earnest to organize every worker and when we make our demands we will be in a position to tie up every plant on the line." The union did succeed in building up its membership, but rather than becoming established in sawmills and logging camps, the tie operations were the most fertile ground for union organizers.

Features of the tie industry permitted successful union work. The tie season began in November when contractors, having obtained contracts from the railway, set up camps and hired a work force. Ties were cut and then hauled over the snow and ice by sleigh to railway sidings. The season was over in May. Tie
contractors were mainly small operators needing only limited amounts of capital to get set up. Because of the temporary nature of the camps and the slim profit margin, accommodation for workers was very poor. The contractor was also under time restraints to meet deadlines. Having secured a contract from the railway, he was obligated to fill the requirements by the following spring, and thus work stoppages had to be minimized in order that he receive his pay. Terrible living conditions, low capital investment, and a restricted season made the tie industry vulnerable to unionization.

The 1919-1920 tie season witnessed the entrance of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union into northern interior tie camps. The J.W. Blain camp at Foreman, one of the largest tie operations in the area, was the first to be unionized. Blain, of Edmonton, had a contract to take out 150,000 ties and he hired a crew of 75 men to do the work. On the evening of November 23, 1919, the men held a meeting, elected a camp committee, and drew up a list of demands to be presented to management. The list included increasing the piece rate of tie hacks from 16 cents to 18 cents per tie and the establishment of a wage schedule for teamsters, cooks, and day labourers. Moreover the men wanted improved living conditions, the construction of a laundry and drying room, furnished with four tubs and a stove, the addition of ventilators to the bunkhouses, an increase in the number of tables and lamps in the bunkhouses, the establishment of sleeping quarters for the cookhouse staff separate from the kitchen, the procurement of a first-aid kit, and the digging of a pit 100 feet from the cookhouse to hold
kitchen refuse. The men also demanded that no discrimination be shown against camp delegates or other members of the LWIU and that the eight-hour work day be instituted. The meeting resolved to strike on the morning of the 25th of November if the terms were not met.16

On the morning of the 24th the camp committee presented the demands to management. Immediately the foreman suspended operations. The senior partner of J.W. Blain & Company was in Edmonton, and when he returned to Foreman on the afternoon of November 25, he asked for a modification of the demands, but after a union meeting the men decided to hold fast and even advanced additional requests. They now also wanted the reinstatement of a fellow worker who had been dismissed as a result of his union activities, payment in cash twice monthly, and a written reply from the company to all union demands. Further negotiations ensued and on November 26, 1919, the strike was called off, the terms of the agreement being satisfactory to the union. The majority of the union's demands were met, including the increase in tie prices to 18 cents per tie and the eight-hour work day.17

Flushed with success, the union moved to entrench its position in the Blain tie camp. A union business meeting was held on November 30, 1919, at which a motion was passed demanding that the company discharge the seven men who had continued to work in the camp during the strike. The company replied, in writing, that it interpreted the settlement to mean that there was to be no discrimination against workers, no matter whether they were union or non-union. Although the men
disagreed with the company's view, they decided to settle the issues in their own way. The next day they held a union meeting and determined to approach the seven strikebreakers and ask them either to line up with the union or roll up their bedrolls and leave the camp. The seven men were persuaded to join the union and the camp became 100 percent organized with all dues paid up. Any new men entering the camp were immediately approached by LWIU delegates and enrolled into the union. The motto of the camp was "Line Up or Roll Up."  

The organization of the camp did not lead to improvement in working and living conditions. The settlement of the November strike was predicated on promises by the company to remedy the complaints of the men. From the company's perspective, procrastination was an effective and intelligent strategy, for if camp improvements could be put off for a few months, the tie season would be over, and the camp disbanded. Expenditures on bunkhouses and cookhouses could be avoided if promises remained unfulfilled and yet still promising enough to pacify workers. In January 1920 a LWIU delegate at Blain's camp reported that conditions were still terrible and that no bath house, dry room or quarters for kitchen staff had been constructed.  

A strike of teamsters at the camp from January 24th to January 27th over the starting time of the work day was settled in favour of the teamsters, who were allowed to retain the eight-hour day with time and a half paid for unavoidable overtime. During the teamsters' strike the Royal Canadian Mounted Police visited the camp and found that health standards were not up to par, but since it was not within their jurisdiction to enforce the
regulations, they merely reported the matter to provincial authorities. The LWIU had organized the Blain tie camp at Foreman, but by the end of the season the union had not dramatically altered the conditions of the tie workers. With the completion of the season the workers in the camp dispersed.

There were other small victories for the LWIU among East Line forest industry workers in the winter of 1919-1920. In March 1920 the LWIU made some headway in United Grain Growers' logging camps near Hutton, winning semi-monthly pay in cash, the promise of baths and a dry room, stricter enforcement of health laws, and no discrimination against union members. Management was unwilling to provide blankets and sheets, to concede the eight-hour work day, or to establish a minimum wage of five dollars per day. The union victories depended on the good graces of management and not binding contract agreements. As such the apparent victories had little long-term staying power. The membership of the LWIU in the Prince George district was estimated at 800 in April 1920, but the average number of members in the first eight months of 1920 was only about 200.

Besides the camps, Prince George was also the scene of much LWIU activity. In the spring of 1920 the lumber workers were meeting every second and fourth Sunday of the month at their union headquarters on Third Avenue. Jack Stevenson, secretary of the local LWIU, expanded the scope of organizational work, establishing a General Workers' Unit of the One Big Union in Prince George to provide a home for workers not involved in the forest industry. Hotel and restaurant employees organized a
strike under the OBU banner when their demands for an eight-hour work day and a wage of eighteen dollars a week were not met by their employers. At 9:30 in the morning on April 1, 1920, the waiters left their jobs and three hours later the dispute was settled. The workers won the two-hour cut in daily working time but not the wage increase. After the strike OBU cards were placed prominently in five local restaurants.\(^{23}\)

On April 19, 1920, the first semi-annual convention of the Prince George district LWIU was held in union headquarters on Third Avenue. The Prince George district of the LWIU was large, stretching from Smithers in the west to the Alberta boundary in the east, and because of the size of the district the turnout of delegates to the convention was small. Besides the usual resolutions concerning wages, hours of work, living conditions, and the enforcement of provincial health regulations, a campaign against piece-work wages was begun and the LWIU bought shares in a newly-founded cooperative store in Prince George. The meeting also discussed organizational matters. The basis of convention representation was set at one delegate for 50 members and one additional delegate for each further 100 members or major fraction thereof. The salary for members engaged on union business was to be $4.00 per day and it was decided to bond the secretary for the sum of $1,000. The final business of the convention was the election of the secretary and executive for the ensuing six months.\(^{24}\)

The next scheduled district meeting was not to be held until October 1920 but the resignation of Jack Stevenson forced a special meeting on July 4th to appoint a new secretary.
C.F. Morrison was elected to fill the position, but the gathering also chose the opportunity to pass a resolution intended to remove members of the Socialist Party from key union positions. This movement to an IWW, syndicalist stance generated much rancour. The contentious resolution resolved that, "Anyone holding an official position in any political party can not hold office in the L&CWIU, OBU." The Lumber and Camp Workers Industrial Union was the new name of the LWIU.

R.C. Mutch, of Smithers, was present at the July meeting and adamantly opposed the resolution to oust politically-affiliated executive officers. Mutch was a member of the Socialist Party of Canada and an LWIU delegate, and he was highly critical of the proceedings as well as the content of the Prince George meeting. He reported that the convention "was a total farce, being packed by the 'Wild and Woolley' element, who paid no attention whatever to the OBU constitution, and by force of numbers and machine tactics ran things to suit themselves." He accused the meeting of electing men to attend the Vancouver convention who were not LWIU delegates, and he charged that the Prince George LWIU-OBU was being run by a professional group of unionists, not the workers themselves.

In the pages of the British Columbia Federationist the issue was hotly debated. Arthur Johnson addressed Mutch's criticisms by broadening the debate and highlighting the fact that Mutch was a building contractor in Smithers. Johnson was not only against political affiliations but also against allowing what he considered non-workers in the union: "we of the rank and file believe that all bourgeoisie should be handed
a withdrawal card." Alf Palmgren entered the debate and tried to find middle ground: "both sides are very conscientious, and good workers for the cause as a whole--both striving for the same objective, and only disagreeing on the different roads to take in order to reach their objective." Finally, C.F. Morrison, secretary for the Prince George district, entered the fray and put the issue to rest. He stated that Mutch was wrong in his accusations against the proceedings at the July convention. Further, in a theoretical discussion, Morrison came down strongly on the side of the industrial struggle, rather than the political struggle, as the main vehicle by which to obtain working-class goals. It was the struggle on the job that determined the politics of the state. The anti-socialist position was enshrined in the LWIU in the Prince George district.

By the end of 1920 the economic depression had closed many sawmills and logging operations in the northern interior, and for workers "the only chances to trade labor-power for 'pork chops' in this district [was] by wielding a 16-pound broadaxe, making ties at from 20 to 25¢ a tie." At the end of the year the LWIU in the Prince George district, which stretched from Smithers to the Alberta border, had 557 members in good standing out of a total membership on file of 2,261. Along the East Line, because of the economic downturn in the lumber industry, union organization was at an extremely low level.

At a district meeting held in Prince George on March 13, 1921, it was recognized that the office had "practically gotten out of touch with the east end of the district," and a delegate
was appointed to visit "all camps from Prince George to the Alberta boundary, and attempt to re-organize this region, and have the line membership elect camp delegates."33 H.P. Hansen, former secretary of the OBU Miners' Unit in Coleman, Alberta, was chosen to organize the East Line, and he had begun his work before the appointment became official on March 13th. In the pages of the British Columbia Federationist Hansen documented his travels along the East Line where, at the time, only a few mills and camps were in operation.

Hansen left Prince George on March 10, and visited the Prince George Lumber Company at Shelley, a small camp where he found "about 16 slaves huddled in a shack approximately 20x24 which served as a kitchen and dining room as well. With the exception of two or three workers, it is needless to add this camp is composed of the most abject of slaves."34 Hansen offered his opinion on why the conditions were so poor and the union unable to gain a foothold:

Some of the slaves in this camp are old dyed-in-the-wool craft unionists, such as the sawyer and the engineer, who were hostile to any attempts being made to organize the slaves that according to their theory were beneath them in their opinion, on the social ladder of success, and of course these lowly browbeaten slaves were, as is usually the case, looking to their intelligent friends for a way out of their misery, instead of tackling the laborious task of finding a solution for themselves. 35

From Shelley, Hansen travelled through Willow River, Giscome, Newlands, and Aleza Lake, but the mills were not operating, nor was there any logging going on. At Dewey Hansen encountered a crew from the Bashaw Lumber Company hauling logs.
Hansen noted that many of the workers in the camp "are totally ignorant of what has been taking place in the organization recently, and in some cases are still nursing their grudge to the organization, because it did not emancipate them in the strikes pulled in 19 and 20."36

After his stop at Dewey Hansen returned to Prince George to attend the union business meeting on March 13th. He then travelled to McBride and on to Jasper. On the trip back he stopped at Dome Creek, Penny, and Longworth, talking to workers and treating them to his revolutionary rhetoric: "Remember, fellow workers, that the organizing that counts is the organizing that is done on the job, where the teaching of the class struggle day after day establishes that feeling of solidarity that between workers brings about the realization of their identity of interest in their common struggle with the capitalist class and their parasites."37

Hansen also encountered a mill operator on his journey back to Prince George. The lumberman demanded an explanation of how unionization could even be considered in the face of economic depression and dismal market conditions; lumber operations were barely surviving and could not hope to meet the demands of the union. Hansen reported his view of the conversation:

These masters, slave owners and slave drivers, are evidently about ready to admit that markets are a thing of the past, inasmuch as one of them had to pertinently tell your humble servant that unless and until he was able to come around and tell the slaves (and incidentally the boss) where markets were obtainable, he had no business talking about organizing the slaves. The organizer, however, promptly told the boss that he (the organizer) was neither a
travelling salesman for the lumber trust, or a business promoter for that same trust, but that he was engaged in selling labor-power and as such had a right to assist his fellow workers in the work of organizing for the purpose of selling their labor-power at the best obtainable price, and under the best obtainable conditions.

