NOTES

Introduction: “Makers of History”


6 The first of these histories was Paul Phillips, No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia (Vancouver: B.C. Federation of Labour, 1967), and the latest is Alvin Finkel et al., Working People in Alberta: A History (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2012), but none are explicitly histories of provincial federations. The Québec Federation of Labour (Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec) published a partial history (to 1965), FTQ: Des milliers d’histoires qui façonnent l’histoire (Montréal: FTQ, 1988), and Québec labour history has been well served by works such as Jacques Rouillard, Histoire du syndicalisme au Québec des origines à nos jours (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1989), and the updated edition, Le Syndicalisme québécois: Deux siècles d’histoire (2004).

7 The quotations are from oral history interviews conducted by the Labour History in New Brunswick (LHTNB) project and deposited at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, in Fredericton (LHTNB fonds, MC3477), and at the Centre d’études acadiennes Anselme-Chiasson (fonds LHTNB), in Moncton. In the case of interviews in French, I have provided an English translation of quoted material.

8 For one recent example, see Bonnie Huskins and Michael Boudreau, “‘Getting By’ in Postwar Saint John: Working-Class Families and New Brunswick’s Informal Economy,” in Michael Boudreau, Peter G. Toner, and Tony Tremblay, eds., Exploring the Dimensions of Self-Sufficiency for New Brunswick
(Fredericton: New Brunswick and Atlantic Studies Research and Development Centre, 2009), 77–99. For a selection of older articles, many of them from the pages of the journals Acadiensis and Labour/Le Travail, see David Frank and Greg Kealey, eds., Labour and Working-Class History in Atlantic Canada: A Reader (St. John’s: ISER Books, 1995).


11 The SSHRC project is commonly referred to by the acronym LHTNB (Labour History in New Brunswick). For further information about the project, see http://www.lhtnb.ca, which includes features, documents, and lesson plans on several themes in provincial labour history, as well as links to other resources. Specific sources from this website are given in the notes below, but one resource of general interest is the searchable database of officers of the Federation of Labour since 1913. For a discussion of the project, see Carol Ferguson, “Re-Connecting with the History of Labour in New Brunswick: Historical Perspectives on Contemporary Issues/Nouveau regard sur l’histoire du travail au Nouveau-Brunswick: Les enjeux contemporains vus dans une perspective historique,” Acadiensis 37, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2008): 76–85.

A brief note on the present text is also in order here. Except where warranted by the context, I have translated quotations from the French into English and provided a translation in the endnotes. While bearing in mind historical context and the demands of clarity, I have at times used abbreviated or informal forms for the names of union organizations (as well as the formal name). In the case of organizations that did not have names in English, a parenthetical translation has been provided when the organization is first mentioned.

12 New Brunswick lacks a modern provincial history. The most useful surveys of history in Atlantic Canada challenge older generalizations about regional conservatism. See E. R. Forbes and D. A. Muise, eds., The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation (Fredericton and Toronto: Acadiensis Press and University of Toronto Press, 1993); and Margaret Conrad and James K. Hiller, Atlantic Canada: A History, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010).

One: “An Accomplished Fact,” 1913–1929


4 *Eastern Labor News*, 29 March 1913. In September 1912, Sugrue was attending meetings of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada in Guelph, Ontario, and did not participate in the Saint John meeting that made the first attempt to organize a federation. As a member of the provincial executive committee for New Brunswick, Sugrue reported in May 1913 on the earlier effort by provisional officers as follows: “Owing to the lack of interest of one of these officers nothing was accomplished”: *Trades and Labour Congress Proceedings, 1913*, p. 35.

5 *Standard*, 2 September 1913; *Eastern Labor News*, 21 September 1912. For biographical details on Sugrue, see *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 15.

6 “New Brunswick Federation of Labour Minutes,” 20 January 1914, 1 July 1914, 11 January 1915, and 1 July 1915. At the latter meeting, the frequency of meetings was reviewed, and they met annually thereafter. Canadian Labour Congress President Claude Jodoin later stated that a charter dated 25 February 1914 was signed by J.C. Watters and Fred Bancroft: *NBFL Proceedings, 1914*, p. 35. The earliest proceedings are in minutebooks but were published in a printed form beginning in 1918 and then in typewritten form in 1923; from 1918 onwards they are cited here as *NBFL Proceedings*. No official minutes for 1916 and 1917 were located, though accounts are found in other union records. According to the *Globe*, 20 January 1914, delegates proposed that the Bureau of Labour, created in 1908 under the provincial secretary, be placed under a separate official “who would be a member of the government and a representative of the labor interests in it.” The *Standard*, 21 January 1914, reported that the proposed amendments to the Fair Wage Clause stated that contractors on public works be required to pay union wages.


8 *TLC Proceedings, 1913*, p. 35. See also the *Standard*, 16 and 17 September 1912. Montréal had been agitating for the honour for several years.

9 James L. Sugrue to Provincial Secretary, 1 August 1914, and Provincial Secretary to George R. Fuller, 4 August 1914, box 52, Executive Council Papers, rs 9, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (hereafter *panb*). No copies have been located, but a similar booklet was published for the Calgary meetings in 1911.

10 *TLC Proceedings, 1913*, p. 35; *TLC Proceedings, 1914*, p. 3.

11 Saint John delegates C. H. Stevens and C. E. Harrison supported more training for street railway workers; Seymour Powell of the Moncton boilermakers called for more technical education for apprentices; Edwin Thomas proposed laws to regulate private detective agencies. In addition, a written appeal from Ella Hatheway of Saint John, president of the Saint John Women’s Suffrage Committee, was favourably received, and the congress passed a resolution in favour of the extension of votes to women.

12 O’Reilly’s appeal to union members was based not only on ideas of solidarity but also on the...
self-interest of union members: by organizing women, the male union members would protect themselves against “the possibility of unorganized women crowding men out of employment by the lower rate of wages they would accept.” According to the *Globe*, O’Reilly “made a deep impression” on the delegates. See the *Globe*, 23 and 24 September 1914. The newspaper reports spell her name as O’Riley. For a brief biography, see *Notable American Women, 1607–1950: A Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 651–53.

13 *Globe*, 22 September 1914.


15 *NBFL Proceedings*, 12 March 1918. See also the report of the meeting in Minutebook, 1907–30, Saint John Typographical Union No. 85, s 18-6, New Brunswick Museum (hereafter NBM).


17 See folders for 15 February and 7 June 1916, box 54, and for 3 January 1917, box 55, RS9, PANB.

18 Compensation claims were considered by an independent board, using a standard schedule and, most importantly, without regard to the cause of the accident as long as it arose from conditions of employment; workers and their families could expect standard benefits without reference to their ability to seek restitution in the courts. The costs were paid by a form of taxation based on payroll lists and occupational categories; indeed, by increasing the liability of employers for accidents at work, the premiums were expected to create an incentive for promoting safe conditions at work. For the developing context, see Eric Tucker, *Administering Danger in the Workplace: The Law and Politics of Occupational Health and Safety Regulation in Ontario, 1850–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).


20 An interim report was dated 14 May 1917. See “Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Working of the Ontario and Nova Scotia Workmen’s Compensation Act,” *Journals of the House of Assembly, 1917*. Public hearings were held in Saint John, Fredericton, Woodstock, Moncton, Chatham, Bathurst, and Campbellton. At each location, one or more of the commissioners, usually including Sugrue, listened to evidence given by workers, employers, doctors, journalists, and
others. Local union leaders took a prominent part in making the case for the new laws.

21 ILA 273 Minutebook, 20 March 1918, NBM.
22 Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, 1918, 33–34, 260–61, 277–79. For the progress of the bill, see Bill 23, 1918, RS 24, PAnB. There was also a plan to provide a list of industrial diseases covered by the act. However, a critical reading of the Workmen’s Compensation Act should also draw attention to limitations characteristic of contemporary legislation. Exclusions for willful misconduct and intoxication were uncontroversial. Benefits generally were to be closely assessed on the basis of the extent and duration of incapacity and a worker’s past earnings as well as other possible sources of income. Contributory negligence could be taken into account, and payments could not exceed 55 percent of earnings; while death benefits could be as high as $3,500, disability benefits could not exceed $1,500. In the case of fatalities, surviving children received a benefit to the age of sixteen, and widows were entitled to $20 per month, a benefit to be terminated upon remarriage. In its first year of operations, the board considered a total of 2,746 claims and authorized payments of $89,619.27. See First Annual Report of the Workmen’s Compensation Board of the Province of New Brunswick (1919), 7, 20.

23 Initially Sugrue was to be paid less than the other members, but he appealed this and his salary was raised to the level of the vice-chairman, $3,000 per annum; in 1920 the chair was paid $4,500 and the other members $3,500. See folder: 2 October 1918, box 58; folder: 1 May 1919, box 59; and folder: 17 April 1920, box 61, RS 9, PANB.
24 The account here draws on an unpublished paper by George Vair, “The 1917 Plumbers Strike” as well as a diary in the John Bruce fonds, MG 31 B8, vol. 2, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC).
26 Ibid.
27 For biographical details on Melanson, see the entry at http://www.lhtnb.ca.
28 Text of speech by Margaret MacNinch, 1946, p. 5, Unity Lodge #10, Ladies’ Auxiliary, International Association of Machinists, fonds 150P, Service des archives, Université du Québec à Montréal.
29 Moncton’s Labor Day Celebration, September 1st, 1919, p. 32. The parade was followed by a programme of sports events at the athletic grounds that was notable for variety, including five different versions of the 100-yard dash — war veterans, union men, ladies, boys aged fifteen and under, and men weighing 225 pounds or more. There were also exhibition booths, a free picture show, horse racing at the speedway, and fireworks in the evening. It was not all fun and games. The labour council pursued regularly issues of importance to the city’s workers, including the rising rents and prices in the city. In June 1919, they telegraphed support to Toronto metal trades workers who were preparing to go out in a general strike. A list of affiliates included municipal employees, as well as women workers who belonged to
the United Textile Workers of America. See documents and correspondence in ms 5, b1, Moncton and District Labour Council fonds, mc 1407, panb.


31 NBFL Proceedings, 1920. Both were important recruits for the union movement. Born at Chatham in 1881, Martin had worked as a clerk for the Snowball enterprises before going into business as a storekeeper on his own account; he was active in community affairs, served on the town council, and was well-known as a bandmaster who played cornet and violin. For his part Stuart, born near Minto in 1873, had been a founder of the Fredericton Socialist League in 1902 and the New Brunswick Teachers Association in 1903; he had come to Newcastle as a newspaper editor and then worked as a school principal and served on the town council. An exponent of the social gospel, Stuart considered socialism to be nothing less than applied Christianity. He hoped to see broad cooperation among reform groups in the province. He encouraged the Federation to welcome the affiliation of teachers, and he called for close political cooperation between farmer and labour candidates. See Prominent People of the Maritime Provinces (Saint John: Canadian Publicity Co., 1922), 124; W.D. Hamilton, Dictionary of Miramichi Biography (Saint John, 1997), 225; and J.K. Chapman, “Henry Harvey Stuart (1873–1952): New Brunswick Reformer,” Acadiensis 5, no. 2 (Spring 1976): 79–104.

32 “Convention Call” [1920], mc 1407, panb. Federation stationery at this time featured a broad motto: “Organize, Educate, Federate, Co-operate”; see, for example, C.A. Melanson to W.E. Foster, 3 March 1920, folder: 17 April 1920, box 61, rs 9, panb.

33 Thorne was noted as one of the credentialed delegates who was not present at sessions on the first day: Standard, 12 January 1921.

