CHAPTER FIVE

GOODWIN IN ACTION

"It is the workers themselves that must work out their own emancipation."

Albert (Ginger) Goodwin, 1916

GOODWIN'S EARLIEST RECORDED political activity in Trail was attending the reorganizing meeting on 13 May 1916 of the Socialist Party of Canada, Local 37, and giving a short talk "emphasizing the necessity of education and clear propaganda." He must have made a favourable impression because, two months later, the party picked him as its candidate for the provincial election on 14 September 1916. He was described as "a miner by trade but who has been an employee of the Trail smelter for the past seven months."

Goodwin declared flatly that "the interests of the workers and that of the capitalists cannot be harmonized." Neither the Liberal nor Conservative parties would be of much benefit to the workers, he said. If the workers wanted a real change, they should vote the Socialist ticket in September. He drew mixed reviews from the press. The Rossland Daily Miner found Goodwin "exceptionally clever and speaking along the lines of the doctrines of the party he represented.... His address was well received." The Trail News referred to his "clear-cut manner" and reported that he spoke "forcefully and did not mince his words." Yet the Miner reprinted an opinion from the far-away Victoria Daily Times: "Albert Goodwin is a young man, full of the vague and irrational thinking which passes muster for reason."

When the votes were counted, including the armed forces overseas, the sitting member of the legislature, Conservative James Schofield, was

1 Western Clarion, July 1916.
2 Western Clarion, June 1916.
3 Rossland Daily Miner, 18 July 1916.
5 Trail News, 18, 25 August 1916.
7 Trail News, 28 July and 18 August 1916.
8 Rossland Daily Miner, 1 September 1916.
Goodwin speaks. The photograph appears to be from 1916 or 1917. The location is not known but the time suggests it was in Trail. *Cumberland Museum and Archives, C110-004*. 
re-elected with 626 votes followed by the Liberals’ Michael Sullivan with 484 and Goodwin with 262. With Trail itself the result was much closer: Sullivan 319, Schosfield 239, Goodwin 214. The SPC seemed satisfied, declaring that Goodwin put up “a clean and vigorous campaign” as the first Socialist candidate in the constituency “and much credit is due to Com(rade) Goodwin for the manner in which he conducted the fight.” Credit was also extended to a Cumberland friend of Goodwin’s, Peter Zanoni, for his “great assistance” among the significant Italian community in Trail.

Goodwin continued to articulate his Socialist views in the Western Clarion. In straightforward language, he could engage in Marxist flights of rhetoric but he also sounded at times dreamily utopian. Perhaps viewing the exclusive residential area where managers and their families lived upwind from the sulphurous smoke that belched from the Trail smelter chimneys, Goodwin wrote about the economic law of class: “This gorgeous display of wealth by those that do not produce, before a half-starved community of workers must arouse a consciousness, more or less of the huge amount of wealth that has been exploited from the workers in the past.” He also wrote: “Instead of waiting till we are dead, we are beginning to realize that happiness can be gained here; instead of accepting that everything that falls to our lot was ordained, it has been discovered that intelligent action by the workers can affect the conditions of their lives.” Workers must work out their own emancipation and the Socialist Party of Canada was the organization to carry on a program of education, he wrote “As the condition of the workers becomes more unbearable, the call for education and knowledge must of necessity increase, that the galling chains of wage slavery, with their accompanying evil effects of misery and want, insanity and crime, may give place to a society where slavery is no more, and happiness and joy, peace and plenty, be at the disposal of all. This will mean ‘Social Salvation,’ ” he wrote.

In “Civilization,” he wrote of the toll of life exacted by industry “for the satisfaction of its insatiate appetite. It has made the life of the worker a veritable hell, destroyed every charm of his being, and dragged the women and children of his class into the vortex of production.”

In “Nationalism and Internationalism,” he wrote of the “conflicting interests of the masters of the different nations that are competitors for the markets of the world in which they hope to get rid of the wealth extracted

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10 Trail News, 15 September 1916.
11 Western Clarion, October 1916. For Zanoni, see also Chapter 5 note #24.
12 Western Clarion, July 1916.
13 Western Clarion, January 1917.
Goodwin lived at the Meakin Hotel at the corner of Cedar Avenue and Spokane Street in Trail. The hotel, shown here in the early 1900s, opened in 1896 with 24 bedrooms, offices, and a dining room. It was demolished in 1957. Trail City Archives.

from the wage slaves.” Soldiers returning incapacitated from the field of battle “are left to rustle for themselves” and “were it not for the kindness of friends they would be left to starve. The only liberty you have under Capitalism is to work for wages when you are wanted (that is when you can be profitably employed) and when the markets have been glutted with the surplus wealth stolen from you, to be thrown out of work to want for the bare things of life, or take up arms and fight for the opportunity to dispose of his commodities you so generously produce and turn over to him.”

Goodwin was quite clear in his anti-militarism: “Our efforts must be bent to the cause of our enslavement, capitalism; and in that case it precludes the workers from taking action in national wars, that does of necessity undermine the international character of the proletariat.” Socialism was the antithesis of nationalism, he wrote. The workers did not start World War I. “The real trouble was that the masters interests were endangered through competition with each other, and they called upon their slaves to fight it out. And that the manufacturers of armaments wax fat at the large profits
derived from the sale of the engines of destruction, explains their attitude on war very ably," he said.\textsuperscript{14}

Goodwin said the Morgans, Rockefellers, and Rothschilds "will reap the victory, no matter how the war ends. It will be the law of concentration of capital into fewer hands strangling the life out of the smaller capitalists in the process of creating a smaller number, but more powerful master class, than was before."\textsuperscript{15}

Goodwin told an audience at the Rex Theatre in Vancouver that as long as the working class kept itself in ignorance of the facts, it would be subservient to the master class. The World War was caused by competition for markets. He appealed to his listeners to study the situation and tell fellow workers of their condition. Only in this way could the cause of Socialism triumph. The Vancouver daily newspaper \textit{World} was moved to comment about Goodwin: "The speaker showed that he had acquired a fund of knowledge on the subject and, contrary to the tactics of many Socialists, spoke with calmness and refrained from abusing those classes and institutions which so often are the target of the illiterate Socialist."\textsuperscript{16}

Goodwin's trade union activity grew and on 18 December 1916 he was elected secretary of the Trail Mill and Smeltermen's Union, Local 105, and functioned as its business agent. The local was chartered in 1905 by the Western Federation of Miners to represent smelter workers. In 1916, the \textit{WFM} changed its name to the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers to reflect its geographical significance beyond the west in Canada and the United States as well as its industrial jurisdiction representing mill and smeltermen as well as hardrock miners. Organizing efforts by Goodwin and others brought the membership of the Trail local to about 1,000 of the 1,500 employees at the smelter. Many of the remaining employees were mechanics who belonged to individual craft unions.