The boss was further informed that we did not propose to mingle in his business enterprises, as the slaves had no interest in so doing. We, as the slaves, did not own any of the lumber, and therefore, we were not interested in finding markets for the boss.

Hansen then directed his argument to the readers of the *British Columbia Federationist*:

Fellow Workers: Get your mind made up on this issues. If the boss cannot find a profitable market for his products, you don't work, and the boss is therefore in reality admitting that he is incompetent to carry on any longer; and therefore, the sooner you organize yourselves in your respective industrial unions for the ultimate purpose of taking over the industries and operate them for the benefit of society as a whole, the sooner the boss will be separated from the ownership of the very things you need in order to live (not exist), and the workers will then be able to show the bosses that the different industries can be carried on and operated by the workers, and that the workers will not make as big a mess of the job as the bosses are doing at the present time. 38

Theoretical arguments, radical rhetoric, and the enthusiasm of H.P. Hansen could not revive the LWIU in the camps along the East Line in the spring of 1921. The depression had devastated the lumber industry, and the mills and camps were closed or worked intermittently. The plight of the lumber operators was obvious to all and wage cuts were imposed to reduce manufacturing costs with little protest from workers. The size of the labour force in the forest industry decreased and the
local farmer-loggers formed a higher percentage of the workers. The transient workers, who were more prone to radicalism, had no reason to remain in the area during the depressed economic times. Organization among loggers and sawmill workers had run up against the hard wall of a capitalist economic crisis.

The LWIU did not die with a whimper in the Prince George district. The tie industry was not immediately affected by the monthly fluctuations in the continental lumber market. The railway was the sole purchaser of the ties, and once contracts had been let in the fall the local contractors and their employees were guaranteed work until spring. During the 1921-1922 tie season a major conflict developed between the largest contractor and his employees, perhaps the most significant strike in the short history of the LWIU in the Prince George district. The local press, the LWIU, the Prince George City Council, and H.P. Hansen were all intimately involved in the confrontation that developed at Mud River, 35 miles to the west of Prince George. The issues were the same as those that had been forwarded by the LWIU in the previous three years, but this time the conflict escaped the perimeters of an isolated camp and exposed the broader class dimensions of the struggle of forest industry workers.

In November 1921 a J.D. McArthur company secured 23 timber limits on the Mud River and plans were announced that the firm was going to take out 250,000 railway ties. D. Hay was the McArthur agent in Prince George and J. Blaikie was the superintendent of the work at Mud River. On short notice
Blaikie hired 180 men, set up the tie camps, and began manufacturing railway ties.

Living conditions for the workers at the McArthur camp were extremely poor. The men requested that the management improve the sanitary state of the camp, but no changes were made. The men then sent a letter to the Health Department in Victoria requesting an investigation of camp conditions, and a provincial police constable was dispatched from Prince George to inspect the situation. He concluded that sanitary conditions were indeed below the provincial standards set by the Board of Health. Workers expected that the government regulations would be enforced, but it soon became evident that the company did not intend to upgrade the camp facilities.

On February 26, 1922, a tie hack named Jackson, who had been very active in the proceedings to rectify camp conditions, was discharged. The rest of the workers held a meeting that same day and then demanded that the company reinstate Jackson, claiming that his dismissal was a blatant act of discrimination. Blaikie, the camp superintendent, refused to consider the request and said he would give all the men who did not wish to work their time. The tie workers decided to strike. On the following day the company called for the intervention of the police in an attempt to keep the camp operating with men not sympathetic to the strike. The police arrived and in their presence another strike vote was held; the overwhelming majority were in favour of the strike action. The strikers then left for Prince George, either walking into town or paying farmers one dollar a head to drive them there.
The strikers held a mass meeting in Prince George on the afternoon of March 2nd in the Princess Theatre. Many of the city's unemployed were present, although they did not participate in the proceedings, and the strike situation was discussed thoroughly. A motion was put forward that declared that the strike was still in effect, and the workers from the McArthur camp voted and carried the measure by a margin of 118 to 1. The strikers then elected a twelve-man committee to conduct all their business in regards to the strike. A major point of contention was the biased, unfactual reporting of the dispute by the *Citizen* newspaper, and a delegation was appointed to meet with the editor, J.B. Daniell. According to the strikers only 15 men were still at work at the McArthur camp.\(^42\) During the following week the strike committee approached the provincial health authorities to request their help in securing improved camp conditions. The health authorities agreed that the men's complaints were valid and that the McArthur company would have to remedy the situation. The strike committee also had two interviews with representatives of the McArthur company. The firm agreed to improve camp sanitation but would not rehire four of the strikers. The men were adamant in insisting that all strikers be taken back. Since the provincial government had upheld the justice of their cause, it seemed arbitrary and discriminatory that the four activists should be denied work. The strike committee argued 'that in view of what the health authorities have seen fit to compel you [the company] to do in order to make your camps sanitary, you have no good reason to refuse to meet the men's committee and
discuss the situation in a businesslike way with a view to making arrangements for return to work of the men without any discrimination being shown." 43 The company refused to negotiate the issue.

On March 16, 1922, H.P. Hansen led a delegation of strikers to a meeting of the Prince George City Council. He wanted the council to intervene in the dispute by setting up an arbitration committee to break the deadlock. The arbitration committee was to be composed of one man representing the strikers, one speaking for the company, and a third man, to be agreed upon by the two parties affected, who would act as the neutral chairman. The council discussed the proposal and decided to leave the matter to the discretion of the mayor. 44

The arbitration proceedings never materialized and the McArthur company remained firm in refusing to take back the four men. In the face of the intransigent stance of the company and the city council, the tie workers were forced to capitulate. On March 20, 1922, the strike was settled and most of the men returned to the Mud River tie camps. 45 The four strike leaders of note were not rehired. The authority of the state, after much prodding by the workers, was instrumental in forcing the company to improve the sanitary conditions in the camps. The victory was hard-won, but without recognition of the camp committee and the principle of non-discrimination, the settlement was unsatisfactory from the men's perspective. The J.D. McArthur company had proved the strength of management, but theirs was a costly victory. The Mud River tie operation lost money over the season as the company was able to deliver only
about half of the 250,000 ties specified in the contract with the railway. 46

The settlement of the strike did not close the book on the dispute. The night that the strike ended H.P. Hansen and J.B. Daniell, editor of the Citizen, exchanged physical blows in a Prince George restaurant and legal proceedings ensued. The fight involved two men of extremely conflicting political opinions. Hansen was a revolutionary industrial unionist committed to the uplifting of the working class, while Daniell was an anti-union conservative who abhorred any attempt by workers to challenge the rights of capital in conducting their business and who praised working-class leaders willing to work in harmony with employers.

The fracas occurred about one o'clock Tuesday morning, 21 March 1922. Hansen was in the Royal Cafe as was J.B. Daniell. Daniell had taken umbrage at Hansen's behaviour during the strike: "Hansen has in his speeches incensed the men against local people and institutions that had no real difference with the strikers, or the strikers with them. He is said to have called for boycotts against business houses and otherwise proved himself to be an unreasonable man for the workers to follow as a leader." 47 In the restaurant early Tuesday morning Hansen was "discoursing on local men and their lack of sympathy with the strikers." 48 He singled out a member of the Citizen staff, Walter Crocker, as a spy, for during the strike the men often met on vacant ground behind the Post Office, and Crocker had looked on from the Post Office windows in a manner, according to Hansen, that was particularly obnoxious. Daniell took issue
with one of his men being called a "stool pigeon" and struck Hansen. A brawl ensued, and the cafe proprietor was forced to separate the two men and had to subdue Hansen physically. Hansen left the cafe but soon returned, and when the owner attempted to call the police, tore the telephone loose.49

Hansen was arrested on Tuesday afternoon and appeared before the police magistrate the following morning. He was found guilty of damaging the property of the telephone company and given a fine. The second charge, assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, was remanded. The police magistrate was the father of J.B. Daniell and it was thought best to await the return to the city of another magistrate before proceeding with the case. Hansen was released on bail. Two local citizens provided the sureties to gain Hansen's release. John McInnis, a local building contractor and a long-time socialist, put up $250, as did John Quinn, editor of the Leader and trade union supporter who had been sympathetic to the aims of the union workers involved in the Winnipeg General Strike.50 In the next few days Hansen laid assault charges against Daniell; both men went to trial, were found guilty, and received a fine.51

Four days before Hansen faced the judge, Daniell printed an editorial which was a scathing diatribe against the activities of radical union organizers. The editorial had no effect on Hansen's court case, but it did expose the feelings of many local citizens towards the LWIU. Under the guise of defending the presence of the RCMP in British Columbia, Daniell lashed out against the surge of working-class radicalism that had occurred during the previous six years:
The uses of the RCMP are of a nature which do not show in public print. Their duties lie in anticipating the actions of the rabid element that is today seeking to stir up the most dangerous and susceptible passions of the unskilled worker. All over the world there is evinced a desperate effort to inflame the mob against organized conditions of business, by arousing the passion of covetousness.

That these conditions have had a good effect in some ways is not be denied. Employers have dropped an attitude of intolerance towards the working man and gradually there is appearing new legislation, demanding better conditions for the people whose welfare had not occupied the proper attention of the employers when the intolerant attitude held sway.

The aims of the fire-brands among the laboring classes remain unappeased, however. They seek self-advancement more often than the betterment of the conditions of those whose cause they espouse with such fiery ardour. Gradually they became fanatics, preaching communism in spite of the frankly admitted failure of this system in Russia, and they awake in minds that cannot escape the false impression they declare, a response that leads on to turmoil and misery, and the unsettlement of a fair relation that saner opinion seeks to create between capital and labor in order that the slowly moving wheels of industry may be sped up to a high pitch of production again, and prosperity may take the place of hard times.

The officers of the RCMP backed up by their uniforms and the traditions of the force they represent, have become a great power to prevent the over-zealous disciples of an unwise element in the world of labor, from spreading discontent and anarchy where these things need not dwell. They have become the friends, rather than the enemies of the laboring classes. They are quick to note conditions allowed by employers which are not those which the men have a right to expect, and they remedy many troubles which might grow into serious proportions without their good offices.32

The editor's paternalism, however, offered little hope for the men in the camps and little recognition of their dignity as
human beings. The radical LWIU not only struggled for improved material conditions, but also gave workers a sense of participation in society and a feeling that they had the power to effect change in their own lives. Reliance on the good graces of the government and the police was neither effective nor an exercise in self-reliance, and in a society where camp workers were seen as a mindless mob, militant action held out the only promise for improvement.

The Mud River strike spelled the end of the LWIU in the Prince George district, and as the union disintegrated throughout British Columbia, pure IWW locals took its place. The IWW established a stronghold among lumber workers in the Kootenays and organized major strikes in 1923 and 1924. The IWW kept the name of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union, and in 1923 an IWW local, LWIU No. 120, was established in Prince George. At a business meeting in Prince George on January 1, 1924, the card conductor noted that Local 120 had 24 members in good standing. The IWW continued to carry the message that the LWIU had preached in previous years, and delegates were active in logging and tie camps along the East Line. At times issues were settled through strike action, but union membership remained very low. East Line forest industry workers were not interested in the IWW, as one union delegate noted with disgust when he visited three logging camps at Newlands that employed 90 men in 1924:

Sanitary conditions rotten. One camp is run by Joe Gauthier and the floors are never swept, let alone scrubbed. The slaves are wading up to their ankles in litter which consists of old rubbers, socks, underwear,
"snus" boxes, etc. I went into this camp and could get nobody to line up in a regular working man's organization to do away with the filth and litter found in the camps. When I talked about a dry house they looked at me with their mouths open because they never heard of such a thing as a dry house. Most of them are dry farmers from the prairies and probably accustomed to living in filth on their farms, so do not mind living in filth in the logging camp. It is these kind of animals that hold the real workers from trying to better their conditions because anyone looking at their vacant faces is liable to get discouraged with the material we have to try and organize. Let us try and develop some spark of manhood in these slaves by talking to them at every opportunity. We can have no organization till we get them to act like human beings.56

The discouragement of the IWW delegate was well-warranted and in 1925 the Wobblies gave up the office they had established in Prince George.57

The union drive in the northern interior in the post-War years was not self-sustaining and needed the enthusiasm and vigor of organizers from prairie centres and the Lower Mainland. As the momentum of the western Canadian working-class challenge was lost after 1919, East Line organizers found themselves without connections to a vibrant national movement which could boost morale and hopes in forest industry workers. The nature of the economy, too, made organization difficult. The lumber trade entered a period of hard times after 1920, and workers desperately sought any jobs available. The relatively small sawmill, tie, and logging operations were extremely vulnerable to the vicissitudes of nature's seasons and the resource market, and labour turnover and unemployment were common occurrences. A persistent, stable working class could
not develop under such circumstances, and while IWW tactics of direct job action could sometimes achieve short-term results, characteristics inherent in the industry and the inchoate working class prevented the establishment of a solid union organization.