34 In addition to Melanson, the 1921 delegate list included several names of Acadian origin, all from the urban centres of Moncton and Saint John.

35 NBFL Proceedings, 1918. The same session had also produced a Vocational School Act.

36 NBFL Proceedings, 1919, 1920. For the order-in-council extending the Compensation Act to workers in the woods, see Minutes of the Executive Council, 17 April 1919, film 426, rs 6, panb. In 1920 the Factory Act was brought under the Workmen’s Compensation Board; however, there remained only one inspector for the whole province, and recommendations for a female inspector were not acted upon.

37 NBFL Proceedings, 1920; Union Worker, April 1920. Although the newspaper was not directly controlled by the unions, it received an endorsement from the Federation. The managing editor, A.D. Colwell, was a member of the typographical union and secretary of the Saint John Trades and Labour Council. The newspaper was supported by subscribers and advertisers, although the latter included
only a small number of locals in Saint John who purchased cards for the union directory. A report on the Federation meetings underlined the “calm and dignified manner in which President Melanson conducted the proceedings,” and the high quality of discussion and resolutions was seen as an indication that union members were well qualified to participate in governing the province.

38 *Union Worker*, February 1920. While supportive of independent labour politics, the newspaper identified itself with moderate labourism: “Within the columns, there will be no room for One Big Union ideology, Red Anarchy, Socialism, Bolshevism. The columns will consist of articles written by men in the ranks of labour who have by persistent efforts and honest toil won places for themselves in the community.”

39 For provincial election results, see *Elections in New Brunswick, 1784–1984* (Fredericton: Legislative Library, 1984). As leader of the *ila* local, Martin was, according to a biographical notice in 1922, “selected by laborers as an absolute labor man.” He collaborated regularly with the Federation leaders in legislative matters, and the Federation president in 1923, for instance, acknowledged the “cooperation and assistance he received from Brother J. S. Martin, Labor Member for Northumberland Co. who was ready at all times to provide all the assistance possible”: *NBFL Proceedings*, 1923. After his term as an MLA, Martin continued to attend as a delegate and was elected a vice-president on several occasions. Less is known about Vanderbeck, who was born at Renous in 1864 and traced his roots back to New Jersey Loyalists who settled at Fredericton in 1783. He worked for the Snowball interests, both as an overseer and mill manager. Like Martin, he was active in community affairs, serving on the county board of health; he too was known as a musician and “played a unique twelve-string guitar.” See W. D. Hamilton, *Dictionary of Miramichi Biography* (Saint John, 1997), 390–91.

40 *NBFL Proceedings*, 1921. There was no political breakthrough in the subsequent 1921 Dominion election. In Westmorland, the local *ILP* endorsed Albert E. Trites as a Farmer-Labour candidate, and Fred A. Campbell of the street railway union ran as the labour candidate on the Farmer-Labour ticket in St. John–Albert. Both finished in third place, Trites with 3,059 votes and Campbell with 1,224 votes.

41 Credentialed delegates numbered 48 in 1922, 38 in 1923, 42 in 1924, 25 in 1925, 26 in 1926, and 33 in 1928 and 1929; actual attendance was usually somewhat lower.

42 Melanson later became the city’s receiver of taxes. He remained a leading citizen in Moncton, serving, for example, as a director of *L’Évangéline*. His labour background was not forgotten. In 1944 he was appointed a member of the province’s Civil Service Commission, and as late as 1956 he was welcomed at the Federation convention as one of the early pioneers.

43 For biographical details on Tighe, see the entry at http://www.lhtnb.ca. A more detailed account is forthcoming in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 16.

44 The conflict is documented in file 161, vol. 327, Strikes and Lockouts Files, Records of

45 Union Worker, August 1921.
46 Standard, 12 January 1921. A debate arising from the executive report at the 1921 meetings also seemed to indicate the increased subordination of the Federation to the TLC. This involved a requirement that the Federation's legislative programme be submitted to the Trades and Labour Congress. See NBFL Proceedings, 1921 and Telegraph, 13 January 1921.

47 Union Worker, March 1920, September 1921; Gleaner, 18 March 1926.
48 The 1921 meetings had called for the creation of a full Department of Labour, with a minister as a member of cabinet. When this reform was not forthcoming, the Federation supported proposals to consolidate the administration of the Factory and Workmen’s Compensation Acts under a single board, pending the establishment of a proper Department of Labour. There was also considerable discussion of the labour provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, and Federation delegates participated in national meetings to discuss how to implement these in Canada.

49 In recommending Sugrue, George Melvin had written: “Mrs. Sugrue as you no doubt know is the wife of Mr. J. L. Sugrue Commissioner on the Workmen’s Compensation Board, and through his wide knowledge and experience of the Labor Movement and what it stands for and advocates, has herself aquired [sic] considerable knowledge of these matters”: Melvin to P. J. Veniot, 9 June 1921, folder: 12 September 1923, box 65, RS9, PANB.

50 Minutes of Executive Council, 12 September 1923, RS6, PANB; Journals of the House of Assembly, 1925, 22; Labour Gazette, April 1925, 331. No copy of the report has come to light.

51 NBFL Proceedings, 1927.
52 NBFL Proceedings, 1923. At this time Veniot also announced that he would appoint the desired Commission on Mothers’ Allowance and Minimum Wage Acts. The 1923 minutes report that Veniot was the first provincial premier to speak at the Federation meetings and note that “he stated that while he could not promise that we would get every thing we asked for, yet the doors of the Government would always be open to our representatives.”

53 Labour Gazette, February 1924, 135–37. The Federation’s agitation focused in part on raising minimum payments for disabilities and fatalities.

54 The employers’ position was badly undermined by the fact that McLean’s own Bathurst Lumber Company had refused to pay assessments. As one union resolution pointed out, the situation had forced other sectors to carry the costs of accidents occurring at non-compliant enterprises. The company’s attempt to evade the act was the subject of legal action by the board; an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada was decided in favour of the board in March 1924. See Labour
Gazette, December 1923, 1455, and April 1924, 350.

55 Gleaner, 18 March 1926.

56 There were objections, however, to the appointment of a labour representative on a royal commission on the administration of compensation in the lumber industry without consultation with the Federation: Gleaner, 23 March 1927.

57 NBFL Proceedings, 1928; Gleaner, 9 March 1928.

58 Tighe returned as NBFL president in 1934–36. In 1929, Tighe's successor as president was Eugene R. Steeves, like Melanson a member of the machinists union in Moncton.

59 Telegraph-Journal, 29 August 1929. As in 1914, the province agreed to provide a grant to support the event, in this case $1,500: see folder: 18 July 1929, box 73, RS9, PANB. Also in 1929, the province approved advertising expenditures in connection with Moncton meetings of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees: see folder: 20 August 1929, box 73, RS9, PANB.

60 TLC Proceedings, 1929, 3, 137, 185. For the occasion there was also a substantial publication, a History of Saint John Labor Unions, Compiled and Issued by the Saint John Trades and Labor Council and Subordinate Unions, an additional indication of local historical consciousness.


62 Gleaner, 22 March 1927.

Two: “What We Were Promised,” 1930–1939

1 The photograph was published in the Evening Times-Globe, 8 January 1931, 2. The original is in the New Brunswick Federation of Labour fonds, MC1819, PANB. A reproduction in The Early Presidents of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, 1913–1964 (Fredericton: LHTNB, 2011), 20–21, provides identification for most of the delegates in the photograph.

2 For a short biography of Steeves, see the entry for “Eugene R. Steeves” at http://www.lhtnb.ca.

3 Moncton Transcript, 16 January 1930.

4 NBFL Proceedings, 1931.

5 “Minutes of Executive Board,” 17 October 1931, box 196, NBFL Papers, MC1819, PANB.

6 Evening Times-Globe, 7 January 1931.

7 Evening Times-Globe, 7 January 1931. There were worse cases the next year. In 1932 it was reported that a contractor for the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission at Musquash was paying 17 cents an hour for a ten-hour day and charging 80 cents a day for board — leaving the men with a pay of 9 cents an hour.

8 NBFL Proceedings, 1932. See also Chatham Gazette, 4 January, 6 January, and 8 January 1932. Meanwhile, the urgent conditions across the country led the federal government of R.B. Bennett to adopt a plan for relief camps to put large numbers of single men to work at the lowest possible wages on government projects under the supervision of the Department of National Defence. The first of these camps in New Brunswick opened at Upper Brockway in November 1932, and additional camps opened at Blissville,
Cambridge, and Havelock (to build emergency landing strips across central New Brunswick), Millidgeville (the Saint John Municipal Airport) and Colter’s Siding (an artillery training base and forest research station). Over the next several years, almost 8,000 New Brunswick men, mainly in their twenties and thirties but some as young as thirteen and others over seventy, worked in the camps, mainly cutting wood, hauling stumps, and clearing land. In addition to food and shelter, they received a pay of 20 cents a day. There were provisions for medical care and even for classes, but troublemakers were quickly weeded out (the records show that 580 men were expelled for disciplinary reasons). There were few disturbances and no unions of the kind that made the camps in western Canada hotbeds of unrest. See Brian Christopher Gallant, “‘Half a Loaf’: The Unemployment Relief Camps in New Brunswick, 1932–1936,” MA thesis, Department of History, University of New Brunswick, 2003.


10 Executive Board Minutes, 5 July and 26 July 1930 (contained in Nbfl Proceedings, 1931); Executive Board Minutes, 17 October 1931; Nbfl Proceedings, 1932; Melvin to Whitebone et al., 30 August 1932, box 103, mc1819, panb; “Minutes of the Executive Board, 16 September 1932.” See also Melvin to Richards, 28 July 1930, folder: 17 September 1931, and Melvin to Richards, 20 October 1931 (with resolution), folder: 16 November 1931, box 76, rs9, panb. One of the first decisions of the board after Steeves’s appointment was the refusal of support to the widows Grace Betts and Greta Gallant, whose husbands had perished in the rescue attempts at Minto in July 1932; it is unclear why Steeves failed to support the widows in this case, which was not finally decided in their favour until the conclusion of an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. See Frank, “Minto 1932,” 19–24.


12 Whitebone also achieved prominence in community affairs. He was elected to Common Council as an alderman in 1936 and in his first year on council advanced several labour causes, including a fair wage clause in city contracts and an eight-hour day for civic employees. See Saint John Common Council Minute Book, no. 57 (1936–39), panb. He remained active in municipal politics for several decades and in 1960 served as acting mayor of the city. For a short biography, see “James A. Whitebone,” http://www.lhtnb.ca.
In August 1938, the first union in Canada to affiliate to the CCF was District 26, United Mine Workers of America, whose membership was predominantly in Nova Scotia but also included New Brunswick members by this time. See Ian McKay, “The Maritime CCF: Reflections on a Tradition,” New Maritimes, July–August 1984, 4–9.

The Moncton delegates at the TLC also included E.H. Carson and B.L. Skidmore of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, Lodge 245, who won endorsement for a resolution supporting “the principle of national control of the banking system.”

Max Tarik to Bert Robinson, 21 August 1933, box 8, Socialist Party of Canada, Ontario Papers, Woodsworth Memorial Collection, MC35, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto; Watson Baird, “Officers and Members . . .” (secretary-treasurer’s report), 9 August 1935, vol. 89, Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Papers, MG28 IV-1, LAC. Even before the founding meeting in June, one of the delegates from Saint John complained that leaders of the Federation were “afraid of the words Socialization and Socialism”: Tarik to Robinson, 26 May 1933, box 8, Socialist Party of Canada, Ontario Papers, Woodsworth Memorial Collection. By 1935 the original branches in Saint John and Moncton had been supplemented only by small branches in Beersville and Tarrettville, both in rural Kent County.
20 NBFL Proceedings, 1934; Gleaner, 13 February 1934.