Goodwin worked in the union hall on Cedar Avenue and lived nearby at the Meakin Hotel, a three-storey hotel built in 1896 for Mary Jane Meakin, who died in 1901. The hotel's name survived until it was demolished in 1957. James Hurley and his wife Frances operated the hotel from 1911 to 1925. Frances ran the dining room, with four big tables, where Goodwin ate his meals. It was known as a workingman's hotel and almost everyone who stayed there worked at the smelter.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Western Clarion}, June 1917.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{B.C. Federationist}, 2 November 1917.
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Vancouver World}, 20 August 1917.
\textsuperscript{17} Mayse, Ginger; Mike Solski and John Smaller, \textit{Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895} (Ottawa, 1985); United Steelworkers of America, Local 480, \textit{A Time to Remember} (Trail, 1976); \textit{Trail News}, 16 November 1917; Jamie Forbes, \textit{Historical Portraits of Trail} (Trail, 1980); Pa-
Just over a month after assuming full-time union leadership, Goodwin increased his union stature when he was elected vice-president (West Kootenay) of the BC Federation of Labour as part of a slate of left-wingers that included his old friend, Joe Naylor of Cumberland, who was elected president. Naylor was still unable to get work in the coal mines after the 1912-14 Big Strike and all that kept him on Vancouver Island was the United Mine Workers of America taking him on as a part-time organizer. Goodwin’s trade union career rose further still when he was elected president of the Trail Trades and Labour Council and, from April until September, he was also president of Mine Mill’s District 6, covering its locals in the Kootenays.

Soon Goodwin was engaged in a lively exchange of correspondence with the smelter company’s assistant manager, Selwyn Blaylock, who handled labour relations. Letters show Goodwin was clear and firm with smelter management, not deferential. Blaylock was also firm and could be paternalistic, even petulant. Goodwin rapped the company for violations of the eight-hour workday in February 1917: “There is a penalty imposed upon those that do not comply with the law, but we feel that you should have the opportunity to remedy the grievance before taking the case any further.” Blaylock replied that the matter was corrected in one work area before Goodwin’s letter arrived and he promised to look into hours at the copper refinery “and we will see that the spirit as well as the letter of the law is lived up to.” Clearly annoyed by Goodwin’s bluntness, Blaylock added: “If any of our workmen notice any such irregularity in the future, I hope that it will be brought to our attention in a courteous way, and not be accompanied by a threat of prosecution in the Courts, before it is found out whether or not we are unwilling to observe the law.”

But the company quickly sent a letter to its lawyers in Nelson, Charles Robert Hamilton and Edmund Carlyon Wragge, asking for an opinion on its obligation to observe the eight-hour workday law. Hamilton replied that the law did not apply to the handling of blister copper, fine copper, lead bullion, and pig lead. When Goodwin complained again in June that copper refinery men were working beyond eight hours — by half an hour — Blaylock pointed to a notice posted a few days before the letter saying no man was required to work beyond eight hours. This notice was despite Hamilton’s written opinion about copper.

In early April, Mine Mill’s District 6 proposed to CM&S that workers at all its smelters and mines get a 50-cent daily pay raise and voluntary checkoff of union dues. The company responded that it had “contracts with both the

tricia Wejr and Howie Smith, Fighting for Labour: Four Decades of Work in British Columbia 1910-1950 (Victoria, 1978); Trail Daily Times, 7 August 1957; Charles Goad fire insurance plan for the city of Trail, 1918.
Fighting For Dignity

The company store in Trail, owned by Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company, was opened in 1917 with support from the Trail Mill and Smeltermen's Union, Local 105, during a period of rapid inflation. Known as the Retail Department of CM&S, it is shown here in 1920. It operated until 1951. Trail City Archives.

Trail and Rossland local unions" and told federal labour department mediator, John McNiven, that it feared a strike. "Labour seems to have completely lost its head," wrote managing director James J. Warren. Despite his pessimism, a wage increase was negotiated without a strike but the company successfully resisted the union's request for dues checkoff.

The correspondence shows the foundation for the disagreement that led to the strike later in the year over the eight-hour workday: the two sides differed sharply on whether there was a contract at Trail. The company said an agreement reached on 27 June 1916 at Trail was "for the duration of the war." Goodwin said "there is no agreement between this union and the Consolidated Co." Unfortunately, the 1916 letters that would clarify this issue do not survive verbatim, although parts of them were quoted in extant letters from 1917. The negotiations carried out through these 1916 letters were not drawn up as a contract between union and company. The only known remaining record of the 1916 sliding-scale wage agreement accepted by the employees appears in the Trail News of 30 June 1916 but it does not mention the duration of the agreement. This was an improved of-
fer over a company wage scale effective 1 May 1916, which also made no reference to the length of contract.

The confusion appears to have occurred this way: On 5 May 1916 CM&S sent a letter to employees with a new wage scale retroactive to 1 May "for the duration of the War" but this was rejected 500-to-17 by the employees. After mediation under McNiven, the company wrote to him agreeing to the increased offer and concluded, "Except as modified by this letter, the scale made effective on May 1st, 1916, shall prevail." The union took the position that there was no specified length of contract in the second offer; the company pointed back to its 5 May 1916 letter, dealing with the first offer, and said the agreement was in effect for the war.

Warren, meanwhile, wrote in confidence to federal Labour Minister T.W. Crothers saying that the company could not deal with the union on a district-wide basis. The district officials were being "unfriendly and unfair," he said, and the union was "trying to take advantage of the necessity for metals for munitions purposes to get a complete hold on the labor situation in the southern interior of British Columbia." He also wrote: "Personally, I believe in Unions and that we should have one both here and in Rossland, but when the Union attempts to control the whole situation, it must be checked, or the country will go to the dogs."