Employers also contributed to the defeat of the LWIU. By late 1919 East Line sawmill and logging camp operators had begun to improve the living conditions of their employees as a strategy to deflect unionization. The blacklist system, labour spies, and a standardized wage schedule were also employed, and some camps used a selective hiring policy to keep union militants at bay: they would not hire "bohunks," giving work only to "white men." After 1922 the operators pressured the government to closely monitor IWW activities, and police informants in the camps apprised employers of undercurrents of unrest. The response of northern interior lumber operators to the LWIU was not as substantial as that of coastal lumbermen, for in the Prince George district such dramatic procedures were not necessary.

Schisms within the forest industry work force itself also undermined union efforts. The migrant loggers and tie hacks were the most militant elements in the forest labour force; yet the farmer-loggers and farmer-tie hacks within their camps made organization difficult. Further, despite the efforts of the LWIU, the union did not penetrate East Line sawmills. The mill operators treated their sawmill work force with more consideration than they did their bush workers. The comments of
the district forester in 1934 were just as relevant in the context of the 1920s:

That the mill operators recognize that the mill worker shall receive an adequate living wage was evident in discussing wages with them. Most mill operators after having collected together a good crew like to keep them season after season and will often boast that he has done so, and is usually very proud and thoughtful of the mill wage earner and his family which make up the community centred around his mill. If, to use the metaphor of LWIU organizers, loggers and tie hacks were wage slaves, then sawmill workers were serfs in a feudal-type social order in which the mill owners exercised the responsibilities of noblesse oblige in caring for their workers and their families.

A social event in Giscome in the mid-1920s illustrates the ideal conception of community which was fostered in the small mill towns. On a Monday evening, early in February 1925, a festive gathering congregated at the local hotel. It was a father and son banquet, and seventy boys and their dads were in attendance. The manager of Eagle Lake Sawmills, the town's major employer, presided over the banquet, and the women of the Ladies Aid prepared and served the meal. After the supper a field secretary of the Religious Education Council of British Columbia addressed the gathering, speaking on the need for closeness between father and son. The scene in the Giscome hotel represented the ideal of a well-ordered, organic society where men and women, fathers and sons, employers and employees, and religion and society each had particular roles and were bound together in an intricate set of interrelationships. The
mill wage earner may not have had much in the way of economic resources or social prestige, but at least he was an accepted member of local society. The cries of loggers and tie hacks for decent living standards, adequate wages, and the right to be treated as having human dignity did not penetrate the world of East Line sawmill workers. The tie hacks and loggers were outsiders who were bent on overturning the paternal social order in which the sawmill workers had found a niche. Personal ties between lumber operators and the mill hands cultivated bonds of loyalty and an adherence to a social system which provided rewards to mill workers, albeit in a meagre manner, and as such the class-based activities of the LWIU found little support in the sawmill towns.

The LWIU in the Prince George district was profoundly distrustful of the political process. This stance, though part of the IWW philosophy, was rooted in the experience of migratory, dispossessed workers in North America. Without property and a permanent place of residence, they were often unable to vote; working in isolated areas, they could not participate in municipal politics, and their concerns over camp conditions and the particulars of their work found little support in the urban, working-class parties. In the Prince George district the LWIU did not gain allies within the political arena, nor did they make their own political initiatives. Geographically and culturally the loggers and tie hacks remained on the periphery of the local political scene. In fact their resolve to remain outside of the political process
caused tensions with the working-class parties that did appear in the district.

The Socialist Party of Canada, Local No. 61, which was organized in South Fort George in 1911, soon possessed its own building and reading room. A major force in the party was John McInnis. He was born in Prince Edward Island in 1879 and at about age twenty he migrated to the Kootenays. For eight years he worked in the mines at Phoenix, Sandon, and Greenwood and became president of the Western Federation of Miners local in Phoenix; in 1907 he was elected to the provincial legislature on the socialist ticket. Defeated in the 1909 election and finding himself blacklisted from Kootenay mines, McInnis moved to the Fort George area in 1910. He worked first on a survey crew, until in 1911, he went into business as a building contractor with Neil McLean as his partner. He lectured frequently on socialism in South Fort George and Fort George and was instrumental in organizing the SPC local. Other early socialists included Neil McLean, William Bell, a school principal, and C.W. Moore, an American who had been cache keeper for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in 1907 and then had begun farming and dealing in real estate.

Over the next few years the socialists were very active in the area and by 1915 the party was perceived as the only threat to the incumbent Conservatives in the Fort George riding. As T.D. Pattullo, an organizer for the Liberals in northern British Columbia noted in 1915: "I believe that the Liberal candidate has no chance of winning, and the Liberal support of the socialist candidate could I think be made the means of insuring
that no socialist or labor candidate contest any of the other northern districts." A saw-off was orchestrated in time for the 1916 election and no Liberal was entered in the Fort George race. John McInnis was the socialist candidate, and W.R. Ross, Tory cabinet minister, ran for the Conservatives. W.G. Gillett, a disgruntled Tory, was also in the race.

The riding seemed to be ripe for picking by the socialists. The Fort George Electoral District had recently been created, separated from the Cariboo District to the south. As the sitting member, a Conservative from Quesnel, had neglected the northern part of his constituency, there was much resentment against the Tories. John McInnis was a popular candidate, his campaign was well organized, and he had the support of most Liberals. The socialists were confident of taking the seat.

In contrast to their provincial debacle, the Conservatives ran an excellent campaign in Prince George. W.R. Ross, minister of Public Works, had a high profile, despite the fact that he was not a local man. Ross used his position in government to spread largesse, especially through the Public Works Department, and to convince voters that a member of the government was best able to deliver the roads and bridges that the area needed. He appealed directly to the immediate material needs of the constituents and carried the election by seven votes. The local Socialists and Liberals were appalled at the blatant use of patronage by the Tories and they secured a provincial inquiry into apparent election irregularities. The Liberal-appointed
commission uncovered highly questionable practices but there was not sufficient evidence to declare the election invalid.67

McInnis did not campaign on the official Socialist Party platform; rather, he tried to appeal to a broad base of voters, especially Liberals. Like Parker Williams, the Newcastle MLA, McInnis was disowned by the Socialist Party of Canada for failing to adhere to the orthodox socialist line.68 McInnis, for example, spoke out against the idea of having government-owned coal mines.69 In the Fort George riding, where farmers formed a significant proportion of the electorate, the doctrinaire, working-class Marxism of the provincial SPC would have fallen on deaf ears. After 1916, the Socialist Party disappeared from the Fort George district.

In 1918 a local of the provincial Federated Labor Party was founded in Prince George, and by March 1918 the local could claim 25 members. McInnis, William Bell, and C.W. Moore were the leaders in the organization.70 The fledgling party was confident of expanding its influence and carried on an extensive propaganda campaign to spread its labourite platform. In the heady days of 1919, when labour across Canada expected to rise as a political force, the FLP in Prince George was a focal point for district workers. In June 1919 the FLP sponsored a meeting which heard speakers from the Great War Veteran's Association and the B.C. Loggers Union.71 This seeming working-class solidarity, however, was chimerical. In January 1920 John McInnis successfully ran for the office of city Police Commissioner, but the local secretary of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union took great pains to point out that McInnis was
not running as an exponent of labour, and the union offered him no official support. In 1921 the One Big Union in Prince George tried to smear McInnis by claiming that he was lowering the wages of the carpenters who worked for him. An angry McInnis produced affidavits to refute the charge. The Federated Labor Party did not gain a stronghold in the Prince George area and by 1920 some of the party's activists had already switched to the local Liberals.

During the 1920s, no labour candidates contested a provincial election in the Fort George district; labourites such as McInnis campaigned for H.G. Perry, a Liberal who held the seat from 1920 to 1928. Perry, a clothing merchant who entered the insurance and real estate business in 1921, was a fiesty, independent-minded member who fought hard for his constituency. He had supported McInnis, his close personal friend, in 1916, and was sympathetic to labour reform legislation in the 1920s. Northern interior lumber manufacturers were united in their opposition to the proposed eight-hour work day for sawmill workers. East Line mill workers were behind the measure, even if it meant a reduction in their wages: "Give us the eight-hour day. We are satisfied we will be able to look after the wages." In the legislature Perry voted in favour of the eight-hour bill and the minimum-wage law.

The tentative nature of the forest economy in the northern interior during the 1920s could not sustain militant class action. Loggers, tie hacks, and mill workers remained clustered in small towns and camps doing seasonal work. This small, divided work force could not effect substantial changes in the
workplace or organize around common causes. In politics, the socialist and labourite parties were dominated by business people, farmers, and skilled railway workers, and forest industry workers played a negligible role. The union movement in the years after World War I was closely linked to developments in the prairies and the coastal region of British Columbia and was unable to overcome the difficulties of organizing workers in a fringe, underdeveloped industry. Agitators were unable to maintain the momentum for organization after 1920. At the end of the decade the working class was segmented and loosely formed, as a group of petty producers in the lumber industry sought to maintain viability in the mercurial resource market.
Notes

1. Fort George Herald, South Fort George, 15 June 1912.

2. Fort George Herald, 10 August 1912; 31 August 1912; 12 April 1913; 6 June 1914; Public Archives of British Columbia (hereafter PABC), British Columbia Provincial Police, GR 57, v.4, f.225.


4. Biographical memorandum on Tom Mace by Dorothy Steeves (?), University of British Columbia, The Library, Special Collection Division (hereafter UBC), Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection (hereafter MacInnis Collection), v.52, f.9; Citizen, Prince George, 26 March 1919.

5. Mark DeCew to T.W.S. Parsons, Deputy Inspector, B.C. Police, South Fort George, 26 April 1919, PABC, Attorney General, GR 1323, B2151, f.628-16-18.

6. Ibid.

7. T.W.S. Parsons to V.M. de Cue (sic), 29 April 1919, PABC, GR 1323, B2151, f.628-16-18. Parsons' superiors in Victoria did not share his eagerness to establish a company militia at Hutton, but neither did they see fit to overturn the decision; see Wm. G. McMynn to Parsons, 5 May 1919, PABC, GR 1323, B2151, f.628-116-18.


10. Ibid., 25 June 1919.

11. British Columbia Federationist, 6 June 1919; Citizen, 9 July 1919.

12. Citizen, 11 June 1919; 9 July 1919; 16 July 1919; Pacific Coast Lumberman (July 1919), pp. 50 and 68.


15. **Citizen**, 16 July 1919.


17. **British Columbia Federationist**, 12 December 1919; 5 December 1919.

18. Ibid., 19 December 1919.


20. Ibid., 13 February 1920.

21. Ibid., 19 March 1920; 20 October 1920.


24. **British Columbia Federationist**, 14 May 1920. The Lumber Workers Industrial Union, Prince George district, used the **British Columbia Federationist** as its organ. Field reports and convention minutes were published therein.


26. Ibid., 13 August 1920.

27. Ibid., 13 August 1920.

28. Ibid., 20 August 1920.

29. Ibid., 3 September 1920.

30. Ibid., 10 September 1920.

31. Ibid., 11 February 1921.

32. Ibid., 28 January 1921.

33. Ibid., 25 March 1921.

34. Ibid., 25 March 1921.

35. Ibid., 8 April 1921.

36. Ibid., 25 March 1921.

37. Ibid., 8 April 1921.
38. Ibid., 8 April 1921.


40. Citizen, 28 February 1922; British Columbia Federationist, 17 March 1922.

41. British Columbia Federationist, 17 March 1922; Western Lumberman (March 1922), p. 87.

42. Leader, Prince George, 3 March 1922.

43. Leader, 10 March 1922; Citizen, 10 March 1922.

44. Leader, 17 March 1922; Citizen, 17 March 1922.


47. Citizen, 21 March 1922.

48. Citizen, 24 March 1922.

49. Citizen, 21 March 1922; 24 March 1922; 28 March 1922; Leader, 24 March 1922; British Columbia Federationist, 14 April 1922.