21 History of Federation of Labor of New Brunswick (Saint John: New Brunswick Federation of Labour, [1934]). The unattributed cover art may well have been produced by teachers or students in graphic arts at the Saint John Vocational School. The image from 1934 remained in use on the covers of the Federation proceedings from 1936 to 1961. The production of the book itself caused controversy, as Tighe questioned Whitebone closely about the financial arrangements, under which a Saint John printer received 60 percent of the gross proceeds from the book. A year later, Secretary-Treasurer Melvin pronounced the book “a complete success, both as to the book itself, its contents, and the financial return to the Federation,” which Melvin placed at $486.38. See Gleaner, 14 February 1933, NBFL Proceedings, 1934 and NBFL Proceedings, 1935.

22 NBFL Proceedings, 1935.

23 Gleaner, 20 February 1935.

24 NBFL Proceedings, 1936; Gleaner, 13 March 1936. Failure to participate meant that the citizens of New Brunswick were supporting a national programme from which they received no benefits, even though the provincial contribution at this time was only 25 percent of the cost.

25 NBFL Proceedings, 1937. Political tensions were apparent. Although Premier Dysart had accepted an invitation to speak, he did not do so; he also stated that the legislature would not be able to receive a delegation during the convention, which Whitebone described as “an insult to the Federation.” Meanwhile, Opposition leader F.C. Squires curried favour with the delegates—“Labor is too important in the life of the country to be neglected”—and the convention received a telegram of greetings from the Maritime Section of the CCF in Saint John. In response to Liberal charges that “the Tory wolf has lain down with the labour lamb,” Whitebone denied partisan affiliations. See Gleaner, 3 March 1937, and NBFL Proceedings, 1937. Meanwhile, the Maritime Section of the CCF sent the premier resolutions on education, minimum wages, and workers’ right to organize: E.A. Dryden to A.A. Dysart, 16 October 1937, folder: 10 November 1937, box 84, Rs 9, PAnB.

26 NBFL Proceedings, 1937.

27 NBFL Proceedings, 1937: see Resolutions 9, 10, 26, and 39.

28 The short draft bill was prepared by the Trades and Labour Congress and forwarded to provincial governments, accompanied by a four-page legal memorandum: see P.M. Draper and R.J. Tallon to Members of Provincial Legislative Assemblies in Canada, 15 February 1937, with accompanying documents, folder: 16 April 1937, box 83, Rs 9, PAnB. While the draft bill asserted the lawfulness of collective bargaining, unlike the Wagner Act it did not provide for the enforcement of recognition and bargaining.

29 Statutes of New Brunswick, 1936, c. 51, and 1937, c. 39. The mandate was to hear complaints, conduct investigations, hold conferences for “voluntary adjustment,” and if necessary issue orders for rates of wages and maximum hours covering specific groups of workers. For the early activities of the Fair Wage Officer, see Labour Gazette, June 1938, 652–53.
Executive Meeting, 31 March 1937; Melvin to W. F. Roberts, 13 April 1937, folder: 2 and 4 August 1937, box 83, RS 9, PANB. In the same file, see other correspondence concerning these appointments, including Frank H. Gillespie to Roberts, 17 July 1937 and James D. Leger to J. B. McNair, 21 April 1937. The Fredericton Labour Council nominated James D. Leger in part on the grounds that “we believe it is imperative that a French speaking man should be appointed, as some 40% of our population are French, and also that the central part of the Province should be represented”: Stanley Goodspeed to Roberts, 20 April 1937. The Federation had been concerned that the province would accept only one of their nominations, the second labour member to come from “some other labor body,” an allusion to the emergence of the New Brunswick National Council of Labour, for which Gillespie served as Legislative Representative.

The account here is based mainly on Patrick H. Burden, “The New Brunswick Farmer-Labour Union, 1937–1941,” MA thesis, Department of History, University of New Brunswick, 1983. Burden notes that the NBFLU advanced a critique of local economic development in which “big business” was accused of betraying the economic interests of the community and the potential of local resources. In Newcastle, the sympathetic T. H. Whalen, editor of Farm and Labor, favoured more attention to cooperative methods for sustaining rural life but also supported the worker’s “right to a living wage,” partly on the basis of his reading of the papal encyclical Rerum novarum.

Ibid., 36–43. Burden notes that many of the workers who participated were former members of the waterfront workers union of longshoremen and millworkers established as an ILA local in 1919. A failed sawmill strike in the summer of 1934 led to their withdrawal from the ILA, and by 1936 they were functioning as an Independent Labor Association and calling for wider local forms of organization. Burden also notes that no single union active in the province was prepared to meet the needs of lumber workers and states that “the focusing of the entire province’s trade union movement through the lens of a Saint John-Moncton labour bureaucracy alienated and ignored lumber workers from a depressed region like the Miramichi,” 36–37.

Greg McEachreon to A. A. Dysart, 26 February 1937, with resolution, folder: 16 April 1937, box 83, RS 9, PANB. McEachreon, the South Nelson storekeeper who became president of the NBFLU, included “legislation of benefit to workers” and “collective bargaining” among the principal objectives of the new union.


NBFL Proceedings, 1938. A delegation from the NBFLU was present at the convention. Whitebone noted that the NBFLU had 2,000 members in Northumberland, Restigouche, Gloucester, and Albert counties; Burden reports that by the time of the first annual convention in June 1938, there were 2,500 members in 20 locals. Although Whitebone stated in 1938 that they had applied for affiliation, there were no delegates at subsequent conventions. Some Miramichi locals
gained union recognition from employers in the early years of the war, but few locals lasted beyond 1941. As Burden concluded, the NBFL was “a creature of the Depression, a synthesis of various local strategies to deal with the depressed economic conditions” (95). For discussion of “amalgamation,” see NBFL Proceedings, 1931.


37 The local union president later stated that the vote was 762 in favour, 15 against, with two spoiled ballots: NBFL Proceedings, 1938.

38 Seager, “Minto, New Brunswick,” 118–19. For the women’s participation, see also the Gleaner, 2 December, 6 December, and 8 December 1937.


40 For the conciliation board report, see Labour Gazette, July 1938, 725–31.

41 NBFL Proceedings, 1938; Seager, “Minto, New Brunswick,” 123. Premier Dysart told the convention that he would not discuss the Minto situation at all as it was “sub judice”: Gleaner, 27 January 1938. Whitebone was replaced by another senior Federation officer, John S. MacKinnon, who was also Secretary to the Fair Wage Board.

42 Gleaner, 27 January 1938; NBFL Proceedings, 1938. As Patrick Burden has noted, the Miramichi and Minto strikes of 1937 “contributed to a reevaluation of the province’s labour relations policy” (“The New Brunswick Farmer-Labour Union, 1937–1941,” 84–85).

43 NBFL Proceedings, 1938; Gleaner, 28 January 1938. For the Nova Scotia law, see Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1937, c. 6. The convention agreed to seek introduction of legislation as a private member’s bill if necessary.

44 Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, 1938, 157–59, 211. The key provision regarding collective bargaining was only permissive: “It shall be lawful for employees to bargain collectively with their employer and to conduct such bargaining through their representatives duly elected by a majority vote of the employees affected or through the duly chosen officers of the organization to which the majority of such employees belong”: Statutes of New Brunswick, 1938, c. 68, pt. 2. For a summary, see Labour Gazette, September 1938, 987–89.

45 “The Labor and Industrial Relations Bill,” folder 251, Frank and Libbie Park fonds, vol. 15, MG31 K9, LAC. The section protecting workers from intimidation received a more positive assessment. Park’s critique of the Fair Wage Act was relatively straightforward: it
was an exercise in paternalism in which standards and conditions were at the discretion of officials and ministers: “The government is trying to do the Union’s work for them. The result will be a weakening of the Unions just when the need for them is most apparent.” As for the provisions for investigation and conciliation of disputes prior to a strike, it was a “complicated rigmarole” of administrative delays and discretionary decisions. Moreover, the provisions for fines in the event of illegal strikes were “a savage section and unworthy of this government or any government calling themselves Liberals.”

46 *NBFL Proceedings*, 1939. Whitebone objected also to the inactivity of the Fair Wage Board: “Surely in this Province where low wages and long hours is the rule rather than the exception there is unlimited scope for investigation and adjustment of wages and working conditions, yet the Board apparently ceased to function some months ago.”


48 *NBFL Proceedings*, 1939.

49 Joseph Vandenbroeck to J. B. McNair, 2 September 1938, folder: 14 September 1938, box 85, RS9, PANB.

50 Joseph Vandenbroeck to Whitebone, 23 January 1940, box 103, MC1819, PANB. He noted that the 1939 convention had adopted their resolution calling for an amendment to meet the standards of the Nova Scotia law.

51 *Evening Times-Globe*, 10 January 1939.

52 *Evening Times-Globe*, 12 January 1939.

53 *NBFL Proceedings*, 1937–39. Whitebone’s report in 1938 noted that “the membership of existing unions has been greatly augmented” and that in addition to the coal miners, new unions were organized among dairy workers, hospital workers, and other groups.


56 *Canadian Unionist*, February 1937, 224, June 1937, 12, and September 1937, 100. In 1938, however, the ACCL also issued charters to the Rothwell Mine Workers Union and the Miramichi Mine Workers Union — decisions that opened them to charges of endorsing company unionism in the wake of the Minto strike and the defeat of the United Mine Workers.


58 The schism between craft and industrial unions resulted in the suspension of the CIO unions (including the UMWA) from the American Federation of Labor in 1936 and the formation of the new Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1938. In Canada, the TLC expelled the CIO unions in 1939, which led the CIO unions to join with the ACCL to create the Canadian Congress of Labour in 1940.

59 *NBFL Proceedings*, 1938, 1939. Whitebone’s comment in 1939 was a direct criticism of immigration policies that refused the entry to Canada of Jewish refugees from fascism.

Three: “A Province Fit for Heroes,” 1940–1956

1 Untitled ms. dated 7 May 1945, “Radio Talks,” box 103, mc 1819, panb. Other items in this file are identified as radio broadcasts on the stations CHSJ and CFBC.

2 This time Saint John delegates were not in a majority, although they were still the largest group with 25 of the 79 delegates. The domination of the southern cities was balanced by the appearance of 29 delegates from the north of the province, primarily members of unions in the pulp and paper industry and the railway trades. This included delegates from Dalhousie (15), Edmundston (6), Bathurst (5) and Atholville (3). Although longshoremen were the third largest group in 1940, they were outnumbered by the paper mill workers and the machinists. Despite this picture of diversification, the Federation had lost some ground, as the 37 locals participating in the 1940 convention represented 22.1 percent of the 167 union locals reported in the province for 1940.

3 Moncton Transcript, 10 January 1940; NBFL Proceedings, 1940 (January). Note that the NBFL held two conventions in 1940, one on 9–11 January and another on 29–31 October.

4 NBFL Proceedings, 1940 (October), 1941; Gloucester Northern Light, 16 October 1941; Evening Times-Globe, 31 October 1940.

5 NBFL Proceedings, 1941; Evening Times-Globe, 15 October 1941.

6 NBFL Proceedings, 1940 (October), 1941, 1942, and 1943.


8 NBFL Proceedings, 1944.

9 Certification Files, Industrial Relations Board Records, rs895, panb. My thanks to Raymond Léger for sharing his research in these files.