The wage increase of 15 cents above the 25 cents a day earlier offered by the company, and a sliding scale based on the price of lead that could take this to 50 cents, was spurred by the rapidly increasing cost of living. While prices remained almost unchanged until the end of 1915, they jumped eight per cent in 1916, more than 18 per cent in 1917 and 13½ per cent in 1918. This spurred labour unrest generally in Canada as workers tried to keep up with inflation. In Trail, there was the unusual instance of the union supporting a company store. Although the union expressed reservations as early as March 1917, both sides reached an agreement for a company store by July over protests from local storekeepers who denied they were profiteering. Goodwin wrote that a company store "has been accepted by the Union men through a referendum vote. The ballot was strongly in favor of the proposal and the men are anxious that the store be started as soon as possible. They don't want to be held up any longer is the cry of the men and all concerned." Thus began The Company Store, also called the Retail Department of CM&S, that was to last until 1951.

While prices soared, so did profits. In the years leading up to World War I, CM&S net annual profits were about $300,000 but this soon jumped to close to $1,000,000 and for the year ended 30 September 1917, net profit was $1,076,828. Total dividends paid out were handsome, rising from $464,376 at the beginning of the war to $1,047,745 at the end. Wartime expansion of the smelter, especially the processing of lead and zinc, boosted
assets to $17,099,923.04 from $9,355,302.02 in 1914. During the war, the company supplied the Imperial Munitions Board with 22,356 tons of zinc, 39,606 tons of lead and 6,831 tons of copper. Even after the war, for the 15 months ended 31 December 1919, net profit was $976,065.13, assets were $19,866,738.64 and dividends were $1,315,462.50. Then metal prices dropped to pre-war levels and wages were cut in 1920 by 12½ per cent.

In August 1917, the eight-hour workday and the disputed existence of a labour contract at the smelter surfaced again as issues when carpenters stopped work in protest at working Sundays. The carpenters were among several hundred mechanics and day labourers who worked a nine-hour day. They belonged to different unions than Mine Mill. Blaylock told James Graham, local secretary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, that: “All agreements, wage scales, etc. between this Company and its Union employees are made between the Mill and Smeltermen’s Union and the Company. These agreements also cover all non-Union men, or men not belonging to the Mill and Smeltermen’s Union. The scale of wages and hours of work for all classes of labor employed in and about the smelter has been agreed upon between the Mill and Smeltermen’s Union, by whom the carpenters were represented, for the duration of the War.”

While in this instance Blaylock said the company had an agreement with a union, he tended to recognize unions (or not) as it suited company purposes. In May 1916, for example, he told The Daly Reduction Company Limited in Hedley, BC, that: "We have, however, flatly refused to recognize the Western Federation of Miners or their officials, as such.” At the same time, he told his superintendent of the Kimberley mine, J.K. Cram, that he did not “care to change the system of dealing with committees of our own employees.”

Blaylock, however, frequently did business with union officials and considered that the company had a binding agreement at the Trail smelter with the union for the duration of the war. In the case of the smelter carpenters, discussions were held with Mine Mill that resulted in a compromise. Blaylock agreed to cut out all work possible on Sundays. If Sundays were worked, the carpenters could get another day off during the week. Perhaps most significantly, the eight-hour workday was implemented — on Sundays.  

Meanwhile, as the wheels ground on for an inevitable clash in late 1917 between union and company over the eight-hour workday at the Trail smelter, the European war clouds settled over the Canadian political landscape and dropped the most divisive domestic issue of World War I — conscription.

A staggering 94 per cent of young Canadian men who registered for conscription, as required under the Military Service Act, sought to avoid army service. There were 401,882 registered conscripts and 379,629 of them sought exemption. Nor was the desire to avoid conscription limited to Quebec, as might be (and popularly still is) supposed to be the case. In Quebec, 115,000 of the 117,000 conscripts did seek exemption. But in Ontario, so did 118,000 of 125,000; in BC, 12,824 of 15,821 conscripts did not want to fight. Ginger Goodwin was in plenty of company. But he was different in one important respect: He publicly opposed war on political grounds.

At the front, the opposing armies had dug themselves in and for three years had fired bullets and bombs at each other without much ground changing hands. Fresh supplies of manpower were needed because voluntary recruitment was not enough. The federal government led by the Conservative Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, decided that conscripts would augment volunteers. It was a decision that provoked widespread political dissent, especially in Quebec where there were anti-conscription riots, and it led to a bitter federal election in the last month of 1917. Opposition leader Sir Wilfrid Laurier opposed conscription but his Liberal party was split. Canada was a country divided.

The BC Federation of Labour convened a special convention in September 1917 to protest conscription. Delegates called for a general strike that was approved by locals but there were so many abstentions as to question its general acceptance. It was never implemented. Labour decided to run anti-conscription candidates at the general election. Goodwin told the convention that conscription meant life or death to the workers who should not conclude that because the conscription law had been passed, that it would become effective. He promised to do all in his power to prove to workers that war was none of their business.

In the trenches, the tide finally began to turn in favour of the Allies. Canadians were victorious at Vimy Ridge in April 1917 where British and French armies had failed. But the cost in human terms was steep. By the war’s end, Canada had sent 418,052 troops overseas of whom 56,638 were killed. The number of combatant deaths from all countries has been put at


20 B.C. Federationist, 7 September 1917.
Selwyn Blaylock (left), assistant general manager of the Trail smelter until 1919, then general manager, always head of labour relations, sits next to the visiting Prince of Wales, later (briefly) King Edward VIII, during royal visit in 1926. Others (to the prince’s left) are James Buchanan, T.W. Bingay, the Duke of Kent and George Murray. Trail City Archives.

9,700,000. But even that death toll from four years of war paled before the influenza pandemic that lasted less than one year in 1918 and 1919. It killed 21,640,000 people. The Canadian influenza death toll has been put as high as 50,000.

Also overseas, in what was arguably the most important single event of the 20th century, the Bolsheviks (later called Communists) snatched power in Russia from the provisional government of Alexander Kerensky on 7 November 1917. Czar Nicholas II had abdicated earlier in 1917 in favour of the provisional government. The Communists withdrew Russia from World War I and the country split in a civil war between the Reds and the Whites. Western countries, including Canada, sent troops to side with the Whites. In Trail, Selwyn Blaylock, the assistant general manager of the smelter, was

elected president of the local branch of the Win the War League, a national pro-conscription group. He was also a captain in the reserve militia, the Trail Company.