50. Citizen, 24 March 1922.

51. Citizen, 4 April 1922.

52. Ibid., 28 March 1922.

53. PABC, GR 441, v.232, f.25; Strike report, Canada, Department of Labour, PAC, RG 27, T2744, v.332, f.1.


55. Ibid., 15 January 1924; 1 April 1924; 15 April 1924; 1 July 1924.

56. Ibid., 1 April 1924.


58. Pacific Coast Lumbermen (October 1919), p. 56.


60. Memorandum from J.D. McNiven, Deputy Minister of Labour, 7 April 1924, PABC, GR 1323, B2197, f. L-327-13; British Columbia Lumberman (March 1924), p. 27.

62. Citizen, 12 February 1925.

63. Fort George Herald, 30 September 1911; British Columbia Federationist, 20 December 1912.

64. John McInnis to Mrs. Dorothy Steeves, 30 October 1958, UBC, Angus MacInnis Collection, v.52, f.7; John McInnis, PABC, vertical file; John McInnis, Oral Interview, Pioneer Tapes, Cassette 19A, transcript, Prince George Public Library.

65. Citizen, 26 November 1936.

66. T.D. Pattullo to H.C. Brewster, 18 October 1915, PABC, Add MSS 3, v.8, f.20. I wish to acknowledge Frank Leonard for referring me to this source.


68. Western Clarion (February 1916), p. 14; (September 1916), p. 17.


70. British Columbia Federationist, 22 March 1918.

71. Citizen, 11 June 1918.

72. Ibid., 23 January 1920.

73. British Columbia Federationist, 2 September 1921; 11 November 1921.

74. Citizen, 27 November 1924.

75. Citizen, 27 November 1924.
CHAPTER VII

Unemployment, Communists, and the CCF
in the Prince George District in the 1930s

The forest economy of the northern interior slumped dramatically in the 1930s; for workers dependent on jobs in the mills and the woods employment was scarce. Logging camps and sawmills either shut down or operated intermittently at less than capacity. Under such circumstances union drives were non-existent in the forest industry; the level of economic activity could sustain neither a working class nor union initiatives. With the failure of companies and the regional economy, working people began to question the broader structures of economic and social development in Canada and the capitalist system itself. Two strains of protest within the working class emerged in the Prince George district, both directed against the system that generated economic stagnation. Among the unemployed, communist agitators organized to meet immediate problems of relief and destitution as well as to lay the groundwork for radical changes in the economy and social structure. The second new development was the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, a political party with roots in earlier socialist and labour movements that brought together farmers, small businessmen, and railway workers with relatively secure jobs. In the floundering economy of the depression years working people in the Prince George district forged new forms of protest that reflected the changing economic situation in the staple region.
In 1930 the world economic depression began to affect the lives of people in the Prince George district. In the forest industry markets disappeared and lumber production dropped to fifty percent of the cut of the previous two years. A few small mills along the East Line only operated their planers and were "thus able to retain their older married employees upon a reduced time basis and thus enabling them to earn sufficient money to carry on from month to month." In October of 1930 the secretary of the Prince George Board of Trade travelled the East Line and took a census of the unemployed. He found 50 unemployed men in Giscome, 12 in Hansard, 2 in Longworth, 25 in Snowshoe, 40 in Willow River, 30 in Newlands, and 46 in Sinclair Mills, and commented that "most of these men are married, and virtually all are employed in the timber industry when the sawmills are operating." There were over 400 men without work in the Prince George district by the end of the year.

The municipal and provincial governments provided some financial aid to workers and their families who were in desperate straits, and the police closely monitored the behaviour of the growing number of unemployed workers in anticipation of possible agitation and political protest. In 1930 the anger and dissatisfaction of the unemployed was not expressed in social activism. The hope that the economic downturn would be short in length and the fact that temporary unemployment was not an uncommon feature of working-class life kept the lid on radical responses.

The Prince George City Council met the intertwined problems of unemployment and the rapidly rising expenditure on relief
payments by petitioning the provincial government to undertake the construction of a highway from Aleza Lake to Tete Jaune as a relief project. In the late summer of 1931 the highway extension was begun and seven camps were established along the East Line between Aleza Lake and McBride to house 500 relief workers. In the original plan the men were to be paid $2.00 for an eight-hour day with an allowance of 80 cents per day for dependents, but the actual wage turned out to be much lower. Municipal relief and make-work projects were insufficient and did not satisfy the unemployed, and among the jobless a social and political movement, led by communists, emerged in the Prince George district. The communist appeal to the dispossessed, both the unemployed and ethnic outsiders, and the fervor of party members in their vision of a better world contributed to moulding a revolutionary challenge to the established order. While the communists had broad political and economic goals, their activities during the 1930s were primarily directed towards securing basic material needs for the working class. In the communist organizations unemployed forest industry workers, single men in relief camps, and family men and women on the dole found a group of people who expressed their immediate concerns and were willing to work on their behalf.

The first demonstration by the unemployed in Prince George occurred on the afternoon of June 11, 1931, in a George Street store. The action was prompted by the decision of the city of Prince George to suspend direct relief payments due to municipal financial difficulties. Approximately 175 unemployed men and one police constable were present at the meeting and the
premises were crowded to capacity. The men wanted immediate aid for the needy and relief work. Delegations were appointed to wait on Dr. R.W. Alward, the local Conservative member of the legislature, and George Milburn, the government agent. Alward came personally to the meeting and announced that the highway relief project would begin shortly. Milburn promised to forward the men's demands for immediate action on relief payments to officials in Victoria. The meeting was orderly, but the police inspector noted that "the unemployed situation here is reaching that stage where anything may be expected to happen." However, the beginning of the highway extension and the resumption of municipal relief payments diffused organization among the unemployed for the duration of 1931.

In the spring of 1932 discontent in the highway construction camps along the East Line manifested itself. The men went on strike in April, demanding an increase in pay. They stated that they wished to work but that the remuneration of only free room and board and $7.50 a month for pocket money was insufficient. Extra policemen were brought into the area, but the men remained in the camps and acted peaceably as they awaited the response of the Department of Public Works. The strike was soon settled and the men returned to work. The terms of the settlement were a thirty-hour work week, $7.50 in wages, and the provision of work clothes by the government. By early July the promised clothes had not been provided and the number of hours of work had increased to 44 per week with no raise in wages. The men went on strike again, this time demanding $4.00 for a seven-hour work day and the guarantee of three days work
per week. The Department of Public Works refused to meet these demands and closed the camps. The men decided to evacuate the camps and beginning on July 5, 1932, the strikers rode the trains into Prince George.

The infusion of strikers into the unemployed population in Prince George invigorated the local branch of the national Unemployed Workers Association. The Prince George NUWA was linked to the national organization of the same name, which was in turn affiliated to the communist-led Workers Unity League. The activists from the East Line camps took a leading role in the local NUWA, and on July 11, 1932, a deputation appeared before Prince George City Council, delivering a communication that set out the demands of the organization. They wanted the city to guarantee single men three eight-hour days of work per week at $4.00 per day and married men four days per week at the same wage with further allowances for dependents. They also demanded no discrimination against workers because of race, colour, creed, or political conviction, as well as free housing, light, fuel, and clothing for the unemployed. The city, strapped for financial resources, viewed the requests as remarkable and impossible to meet.

In late July 1932 the NUWA began to take its struggle to the streets of Prince George. On the morning of the 28th of July the striking camp workers sent a committee to visit the government agent requesting that he communicate with officials in Victoria regarding the government position on the strike. Victoria replied that there was no change in the conditions offered the camp workers, and upon hearing this the men decided
to take direct action. At 11 a.m. about 100 men entered the
grocery store of C.C. Reid and asked him to supply them with
food. They told Reid that the provisions were to be charged to
the provincial government. As Reid attempted to negotiate with
the men, a number of police constables arrived to maintain
order. Finally the men left the store, but only after Reid had
donated fifteen dollars worth of food to the unemployed men.¹³
That evening the NUWA held a meeting, and Inspector Spiller and
Sergeant McKenzie of the provincial police warned the men that
their action demanding food was unlawful and must not occur
again. The leaders of the NUWA replied that they did not advise
the breaking of man-made laws but that their advice was to obey
the laws of the stomach.¹⁴

On the morning of August 3, 1932, the provincial government
presented an ultimatum to the striking camp workers. They were
informed that the twenty-five cent daily subsistence allowance
they were receiving in Prince George was suspended, and that to
receive room and board they would have to go to non-work relief
 camps. The camps were those that had been previously used for
highway construction crews, and the strikers did not want to
return to these isolated camps to while away the time. The NUWA
and the strikers promised stronger action in dealing with the
government: "To date we have been dealing with the government
on a more or less fair basis, but from now on it is going to be
Direct Action."¹⁵ That afternoon the police patrolled the city
streets to prevent demonstrations. About ninety men were
involved in the refusal to go to the relief camps, but according
to Inspector Spiller the number of "malcontents" in Prince George numbered about 250.16

It was over a week before the NUWA acted. On the morning of 12 August 1932 sixty men arrived at the police office and demanded to be arrested as vagrants. Inspector Spiller told the men that because they had the option of moving to the non-work relief camps, they could not be arrested as vagrants. In the afternoon twenty-six of the men went into the government agent's office demanding food and shelter. On being refused, the men stated that the building belonged to them, as they were the people, and proceeded to sit down and occupy the office. The men were then arrested and charged with unlawful assembly.17

Three days later at a preliminary hearing the twenty-six men appeared before George Milburn, the government agent and acting stipendiary magistrate. Before any evidence was presented, Milburn, who had witnessed much of the affair, commented that there was little doubt that the men would be committed to trial. NUWA leaders who had been involved in the incident, Henry Vorberg, John Ward, Leo McCaffery, Frank Stager, and Frederick Newton, skillfully cross-examined the witnesses on behalf of the accused and argued that no weapons had been involved, the men were weak and hungry and as such incapable of physical violence, and that while in the government agent's office the men had caused no trouble.18 The men were committed for trial and bail was set at four hundred dollars for each of the accused. Bail was raised only for Fred Newton and the other twenty-five men remained in prison. A defense fund was organized and donations came in from throughout the district, a
logging camp at Sinclair Mills making an especially large contribution. 19

At the trial on September 22, the case was dismissed on the grounds that there had been no fear that the peace had been about to be broken. On the following morning the men and their sympathizers celebrated by gathering in front of the government office and singing Red songs. They then marched to the Prince George Grill and demanded to be fed; the bill was to be sent to Prime Minister R.B. Bennett. The police arrived and 43 men were arrested, including the 26 who had just been released. At the trial the accused were acquitted on the same grounds as the previous case involving the NUWA. 20

With the release of the most active NUWA members from jail and the success of the NUWA tactics in embarrassing the government and the judicial system, organizational work among the unemployed was intensified and prosecuted with increased vigor. The events of late September 1932 buoyed the spirits of NUWA organizers, and plans for disturbances and demonstrations were discussed, pamphlets and radical working-class newspapers were disseminated, and organizational work was revived. 21

Provincial authorities were not idle. In October, an official of the Canadian Immigration Department came to Prince George to investigate the possibility of deporting some of the more militant NUWA members. The immigration official spent two days in the city and interviewed eight men: Frank Stager, John Ward, Frederick Newton, Carl Anderson, Arthur Negard, Ragnar Olson, Victor Hagen, and Nels Hedlund. All of the men except Hedlund had been arrested in the sit-in at the government
agent's office on August 12, 1932. Confident that the deportations would be executed, Inspector Spiller only regretted that the federal immigration officer had been able to interview so few potentially deportable men during his short stay.22

During October the government was successful in removing the unemployed activists from Prince George to the non-work relief camps along the East Line. With no relief payments forthcoming in Prince George, the men were forced to go to the camps in order to receive food and accommodation for the coming winter. The NUWA was angry at this turn of events and promised that "these unfortunate victims who are, through starvation, forced to go and bury themselves for the next six months, are not going to tolerate for one moment such vile conditions as existed in those so-called camps last winter."23 If the authorities felt that moving the single unemployed from Prince George to isolated East Line camps would ensure harmony, they were sorely mistaken.