10 NBFL Proceedings, 1941; see also Gloucester Northern Light, 16 October 1941.

11 NBFL Proceedings, 1942.

12 “Post War Reconstruction Brief Submitted by the New Brunswick Federation of Labor” (July 1943), included in the folder for NBFL Proceedings, 1942, mc 1819, panb. However, the Federation expected better results from the federal government than from the provincial governments. Past and present experience, Federation leaders believed, had shown that the way to ensure that all Canadians shared equally in standards of social security was to bring social legislation under the control of the federal government through amendments to the British North America Act.

13 Evening Times-Globe, 16 September 1943.

14 NBFL Proceedings, 1943.

15 For the platform, see the party advertisement in the Moncton Times, 23 August 1944. My thanks to students Wade Tower and Sharon Kitchen, who wrote papers on the 1944 election. Interestingly, one of the Saskatchewan CCF members elected in 1944, Beatrice Coates Trew, was a New Brunswicker who had gone west as a teacher.

16 For election results, see Elections in New Brunswick, 1784–1984 (Fredericton: Legislative Library, 1984), 117–19, and for detailed reports, see Telegraph-Journal, 29 August 1944. Labour connections were determined from NBFL Proceedings and other sources. The province’s only previous CCF candidate was Joseph C. Arrowsmith, who
received 712 votes in Saint John in 1939. There were twenty candidates in 1948 — including Gladys West in Queens, the wife of a former miner, who was the second woman to run in a New Brunswick provincial election. There were only twelve CCF candidates in 1952 and none at all in 1956 and 1960. In Edmundston, Marmen failed to gain election as an Independent or as a Liberal but was elected mayor in 1948.

17 Evening Times-Globe, 8 May 1975; NBFL Proceedings, 1942. See also the MLA biographical files at the Legislative Library. On the history of the department, which emerged as a small “Labour Bureau” (1910) and later became a branch within an expanded Department of Health and Labour (1936), see Delbert W. Gallagher, “The New Brunswick Department of Labor — History and Development,” Trades and Labor Congress Journal, July 1955, 23–25.

18 Labour Relations Act, 1945, Statutes of New Brunswick, 1945, c. 41.

19 NBFL Proceedings, 1943.


21 NBFL Proceedings, 1946; Evening Times-Globe, 15 October 1946.

22 In addition to the CCL unions, other, independent, unions were also taking advantage of the new labour laws to press their case for union representation. One notable example was the Restigouche Woodsmen’s Union, which succeeded in gaining certification at several lumber operations in the north of the province in the early 1950s. See Léger, “L’évolution des syndicats au Nouveau-Brunswick,” and Certification Files, RS 895, PANB.


24 Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of Canada, Local No. 3, Annual Labour Journal (Saint John, 1944?), 1.

25 MacLeod was also an unabashed CCF supporter, stating in 1948, for instance, that “until the CCF comes to power, the ideas of labour, organized and unorganized will never be brought to fruition”: Maritime Commonwealth, 27 May 1948. MacLeod was president of the New Brunswick Council of Labour in 1946–51 and again during its final year in 1956.

27 Patrick Burden, “The 600 Men Who Dig Coal Under a New Brunswick Forest,” unpublished paper, University of New Brunswick, 1981. One feature of the strike was that the New Brunswick miners did not protest limited operations, under provincial supervision, to provide coal for the Grand Lake power plant.


29 File 7-55-412, vol. 1793 (1947) and file 53, vol. 463 (1948), RG 27; Strikes and Lockouts Files, Department of Labour Records, LAC. See also Certification Files, RS 895, PANB. The 1948 strike was recalled in an interview with Robert Moore, a young boy at the time, who remembered union songs played through a public address system on the front porch of his home on York Street. He also recalled that one of the union leaders was fired as soon as the strike was settled. See Robert Moore Interview, 2005, LHTNB fonds, MC 3477, PANB.

30 Whitebone’s hope for a national labour code was disappointed, and each province continued to set its own standards. Ottawa’s Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act (1948) carefully avoided interfering with provincial rights and applied only to the usual areas of federal jurisdiction in transportation and fuel production. See Peter S. McInnis, Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada, 1943–1950 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

31 Labour Relations Act, Statutes of New Brunswick, 1945, c. 41, s. 10(2).


33 Ibid., 99.


36 However, in 1951 municipalities were given the power to declare themselves employers under the act, an instance of the incremental practical reforms that led to the eventual enactment of public sector labour relations legislation.

37 Labour Relations Act, Statutes of New Brunswick, 1949, c. 20.

38 Laskey, “‘Employees Under the Law,’” 5.

39 Ibid., 7–8.


For accounts of the CSU, see Jim Green, Against the Tide: The Story of the Canadian Seamen’s Union (Toronto: Progress Books, 1986); and William Kaplan, Everything That Floats: Pat Sullivan, Hal Banks, and the Seamen’s Unions of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987). See also George Vair, “The 1949 Canadian Seamen’s Union Strike (The Saint John Story),” available online at the website for the Frank and Ella Hatheway Labour Exhibit Centre, http://www.wfhathewaylabourexhibitcentre.ca.


Telegraph-Journal, 1–29 April 1949; Evening Times-Globe, 2–11 May 1949; Searchlight, 26 May 1949; Green, Against the Tide, 230–32. As George Vair’s account shows, the CSU held out longer in Saint John than in other ports, in large part thanks to the solidarity of the longshoremen. For his “illegal” actions in supporting the CSU, Crilley was expelled from the longshoremen’s union and blacklisted on the waterfront. He shoveled snow on the CPR tracks the next winter before finding work as a freightchecker for the CNR and subsequently becoming an officer of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees; he was later a vice-president of the Federation.


NBFL Proceedings, 1952; Telegraph-Journal, 16 September, 17 September, and 18 September 1952.

NBFL Proceedings, 1952.

The political strategist Dalton Camp, a former Young Liberal who worked for the Flemming campaign in 1952, recognized that McNair had made a mistake and considers the union issue to have been a decisive factor in his defeat: Dalton Camp, Gentlemen, Players and Politicians (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 52. His campaign in 1952 included an attack by “L. C. House” on the Liberal Minister of Labour Samuel Mooers: Telegraph-Journal, 3 September 1952.

Labour Gazette, February 1953, 371; November 1953, 1638.

Maritime Advocate andBusy East, September 1953, 32; Evening Times-Globe, 25 May 1960. See also the MLA biographical files at the Legislative Library. Note that some sources state erroneously that Skaling was a president of the Federation of Labour; however, he had served as a vice-president. Skaling was prominently featured in a souvenir booklet published by his union: International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen, Local No. 1, N.B., 100th Anniversary, November, 1989.


NBFL Proceedings, 1956. See Statutes of New Brunswick, 1956, c. 42, p. 105, and c. 43, p. 106. Whitebone stated that the decision regarding policemen “is of the greatest importance to all of us inasmuch as other unions could have been placed in the same position by action of the courts had the Act not been
changed.” Another amendment in 1956 limited the effect of ex parte injunctions in labour disputes to no more than five days.

57 Gregg addressed the convention each year from 1950 to 1956, with the exception of 1951, and Skaling addressed the convention each year from 1953 to 1956. In addition, the Federation benefited from government appointments. After the death in 1952 of former Federation president E. R. Steeves, who represented labour on the Workmen’s Compensation Board, there was little delay in appointing Robert G. Jones of the International Molders and Foundry Workers Union, Local 236, Moncton, as a replacement. In addition, the government named Whitebone to the board of the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission.

58 NBFL Proceedings, 1954. The certification of unions continued apace during these years; a total of 138 new certification orders were issued in 1953–56. See Certification Files, RS895, PANB.

59 Labour Gazette, February 1955, 153; similar views were presented by the New Brunswick Council of Labour.

60 Chouinard, “Shipyard Struggles,” 174–98; Calhoun, Ole Boy, 56–57. At its final convention in 1956, the New Brunswick Council of Labour passed a resolution calling on Maritime firms engaged in marketing oil products and exploiting natural resources to “contribute to our regional economy by building, repairing and registering ships in Canada”: New Brunswick Council of Labour Convention Proceedings, 1956.


62 NBFL Proceedings, 1954, 1955. Gad Horowitz, Canadian Labour in Politics (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968), notes that Whitebone was among the minority of TLC executive officers who “opposed the rapid progress towards merger” (179), in part because he feared it would lead to an endorsement of the CCF, which the CCL supported.


64 The fraternal delegates included Angus MacLeod and Ralph Evans of the New Brunswick Council of Labour as well as the regional director for the new CCL, Henry Harm, who was based in Moncton, and the two Saint John representatives, Harold Stafford (formerly of the TLC) and Bill Craig (formerly of the CCL).

65 In conversation with Nicole Lang, Blanchette has recalled that when he chaired convention sessions and committee meetings as a vice-president he took care to speak in both languages in order to encourage the participation of fellow francophones. He also recalled that President Whitebone was “un vrai anglais de Saint-Jean.”

66 The women delegates were Agnes Dillon, Lola Pellerin, and Muriel Chandler, IBEW 1472 (Saint John) and Yvonne Cormier and Grace Deroucher, Laundry Workers Federal Union, Local 570 (Moncton). See Dunphy, “Women in the New Brunswick Federation of Labour.”

68 Ibid.
69 Ibid. In similar fashion, Whitebone had addressed the convention of the New Brunswick Council of Labour several weeks earlier, which also endorsed plans for the merger: *New Brunswick Council of Labour Convention Proceedings, 1956*. In his final speech to the council, MacLeod stated: “History has taught us, if nothing else, that Labour can no more afford to let others have complete control of the political affairs of a country, than to allow our employers to have complete control of our economic affairs.”

70 On the refinery strike, see file 151, vol. 514 (1955), Department of Labour Records, RG27, LAC. Prior to the strike, a labourer’s wage was $1.06 an hour for a 48-hour week; the wage for “ordinary female labour” was 71 cents an hour; skilled and experienced workers received higher rates, with women receiving 5 cents an hour less in all categories. Under the new agreement, with reduced hours, rates increased to $1.18 and 77 cents for male and female labourers respectively. See also *Lantic Sugar Refinery, Saint John, N.B.* (a memorial volume, published circa 2000), 69–70. The local entered the Bakery and Confectionery Workers International Union in 1956, and Simonds later became director of organizing for the CLC.

71 *NBFL Proceedings, 1956*. Jodoin’s address, at pp. 44–51, was the first speech reported verbatim in the Federation proceedings to include several paragraphs in French (pp. 47–48). His reference to the CLC’s general objectives echoed the joint submission of the TLC and CCL to the Royal Commission on Canada’s Economic Prospects in 1955, which also included “the preservation of a free, independent Canadian nation, even at some economic cost” and “the preservation of the historic communities which make up the Canadian nation”: *Labour Gazette*, April 1956, 384–88.

72 *NBFL Proceedings, 1954–56*.
73 *NBFL Proceedings, 1956*.
74 Ibid. Harm was an example of the new generation of labour leaders and had a background in both TLC and CCL unions. An immigrant from Norway as a young man in the 1920s, he worked at the Dalhousie paper mill and was a member of the papermakers union there. During the war, he worked in the Pictou shipyards in Nova Scotia, where he joined the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers. Subsequently, he became an organizer for the CCL. On Harm, see *Viewpoint: The Voice of Labor in Cape Breton*, January–April 1968, 12.


1 *NBFL Proceedings, 1965*, 33–41. Also included in one of the earliest recordings of convention proceedings, at scd09213-BL3, mc1819, panb. Robichaud’s earlier comment (in French) was: “I consider the movement you have undertaken to be very important, and the interests of all the labourers and all the workers of New Brunswick are close to my heart.”