Businessmen Noble Binns of Trail and William R. Braden of Rossland were chosen to be the members of Local Tribunal No. 30 (Rossland and Trail), one of the local tribunals across Canada that decided on applications for exemption from conscription. Binns joined Blaylock on the executive committee of the Win the War League. They both belonged to the Trail Board of Trade, of which Binns was president. Still, Binns could show an independent streak. CM&S managing director James Warren declared in early October 1917 that the company would apply for exemption from conscription for all its workers. He said they were serving their country in what was really a munitions plant “and aiding in the prosecution of the war just as much as if they were armed and in the trenches.” Binns publicly disagreed. He did not consider Warren’s circular worth the paper it was written on. The Military Service Act would be fully carried out with fairness to the company and the men, he said. There was no blanket exemption for smelter workers. E.L. Newcombe, deputy minister of justice in Ottawa, agreed with Binns.22

The Military Service Act provided eight grounds for exemption. Ill health or infirmity was the most frequently cited ground by potential conscripts. It was a measure of the poor state of people’s health in Canada that, according to one report, medical boards examined 361,605 men and found 181,229 of them physically unfit for service in the field.23 Other grounds for exemption included importance of continuing employment for which the exemption applicant was specially qualified. Conscientious objection required a religious prohibition — no help for atheists like Goodwin. Clergymen could claim an exemption.

Goodwin attended his last convention of Mine Mill District 6 in September 1917 when he declined nomination for president and was succeeded by Marcus Martin of Nelson. The convention again called on the provincial government to require an eight-hour workday for everyone employed in and around smelters. With an eye elsewhere, the union proposed Goodwin for deputy minister in the new labour department being created by the BC government. Labour councils in Vancouver and Victoria supported him. The post, however, went to federal government mediator, John McNiven, in December 1917.

Goodwin’s personal ambition resulted in the Dominion Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Canada, including prominent labour leader

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22 Trail News, 14 September, 5, 12 October, 2 November 1917; Rossland Daily Miner, 10 October 1917; Nelson Daily News, 15 October, 2 November 1917.
23 Macphail, Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War.
Jack Kavanagh, refusing to renew his membership. The executive stated “that any individual attempting to enter political life as a lackey of the present political parties is unfit to hold membership in the SP of C. That the action of A. Goodwin in allowing his name to be used as a candidate for Deputy Minister of Labor in BC, and his acceptance of the candidature by the absence of any public repudiation placed him in the position above stated.” By the following spring, Goodwin’s $3 dues were accepted and he was back in the party, with Kavanagh making the motion to re-admit him. No explanation was published for the change of mind. This was the second time Goodwin had run afoul of the often doctrinaire SPC. In early 1915, the party’s BC Executive Committee demanded the reinstatement (presumably after expulsion) of Goodwin, as well as Joe Naylor and Peter Zanoni, because they “have not, in our opinion, violated any clause of the party platform in stating ‘that the commodity struggle was part of the class struggle’.”

The commodity struggle meant strikes and so this indicates that Goodwin had been opposed by the Impossibilist faction of the SPC that dismissed

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24 Peter Zanoni was a Cumberland miner at No. 7 Mine, where Naylor had also worked. Zanoni was evicted by Canadian Collieries from his company house early in the Big Strike: BC Archives, GR 1946, File 6.
strikes as commodity struggles. Clearly, Goodwin saw strikes as part of the class struggle.\textsuperscript{25}

The issue of the eight-hour workday for all CM&S smelter workers was presented squarely for negotiation in mid-October 1917. But behind Goodwin’s back, local union president Jack McKinnon engaged in unofficial communications with Blaylock, as one surviving letter shows. In a hand-written letter to Blaylock dated 5 July 1917, McKinnon had this to say to his boss: “Re our conversation yesterday dealing with the wages of concrete men and straw bosses I have nothing more that I can say that would further explain to you the action of the union in dealing with the matter as communicated to you by Secretary Goodwin and anything that I could say would be as I have already explained to you in our conversation would only be as an individual. As the union have [sic] taken on this matter and as their present officer I have to abide by their instructions. If however their [sic] is some point in connection with this matter that you wish to go further into with the executive officers of the union before you reply to the communication received from the union I will notify the other officers of the union or you can notify Secretary Goodwin and which ever one you notify we will arrange to meet you if you so desire. I am writing you this note as an explanation [sic] as to why I did not go up to your office [as] suggested in our conversation. As you know that me going to your office to talk over matters whether they happen to be union affairs or not may be looked upon with suspicion by my own fellow men and as one officer I am going to try and avoid such if I can. “Thanking you for past favors and consideration in my efforts on behalf of the union.” Interestingly, less than three months later, McKinnon resigned as union president after the company promoted him to shift boss at the smelter.\textsuperscript{26}

The union became emboldened by bargaining successes during 1917, not the least of which was winning the eight-hour workday on Sundays for carpenters at the Trail smelter. In September, hours were similarly reduced for all smelter workers at the Granby Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company in nearby Grand Forks — the biggest copper producer in BC — where the workday had been nine hours.

All unions with members at the Trail smelter decided that everyone should be treated equally. The approximately 1,150 production workers had the eight-hour workday but about 450 tradesmen such as carpenters and bricklayers, their helpers, and day labourers, put in nine-hour days. Because the tradesmen belonged to their own craft unions, all unions decided

\textsuperscript{25}Nelson \textit{Daily News}, 10 September 1917; \textit{Western Clarion}, 1 March 1915; November 1917; April 1918.

\textsuperscript{26}Cominco Papers; Trail \textit{News}, 5 October 1917.
that there should be a common approach through the Trail Trades and Labour Council, and Goodwin was elected council president. The council communicated its proposal to Blaylock on 19 October and asked that it be implemented on 1 November.

"On behalf of the local unions affiliated with the Trades & Labor Council of Trail, we are presenting to you a request for the granting of the 8 hour day for all employees in and around the Smelter. This question has been recognized by the employers of labor and it seems that it is only a matter of a short time until it becomes law in the province of British Columbia," labour council secretary Morton Brown wrote to Selwyn Blaylock on 19 October. His last statement was to prove prophetic, but the legislated eight-hour day would not be put into effect for smelter workers until 1 April 1919.