The relief camp at Penny, some 75 miles east of Prince George, was the largest camp on the line and the scene of conflict. In November 1932 Camp 808 at Penny housed 64 men, many of whom had been involved with the NUWA in Prince George during the previous summer. About the middle of November an epidemic of dysentery and flu broke out at the camp; there was no medical treatment at the camp to allay the suffering of the men. On November 19, 1932, a delegation appointed by the men, made up of John Ward, a man named Powell, and D.C. Dickinson, waited upon Andrew Forrest, the camp foreman. The men inquired about medicines available in the camp, as well as the clothing
disbursement and rations. Forrest told the men that medicine would not be procured for men suffering from dysentery. A heated argument followed in which the men threatened to take over the camp and Forrest belittled the political affiliations of the delegates. Forrest then ordered the men to leave the office but they refused. Forrest picked up a double-bladed axe and struck Ward with the flat of it to encourage their departure. The men left the office and called a meeting of the unemployed, and at this gathering they decided to go in a body to the office and order the foreman out of camp. About forty men returned with Ward, Dickinson, and Powell to the foreman's office; Forrest packed his belongings and rode the next train to Prince George.

The following morning the men in Camp 808 were awakened by the stopping of the mail train at Penny. Five policemen and a new foreman disembarked, but the camp was quiet and Harry Brawn took over the foreman duties without incident, except that he soon contracted dysentery. Two men were transported to Prince George for medical treatment; later a doctor was sent to treat the men who were ill at Penny. An investigation by the police recommended that no charges be laid against the men in their treatment of Forrest; in fact, the evidence suggested that a charge of assault might be upheld against Forrest in his attack on John Ward. The police report stated that it would do more harm than good to pursue the issue of Forrest's treatment at the hands of the men.24

With a new foreman and treatment for the dysentery outbreak, Camp 808 returned to a normal existence and by the end
of the month the Penny camp held its full complement of 108 men. NUWA organizers remained active: "we are arranging our forces for the next skirmish and the men are going about the job of educating themselves along class lines so that we may have concerted action against the 'Iron Heel' being displayed in this district." For Harry Brawn, the camp foreman, discipline was not a problem, but, alarmed at the influence of the communist agitators on the young boys in the camp, he wanted to see John Ward and other leaders either deported or put in a camp by themselves under close watch. Brawn was indignant that the "Red Flag" was sung at camp committee meetings, a behaviour he had never expected to observe in Canada.

Provincial authorities monitored the situation at Penny very closely and followed up all rumours involving potential activities by communist agitators on the East Line. A main goal of the police was to keep the single, unemployed men isolated in the non-work relief camps, away from Prince George. On 25 November 1932 three men, Powell, Dickinson, and Hazuka, were taken off the train at Foreman and charged under the Railway Act for riding the rails without a ticket. The three activists from Camp 808 each received a one-month prison sentence, the police hoping that "their conviction may have a sobering effect on the others in that camp." The police also worried that the new camp to be established at Willow River, 18 miles east of Prince George, would cause "a great deal of trouble with men 'Beating their way' backwards and forwards on the trains." The provincial government pestered federal officials to proceed with the deportation of activists among the unemployed.
John Ward was the focus of much communication between Victoria and Ottawa. In January 1933 a federal immigration officer spent two days at Camp 808 investigating communist inmates. John Ward, who had come from Scotland with the scheme that brought 10,000 British miners to work the prairie harvest in 1928, Gus Hedlund, who had come from Sweden in 1928, Pete Onoprychuk, a Pole, and Victor Hagen, a Finn who had been in Canada for almost five years, were all ordered deported on the grounds that they were public charges. All except Hagen appealed the deportation order. While the official reasons for the deportations were the economic circumstances of the men and the fact that they had been domiciled in Canada for less than five years, the political activities of the men were the overriding concern of the authorities.

The NUWA was active in the city of Prince George during the winter of 1932-1933. Meetings were held, resolutions were drafted, and petitions were organized to protest the arrests and imprisonment of leading Canadian communists such as Tim Buck and Arthur Evans. The death of Steve Berlinic, a rank-and-file party member who had been involved in the demonstrations in the summer of 1932, prompted a large Red funeral in Prince George. Men travelled from as far away as Penny to attend the event. The man's grave was decorated with a large, concrete headstone that was 3½ feet high, and in chiselled lettering, outlined in red, was the following inscription:
The first demonstration of the 1933 season took place on May 1st. The open-air meeting at Duchess Park was preceded by a procession through the streets of Prince George by the 150 participants. Banners were everywhere: "Free '8' and All Class War Prisoners," "Down With Fascism and the Iron Heel," "Bennett Must Go," "More Milk for Children," "We Demand Noncontributory Unemployed Insurance for the Unemployed," "Abolish Slave Camps," "Smash Sec. 98," "No More Deportations," "For Defense of Soviet Union and Chinese People," and "International Labor Day May 1st, 1933. Workers of the World Unite." Three speakers addressed the gathering on international, national, and local themes.

Throughout the summer of 1933 the NUWA and its local allies, the Russian Workers Club, the Workers Sport Association, and the Canadian Labor Defense League, held meetings, organized picnics, and represented people who had concerns regarding the administration of the relief program. For those without work or ethnically outside the mainstream of local society, these organizations provided a haven and a sense of hope and involvement during extremely difficult times.

In October 1933 the relief camp at Penny was closed. Despite the government's plan to transfer all of the inmates to a camp at Spences Bridge, many of the men refused to go and congregated instead in Prince George. The men who resisted
the move to Spences Bridge were soon cut off from receiving relief in Prince George. On the afternoon of November 16, 1933, 76 men entered the office of the government agent, demanded relief, and refused to leave until their request was satisfied. At five o'clock the office closed but the men remained, and the police, using batons, cleared the building. During the fracas a policeman received a bloody nose and four of the demonstrators were arrested for obstructing the police officers in the carrying out of their duties. The trials of Ragner Lindal, Ole Olson, Charles Peterson, and David Dickinson were set for May 1934. Lindal was tried first, and after being found innocent, the cases against the other three men were dropped.  

Throughout 1934 and 1935 the various working-class organizations in Prince George, which now included the Jugoslav Workers Club, the Unemployed Married Men's Organization, and the Russian Workers' Farmers' Club, continued to provide succor to workers without jobs and to show their dissatisfaction with the failing economic system, but no major incident occurred until the spring of 1935. At this time, a group of unemployed, who were working for the city in recompense for their relief, staged the last confrontation with authorities in Prince George during the 1930s.

On the morning of April 5, 1935, the men doing relief work notified the mayor that they had gone on strike. The fifty workers demanded increased wages to reach parity with other provincial relief workers and the right to free medical attention. The city considered the demands and agreed to increase relief wages to $3.20 per eight-hour work day, sixty
percent of which would be paid by the province, and to provide medical treatment at no expense in extreme circumstances. The mayor explained that the city was not in a position to employ all the men on relief at once but that anyone willing to work when called upon would be paid the same as those performing work. The relief strikers, however, were not willing to accept the favourable terms proposed by the city. Instead, they demanded fifty cents per hour for single men, a six-hour work day, a guarantee of 64 hours work per month, and complete coverage under the Workmen’s Compensation Act. Confrontation became inevitable.

One group of some fifteen relief workers not on strike was doing road and bridge work near the Salmon River under the supervision of the Department of Public Works. On Saturday, May 11, 1935, strikers arrived at the work site and began to harass the men at work. Police, expecting trouble, were on hand; the strikers were routed and they returned to Prince George. Rather than easing the tension, the skirmish set the stage for a major battle two days later.

On Monday morning a group of relief workers left the local Public Works Department garage, travelling in trucks to do road work outside of Prince George. As confrontation with the strikers was anticipated, provincial officials accompanied the workers. At the head of the convoy was a car containing the police inspector and two game wardens; following the four trucks carrying the workers was a police car in which four policemen rode. On a hill about 1½ miles east of the city approximately forty strikers were waiting. They had constructed a barricade
across the road. At shortly after eight o'clock in the morning
the convoy arrived at the barricade and a barrage of stones was
thrown by the strikers at the cars and trucks. The two game
wardens leapt from their car to remove the barricade and were
immediately set upon by a group of strikers. One of the game
wardens had his arm broken and the other was badly cut in the
face. The police at the rear of the convoy began shooting
bullets over the heads of the strikers, soon quelling the
disturbance. The barricade was then removed and the strike-
breakers were transported to their destination. At the place of
the battle Frederick Barker was arrested. Later in the day
three other strikers were taken into custody: Heitman Johnson,
Jack Rutledge, and Gus Edvall.41

The local police viewed the outbreak with alarm, fully
expecting further disturbances. Urgent radiograms were
dispatched to the British Columbia police commissioner and the
Attorney General in Victoria:

Situation serious. Need reinforcements
badly. Previous estimate of four men not
good enough. Need ten to fifteen. There is
talk of strikers raiding and smashing up
Government building today or tomorrow and
also talk of raiding stores. It will be
necessary for me to engage specials
meantime. Necessary to have city shifts
doubled or trebled and have mobile force in
reserve.42

The fifteen policemen were quickly dispatched to Prince George,
but no incidents occurred.43

The citizens of Prince George were outraged at the incident
of May 13th. On the Monday following the clash city council
passed a bylaw to regulate all street demonstrations. Under the
terms of the bylaw a permit was required to hold any parade of
demonstration on a public street or in a public area. On
Empire Day, May 24th, the local population found an opportunity
to show their rejection of the growing communist influence in
Prince George, wrapping their sentiments in the cloak of
patriotism, British traditions, and the desire to maintain law
and order. A large patriotic parade was organized and 1,300
people marched through the streets of Prince George. At the end
of the parade the Union Jack was run up amid cheers and the
school inspector delivered the flag address. The crowd then
joined in singing "God Save the King." The editor of the
local newspaper pointedly outlined the significance of the
Empire Day demonstration:

The parade of the citizens of Prince George
on Friday should carry its lesson to the
men who have been persistently fomenting
trouble, supposedly in the interests of the
unemployed.... The parade on Friday made
it clear the people of Prince George have
lost patience with the men who have been
directing the strike of the unemployed....
The strikers may elect not to give their
labor in return for relief, but they will
not be permitted to interfere with the
liberty of action of men who desire to go
to work.

For the relief strikers and the communist organizations the
events of May 1935 were the last major incidents that they were
involved in around Prince George during the depression years.
In early June the striking men returned to work on the terms
originally set down by the government. The four men arrested
on assault charges on May 13th were found guilty; one man was
sentenced to eighteen months in prison while the other three
were each given six-month sentences. The Workers' Defense
League, the Canadian Labour Defense League, and the Workers' Protective Association continued to petition on behalf of the unemployed, but the direct action of the previous years was no longer used as a tactic.

The quiescent behaviour of local radicals after 1935 cannot be attributed to the enthusiasms of British patriotism or the diligence of the police and judicial system. Increased activity in the East Line lumber industry put a larger portion of the unemployed to work after 1935. The smashing of the On-to-Ottawa Trek in Regina on July 1, 1935, left the camp workers' union in disarray, and the election of the Mackenzie King Liberal government four months later led to the closure of the relief camps. The new Liberal government also expanded expenditure on the two national railways, and by the summer of 1936 over 250 men were employed doing maintenance work for the Canadian National Railway near Prince George.\(^4^9\) There was also a change in the direction of the international communist movement. From 1935 onwards the Comintern gave priority to the struggle against world fascism. As part of this policy the previous emphasis on building communist-led organizations in the 1920s and early 1930s was replaced by a communist strategy to create a broad anti-fascist alliance with social democrats, moderate union leaders, and even the Liberal party against perceived fascist and reactionary elements in Canadian society. As a result, some of the communist-led organizations were disbanded and militants became very active in a wide range of non-communist groups.