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

tendencies: “Louis Robichaud was a pragmatist, moved more by his human sympathies than by any philosophical doctrines. He was a democrat, a socialist, a conservative and a liberal all wrapped into one.” Robichaud’s parents had worked in the cotton mills in Massachusetts before returning to the family home in Kent County to bring up their family. See also L’ère Louis J. Robichaud, 1960–1970: Actes du colloque (Moncton: Institut canadien de recherche sur le développement régional, 2001). In thanking the premier for his address in 1965, Federation President Lofty MacMillan “expressed satisfaction that it dealt with subjects very close to the Labour Movement to-day, especially in the Region and the Province”: NBFL Proceedings, 1965.


6 In 1961, the average personal income in New Brunswick was 68.1 percent of the Canadian average; in 1970, it had increased to 71.5 percent but was still the third lowest in the country. See Ian Adams et al., The Real Poverty Report (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1971), 58–59.

7 Canadian Labour, October 1956, 13–15. For more context on this period, see E. R. Forbes and D.A. Muise, eds., The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation (Fredericton and Toronto: Acadiensis Press and University of Toronto Press, 1993), chaps. 11–13.

8 Again, my thanks to Raymond Léger for sharing his research in the files of the Industrial Relations Board and its predecessors, RS 895, PANB.


10 Campbellton Tribune, 31 August 1960.

11 NBFL Proceedings, 1957. The constitution was discussed by a unity committee earlier in the year. The Federation would support the principles and policies of the CLC, and membership was limited to branches of unions affiliated to the CLC or to local unions and labour councils chartered by the CLC. An initial version was found “incompatible” with the CLC’s requirements; however, no copy of this draft was located. At the convention, the only significant discussion of changes referred to the exclusion of sectoral councils (such as a Building Trades or a Waterfront Council). Interestingly, Whitebone headed his presidential report as a report to “the forty-fifth convention,” but the 1958 convention was officially identified as the “first” convention of the “new” Federation.

12 NBFL Proceedings, 1957. The progress continued to be cautious, however. For instance, while the government in 1959 addressed “fair accommodation” and “fair employment” practices by expanding the earlier 1956 terms to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of “race, creed, colour, nationality, ancestry or place of origin,” the category of gender was not included: Statutes of New Brunswick, 1959, c. 6, pp. 9–11.

13 NBFL Proceedings, 1957. MacLeod was nominated for the presidency in 1957 but did not stand. He was, however, named as one of two delegates to the 1958 meetings of the CLC.
14 NBFL Proceedings, 1959. The proceedings for this year were not published in the usual full format; however, the file in MC1819, PANB includes several records compiled by Whitebone at a later date, including a booklet containing the 1959 President’s and Secretary-Treasurer’s Reports. See also Telegraph-Journal, 12–17 September 1959, and Le Madawaska (Edmundston), 17 September 1959. For information on the Escuminac Disaster, see “Escuminac, 1959” at http://www.lhtnb.ca.

15 Telegraph-Journal, 15 September and 16 September 1959. On Knowles, see Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, Stanley Knowles, The Man from Winnipeg North Centre (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1982). Prior to the 1959 convention, one of the Federation vice-presidents distributed a circular letter warning against endorsement of the “new party” and stating that “most of our people are organized for one purpose, namely, to improve their working conditions and wages. That is all.” There was also an element of “redbaiting”: “What happens to us if we should have a Labor Government in the palms of our hands and some groups who have trained in the Kremlin decide to worm their way into our organization with the intention of taking over our country?” See Charles H. Malchow to Affiliated Local Unions, Restigouche and Gloucester Counties, 24 July 1959, box 101, MC1819, PANB.

16 Telegraph-Journal, 17 September 1959. Resolutions adopted in 1959 called for an improvement in workers’ compensation rates to provide 85 percent of a worker’s pay and legislation to ensure that women workers received “equal pay with male workers for equal work.” One of the longest resolutions called on the province to live up to its commitment to provide full collective bargaining rights to the union members working for the New Brunswick Liquor Control Board. In respect of collective bargaining for municipal employees, however, the Flemming government had amended the Labour Relations Act to reaffirm the ability of municipalities to exclude themselves from the provisions of the act: Statutes of New Brunswick, 1959, c. 56.


21 Whitebone to Donald MacDonald, 10 June 1960 (with a clipping from the Evening Times-Globe, 9 June 1960), MacDonald to C.J., W.D., 13 June 1960, “Angus MacLeod, 1960,” vol. 263, CLC Papers, MG28 1103, LAC. Whitebone evidently also wrote to several Federation stalwarts, provoking a number of comments about unpaid bills and drinking at meetings as well as MacLeod’s inconsistency in abandoning the CCF for the Liberals. Rolland Blanchette noted: “I am still opposed to a new political party, we have enough enemies of labour now without creating some more.” See Blanchette to Whitebone, 17 June 1960, and Michael J. Kenny to Whitebone, n.d. [June 1960], box 103, MC1819, PANB.

22 In the 1963 election, Saint John voters produced a more strategic result, electing two members from each party. Whitebone himself remained active in municipal politics in Saint John, where he was first elected to council in
1936. After the 1958 election, he was named deputy mayor and, following the death of the incumbent in 1960, acting mayor. Whitebone was a candidate for mayor in his own right in 1960 but did not succeed. See clipping 23 October 1958, box 103, mc1819, panb; see also Ellen E. Bowen, The Mayors of Saint John, 1785–1985 (Saint John: Saint John Public Library, 1985).

23 NBFL Proceedings, 1960; Telegraph-Journal, 30 August and 31 August 1960; Campbellton Tribune, 31 August 1960. The auditor’s report recommended that all cheques require the signature of two officers, and that all payments by affiliates be made directly to the Federation accounts rather than the officers. MacLeod continued to serve the members of his home union at the Saint John shipyards until his official retirement in 1971, when he was celebrated as a union pioneer with a selfless sense of duty. For his part, MacLeod stated that he had always acted without need for formal recognition: “I’m one of those who believe that the trade union movement owes me nothing. I owe them everything that I’ve got.” He lived until 1980, when the Telegraph-Journal, 15 December 1980, described him as “a tough and dedicated man working for the things he believed in.”

24 NBFL Proceedings, 1960; Telegraph-Journal, 1 September 1960. The results were Whitebone 85, Booker 28, Ferlatte 27. Ferlatte and Booker were both among the six district vice-presidents elected at this time. For biographical information on Ferlatte, see Morden Lazarus, Up from the Ranks: Trade Union VIP’s past and present (Toronto: Co-operative Press Associates, 1977), 41; on Booker, see the Gleaner, 3 April 2009. Interviews with both Ferlatte and Booker are included in the lhtnb fonds, mc3477, panb.


26 The resolution stated: “Whereas the principles and policies as enunciated by the New Democratic Party coincide in almost every respect with those laid down and supported in the past by this Federation, be it therefore resolved that this New Brunswick Federation of Labour adopt the policy of the Canadian Labour Congress and endorse the principles and policies of the New Democratic Party without direct affiliation.”

27 Telegraph-Journal, 31 August 1961. One historian has noted that clc officers in 1961 considered placing the Federation under “administration.” At the clc convention in 1962, Whitebone was not re-elected as vice-president for the Atlantic Region and was replaced by a strong ndp supporter, John Simonds of the Bakery and Confectionery Workers. See Gad Horowitz, Canadian Labour in Politics (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968), 230–32. The ndp ran no candidates in the 1963 provincial election and only three in 1967, as well as one in a by-election in 1966.

28 Statutes of New Brunswick, 1960–61, c. 7, pp. 55–57; NBFL Proceedings, 1961, 1965; Moncton Transcript, 28 August 1961. As of 1 January 1965, the hourly rates were $1.05 in construction, mining, and forestry, 75 cents in retail and manufacturing and food processing, and 65 cents in the service sector: see Department of Labour, Annual Report (1965), 16, 61–74.
29 *NBFL Proceedings, 1961; Statutes of New Brunswick, 1960–61*. Less noted, and of less direct concern to the Federation at the time, was the addition of nurses to the list of workers excluded from the provisions of the Act.

30 *NBFL Proceedings, 1961; Moncton Transcript*, 29 August 1961. Whitebone was re-elected as president in 1961, by a vote of 82 to 50. The opposing candidate was the NUPE delegate Booker, who was re-elected as vice-president for Carleton, York and Sunbury.


32 *NBFL Proceedings, 1962, 1963*. In 1963 the Federation considered a resolution to condemn the federal government for the adoption of nuclear weapons, which was defeated by a vote of 59 to 44. Two years later, however, the 1965 convention endorsed a resolution warning that the ongoing war in Vietnam could escalate into a global nuclear conflict and supporting a negotiated settlement.

33 *NBFL Proceedings, 1964*. Whitebone noted that extensive amendments to the Labour Relations Act had been considered by the province in 1964 but that these were withdrawn after the Federation insisted on the opportunity to review them. Whitebone also played his own part in Robichaud’s programme of reform, when he accepted an appointment to a provincial royal commission on the modernization of liquor licensing laws, a reform that Whitebone considered to be a matter of public safety.

34 Hodges was a pioneer in other areas as well. In 1959 he was a founder of the Saint John branch of the New Brunswick Association for the Advancement of Coloured People and later held appointments to the Labour Relations Board and the Human Rights Commission. See Mac Trueman, “Heroes of Black History,” *New Brunswick Reader*, 25 May 1996, and *Evening Times-Globe*, 23 July 1999.


36 *NBFL Proceedings, 1967–73; Dunphy, “Women in the New Brunswick Federation of Labour,” 53–60. There had been only three women delegates to the 1957 convention (and only two in 1958). In 1967, Hartman did not support the creation of special offices for women within the labour movement. Hartman also spoke to the convention in 1968, focusing on collective bargaining for public employees. Hartman was an influential pioneer in “labour feminism” and from 1975 to 1983 served as president of CUPE, the first woman elected president of a major union in Canada. For a biography, see Susan Crean, *Grace Hartman: A Woman for Her Time* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1995).


38 Aurèle Ferlatte interview, LHTNB fonds, MC3477, PANB; Hem C. Jain, “Impact of
Ethnic Differences in the Work Force in Industrial Relations: A Case Study,” Relations industrielles / Industrial relations 24, no. 2 (1969): 383–402. Another study from this period found no significant differences between the attitudes of English and French workers at an unidentified manufacturing firm: 47 percent of the anglophone and 56 percent of the francophone employees were dissatisfied with their wages. The study also noted that francophone workers were paid $600 less per annum than other workers. See Vinay Kothari, “A Cross-Cultural Study of Worker Attitudes in a Bicultural Economic Environment,” Relations industrielles / Industrial relations 28, no. 1 (1973): 150–65.


Laberge’s remark was: “I think there are more French-Canadian delegates here at this convention than we have English-speaking delegates at the Quebec Federation of Labour congress, and yet we have simultaneous translation. I know that your officers are thinking about this very seriously and that the only obstacle up to this point has been simply the question of costs.”

NBFL Proceedings, 1972, and the recording, sccd 09216-BR, mc1819, panb. See also Campbellton Tribune, 7 June 1972. The offensive statement was not reported in the proceedings or captured on tape, but see Telegraph-Journal, 7 June 1972. In 1977 Blanchard was elected regional vice-president for Gloucester County, making her the first woman to serve as a vice-president since the early 1920s. It is estimated that by this time at least 30 percent of the delegates at Federation meetings were Acadians. Although the province’s Official Languages Act was enacted in 1969, it was not fully proclaimed and implemented until 1977.