The company's reply was clear and the die was cast: It would not recognize the labour council as representing the unions to which the smelter workers belonged. "As all our agreements re wages, hours, etc. have been made with the Trail Mill and Smeltermen's Union representing all classes of labour in the plant, all questions relating to any changes desired in these matters should be brought up through that organization," Blaylock replied on 23 October.

Brown restated the position of the labour council on 25 October: "I have been requested to state that the question of the 8 hour day be dealt with through the Trades and Labor Council. The Unions have all expressed their willingness for to [sic] follow this course. The Mill and Smeltermen's Union have [sic] also decided that as they do not represent all the members of the other Unions, that the only way was for the question to be taken up through the committee of the Trades and Labor Council which are delegates from each union that is effected [sic] with the grievance."

Blaylock answered on 27 October: "I noticed that you say that the Unions have all expressed their willingness to have the Trades and Labour Council deal with this matter. However, as all our wages and agreements are made with the Mill and Smeltermen's Union, I do not feel that we are in a position to deal with your Labour council on these matters." That was the last written exchange between the two sides regarding the eight-hour workday issue that was quickly to lead to the first strike at the smelter.

Suddenly, a new issue arose: Goodwin protested the company's compulsory checkoff of a day's pay once a month for the Smeltermen's War Fund. "I am instructed to inform you that if the patriotic money is taken out of the men's envelopes on next pay day, the men will refuse to work the following day," he wrote to Blaylock on 30 October. "If you can assure the union that it will not be deducted any more it will avoid any stoppage in the operation of the Smelter," he added. Blaylock, who had earlier refused the union proposal for voluntary checkoff of union dues, reacted by letter on the same day
to Goodwin. Workers who did not wish to contribute could opt out, or any
ten employees could call a meeting and have subscriptions channeled
through the bank. “I am instructing all foremen that men may not be fired
because they will not subscribe to the Patriotic Fund,” he told Goodwin.
This, clearly, implied that there had been a threat of dismissal for not con­
tributing to the patriotic fund. Blaylock also wrote: “While the Company
has no right to force men to subscribe to the Patriotic Fund, I feel that this is
a matter for each individual for himself, which he may do without fear of
molestation.” Smeltermen decided on 3 November to make their War Fund
contributions at the bank.

Meanwhile, the momentum for the eight-hour workday continued. The
compny sought help from the Mine Mill union head office in Denver to
avoid a strike but the union local did not acknowledge that there was an
agreement in effect. A strike, however, was not going to occur at a good time
for the smeltermen. The company had recently cut back shipments of lead
from mines because of a reduction in orders from the Imperial Munitions
Board. In the bigger picture, there was a major wave of strikes from 1917 to
1920 throughout Canada that in turn was part of an international insur­
gency affecting all industrialized nations, fuelled by the rapidly rising cost
of living. In Trail, the strike vote was held on 12 November and approved by
352 votes to 42. Why approximately 1,200 workers did not vote has not
been explained. Further talks proved futile. Both sides drew their lines in
the proverbial sand.

The strike by 1,600 workers, which also idled several thousand miners,
began on 15 November 1917 — the first strike to close the smelter and, as it
turned out, the last strike for 47 years. The day before the strike began,
Mine Mill president Charles Moyer issued an open letter from Denver ap­
pealing to the loyalty of all men in the United States and Canada who
worked in and around copper mines, mills and smelters to assure maxi­
mum production. He said “only in cases where an employer may be so un­
fair, unjust and unpatriotic as to deny the appeals of our government in this
hour of its great need, that the question of a strike be considered at all.”
Moyer asked union members “to comply with the requirement of this pro­
clamation so as to avoid doing anything at this time that may injure the case
for humanity for which our country is now waging battle for the common
people of all nations of the earth.” The appeal had no effect in Trail where
copper was processed but, more significantly, lead and zinc.

Both Goodwin and Blaylock addressed the workers on the first day of the
strike. Blaylock asked them to return to work, offered arbitration, and said
if the arbitration result was in their favour the company would pay overtime
for the extra hour from then until the date of the award. The men refused
saying the union had already given the company 24 hours notice of the
Smelter workers in Trail on strike in November 1917 head to the baseball park for a mass meeting. *Trail City Archives.*
strike and a further extension of 15 hours. Almost immediately, the issue of
conscription was injected into the strike by a false news report originating in
the Victoria Daily Colonist which said the strike was in protest against the
Military Service Act that ordered conscription. The newspaper report was
roundly dismissed by all concerned, including Blaylock, who said there was
not the slightest truth to it. It may have been the only point on which there
was unanimity in the strike. The strike itself remained solid and peaceful
throughout.

For Goodwin, there was sad news from Yorkshire about his father. Walter
Goodwin was admitted to West Riding Lunatic Asylum in Wakefield on 17
November 1917 suffering from senile dementia. On admission to the men­
tal hospital he was described as "restless and excited in his manner, unable
to keep still." He never left the hospital.

In Canada, the stage was being set for conscripts — and for Ginger
Goodwin personally. The Military Service Act made all men aged 20 to 45
liable for conscription and Goodwin, now 30 years old, was in the first group
to be called up. The act required potential soldiers to present themselves
for medical examination. Goodwin went to Nelson, probably in October,
where the Medical Board was comprised of three local doctors serving in
the Canadian Army medical corps: Maj. Lorris E. Borden, chairman, and
Lieuts. William H. Wilson and M.J. Vigneux. They placed him in Category
D — temporarily unfit but subject to re-examination later. The other cate­
gories were A — combatant service, overseas; B — non-combatant service,
overseas; C — non-combatant service, home; and E, rejected.

But on 26 November 1917 (according to the B.C. Federationist of 14 De­
cember 1917) — just 11 days after the start of the first-ever smelter strike
that Goodwin was leading — he received a telegram ordering his medical
re-examination in Nelson "from one of the members of the tribunal," the
identity of whom has never been made known.