Besides direct action in government offices and organizational work in the relief camps and among the
unemployed, the communists also had entered the political arena, offering a candidate in the 1933 provincial election. This election also marked the first appearance of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in the Fort George riding. During the 1920s, labour political parties were dormant in Prince George, but in 1931, Ernest Winch, provincial organizer of the new Independent Labor Party, which soon became a part of the CCF, wrote to C.P. Deykin and requested that he organize a Prince George branch of the party. In the northern interior, the CCF was dominated by skilled tradesmen, farmers, small businessmen, and railway workers centered in Prince George, while the United Front, the party of the communists, appealed to workers on the economic and social periphery.

Though Deykin had been defeated in a recent provincial by-election, running as a Farmer-Labor candidate, he was a strange choice to spearhead a labour party in the Prince George district. Deykin has arrived in Fort George in 1913 to manage a local theatre but soon became a dairy farmer. Outspoken and mercurial in political affairs, Deykin supported the Conservatives in the 1920 provincial election. An early enthusiast of General McRae's Provincial Party, Deykin became disenchanted with the business party when it became evident that the new organization did not support the extension of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway to Prince George. In 1930 H.G. Perry, an astute local Liberal, described Deykin as a man who was "always 'against' and is really neither a farmer nor labour man. He is a business dairyman. His ideas on labour and other matters are the crudest you ever imagined."50 Perry
declared further that labour politicians in British Columbia would have a fit and collapse if they knew Deykin's views. 51 In 1933 Deykin ran against the CCF as an Independent Union candidate and later in the year he moved to Duncan on Vancouver Island where he became an active Tory. 52 The leaders of the Independent Labor Party in Vancouver were poorly informed about politics in the northern interior, and their Prince George contact was distrusted by local labour activists.

In 1931, however, Deykin did organize a local branch of the Independent Labor Party. The initial meeting, held on September 30, 1931, was attended by about fifty people, many of whom were trade unionists. As organizer of the meeting Deykin was allowed to outline his idea of the new party's policy. He advocated a six-hour day, the suspension of all timber royalty and stumpage charges for six months in order to re-activate the lumber industry, the establishment of stock-breeding stations, and in the matter of provincial administration, the discharge of political heads of several government departments and their replacement by a businessmen's commission. The meeting elected Deykin vice-president of the local ILP, and made William Somerton president. 53 Somerton, a CNR telegraph operator, was a long-time activist in the Order of Railway Telegraphers.

In May 1932, the local ILP held a special meeting. Prince George labourites had become alarmed that more radical socialists had taken control of the provincial ILP in Vancouver. Members in Prince George decided to transfer their affiliation to the National Labor Party of Canada, a weak, ephemeral, less radical organization. 54 As William Somerton,
president of the new NLP branch, commented: the NLP "would set up something in the way of a state capitalistic system, replacing the individual or groups which operated the old system ... without resorting to revolution." The party would appeal to farmers and businessmen as well as workers. By early 1933 the NLP in Prince George had affiliated to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, and in September 1933 Alexander Sinclair was nominated to be the CCF (NLP) candidate in the forthcoming provincial election.

The local communists looked on the creation of the CCF with disgust. They perceived the socialist party as a bulwark of capitalism that intended to save the capitalist system through reforms which would remove blatant injustices but not transform the whole of the social and economic structure. To the communists only wholesale change and the victory of the working class would ensure the creation of a just society. On August 25, 1933, a contingent of communists attended a CCF meeting in the Princess theatre. There was a capacity crowd, with Dr. J. Lyle Telford, a prominent British Columbia CCFer, the speaker. The communists in the audience disrupted the meeting by booing Telford, making disparaging remarks about J.S. Woodsworth, a national CCF leader, and singing the "Red Flag." As a newspaper reported: "The outstanding feature of the evening was the demonstration that there is no immediate connection between this phase of communism and the CCF."

Three days later the communists nominated their own candidate to run in the provincial election under the United Front banner. The meeting chose William Mahoney to be their
standard bearer. In a back-handed manner the government agent acknowledged the skills of the United Front candidate:

William Mahoney is a born agitator, of Irish descent, with all the objectionable qualities, none of the good ones, of the Irish. He is engineering all the meetings and demonstrations and as he is one of the few educated of the men, I think he writes all the resolutions, and his object is to embarass (sic) the Government, financially, and in any other way, as his continuance as leader depends upon keeping in the limelight.

As well as significant doctrinal differences and occupational divisions between supporters of the two parties, there was also the suggestion of an ethnic dimension that separated the communists and the CCF. The people who nominated the CCF candidate were named Robertson, Hutchison, Crassweller, Peckham, Anderson, McInnis, and Ellis. The British Isles seemed to be the homeland of the bulk of CCF supporters. The people who signed Mahoney's nomination papers were named Goethals, Radakovich, Huelordh, Gustafson, Lindquist, Warren, Sikstrom, Paradis, Dickinson, Johnson, Baker, Lindal, and Barker. Scandinavians and eastern Europeans were the core of the United Front supporters.

In the 1933 provincial election H.G. Perry, the Liberal candidate, easily won the Fort George riding. The CCF finished second with 625 votes, 952 behind the leader. The election established the CCF as the major opposition party in the Fort George constituency. The United Front gained only 192 votes, 7 percent of the total number cast. For the communists electoral success was a dream, but the campaign had allowed the opportunity for proselytizing.
In the context of the 1930s, the communists represented an important constituency in the northern interior which contributed significantly to improving conditions for unemployed workers. The communists found their strength among the same group of people that had been attracted to the Industrial Workers of the World and the Lumber Workers Industrial Union ten years earlier. An immigrant, migratory population from Scandinavia and eastern Europe driven to work at low-paying, seasonal jobs, these people were outsiders in the social and economic life of the Prince George district. With the onset of the depression their economic situation became even more precarious and they saw the communist movement as a vehicle for meaningful social change.

Yugoslavs, Scandinavians, Poles, and Russians had not been integrated into Canadian institutions: the demonstrations in the streets of Prince George and the occupations of the government offices were the first times that they actively participated in the political process. The "foreigners" and "bohunks" were pursuing objectives within Canadian society, which although radical and outside accepted conventions, forcefully illustrated the needs and existence of this heretofore subterranean element of society. If nothing else, the communist-led activities introduced these people on the fringe to the forum of municipal and provincial politics.

The main focus of the communists in the Prince George district was on the unemployed. Had there been any sustained activity in the East Line forest industry, communists would have been aggressive union organizers, but conditions in the 1930s
dictated otherwise. In dealing with the problem of unemployment the communists exposed three aspects of the situation. First, they fought for decent living conditions for people out of work. Second, they attacked the practice of forcing single, unemployed men from population centres to waste away in isolated camps, and third, they criticized the assumption that unemployment was the problem of the individual and not society.

The struggle for decent conditions in the relief camps and sufficient payments for survival in Prince George addressed a serious problem. The lack of medical treatment, the dysentery epidemic, and the overbearing camp foreman at Penny were realities that provincial authorities recognized only after the actions of the communists brought the issues to their attention. In municipal relief, the jurisdictional squabbles between the provincial, federal, and municipal governments over which agency was responsible for providing for the unemployed debilitated the transfer of funds to those who needed help. The NUWA took the complaints of individuals and pressed for immediate remedies from authorities intent on shifting responsibilities away from themselves. For people in desperate financial straits, constitutional, political, and administrative niceties were irrelevant, and it was the NUWA that became their advocate in securing needed funds through direct, speedy action.

The communists also rejected the very existence of the relief camps. It was not merely poor living conditions that underpinned this stance, but the belief that the forced detention of young men in the camps stripped them of dignity,
self-confidence, and the ability to participate normally in society. A provincial commission of inquiry found that food, sanitation, and facilities in the relief camps were satisfactory, but that the negative mental attitude of the inmates was the most serious problem in the camps. Liberal politicians came to realize that the existence of the camps was not healthy and that large segments of society were against their continuance. Premier Pattullo sent a telegram to the acting Prime Minister in the spring of 1935: "Citizens generally sympathetic with men in camps as they believe system devastating both to morale and character. Many citizens have relatives in these camps." In early 1934, H.G. Perry presented a memorandum to the Minister of Labour suggesting changes in the administration of relief, claiming that the present method "is fast breaking the morale of the greater portion of our people, and is not sufficient in itself to give satisfactory sustenance in many cases." Perry, who wanted the government to offer work to the unemployed so that self-respect would be retained, concluded with a warning:

One thing is certain, we cannot drift in the way we are doing, just carrying on with the old relief agreement, which is unsatisfactory to the recipient in most cases, disastrous to the future welfare of society and I believe the immediate welfare too, and objectionable to the taxpayer. No state of society can do other than collapse if this is continued.

The relief camps and the administration of relief were recognized as being problematic, but the implementation of changes was not forthcoming. The agitation of the NUWA kept a serious issue at the forefront of political and public dialogue.
While the communists fought for concerns that had the sympathy of large segments of the British Columbia population, they also saw themselves as part of a revolutionary movement destined to overthrow the economic and social order. The world-wide depression of the 1930s seemed to signal the demise of capitalism, and the growth of fascism in Europe appeared to be a last-ditch effort to prop up a dying system. The time seemed appropriate for wholesale changes and radical new beginnings. For Canadian communists the Soviet Union was the homeland of the international working-class movement, and they saw their activities in Prince George and along the East Line in a global context. With a little push capitalism would surely tumble. This analysis of the communists led to the taking of extreme positions and proved to be wrong, but in the context of the early 1930s the position was not outlandish, especially to workers and their families bearing the brunt of the economic crisis.

The eradication of capitalism was the goal; agitation and pressuring governments were tactics designed to achieve that aim. Prince George communists directed their actions in concert with international developments; in the context of this logic no compromise with the capitalistic state was acceptable. The strike of the municipal relief workers in the spring of 1935 exemplified this stance. When the strikers demands were to a large extent met by the city and the provincial government, the strikers refused to accept the terms or negotiate. Instead, they increased their demands and went to the barricades to challenge the strikebreakers and the authorities. Under such
circumstances it is doubtful whether the state could have satisfied the communists at all.

The disintegration of the forest economy in the 1930s brought new problems to the Prince George district and new responses from workers. Most of the forest industry work force experienced long terms of joblessness, and when men were needed operators hired permanent local residents and farmer-loggers, people less inclined to challenge existing economic relations. Conditions in the camps remained abysmal. For unemployed workers the communists held out the prospect of change and the chance to participate in activities to help themselves, rather than waiting passively for businessmen and governments to provide solutions. The CCF, for its part, succeeded in bringing together small entrepreneurs who had managed to maintain their concerns in tough economic times, farmers, and railway workers with relatively secure government jobs.

Both the CCFers and the communists were part of organizations that sought change at the national level. They recognized that local problems could only be solved by outside forces, for the northern interior was an underdeveloped economic region dependent on decisions made elsewhere. The railway was the most reliable employer in the district but it offered little in terms of economic expansion, and the weak forest industry was still the only hope for the future. The forms of protest in the 1930s reflected the nature of the segmented working class, a class that was incompletely formed in the forest sector, and the reality of life in an economically depressed region. For communists and CCFers only change in the larger system could
bring a level of prosperity to the fringe economy in the northern interior.
Notes


3. Citizen, Prince George, 30 October 1930.

4. Citizen, 6 November 1930.

5. Spiller to Superintendent, British Columbia Police, 5 December 1930.


7. Citizen, 16 April 1931.

8. Radiogram, 12 June 1931, PABC, GR 1323, f. L-125-1; Citizen, 18 June 1931.


10. Radiogram, Spiller to British Columbia police commissioner, 11 April 1932, PABC, GR 1323, B2300, f. L-125-1 (1932); Citizen, 14 April 1932.