Mark McLaughlin, University of New Brunswick, provided this information in an unpublished paper presented at a conference in 2009, “Labour Force Responses to Modernization in the New Brunswick Woods, 1945–1982.” He goes on to note that the forest companies also turned to mechanization to address labour shortages. The chainsaw was introduced in the 1950s and became common in the 1960s, and mechanical harvesters in the 1970s severely reduced the demand for woods labour. In another development, Local 306 of the International Woodworkers of America organized workers at several sawmill and plywood operations on the Miramichi and won a long strike at the Burchill Brothers mill in 1964: see Andrew Neufeld and Andrew Parnaby, The IWA in Canada: The Life and Times of an Industrial Union (Vancouver: IWA Canada/New Star Books, 2000), 166–68.


“A Submission of CUPE-CLC and its New Brunswick Division to the Special Committee Appointed to Study the Byrne Royal Commission Report,” Appendix, *NBFL Proceedings, 1964*. At the CUPE founding convention of in Winnipeg in 1963, which created the new union by a merger of the National Union of Public Service Employees, there were eight delegates from New Brunswick, three of them women; they represented city workers and school board and hospital employees from Saint John, Campbellton, Dalhousie, and Moncton. See Canadian Union of Public Employees, *Proceedings of the Founding Convention, 1963*, 33.

MacMillan received 84 votes. Frank Murray, a delegate from Local 502, ibew in Saint John, received 11 votes, and S. W. MacDonald, a delegate from Local 1974, IAM in Bathurst, 50 votes. *NBFL Proceedings, 1964*.

MacMillan was, like Whitebone, one of labour’s standard bearers in municipal politics and served on Common Council for four years. In the 1958 election, he and Whitebone topped the polls among the elected councillors. There was an element of rivalry there, as MacMillan was declared the first-place finisher on election night but their positions were reversed in the official count. In addition to MacMillan, *The Boy from Port Hood*, see Raymond Léger, “Remembering a Giant: Lofty MacMillan, 1917–2006,” *Our Times*, April–May 2006, 36–37.
services, it had failed to note that Sweden had one of the strongest union movements in the world and that public employees enjoyed full union rights. If the system was to be borrowed “as a package,” CUPE’s submission argued, “this package should include trade union rights.”


52 Statutes of New Brunswick, 1967, c. 29, repealed s. 34, which specified that married women could not be employed unless widowed or lacking competent male support.

53 NBFL Proceedings, 1966, 1967. Meanwhile, under pressure from workers employed by the federal government, Parliament was proceeding towards adoption of the Public Service Staff Relations Act, which became law in 1967.

54 In a book on public sector labour relations, Frankel had little to say about the situation in Québec and the Atlantic provinces: “There are staff associations in all of these provinces; but they are weak in numbers, little respected by their Governments, and quite ineffective”: see Staff Relations in the Civil Service: The Canadian Experience (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1962), 205–6. For additional context, see Lisa Pasolli, “Bureaucratizing the Atlantic Revolution: The ‘Saskatchewan Mafia’ in the New Brunswick Civil Service, 1960–1970,” Acadiensis 38, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2009): 126–50.


This important document was published in both languages.


57 Public Service Labour Relations Act, Statutes of New Brunswick, 1968, c. 88; Léger, “Remembering a Giant,” 37. The same prohibition on the use of strikebreakers did not appear in the Labour Relations Act. In situations where negotiations failed to lead to collective agreements, workers would have the choice of sending the dispute to arbitration or holding a strike vote. Nonetheless, all bargaining units would have the option to identify “designated employees” required to remain at work in the interests of public health, safety, and security. One interesting provision in the new law stated that no organizations that discriminated against members on the grounds of sex, race, origins, colour, or religion could be certified; nor could the board accept an organization seeking “the overthrow of constituted authority.”


60 NBFL Proceedings, 1965. For the dispute discussed here, see vol. 3112, reel T-3416, file 340, Department of Labour Records, RG 27, LAC. Additional disputes at Belledune are documented in vol. 3115, reel T-3418, file 11; vol. 3116, reel T-3419, file 107; vol. 3117, reel T-3419, file 166; and vol. 3122, reel T-3421, file 442.

61 For biographical information, see Lazarus, Up from the Ranks, 67–68; Telegraph-Journal, 28 June 2000; and box 119, MCI 1819, PANB. At some point after the 1966 convention, the vice-presidency for Gloucester and Restigouche was divided to create separate representation for Gloucester County. For many years the steel union was involved in a long-running conflict with a rival union with a more “leftist” reputation, the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, which also entered New Brunswick at this time and was represented by organizer Ed Levert. In 1966, Mine-Mill Local 1043 was locked in a long struggle for a union contract at the Nigadoo copper mine. Although Mine-Mill was excluded from the CLC and the Federation, MacMillan insisted on supporting this struggle, reporting to the 1967 convention: “The Federation took a stand that no employer in the mining field or otherwise would come into this province and impose substandard wages and conditions on fellow New Brunswickers, regardless of their trade union affiliation.” As the Steel representative, he added, LePage had “exemplified real trade union principles during this period.” At this stage a merger between Steel and Mine-Mill was near completion, and Levert came to work for Steel.


64 NBFL Proceedings, 1968, 1969; Northern Light (Bathurst), 13 June and 20 June 1968. See Statutes of New Brunswick, 1968, c. 85. The plan did not come into effect in the province until 1 January 1971. Meanwhile, the
Federation continued to call for the inclusion of optical, dental, chiropractic, and prescription drug coverage, as recommended by Justice Hall. One of the Federation’s contributions to the debate was to advise against a provision for doctors to “opt in” rather than “opt out”; they also proposed an advisory committee, to include representation from organized labour and the medical profession among others, to report annually on the effectiveness of the plan. See “Submission by the New Brunswick Federation of Labour with regard to Bill #1, Medical Services Act” (June 1968). For the context, see Alvin Finkel, Social Policy and Practice in Canada: A History (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 169–92.

The discussion here is based on Patrick Webber, “‘For a Socialist New Brunswick’: The New Brunswick Waffle, 1967–1972,” Acadieinsis 38, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2009): 75–103. See also his “‘For a Socialist New Brunswick’: The New Brunswick Waffle, 1967–1972,” M.A thesis, Department of History, University of New Brunswick, 2008, which reproduces the manifesto on pp. 165–68. Support for the New Brunswick Waffle was largely based in the province’s universities and new left, though one influential supporter was party President Pat Callaghan, a working-class immigrant from Scotland who was schooled in the traditions of the British Labour Party. Richardson continued as provincial NDP leader for several more years and was elected secretary-treasurer of the Federation of Labour in 1981.

LePage, “Address to the Day of Concern,” box 111, MC1819, PANB. As Kenny has pointed out, such critiques largely accepted the premises of “state modernization policies” and, as became apparent, failed to appreciate the local mix of “ethnic, class and generational consciousness.”

Northern Light, 12 January 1972; L’Évangéline, 14 janvier 1972. By September, Hatfield and Marchand were able to announce additional funding to support local industry under an amended federal-provincial agreement.

Richard Wilbur, The Rise of French New Brunswick (Halifax: Formac Publishing, 1989), 247, and, more generally, chaps. 15 and 16. The Parti Acadien at this time endorsed social and economic policies similar to those of the NDP. Party leader Euclide Chiasson, a professor at the Collège de Bathurst, received 1,011 votes in Nigadoo-

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72 *Northern Light*, 15 February, 22 February, and 1 March 1972; “Report to the Executive Officers . . . re problems in Northeastern New Brunswick,” 28 March 1972. Similar concerns were expressed in a letter in the *Northern Light*, 19 January 1972, which stated: “No: it was not the hour and the place to air Acadian grievances. We have enough tribulations facing us on the North Shore at the moment — now we should face them as a divided people?!?”

73 *NBFL Proceedings, 1971–73*. On Hatfield, see Richard Starr, *Richard Hatfield: The Seventeen Year Saga* (Halifax: Formac, 1987). As the party’s house leader in 1968, Hatfield had supported Robichaud’s initiatives in labour and social legislation. However, in the Hatfield years there was a shift away from ministers of labour who had a labour background, and in 1975 the name of the Department of Labour itself was changed to Labour and Manpower New Brunswick. With affiliations and administrative work both increasing, the Federation in 1972 decided to employ a full-time executive secretary. After interviewing three candidates, the executive hired John Murphy, a young graduate of Mount Allison University with a union background, who continued to serve the Federation over the next three decades.

74 *NBFL Proceedings, 1975*. At the 1973 meetings there was also continued impatience with the slowness of the Federation’s progress towards bilingualism. Moreover, to LePage’s embarrassment, the Resolutions Committee endorsed a resolution from the Canadian Seafood Workers Union in favour of full bilingualism for all Federation employees, which was vocally supported by Blanchard before it was defeated. By 1975 there was measurable progress, as policy documents and resolutions were presented in both languages, as were the financial statements. In another controversial debate in 1973, delegates from *cupe* won support for a resolution condemning the Canadian Labour Congress for considering the admission of the New Brunswick Public Employees Association as an affiliate; in their view the *nbpea*, the former Civil Service Association, was a weak organization with inferior contracts whose members in the civil service properly belonged within the jurisdiction of *cupe*. See *Evening Times-Globe*, 4–6 June 1973.

75 *NBFL Proceedings, 1975*; *Moncton Daily Times*, 3 June 1975; *Telegraph-Journal*, 3 June 1975. The Department of Labour reported a total of 122,328 “man-days” of lost work in 1974, of which 70,300 were accounted for by continuing trouble at Brunswick Mines. There were 9 legal strikes and 32 illegal walkouts. The Federation offered financial support in four major disputes: six-week strikes at Eastern Bakeries and the New Brunswick Telephone Company, an 11-week strike at International Paper in Dalhousie — and a strike at Cirtex, a small knitting operation in Caraquet, where workers had already been out for six months.
These were discussed at the special policy meetings in 1974 that took place instead of the annual meeting and formed elements of a broader labour agenda seeking to redirect the wealth and productivity of the country towards shared social purposes. Consumers and farmers both needed protection from the multinational food corporations, it was argued. Housing was a right for all Canadians and could be strengthened by supporting cooperative housing plans. Pensions should be available to workers at age sixty, and all private plans should have minimum standards and be governed jointly by workers and employers. As for wages and incomes, the most important statement in the policy document was that the share of the national income going to profits was higher than at any time since 1951 and that labour’s share of the national income had been in decline since 1966. Moreover, the chronic problem of low wages and high prices in New Brunswick was now being aggravated by rapid inflation, and real earnings were falling rapidly. The minimum wage needed to be raised to $3.50 per hour, with regular adjustments to take rising prices into account, and the same principle should also be applied to social security benefits. Meanwhile, unions must be prepared to reopen contracts in order to achieve cost-of-living adjustments and should expect more difficult rounds of collective bargaining ahead.

76 These were discussed at the special policy meetings in 1974 that took place instead of the annual meeting and formed elements of a broader labour agenda seeking to redirect the wealth and productivity of the country towards shared social purposes. Consumers and farmers both needed protection from the multinational food corporations, it was argued. Housing was a right for all Canadians and could be strengthened by supporting cooperative housing plans. Pensions should be available to workers at age sixty, and all private plans should have minimum standards and be governed jointly by workers and employers. As for wages and incomes, the most important statement in the policy document was that the share of the national income going to profits was higher than at any time since 1951 and that labour’s share of the national income had been in decline since 1966. Moreover, the chronic problem of low wages and high prices in New Brunswick was now being aggravated by rapid inflation, and real earnings were falling rapidly. The minimum wage needed to be raised to $3.50 per hour, with regular adjustments to take rising prices into account, and the same principle should also be applied to social security benefits. Meanwhile, unions must be prepared to reopen contracts in order to achieve cost-of-living adjustments and should expect more difficult rounds of collective bargaining ahead.