The telegram came six days after Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden is­sued
a national statement saying that men in Goodwin's category — D —
would not be called up at this time. Borden said in Ottawa on 20 November:
"It is only men who have been included within Category A who can be called
out for active service in the trenches. The need at present is for infantry to
serve at the front. As men coming in the categories B, C, D, E are not consid­
ered suitable for this service, there is no likelihood of their being drafted.
The best service which they can give to the state is in Canada rather than at
the front." It was no wonder that Goodwin's friends saw the demand for his
medical re-examination as more than a little suspicious.

The Trail Mill and Smeltermen's Union, Local 105, protested the medi­cal recall at a mass meeting on 29 November and passed a resolution saying
Goodwin's services "are most essential to the well being of our organiza­
Fighting For Dignity

tion" and asked that he be granted exemption to look after union business. A public statement was issued by the union saying: "As a result of the strike here, certain influences are at work to force Mr. Goodwin into military service, without any attempt to consider the circumstances. Mr. Goodwin, on his own behalf, filed a claim for exemption, on the ground of being physically unfit, a condition in which he has been for several years." The telegram ordering his medical re-examination indicated an intention "under any circumstances, to put Goodwin in Class A," said the union.

The B.C. Federationist said bluntly that "the whole thing opens out and displays the hands of those desirous of disposing of Goodwin by fair means or foul." West coast labour leader and prominent Socialist, William Arthur Pritchard, who knew Goodwin, declared flatly later: "The management contacted the draft board and had Goodwin called back for further examination where he was classed as A." Dick Marshall, one of the strike leaders and a key organizer of the Italian workers at the smelter, said the same. Marshall, assistant secretary of the union, related events this way in 1919: "Now the first time he went to Nelson, BC, for his examination he went through and finally the board put him in Class 'D' and after he come from the Tribunal Office the president of the local and the general manager there and he says, 'Well Goodwin what class did they put you in?' 'Class D,' he said and the general manager he said I am going to repeal [sic - appeal?] that case, 'You are going to the front, Goodwin and I will help make you go.' So finally a week or two afterwards two weeks afterwards the case came up and meantime we called a general strike for eight-hour day. Now when the strike had been called three days, Albert Goodwin got a telegram from Nelson; the company lawyer was on his tribunal, so he got a telegram to go to Nelson and be examined again, so he went to Nelson and instead of Class 'D' as before they put him 'A-2'.” Marshall then went on to say that Goodwin decided to appeal and the union held a big meeting where the strikers passed a resolution claiming an exemption from conscription for him. Marshall did not identify the "president of the local" but it was Jack McKinnon at that time. He did not identify the "general manager" of the smelter: James Warren was the managing director, or general manager, but Selwyn Blaylock was the assistant general manager in charge of labour relations and in 1919 he became general manager. Also unidentified by Marshall was the "company lawyer on his tribunal." It was Edmund Carlyon Wragge who had joined Newton Wolverton of Nelson, a businessman, as the two-member conscription exemption tribunal in Nelson. Wragge was a decorated veteran of the South African (or Boer) War and a publicized donor to the Nelson branch of the Canadian Patriotic Fund. He was also the law partner of Charles Robert Hamilton who had provided the legal opinion to
CM&S on the applicability of the eight-hour workday law in BC to the Trail smelter.

Goodwin presented himself for re-examination and the Nelson medical board bumped him up to Category A — fit for fighting in the trenches. The Military Service Act put the onus on those claiming ill health to prove their case on the evidence of a family doctor or a doctor who knew the applicant for at least a year. The medical report had to be exhaustive and go into details of defective organs. According to one newspaper account, this was not done in Goodwin’s case. Because all the conscription records have been destroyed (as we shall see), the actual state of Goodwin’s health can only be glimpsed via anecdotal evidence from lay persons and by inference. Several contemporaries (and at least one newspaper report) were clear that he suffered from stomach ulcers. Speculation that he also suffered from tuberculosis would appear unfounded. Surely doctors would not categorize as fit for fighting in a war a man who had TB? Andrew Waldie, an accounting clerk at CM&S who boarded at the Meakin Hotel, said Goodwin was “a very, very sick man” with rotten teeth who hardly ever ate a decent meal. Jean Letcher was a 15-year-old girl when Goodwin stayed with her family in Cumberland in early 1918 while battling conscription. She recalled he had “beautiful red hair” and was “very slim.” As for Goodwin’s health, she said: “Oh, he was a sick man. It was something to do with his stomach. He couldn’t keep anything on it. He had an ulcerated stomach but he also had something else. Mother was fussy about the dishes. My mother catered to his stomach with an all-milk diet.” Union leader W.A. Pritchard said Goodwin was classified D — temporarily unfit — because of stomach trouble.

Whatever ailed Goodwin, however, was not sufficient to stop him playing soccer. In July 1917, he played centre forward in a pickup game in Trail for the Thistles against the All Whites and set up a goal “after a brilliant piece of play,” reported the Rossland Daily Miner. The game was described as “fast and some good play was witnessed.” He was also fit enough to referee a soccer game in Trail “and he handled the game well.” An undated team photo indicates that Goodwin was playing regularly in Trail in either 1916 or 1917.

While Goodwin battled conscription, mediation attempts in the smelter strike by McNiven, by William Armstrong, who was briefly a one-man royal commission of inquiry, and by the Associated Boards of Trade (ABT) were not successful. Armstrong, as well as McNiven, concluded in early December that there was an agreement in effect for the duration of the war at the smelter. Armstrong advised the men to return to work and use their influence to get the provincial eight-hour workday law amended to cover all workers around smelters. (Armstrong could not have known how correct his advice would turn out to be: The Labour Regulation Act was amended by
Goodwin played soccer in Trail. He is in the front row, second from left, in this Trail team that competed in the West Kootenay Football League. Interestingly, back row left is Trail MLA James Schofield, the club president. The two men contested the 1916 provincial election in Trail constituency with Schofield winning re-election. The photo is likely from 1916 when Goodwin first moved to Trail. Tom Routledge identified Goodwin and the other team members in an interview with the now-defunct Beaver Creek and Salmo Bulletin in 1970 and provided this photograph. Routledge is the goalkeeper (dark shirt, back row). He starred for Nanaimo Football Club that won the Canadian soccer championship in 1923 and 1927. Trail City Archives.

the legislature the following spring and the eight-hour workday for all workers in and around smelters was made effective on 31 March 1919. CM&S introduced it the next day). But a motion to take a referendum vote on a return to work was defeated at a mass meeting of the strikers. A compromise suggested by the ABT — that the men return to work with the company conceding the eight-hour day pending a decision by a conciliation board — was accepted at a mass meeting on 24 November, but the company rejected it.