11. Citizen, 7 July 1932.


15. The Unemployed Worker, 13 August 1932.


17. Radiograms, Spiller to British Columbia police commissioner, 12 August 1932 (11:45 a.m.); 12 August 1932 (2:45 p.m.), PABC, GR 1323, B2300, f. L-125-1 (1932); Citizen, 18 August 1932.
19. Citizen, 8 September 1932; 22 September 1932; 29 September 1932.
20. Citizen, 29 September 1932.
21. The Unemployed Worker, 22 October 1932; 5 November 1932.
24. Radiograms to British Columbia police commissioner, 21 November 1932; 22 November 1932, PABC, GR 1323, B2300, f. L-125-1 (1932); Citizen, 24 November 1932; The Unemployed Worker, 3 December 1932.
25. The Unemployed Worker, 3 December 1932.
28. Ibid.
30. Police Report, 21 January 1933, PABC, GR 1323, B2301, f. L-125-1 (1933); The Unemployed Worker, 4 February 1933; Canada, Immigration Branch, Public Archives of Canada, RG 76, C10288, v.396, f.563236, pt. 15.
31. The Unemployed Worker, 31 December 1932; 14 January 1933; Citizen, 26 January 1933.
33. The Unemployed Worker, 10 May 1933.
34. Citizen, 13 July 1933; The Unemployed Worker, 27 September 1933.
35. Citizen, 12 October 1933; 2 November 1933.
36. Radiogram, Prince Rupert police to British Columbia police commissioner, 17 November 1933, PABC, GR 1323, B2301, f. L-125-1 (1933); The Unemployed Worker, 22 November 1933; 29 November 1933; Preliminary Hearing Report, PABC, GR 419, v.418, f.22/1934; Citizen, 17 May 1934.

37. PABC, GR 1222, v.102, f.1; GR 1222, v.4, f.2.

38. Citizen, 11 April 1935; Strike report, Canada, Department of Labour, Public Archives of Canada, RG 27, T2983, v.374, f.29.


41. Ibid.; Citizen, 16 May 1935.

42. Radiogram, Prince Rupert police to British Columbia police commissioner, 13 May 1935, PABC, GR 1222, v.7, f.5.


44. Citizen, 23 May 1935.

45. Ibid., 30 May 1935.

46. Ibid., 30 May 1935.

47. Ibid., 6 June 1935.

48. Ibid., 6 June 1935; 13 June 1935.

49. Ibid., 9 July 1936; 12 August 1936.


51. Ibid.

52. Citizen, 30 November 1933; 18 April 1935.

53. Ibid., 1 October 1931.

54. Ibid., 5 May 1932; 12 May 1932.

55. Ibid., 26 May 1932.


58. *The Unemployed Worker*, 20 September 1933.


60. *Citizen*, 12 October 1933.


63. T.D. Pattullo to Sir George Perley, 25 March 1935, PABC, Add MSS 3, v.74, f.5. Pattullo was well aware of relief camp problems before 1935. See, for example, Pattullo to R.B. Bennett, 1 March 1934, PABC, Add MSS 3, v.74, f.4.

64. H.G. Perry to George S. Pearson, 8 January 1934, PABC, GR 1222, v.3, f.11.

65. *Ibid*.


Conclusion

The forest economies of the Port Alberni and Prince George districts exhibited the main features of staple exploitation. Production took place in the fringe areas near the resource, capital and labour were imported, and products were sold in outside markets. Both regions had large and small logging and sawmill operations, business successes and failures, and the same provincial state provided timber policies and social legislation. Non-forestry workers, small businessmen, and professionals lived in the two districts, where lumber workers in camps and milltowns endured dangerous working conditions, low wages, and often substandard living quarters. Forest industry workers were socially and politically marginal, and ethnic divisions fragmented the work force. Both the Alberni Valley and the northern interior felt the impact of national political and union enthusiasms, and zealous working-class activists made their presence known. Beyond these general features common to the two regions, however, there were significant differences in their early histories. The ability of companies to cushion themselves from the inherent insecurities of staple production and the business cycle, the social context of production, and the initiatives of workers were unique to each district.

To make sense of the multitude of factors that shaped the two local histories and to provide an analytic framework, the notion of class formation has been employed. While the study of class formation must include discussions of capital, labour,
community social structure, political and working-class organizations, and class conflict, it must also suggest an interpretive whole, an understanding of how the diverse elements in local districts intertwined in a socio-economic complex in a definable historical period. Comparing class formation in two local forest economies highlights the different processes at work, and suggests that by 1939 the Port Alberni district had undergone a major transformation from a locale of petty production, with a fragmented working class, to a more mature industrial community based on large-scale enterprise and possessing a well-coordinated work force. The Prince George district failed to make this transition in the years from 1910 to 1939.

Capital was the most important variable in the frontier regions in setting the tone for economic development and in shaping class configurations and the responses of working people. In the Alberni Valley, well-capitalized firms with experienced managers, effective marketing strategies, and political influence were able to survive and expand in the volatile lumber trade. The success of two large companies in overcoming the economic downturn in the 1930s made the valley one of the most significant forest industry centres in the province. In 1939, three of the five largest sawmills in the province were located in the Alberni Valley. The northern interior, despite many promises and much potential, failed to develop a viable forest economy. After a faltering start in the boom years after World War I, a string of sawmills along the East Line maintained an existence and expanded production
throughout the 1920s. The depression, however, abruptly reversed the trend of increased regional lumber production. The small firms were unable to respond to the disappearance of traditional markets and falling commodity prices; the forest economy of the northern interior stagnated in the 1930s. If there was a major turning point in the region's economic development, it was the failure of the pulp and paper industry to become a reality in the 1920s. This large concentration of capital would have served to stabilize the regional economy somewhat and eased the devastation of the 1930s. Central Canadian investors, however, decided to withhold their capital and the northern interior was doomed to be an economic backwater.

The social formations also differed in the two regions. These areas were not only lumber producers; fishing in the Alberni Valley and farming and railroading in the Prince George district were crucial to the local economies. Workers in these industries, as well as merchants and professionals, were important members of society in these forest industry communities. Sawmills and logging camps in the northern interior were seasonal operations; transient workers from the prairies and local farmers made up the bulk of the forest industry labour force. Isolated in logging camps and small mill sites along the Upper Fraser River and working intermittently, workers were not integrated into the local society dominated by more permanent residents living in Prince George. The camps and mills in the Alberni Valley were able to operate year round. While loggers were geographically separated from the resident
population in the area and formed a migratory work force, they
did have a home base. They operated out of Vancouver and
restricted their search for work to the coastal region of
British Columbia. Sawmill workers were centred in Great Central
Lake and Port Alberni, and although often transient, a core of
better-paid employees maintained residence in the valley. With
the building of new sawmills in Port Alberni in the mid-1930s,
the size of the mill work force increased dramatically and the
geographically concentrated mill hands numerically dominated the
valley's work force.

Two further features of class development in the forest
industries also deserve attention. First, the divisions between
sawmill workers and loggers had important implications for class
action. Despite working for the same companies, different job
cultures, places of residence, and work settings inhibited the
emergence of a cohesive, forest industry working class. In the
northern interior the ambiguous class position of farmer-loggers
also fragmented the woods work force.

A second feature is the question of ethnicity. Loggers in
the coastal region, especially fallers and buckers, were often
of Scandinavian heritage and these workers were at the forefront
of union and strike activities. An angry M.A. Grainger, manager
of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company, reportedly exclaimed
during a loggers' strike in 1934 that he would no longer hire
Scandinavians in his operation. While similar ethnic
background undoubtedly contributed in generating concerted
action among loggers, its importance should not be exaggerated.
The nature of work in the woods, its inherent danger, the close
quarters shared by loggers in camps, the authoritarianism of management, the congregating of loggers in Vancouver between jobs, and the coordination of all coastal hiring by the Loggers' Agency also engendered working-class activism. Scandinavians constituted a high proportion of the coastal logging work force, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish to what extent militancy was the result of ethnicity or the nature of the job.

In the Alberni Valley, Japanese and Chinese immigrant workers made up a significant percentage of sawmill workers and were often blamed for the inability of a union to take hold in the plants. R.J. Burde launched his campaign for legislation to improve the conditions of white mill hands during the 1920s based on this premise. However, it was not the presence of Chinese and Japanese workers but the racism of white workers that inhibited the unionization of the sawmill work force. There is no evidence to suggest that Chinese and Japanese workers, who worked at low-paying, unskilled jobs, were immune to union ideas. The focus on "Asiatic" workers obscured a more important characteristic of the sawmill work force. Skilled workers, such as sawyers, filers, and engineers, were highly paid permanent residents of British origin, and throughout most of the period they were loyal to their trades and their companies. These key workers enjoyed their status in the community and felt a closer affinity to the merchants and professionals in the valley than to the labourers in the mills.

There was an ethnic dimension in the northern interior forest industry as well. Woods workers, often recent immigrants
from central Europe and Scandinavia who did not speak English, were regarded with disdain by the permanent social elite that was of British origin. Uneducated, transient, labouring at low-paying jobs, and living in isolated camps, these forest industry workers were outsiders and their attempts to better their lot were expressions of their station in society as well as their working conditions.

Class formation, through union activism, reflected local class configurations and the growth patterns of the forest industry companies, but workers were also affected by events and institutions that developed outside their locale. The Industrial Workers of the World, the One Big Union, the Lumber Workers Industrial Union, and the Communist Party of Canada made their presence felt in the two regions. However, the different levels of economic and class development dictated what form these organizations assumed. The LWIU in the northern interior was syndicalist in orientation, a stance appropriate to the experience of migratory, seasonal workers in an undeveloped economy of petty producers, while in the Alberni Valley loggers sought to establish a more structured industrial union framework to represent coastal workers that were increasingly working in factory-like circumstances. In the 1930s communist agitators in the northern interior worked among the unemployed in a forest economy that was floundering, but in the Port Alberni district the communists led a struggle to unionize workers in a prosperous lumber industry.

The workers in the two forest economies chose radical organizations to achieve their ends. Yet, in examining the
quotidian conflicts in the tie, logging, and relief camps the expectations of workers were hardly revolutionary. In the years after 1919, loggers and tie hacks pressed for clean bedding, sanitary camp facilities, decent food, and better wages. The provincial government had deemed most camps as being below acceptable standards, but employers refused to comply with the regulations. The struggle by the unemployed in the 1930s for sustenance and the abolition of relief camps was viewed with sympathy by large segments of the British Columbia population. Nor was the fight for union recognition a particularly radical notion. Miners, tradesmen, and railway workers had been part of recognized unions for decades. While the aims of workers were not beyond the pale of reason or the conventions of society, there were large obstacles to be overcome. In the eyes of employers, the government, and the craft-dominated Canadian union establishment the "timber beasts" were considered unskilled and unsuited for union membership. Unemployed people were seen as being responsible for their own fate. To surmount this social inertia workers needed a dynamic movement in order to organize their fellow workers in similar straits and to challenge social and economic ideas. The syndicalists and socialists after World War I and the communists in the 1930s were the most dynamic elements in the working class and provided the energy, organizational skill, and chiliastic fervor to rally workers and to launch a serious campaign for better conditions, higher wages, and union recognition.

But the importance of outside organizations like the LWIU and the CPC also reflected the weak, underdeveloped nature of
the working class in the two districts throughout much of the period. Local communities were not able to sustain indigenous movements and needed the momentum and enthusiasm of broader organizations and outside organizers to generate union drives. This situation changed in the Alberni Valley during the 1930s when the number of sawmill workers increased, loggers and mill hands began to act together, and local leaders emerged to represent the interests of the work force in the valley.

The late development of a permanent union in the British Columbia forest industry was due to a number of factors that were evident in the Port Alberni and Prince George districts. The lack of strong union tradition in the North American forest industry meant that workers in British Columbia had little initial support in launching organizational drives in their camps and mills. Geographical isolation and transiency further undermined attempts at unionization. It is also noteworthy that neither Port Alberni nor Prince George were single-industry or single-company towns, although this had changed in the Alberni Valley by 1939. Railroad workers, farmers, fishermen, and small businessmen formed significant groups in the local population, groups that had interests that were often at odds with those of forest workers. There were also schisms within the forest sector work force: mill hands, skilled sawmill tradesmen, loggers, and farmer-loggers possessed distinct job cultures and pursued separate goals. In these frontier regions, then, class lines were not clearly drawn and the community was not divided in a hothouse environment that set the workers and local population against one or two large firms. In the Alberni
Valley in the late 1930s the segmentation in the forest working class was being overcome and workers were facing employers in a mature industrial setting. In this environment the IWA took hold.