78 Moncton Times, 3 June 1975; Telegraph-Journal, 3 June and 4 June 1975. His speech (which was preceded by a short film) is in the recorded proceedings at the PANB, scd09217-al.4 and scd09217-bl.1. In the march through the streets, Chávez was accompanied not only by LePage but also by Constable Lorne Saunders of the Moncton police, the newly elected head of CUPE New Brunswick. At the convention the next day, LePage reported to delegates that he had received a telephone call from Dominion Stores head office stating there would be no change in policy: Moncton Times, 5 June 1975.

79 Allain, “L’évolution du syndicalisme,” 59–61. The rate of union membership among men increased in these five years from 31.3 to 35.7 percent, and among women from 15.8 to 23.2 percent. Provincial union membership peaked at 33.8 percent in 1974.

80 NBFL Proceedings, 1975. The largest single delegation in attendance at the 1975 convention was from CUPE, with delegates from 32 locals in all parts of the province. The second largest were delegates from 14 locals of the Canadian Paperworkers Union, the new organization that had emerged from several pre-existing unions to form a distinct Canadian union in 1974. They too came from most parts of the province: Edmundston, Saint John, Bathurst, Dalhousie, Atholville, Nackawic, St. George, Newcastle, and Nelson. Other large delegations came from the Canadian Food and Allied Workers, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the United Steelworkers, and the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers.

81 Telegraph-Journal, 7 June 1975.

1 The account here is based on George Vair, The Struggle Against Wage Controls: The Saint John Story, 1975–1976 (St. John’s: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 2006). Unless indicated otherwise, relevant quotations are from this book.

2 “Day of Protest 1976,” box 201, mc1819, PANB. Several unions, such as the firefighters and police, declared support but did not quit work. In addition, unions such as the New Brunswick Nurses Union, who were not affiliated to the Federation, stated their support and encouraged off-duty members to participate.


4 In addition to Vair, see Paul Young Interview, LHTNB fonds, mc3477, PANB.


6 NBFL Proceedings, 1977. Apart from the loss of pay, there was one report of direct reprisals, as the municipal administration in Campbellton attempted to dismiss more than 40 workers. The city backed down when CUPE threatened that all local members of the union, including hospital staff and firefighters, would walk out in support.


9 Telegraph-Journal, 7 June 1978; Moncton Times, 9 June 1978. By the end of 1981, however, the company announced plans to close the plant: Atlantic Insight, November 1981, 18.

10 NBFL Proceedings, 1978, 1979; Telegraph-Journal, 6 June 1978; Moncton Times, 6 June 1978. The following year the delegates, most of whom had heard former federal NDP leader David Lewis speak at a pre-convention conference, adopted a resolution to support the NDP in the 1979 election, which took place a week later. The NDP showed a small surge in New Brunswick at this time, with the federal vote increasing from 8.7 percent in 1974 to 15.3 percent in 1979 and 16.8 percent in 1980. Provincial results were weaker; the NDP more than doubled its 1974 vote to 6.5 percent in the 1978 election; the Parti Acadien received 3.5 percent of the vote.


12 NBFL Proceedings, 1980, 1981; Telegraph-Journal, 12 June 1980. LePage was also celebrated at a testimonial dinner in Bathurst on 6 September, which was attended by Premier Hatfield.

13 NBFL Proceedings, 1980; “Phil Booker for President” [1980], box 117, mc1819, PANB; and Telegraph-Journal, 11 June and 16 June 1980. See also Phillip Booker Interview, LHTNB fonds, mc3477, PANB. It was
reported later that Booker defeated Hanley by a relatively close margin of 20 votes.


15 *NBFL Proceedings, 1981*; *Telegraph-Journal*, 13 May 1981. The proposal to withdraw from government bodies was defeated, but delegates endorsed a resolution to discontinue preparing an annual brief for the provincial government.

16 *NBFL Proceedings, 1981*; *Moncton Times*, 12 May, 14 May, and 16 May 1981; *Telegraph-Journal*, 15 May 1981. See also boxes 68 and 116, MC1819, PANB. By the time of the suspension, the affected unions were already planning to establish the rival Canadian Federation of Labour, which functioned from 1982 to 1997. The affected unions included the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry, the International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Ironworkers, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the Laborers’ International Union of North America, the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades, the Sheet Metal Workers International Association, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Shipbuilders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers, the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen, the International Union of Elevator Constructors, and the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers. There were specific inter-union rivalries in Québec and British Columbia at stake in the dispute, as was resistance to CLC guidelines to provide more autonomy for Canadian branches of international unions, which the unions considered to be an inaccurate assessment of conditions and undue interference in their internal affairs.


18 For a treatment, including illustrations and documents, see the website feature “Hot Cargo, 1979,” http://www.lhtnb.ca. The event has been described as “the single most dramatic example of Canadian trade union solidarity with workers in the Third World.” There was a second episode in 1982, when the Federation supported the decision of Local 273, International Longshoremen’s Association to refuse to handle nuclear supplies for Argentina. Many years later, after the restoration of democracy in Argentina, the Argentine government presented a medal to the workers of Saint John.

19 *Moncton Times*, 14 May 1981; *Telegraph-Journal*, 14 May, 15 May, and 16 May 1981. George Vair considered Hanley an excellent organizer and orator who could think well on his feet: “He had sort of this uncanny sense of how far he could push the envelope and then would know when to pull back”: *Telegraph-Journal*, 22 March 2006.

20 *NBFL Proceedings, 1982*; *Telegraph-Journal*,


22 This discussion draws on Sue Calhoun, A Word to Say: The Story of the Maritime Fishermen’s Union (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1991), 77–159. The election of a young local schoolteacher, Jean Gauvin, as a government member in Shippagan-les-Îles in 1978 was also important in the political breakthrough; Gauvin pledged to support unionization for the fishermen and was able to advance this agenda when Hatfield named him minister of fisheries. At the federal level, Calhoun notes that after Roméo LeBlanc, who had a grudging admiration for the MFU activists, returned to office as federal fisheries minister in 1980, he allocated most of the herring stock to the inshore fishers. Several of the MFU organizers had a background as radical leftists. Thériault, for instance, had left the Parti Acadien in 1977 and supported the Montréal-based Workers’ Communist Party before it dissolved in 1982. When the Moncton Union Centre banned the MFU from using the building that housed the Federation and other union offices, the issue was taken up at the 1980 Federation convention. A mild resolution of protest was defeated, and delegates voted to move the Federation “to an office where all its affiliates are welcome.” This ultimatum forced the centre to lift the ban on the MFU: NBFL Proceedings, 1980.


26 NBFL Proceedings, 1982, 1984; Telegraph-Journal, 15 June 1982. Moreover, when women activists looked for allies among the social movements in the province, they found experienced leaders in the ranks of the unions. When a provincial ad hoc committee of women’s organizations called for a New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women in the 1970s, Dorothy Power Lawson played a leading part as co-chair. Once the advisory council was established in 1977, the Federation requested representation, and as a result Moncton union activist Kathryn-Ann Leger was appointed in 1981. See also Janet Guildford, “Persistence on the Periphery: Advisory Councils on the Status of Women in Atlantic Canada to 2000,” in Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton, eds., Making Up the State: Women in Twentieth-Century Atlantic Canada (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 2010), 232–37.
Kimberley Dunphy, “The Feminization of the Labour Movement in New Brunswick: Women in the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, 1913–1984,” MA thesis, Department of History, University of New Brunswick, 2009, 75, 136–41, provides an account of the strike based on union records, now in MC3653, PANB, as well as her attendance at the local’s twenty-fifth anniversary event in 2006. See also interviews with Joan Blacquier and Mary Moss, LHTNB fonds, MC3477, PANB.


NBFL Proceedings, 1984, 1986; and Dunphy, “Women in the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, 1913–1984,” 78. However, the change, as approved in 1986 and later included in the Federation Constitution, gave the official name as “Fédération des travailleuses et travailleurs du Nouveau-Brunswick.”

Tim McCarthy to Pierre Juneau, 9 December 1985, box 161, MC1819, PANB.


Although Executive Secretary John Murphy had limited French-language abilities, the Federation’s office secretary Alice LeBlanc was bilingual, and in 1986 it was estimated that 40 percent of her work was in French. In addition, a part-time secretary and a translator were employed as needed. Information is included in “Official Languages and Services Profile,” box 126, MC1819, PANB, prepared in order to qualify for matching funds from the secretary of state for the provision of bilingual services. Limited funds to support bilingual services were also provided by the provincial Department of Labour.

“Francophone Concerns in 1985–86,” box 141, MC1819, PANB.


Times-Transcript, 14 May 1986.

Le Madawaska, 5 juin 1985. The comment reads: “The delegates were obviously delighted to have spent three days in the Republic of Madawaska.”

“To all citizens of the Chaleur region who believe in justice — honesty — rights and freedom.” The preceding statement reads: “Because our husbands are limited by an injunction in what actions they can take, we have decided to replace them, and we intend to maintain our picket line and block access to the sites until we obtain positive results.”


When the Public Service Alliance of Canada and other unions launched a legal appeal, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that “freedom of association” under the new Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms did not protect the right to strike or the right to collective bargaining. See Panitch and Swartz, From Consent to Coercion, 32–37, 51–83. This decision was reversed in 2007.
At earlier conventions, McCarthy opposed withdrawing from the province’s Industrial Relations Council, established by the Hatfield government to encourage consultation between unions, employers, and government; by 1985, however, he was convinced that the council was irrelevant, as major employers were adopting aggressive anti-union attitudes. McCarthy’s recommendation to withdraw was carried unanimously.

The plan included a call for "labour history education in particular to inform new and younger members about the roots of the fights we are now waging."

"Your Voice Could Save 2000 Jobs," box 115, MC1819, PAnB.

The discussion is based on documents in box 115, MC1819, PAnB, which includes the texts of petitions, flyers, and the speech by Bourgeois. See also an extended submission on the impact of the closures prepared by Local 594, IAM, in 1986, “Why the Moncton Shops Must Stay.” For these events, see also NBFL Proceedings, 1986, and Telegraph-Journal, 15 May 1986. For background on Bourgeois, see The Machinist, February 1984 and March 1985.

The account here is based on Raymond Léger, 423 Days on the Picket Line, RWDSU Local 1065 (RWDSU, Saint John [1990]). See also NBFL Proceedings, 1988.

The case dragged on for several years, at considerable expense to both Murphy and the Federation, before it was dismissed by the courts in 1992.
54 NBFL Proceedings, 1983; Telegraph-Journal, 19 May 1983. One of the commission members, Bishop William Power of Antigonish, was invited to address the convention on this theme. For this and other documents, see Gregory Baum and Duncan Cameron, eds., Ethics and Economics: Canada’s Catholic Bishops on the Economic Crisis (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1984).


56 Telegraph-Journal, 6 June 1991. Later in the year there was an evening to honour McCarthy, where the Federation announced the establishment of the Tim McCarthy Environment Prize, to be given annually to union members or family members involved in helping to protect the environment. See NBFL Proceedings, 1992.


58 See Philip Lee, Frank: The Life and Politics Frank McKenna (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 2001), who notes: “The government promoted low wages and labour legislation that was favourable to business” (185).


61 NBFL Proceedings, 1988–91. Meanwhile, the province had removed the right to strike from municipal and regional police officers and enacted special provisions for labour relations at designated “major projects” in the construction industry.


See also NBFL Proceedings, 1991.

