

A statement of the development of organized labour in Canada would not be complete without a reference to the Knights of Labour, an organization formed in the United States in 1869, to which all classes of workers were admitted. The Knights of Labour, which in 1885 reached its greatest numerical strength with about 1,000,000 members, extended its jurisdiction into Canada, establishing district and local assemblies in many localities in the Dominion. Seventeen of these were operating in 1891 in the province of Quebec. Soon after that, however, dissensions took place in the ranks of the organization, owing to the difficulty of uniting workers of different crafts in one body. The international crafts organizations, which had in the meantime become united under the banner of the American Federation of Labour, formed in 1881, offered strong opposition to the Knights of Labour, which in a few years ceased to be an important factor in the labour movement of the continent.

Trades and Labour Congress of Canada.—Through the initiative of the Toronto Trades Assembly (now the Toronto District Trades and Labour Council), the first national labour organization, the Canadian Labour Union, was formed in Toronto in September, 1873. The organization held its second and third annual meetings in 1874 and 1875, but disappeared as a result of the serious depression of the later 70's. In 1883 the Trades and Labour Council of Toronto, feeling the necessity of the wage-earners of Canada having a medium through which to express their opinions, assumed the responsibility of calling another trades and labour congress, which met in Toronto on Dec. 26, with 47 delegates. On the summons of the Toronto council, a second meeting, with 109 delegates, assembled on Sept. 14, 1886, the first occasion on which any labour body outside of the province of Ontario was represented. A permanent organization was effected at this meeting under the name of "Trades and Labour Congress of the Dominion of Canada". This was the title of the organization until 1895, when the title "Trades and Labour Congress of Canada" was adopted in preference to "Canadian Federation of Labour". Since 1886 conventions have been held annually, the 1927 meeting in Edmonton being counted as the 43rd. The Trades and Labour Congress is representative of international trade unionism in the Dominion, the bulk of its membership being drawn from the international organizations which have local branches in Canada. According to reports for 1926, the congress received payment of per capita tax from 57 international bodies and two national organizations which had their entire membership in the Dominion, with a total membership of 94,424 in 1,297 local branches. With other affiliations and unions directly under charter, the congress had in all at the close of 1926 a membership of 103,637 in 1,340 branches.

Membership of International Organizations in Canada.—At the close of 1926 there were 89 international craft organizations having one or more local branch unions in Canada, the same number as in 1925. These bodies among them had 2,078 local branches in the Dominion with 202,532 members, a gain of 34 branches and an increase of 2,703 members as compared with 1925. The international craft organizations represent approximately 74 p.c. of the total of all classes of workers in the Dominion organized under trade union auspices (Table 3).

Canadian Federation of Labour.—The Canadian Federation of Labour was organized in 1902, under the name of National Trades and Labour Congress, as a result of the expulsion from the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada of the Knights of Labour assemblies and all other unions which were composed of members of crafts over which existing international organizations claimed jurisdiction. The delegates of the expelled unions forthwith formed a new central body