Class formation, through working-class political expression, also reflected local circumstances. Socialism, labourism, and communism were national working-class enthusiasms that swept Canada in the years from 1910 to 1939, and these movements attracted adherents in the northern interior and in the Alberni Valley. Ironically, local merchants were the cornerstone of the socialist and labour parties in the Port Alberni district during the 1910s and 1920s, though the sawmill work force was influential enough in the 1920s to earn the support of labourite politicians in pressing for legislative change. During the 1930s the mill workers grew in number and by the end of the decade the mill hands were offering their own leaders for the local CCF party. Loggers, living in camps and often from Vancouver, were unable to participate in local politics, and the communists, who were fully occupied in union business during the 1930s, were not significantly active in the political process.

In the Prince George district the threads of socialism and labourism that led to the formation of a local branch of the CCF were carried by farmers, railway workers, and small businessmen. A second strain of activism was rooted in the non-British ethnic population that was outside the mainstream of local society and that included tie hacks, loggers, and the unemployed workers who were on the economic and social edge.
The radical syndicalism of the IWW and the northern LWIU and the revolutionary stance of communism expressed the needs and frustrations of people on the fringe who bore the brunt of hardships in tough economic times.

The success of the CCF in the northern interior during the 1930s is somewhat surprising. Provincial CCF policy offered little for the forest industry in the interior of British Columbia. A CCF forestry critic declared categorically that there would never be a pulp mill in the interior of the province. A prominent CCF member of the legislature attacked the government-industry initiatives in seeking new markets throughout the world. Further, the CCF, alarmed at the depletion of coastal forests, was outspoken in the 1930s regarding conservation of the timber resource and reforestation. In the interior, however, large-scale capital investment, secure markets, government help, and increased exploitation of the forests were necessary to establish a stable economy, profitable companies, and a viable working class community. It seems that farmers, merchants, and railway workers in the northern interior had given up on the potential of their forest resource.

There were also elements of regional protest in the politics of the two fringe economies. In 1921, H.G. Perry, a rookie member of the legislature for Fort George, chafed at the operation of the Liberal caucus system because it did not allow him to forward the interests of his constituents. Perry resigned from the caucus but was soon mollified and became a loyal and successful Liberal. In the Alberni Valley
independent politicians represented the area in the 1920s and 1930s at the provincial and federal levels. R.J. Burde was the provincial independent, and federally, A.W. Neill remained independent of the three major parties in the 1920s and 1930s. Although Neill was a liberal in thought, though "inclined to Radicalism," and generally supported the Liberal party, he chose to remain independent, reflecting his constituents' distrust of the established political machines. If there were sentiments of dissatisfaction in both resource districts, there was no chance of forming an alliance of staple-producing regions. Their interests were too diverse--often diametrically opposed--and common bonds were elusive.

The impact of the provincial state in the two forest economies became more direct in the years from 1910 to 1939. The provincial government continued to control timber tenure and participate, to varying degrees, in trade extension, but the government increased its intervention into relations between capital and labour. The provincial government had played an insignificant role in the wave of strikes in the Port Alberni and Prince George districts between 1919 and 1922. Workers and employers were left to battle it out between themselves. Yet, the provincial government was not oblivious to workers' concerns; during the 1920s minimum-wage and hours-of-work were enacted to benefit sawmill workers in the province. In the 1930s the state further increased its involvement in relations between capital and labour. The government was directly involved in the 1934 Vancouver Island loggers' strike, trying to negotiate a settlement and providing police protection for
strikebreakers when negotiations failed. The state also monitored the activities of communist militants, pressed for the deportation of radicals, and implemented legislation governing trade unions. Public pressure on the government forced new responses in managing class conflict, and the state, concerned both with economic expansion and the welfare of citizens, took on a more activist role in the provincial forest economy.  

The process of class formation in the Port Alberni and Prince George districts exhibited distinct characteristics. In 1939 the Alberni Valley had a working class that was active in politics and unions. The large mill work force and the loggers were acting in concert with other members of the community to effect change at the work place and in the area's social and economic life through political means. The growth of a stable, concentrated working class was predicated on the success of Bloedel, Stewart & Welch and the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company in creating profitable, expanding business concerns. In the northern interior, on the other hand, the lumber work force did not participate in union or political enthusiasms in the years from 1922 to 1939, and the CCF was the preserve of people not directly involved in the forest industry. This reflected the weak, fragmented nature of the forest sector working class, and unemployment was a much more pressing problem than job conditions to mill and bush workers. The segmented, tentative working class in the northern interior mirrored the failure of forest companies to remain viable in the continental lumber trade.
It is important not to misread the conclusions offered here, to expect too much or too little from the analysis of class formation. The more developed class formation in the Alberni Valley on the eve of the Second World War does not suggest that an ideally "class conscious" working class had been created. Divisions remained within the forest industry workforce and within the broader regional working class, fragmentation that was exposed in the political arena in the 1940s and in the split in the Port Alberni IWA local between communist and anti-communist blocs in 1948. On the other hand, class formation cannot be reduced to a mechanical response to changing economic circumstances, whereby the success of firms in the Alberni Valley dictated the form and nature of the working class. To be sure, the role of capital was extremely significant, but class configurations and forms of worker protest reflected initiatives by working people, initiatives that forced capital to respond and reassess its position on labour.

Class formation is a complex analytic framework, incorporating large segments of local social and economic development and emphasizing the distinctiveness of local histories. Yet, the intricate historical process of class formation does speak to a broader conceptualization of community history. While class formation in the Alberni Valley in the late 1930s was more mature than it had been in 1920 and more developed than it was in the Prince George district, a qualitative change had also occurred in the Port Alberni district. Initiatives by lumber companies in a volatile staple
trade and by workers in political and union activism had created a fundamentally new arrangement; capital and labour were interacting in the context of large-scale capital accumulation. Alberni Valley forest industry workers had more in common with workers in large factories in central Canada than with loggers, tie hacks, and mill hands toiling for small, unstable firms in the northern interior. The transformation wrought by accelerated capitalist exploitation signalled the beginning of a new era in the history of the Port Alberni district. The Prince George district, on the other hand, underwent no such transition and remained a society of petty producers, with capital and labour engaged in a simple, underdeveloped staple economy. The class formations in the two districts expose the uneven development of capitalism in the British Columbia forest economy.
Notes


6. The communists were also lacking in ideas regarding the revival of the interior forest industry.


9. There is a lively debate on the role of the state in Canadian society, especially on the connections between the business class and government, and on the role of the state in relations between capital and labour. See Tom Traves, Canadian Manufacturers and the Federal Government, 1917-1931 (Toronto, 1979); Alvin Finkel, Business and Social Reform in the Thirties (Toronto, 1979); Robin Fisher, "Regulating Fuels in the Depression: The Coal and Petroleum Control Board of British Columbia," BC Studies, 66 (Summer 1985), pp. 3-27; Paul Craven, "An Impartial Umpire": Industrial Relations and the Canadian State, 1900-1911 (Toronto, 1980). The interconnection between business and the state is complex, and to see the state as merely an agent of business is an oversimplification. In the British Columbia forest industry, legislation on hours of work and the minimum wage was attacked by the business community and supported by workers. In assessing the evolving role of the state in conflicts between capital and labour, it is important to note that state intervention in major strikes was not a universal practice in the first
decades of the century. The loggers' strikes of 1919 to 1922 were almost bereft of state involvement.

10. In the 1941 provincial election the Alberni riding sent a Liberal, James Mowat, to Victoria. The CCF candidate, Charlie Michell, was a close second, and, significantly, had the votes of an Independent Labour candidate been added to the CCF tally, Michell would have won the seat. Mowat was re-elected in 1945, 1949, and 1952, but in 1953, after Mowat's retirement, the CCF took the seat, holding it in 1956, 1960, and 1963. In the Fort George riding, H.G. Perry was elected in 1941, but in 1945, John McInnis, the CCF candidate, finally upset Perry. A Liberal, Coalition candidate regained the seat in 1949, but from 1952 to 1972 the Social Credit Party held the riding. British Columbia, Statement of Votes By Electoral District (Victoria, 1942-1972).

11. The Port Alberni IWA local was the first in British Columbia to pass a resolution in 1948 calling for a referendum on secession from the international union. Jerry Lembcke and William M. Tattam, One Union in Wood (Madeira Park, 1984), p. 125. In the Prince George district an IWA local was established in 1944, and it too experienced the turmoil of the split between communist and anti-communist blocs. Ken Bernsohn, Slabs, Scabs and Skidders: A History of the I.W.A. in the Central Interior (Prince George, 1978), pp. 19-27.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Local Newspapers (published weekly)

Alberni Pioneer News, 1907-1912
Alberni Advocate, 1912-1915
Port Alberni News, 1912-1934
West Coast Advocate, Port Alberni, 1931-1941
Fort George Tribune, 1914-1915
Fort George Herald, South Fort George, 1910-1915
Prince George Herald, 1915
Prince George Post, 1914-1915
Prince George Star, 1916-1917
Citizen, Prince George, 1916-1941
Leader, Prince George, 1921-1923

Labour Newspapers

Western Clarion, Vancouver, 1903-1920
British Columbia Federationist, Vancouver 1911-1925
One Big Union Bulletin, Winnipeg, 1919-1923
Lumber Workers' Bulletin (IWW), Spokane, 1923-1924
Labor Statesman, Vancouver, 1924-1941
The Unemployed Worker, Vancouver 1931-1934
B.C. Lumber Worker, Vancouver, 1934-1941

Lumber Trade Journals

Lumberman and Contractor, Vancouver, 1905-1907
Western Canada Lumberman, Vancouver, 1908
Western Lumberman, Vancouver 1908-1928
Pacific Coast Lumberman, Vancouver 1917-1923
British Columbia Lumberman, Vancouver 1921-1941

Manuscript Collections

Public Archives of Canada

Department of Labour, Canada, Records
Frontier College Papers
Immigration Branch Records

Public Archives of British Columbia

Attorney General, British Columbia, Records
British Columbia Forest Service Records
British Columbia Provincial Police Records
Department of lands, British Columbia, Records
Fort George District, Annual Management Reports, 1917-1941
   (Lands Branch)
Immigration Branch (Canada) Records
Premier, British Columbia, Papers
Vancouver Forest District, Annual Management Reports, 1920-1941
   (Lands Branch)
Company Registration Files, Department of the Attorney General
C.D. Orchard Papers
Royal Commission on Forestry, 1944-5, Proceedings
Royal Commission on Labour, British Columbia, 1912-14, Proceedings
Commission of Inquiry Under the Fort George Election Act (1917), Proceedings
Commission on the Incorporation of the City of Alberni, 1912

University of British Columbia, Special Collections
Council of Forest Industries of British Columbia, Papers
Industrial Workers of the World (Vancouver Branch), Papers
Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection
C.D. Orchard Papers
Harold Pritchett--IWA, District Council No. 1, Papers
S.F. Tolmie Papers
One Big Union Records
Alberni District Historical Society Archives, Port Alberni
Various typescript essays
Alberni Valley Museum, Port Alberni
McLean Mill Archives
Prince George Public Library
Pioneer Tapes. Transcripts of Interviews with Prince George Pioneers.
College of New Caledonia Library, Prince George
Transcripts of oral interviews with various interior lumbermen done by C.D. Orchard between 1955 and 1961 (the originals of these interviews are located in the Public Archives of British Columbia).

United Grain Growers' Corporate Library, Winnipeg
Company Annual Reports

Published Government Documents
British Columbia, Department of Labour. Annual Reports.
   Victoria: King's Printer, 1918-1941.


----------. Reports of the Forest Branch of the Department of Lands. Victoria: King's Printer, 1914-1941.


Canada, Department of Labour. The Labour Gazette. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1917-1940.


Articles


Heron, Craig. "Labourism and the Canadian Working Class," Labour/Le Travail, 13 (Spring 1984), pp. 45-76.


----------. "Early Lumbering on Vancouver Island," British Columbia Historical Quarterly, 2, 2 (1938), pp. 95-121.


Books


Cameron, Colin. Forestry ... B.C.'s Devastated Industry: A Frank Discussion. Vancouver: CCF (B.C. Section), 1941.


**Theses**