64 COR received 21.2 percent of the vote, and the NDP 10.8 percent. On the rise of COR, see Matthew Baglole, “‘Many Closet Supporters Will Come Forward’: New Brunswick’s Confederation of Regions Party,” in Hammond-Callaghan and Hayday, eds., Mobilizations, Protests and Engagements, 164–85. For the NDP, in a federal by-election in December 1990 there had been a hint of the potential to elect a union candidate in Acadian New Brunswick. Former MFU president Guy Cormier, a Cap-Pelé fisherman, won 12,587 votes, an impressive 37.37 percent of the total, when he stood against Jean Chrétien in the Beauséjour riding, where the future prime minister was taking advantage of a “safe” Liberal seat to return to the House of Commons as the Liberal leader. It was mainly a two-way race, as the Progressive Conservatives did not field a candidate; COR received 2,783 votes.

65 A joint complaint against the 1991 legislation was filed by the Canadian Labour Congress, the National Union of Provincial Government Employees, and the New Brunswick Government Employees Union. The ILO ultimately encouraged the province to “take measures, in consultation with the trade unions concerned, with a view to restoring a collective bargaining and arbitration system which enjoys the fullest confidence of the parties.” See Report No. 284, Case No. 1605, http://www.ilo.org/.

66 “Coalition of Public Employees Media Scripts,” as cited by Caroline Mann, “‘In McKenna No Trust’: Labour’s Response to


71 Telegraph-Journal, 1 June 1992. The list of observers included nineteen members of the media, more than twice as many as in 1991.


73 Vinh-Doyle, Catching Up, Fighting Back, 53–57. Lofty MacMillan later commented on his experience attending rallies around the province at this time: “Many staff from CUPE and other unions have told me ‘the members are not like they were in your day,’ ‘not so militant.’ This was a pack of nonsense, for I found the rank and file ready to fight once they had the leadership”: MacMillan to Ron Caplan, 18 November 1994 (copy in author’s possession).

74 Times-Transcript, 4 June 1992.


76 Times-Transcript, 4 June 1992.

77 Quoted in Lee, Frank, 262–63.

78 Lee, Frank, 216–18.

79 See Panitch and Swartz, From Consent to Coercion, 129–31: “CUPE claimed, with some justification, that it had won a major victory. And there can be no doubt that what it did achieve was the result of the union actually having waged a serious struggle to defend its members’ bargaining rights. In this light, the strike was certainly not a defeat, but neither was it the kind of victory that Canadian workers so badly needed, a victory that would stand as a clear symbol that the practice of permanent exceptionalism could be successfully countered.”

80 The following year, CUPE NB President Bob Hickes formally expressed the appreciation of his union for the Federation’s support in the struggles of the previous year: NBFL Proceedings, 1993.


82 NBFL Proceedings, 1994. When the government at this time brought the Industrial Relations Act and the Public Service Labour Relations Act under the jurisdiction of a single board, labour’s recommendations for a chair were ignored; the new Labour and Employment Board commenced operations under a McKenna insider, Paul Lordon, who had served him as a deputy minister and was one of his original law partners in Chatham.

83 “If a group of employees take a strike vote and 70 percent of them vote against a strike, the
30 percent who voted for a strike cannot go out on strike.” See **Rwdsu Local 1065 Brief, July 1995, pp. 5, 7, 9.** The anti-scab legislation was one of five themes in the “Make It Fair” campaign undertaken by the four Federations of Labour in the Atlantic Region. Other objectives for reforming provincial labour codes included improved certification standards, an option for binding first-contract arbitration, stronger successor rights, and speedier arbitration of contract grievances.

84 In the September provincial election, the Liberals were returned with a strong majority; the **Cor** Party collapsed, however, allowing the Conservatives to return as the Official Opposition. Weir was easily re-elected in Saint John Harbour, and the **NDP** had strong second-place showings in Saint John Champlain (physician Paula Tippett) and in Dalhousie-Restigouche East (union veteran Aurèle Ferlatte).

85 **NBFL Proceedings, 1995.**

86 **NBFL Proceedings, 1993, 1994, 1995.** The other two labour seats went to the nurses and the building trades, but none of the labour representatives from the Health and Safety Commission was included among the appointments. The province later agreed to expand the board and provide a second seat, for which the Federation named Blair Doucet: **NBFL Proceedings, 1997.** See also **Cupé Research Department, “Presentation to the Independent Review Panel, New Brunswick Workplace, Health, Safety and Compensation Commission” (2007). In the two-year period from 1992 to 1994, unsuccessful claims increased from almost 70 percent to more than 80 percent.

87 The date referred to the original enactment in 1914 of workers’ compensation laws in Ontario, which had helped set the standard for provincial laws across the country. The Day of Mourning was adopted by the **ILO** as International Workers’ Memorial Day and is marked in more than a hundred countries around the world.

88 In 1993 the Federation’s Health and Safety Committee reported that work-related injuries in the province currently accounted for twenty fatalities each year as well as the equivalent in injuries of 1,800 full-time jobs lost.

89 For a fuller discussion, see **David Frank and Nicole Lang, Labour Landmarks in New Brunswick/Lieux historiques ouvriers au Nouveau-Brunswick (Edmonton: Canadian Committee on Labour History / Comité canadien sur l’histoire du travail, 2010), 65–75.** The book also discusses a variety of other labour monuments, including memorials established by individual unions such as the firefighters and the longshoremen.

90 **NBFL Proceedings, 1995.** Clavette had previously observed that only two-thirds of the union locals affiliated to the **CLC** also participated in the Federation, and the 1993 convention endorsed an “affiliation campaign” to promote participation in both the Federation and labour councils. Clavette also noted that the return of several of the expelled unions to the **CLC**, including the Carpenters and the Labourers, held promise for strengthening the Federation, as did provisions for the direct affiliation of nurses, teachers, and other groups.

93 Telegraph-Journal, 14 August 1996.
96 NBFL Proceedings, 1996. The theme of the convention, “Social Programs: Worth the Fight!” was appropriate, Hickes said, but gave him no satisfaction: “Unfortunately, hitting the theme bang on does not make me happy. If anything it makes me mad. I hope it makes my brothers and sisters mad too.” For context, see Alvin Finkel, Social Policy and Practice in Canada: A History (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), chap. 12.
98 The NDP vote increased to 18.4 percent in the province. This election was also a breakthrough for the NDP in neighbouring Nova Scotia, where the party won six seats and 30.4 percent of the vote.
100 Hickes and Boyce to McKenna, 12 March 1997, box 23, mc1819, panb.
101 “Mission Statement of N.B. Common Front for Social Justice,” February 1997, box 23, mc1819, panb. This included objectives such as promoting the value and dignity of human work, creating a more dynamic democracy, maintaining and improving social programmes, challenging policies of privatization, deregulation and the withdrawal of the state, establishing a fair and equitable tax system, and safeguarding “that which makes the Canadian and New Brunswick identity so distinct.”

Epilogue: “Honour the Past. Build the Future”

1 NBFL Proceedings, 2011. Boudreau was elected president in 2005 and has held office since then. As a worker at the Villa du Repos Nursing Home in Moncton, he became president of CUPE Local 2079 in 1988 and president of the New Brunswick Council of Nursing Home Unions in 1998. He was also an elected school trustee (1989–92) and vice-president of the Moncton and District Labour Council (1990–92). “Elect Michel Boudreau for President” (2005) (copy in author’s possession).
2 NBFL Proceedings, 2011. For the decisions, see Canadian Union of Public Employees


4 “Unionization in Canada: A Retrospective” (Summer 1999), and “Unionization 2010” (October 2010), Perspectives on Labour and Income in Canada (Statistics Canada). Supplementary data on unionization in New Brunswick was provided by Sharanjit Uppal, Labour Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, 6 December 2011.

5 It later became part of Post-Secondary Education and Training, then Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour.

6 NBFL Proceedings, 2001. See also Blair Doucet Interview, 7 July 2006, LHTNB fonds, mc3477, panb and Northern Light, 10 February 2009. Doucet died in 2009. One of his achievements as president was the establishment of an annual summer camp for high school students, later renamed the Blair Doucet Youth Summer Camp.


11 Press Release, 8 October 2004, box 23, MC1819, PANB.


13 For federal election results in this period, see “Past Elections,” http://www.elections.ca.

14 Under this arrangement, six at-large officers were elected by ballot at the convention: president, first vice-president, second vice-president, secretary-treasurer (with a requirement that at least one of these four be a woman and another a francophone), plus a women’s vice-president and youth vice-president. Three trustees were also elected by the convention, and there was a representative for each labour council. In addition, the reform created two vice-presidencies for each union with more than 5,000 members, one for unions with more than 1,000 members, and two to be shared by unions with fewer than 1,000 members.

15 Doucet Interview; NBFL Proceedings, 2003. The Federation’s executive secretary, John Murphy, retired in 2005 after thirty-three years of dedicated service.
17 Statement by New Brunswick Coalition of Unions, 9 February 2004, box, 23, MC1819, PANB.
19 Courtney MacIsaac and Lisa Pasolli, “NBPEA to NBU: Association to Union, 1970–2004,” research report, June 2007. See also *NBFL Proceedings*, 2007, 2009. History rarely proceeds in a straight line, however, and before the end of the year in 2011, the NBU unexpectedly decided to suspend their participation; it was not clear if this would be a temporary adjustment or a lasting setback to provincial solidarity.
21 *NBFL Proceedings*, 2011. However, the Federation’s breach with the building trades had not been repaired at the provincial level, although several of these unions had rejoined the CLC. Another large group of unionized employees outside the Federation were the teaching staff in the province’s schools. Interestingly, the renewal of the Federation through new affiliations was a news development largely missed by the provincial media, whose absence from the Federation conventions had been notable since the 1990s. As the sources for this book often show, for many years local
and provincial newspaper reporters had attended the full convention and filed stories on a variety of debates and developments. For a comment, see “Numbers Make a Difference,” *Our Times: Canada’s Independent Labour Magazine*, July–August 2005, 14–15.
22 The secretary-treasurer reported a total of 375 affiliated local unions and seven labour councils, as well as the Federation of Union Retirees. As usual at conventions, not all unions sent delegates (and one labour council was not represented). Moreover, most unions were eligible for more representation; in 2011 the UFCE filled 10 of 14 possible seats, but the CAW filled only 7 of 25. As in the past, attendance was affected by factors such as the location of the convention; locals also weighed the costs of sending delegates to national or international meetings of their own union. Absences nonetheless deprived members of opportunities to participate in the solidarities represented by the Federation at the provincial level. The concept of “open” conventions in which unions encourage non-voting delegates to attend has the potential to introduce more members, especially less experienced members, to labour activism at the provincial level.
23 *NBFL Proceedings*, 2011. Among the total of 166 voting delegates, there were 84 women and 82 men; it is estimated that there were 57 francophone delegates.
24 One by-product of deindustrialization and downsizing is the loss of identity for workers who consider themselves to be closely attached to the union in their trade, occupation, industry, or community. The challenge has appeared before, and at least in the case of senior citizens, organizations of union retirees


26 Fred W. Thompson, *Fellow Worker: The Life of Fred Thompson* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing, 1993), 84. Other New Brunswickers who left the province at a young age also became prominent in labour history in other places. Émile Boudreau, born near Petit-Rocher in 1915, worked in the mines in Québec and became a leading figure in the Steelworkers and the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec. Buzz Hargrove, born at Bath in 1944, went to work in the auto plants in Ontario and was president of the Canadian Auto Workers from 1992 to 2008. For their autobiographies, see Boudreau, *Un enfant de la grande depression: Autobiographie* (Outremont, Québec, Lanctôt éditeurs, 1998) and Hargrove, *Labour of Love: The Fight to Create a More Humane Canada* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter and Ross, 1998).