Fred Starkey, a Nelson mining broker and real estate man who was president of the ABT, gave this view of the thorny issue of the alleged continuing labour agreement: "One thing I am certain of is that the men as a whole are sincere in their belief that there is no such agreement. It is a surprise to me that an agreement in proper form was not framed and submitted to the in-
ternational union. Fair Wage Officer McNiven and Alfred Bordsen, representing the international union, take the view that the series of letters constitute the disputed agreement." An ABT committee said in a report that the smeltermen "were not well advised when they failed to accept the offer of Mr. Blaylock, assistant general manager of the smelter, to pay them the same wage for eight hours as for nine hours work if the conciliation board decided that they were entitled to the eight-hour day. This offer had to be accepted before the furnace fires were drawn, and the men having refused to depart from their attitude appear to have allowed the psychological moment for obtaining their demands to pass. It is believed that any conciliation board would have conceded the eight-hour day to the 450 or 500 men who claimed to be entitled to it."

Moyer, the international union's president, appointed William Davidson of New Denver, BC, and Bordsen, from Great Falls, Mont., both members of the International Executive Board, to investigate the strike. On 16 December they sent a letter (publicized the next day) to the Trail Mill and Smeltermen's Union saying the Trail Trades and Labour Council had no authority under several sections of the constitutions of both the Mine Mill union and the American Federation of Labor to negotiate with the company or to call a strike. Union members at nearby mines had been put out of work, "causing undue hardship." They concluded that the council's strike call was unlawful and could not be endorsed or recognized by the international union. They declared the company "fair" and advised members to go back to work. On 19 December, the Rossland Miners Union appealed to smeltermen to obey the recommendation. With every hand turned against them, the strike committee told a mass meeting on 20 December that it would be folly to continue, and the smeltermen decided to call off the strike. Hundreds of men lost their jobs, blame being apportioned between declining demands for war materiel and a blacklist. The action by Davidson and Bordsen was endorsed in January 1918 by Mine Mill's Executive Board in Denver which labeled the strike "illegal and unwise" and referred to the "asininity [sic] of the Trail local." Moyer said later that, "The action taken by the Trail local was not only a violation of the laws of the International, but practically a conspiracy, hatched and put into execution before the officials of the International were informed that a strike was contemplated, in fact, the union acted first, then notified the International officers and asked for their endorsement of an illegal act." Goodwin said the men were driven back to work by hunger (there was no strike pay) and by the company claim
that there was an agreement for the duration of the war that had never been recognized by the union.27

The strike over, Goodwin continued his battle against conscription. After his treatment at Nelson, he took his case to the Rossland-Trail Exemption Tribunal No. 30 claiming that he was physically unfit and that his union needed his services, either of which, if accepted by the tribunal, were grounds for exemption under the Military Service Act. Goodwin’s judges at the board were his political, economic, and social opposites and adversaries: Noble Binns and William Braden were both in favour of conscription. Binns was a pillar of the Trail community. He was a founding alderman (councillor) of the city and was mayor in 1902. A furniture storeowner and undertaker, he was the police magistrate, president of the Board of Trade and president of the West Kootenay Liberal Association. Braden owned a grocery store in Rossland and was president for several years of the Rossland Conservative Association. Both men buried their past political differences and joined together to support the pro-conscription Unionists. Goodwin, of course, had run as a Socialist in the 1916 BC election in Trail, opposed the war, and frequently derided both the Conservatives and Liberals. Outside Quebec, Liberals joined Prime Minister Borden’s Conservatives in the pro-conscription coalition under the Unionist label.

In the federal election of 17 December 1917, the Unionists rolled to a massive 153-to-82 victory by constituencies. But the popular vote was close and showed how divided the country really was — 841,944 votes for the Unionists and 744,849 for the Liberals who remained with Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who supported Canada’s war effort but did not believe conscription was necessary for victory. In BC, Labour candidates fared poorly on a platform of abolition of profit making, no conscription, decent payments to

27 Doris Goodwin research; Stanley Royd Hospital; Nelson Daily News, 16, 22, 26 November, 17 December 1917; Trail News, 16, 23 November, 16, 21 December 1917; Rossland Daily Miner, 8, 10, 17, 20 December 1917; Vancouver Sun, 31 July 1918; Glen Marshall, “Review of the Walkout at Trail, British Columbia,” Miners Magazine, January 1918, (Marshall, a resident of Rossland, BC, was Secretary of Mine Mill District 6); Moyer’s speech to the IUMMSW convention was reprinted in Miners Magazine, August 1918; B.C. Federationist, 28 December 1917; Douglas Cruikshank and Gregory S. Kealey, “Strikes in Canada, 1891-1950,” Labour/Le Travail, 20 (Fall 1987); McRoberts, “The Routing of Radicalism”; Scott, “A Profusion of Issues”; Cominco Papers; Norlin Library, University of Colorado, Boulder, Western Historical Collections, “Minutes,” Executive Board, Western Federation of Miners/International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers; George Meany Archives, Silver Spring, Md., AFL and IUMMSW constitutions; Dick Marshall is quoted in District 18 UMWA Papers, M2239, File 153, Glenbow Museum and Archives, Calgary; Jean Letcher’s comments were made in an interview with the author, 16 March 1988.
soldiers and dependents, and no profiteering in war supplies. In Goodwin’s constituency of Kootenay West, Nelson Ald. Irvin Austin polled 1,399 votes for Labour compared with 5,377 votes for incumbent Conservative (now Unionist) MP, Robert Green. The Liberal candidate received 1,735 votes.

Binns and Braden rejected Goodwin’s appeal against conscription. Goodwin challenged their decision but on 20 January 1918 the local Appeal Tribunal judge, Yale County Court Judge John Brown of Grand Forks, who handled all the appeals from Local Tribunal No. 30 (Trail), turned him down. Even if Goodwin had kept his initial category D status, the future would have been bleak for him because he was subject to re-examination. By the spring of 1918, nearly all temporarily-exempted men were being called up. Binns and Braden, at the beginning of May 1918, recalled 37 men given D category status the previous fall and immediately revoked 23 exemptions. The other 14 only got temporary extensions “to arrange matters so that they can join the colours.” Still, Goodwin’s change from D to A and losing his exemption appeal in January effectively removed him from union activity in Trail.

Goodwin attended his last union function at the end of January 1918 as a delegate to the BC Federation of Labour convention. He was a member of a federation committee that considered the problems of the returned soldiers and discussed them with representatives of the servicemen including Sgt. A.E. Lees, secretary of the Great War Veterans Association in BC. Soon enough Sgt. Lees would have harsh comments to make about Goodwin. The committee recommended and the federation agreed to find ways and means of ensuring that disabled or pensioned soldiers would not be preyed upon by employers discriminating against them because of disability. Goodwin favoured the committee meeting returned soldiers themselves. He declined a nomination for president of the federation and took a leave of absence from the Trail Mill and Smeltermen’s Union. Peter Bolam took his place.

Goodwin took his conscription appeal all the way to the top, getting fresh medical reports from doctors in Vancouver. The final arbiter was Lyman Poore Duff, a justice of the Supreme Court of Canada who was appointed under the Military Service Act as the Central Appeal Judge in Ottawa. Duff was a former Victoria lawyer and BC Supreme Court judge. In a few months, he dismissed Goodwin’s appeal against conscription. After his stint as the Central Appeal Judge, Duff returned to the Supreme Court of Canada and destroyed the conscription records. He said he was glad he burned the records because of the divisions that conscription had caused to national unity. E.L. Newcombe, then deputy minister of justice and later a Supreme Court of Canada colleague of Duff’s, burned all the records he kept as chairman of the Military Service Council which supervised the Military Service
Act. Duff's biographer, David Ricardo Williams, writes: "Both men, both honourable men, believed they had acted in the national interest by denying future researchers the opportunity of ascertaining the truth." It may, however, be argued that the deliberate destruction without any political or legal approval of such historical records was a dishonourable act, even if made by honourable men. The absence of documentation has left fertile ground for suspicion and speculation. Obvious questions remain unanswerable. Nationally, final conscription figures showed 401,882 men registered of whom 379,629 sought exemption and 222,364 got it with 112,625 ruled unfit. At the local Appeal Tribunal level, 120,448 cases were heard and exemptions were granted to 65,224. Duff himself dealt with 42,300 cases and he declared 17,140 men exempt. In the end, only 24,132 conscripts actually fought in France. In contrast, in BC, with a population of less than 450,000, the response for volunteers in the early years of the war was phenomenal — 55,570 men joined voluntarily, with 43,202 serving overseas, 6,225 of them being killed and 13,607 injured. Goodwin never returned to Trail. He went back to Cumberland where he prepared his final appeal against conscription. He turned to his old comrades at the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council appealing for support on the ground of his union activity. "My claim is that of being an official of the labour movement and doing some useful function to the interests of the wage earners," he wrote. He addressed his letter "to those that feel interested in the position of a slave fighting for what liberty the system will permit him to get out of it and I can assure you that any assistance that can be rendered will be appreciated by this humble slave." But while the Trail union backed him, Vancouver unionists did not at a meeting on 21 March 1918. Socialists Jack Kavanagh and George Thomas rebuked Goodwin. Kavanagh said Goodwin was supposed to be a revolutionary and should take his medicine. Had Goodwin appealed that he had been double-crossed as a member of organized labour, there might have been some grounds for the council's support, said Kavanagh. Thomas said Goodwin's letter was more like a "squeal" than an appeal. Duff considered Goodwin's written appeal on 27 March. A medical board of review in Vancouver sent its findings to Duff. But he returned the findings for further consideration before he denied the appeal on 15 April. Private Goodwin, 270432, ordered to report to No. 2 Depot Battalion in Victoria on 2 May, went into hiding in the mountains west of Cumberland. In early May, the

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28 Granatstein andHitsman, Broken Promises.
30 Goodwin's letter was dated 14 March 1918 and reproduced in the Trail News of 2 August 1918.
Military Police component of the federal Dominion Police began looking for him and other deserters. Inspector William John Devitt of Vancouver, formerly of Trail, Nelson, and Rossland, was in charge of the searches. He was the source of the information that Goodwin was to report for duty on 2 May 1918 and that the letter ordering this was returned unopened from Cumberland. The penalty for desertion was up to five years in prison, with hard labour. Goodwin had three months to live.\(^\text{31}\)

\(^{31}\) David Ricardo Williams, *Duff: A Life in the Law* (Vancouver, 1984); Wejr and Smith, *Fighting for Labour*. The destruction of the conscription records and the disappearance of the records of the Trail Mill and Smeltermen’s Union, Local 105, leave us dependent largely on newspaper accounts. Particular reference is made to: *Trail News*, 4, 18 January, 17 May, 2, 9 August 1918; Nelson *Daily News*, 1 December 1917; 21 January 1918; *B.C. Federationist*, 14 December 1917. Some conscription details and the Nelson Medical Board are from the Nelson *Daily News*, 25 September, 5 October 1917, Prime Minister Borden’s statement was reported on 21 November 1917; Goodwin’s soccer playing and refereeing are from the Rossland *Daily Miner*, 6, 9 July 1917; Walter Goodwin’s admission to hospital is from hospital correspondence with Doris Goodwin, Conisbrough; the call up of temporarily-exempted men is from the *Trail News*, 26 April, 3 May 1918; Pritchard’s quote is from Gloria Montero, *We Stood Together: First-Hand Accounts of Dramatic Events in Canada’s Labour Past* (Toronto, 1979); Goodwin’s rejection by the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council is from the *B.C. Federationist*, 22 March 1918; Goodwin’s BC Federation of Labour attendance and meeting with Sgt. Lees is reported in the *B.C. Federationist*, 1 February 1918; Sgt. Lees harsh words about Ginger are reproduced in the Introduction of this volume. Also consulted were Mayse, *Ginger*; McRoberts, “The Routing of Radicalism”; Scott, “A Profusion of Issues”; Forbes, *Historical Portraits of Trail*; and Turnbull, *Trail: An Invitation to History*. Some details of Braden and Binns are from various contemporary newspaper accounts; BC Archives, GR419, Volume 217, File 1918/79, Preliminary Investigation, *Rex v. Daniel Campbell*. 