

In 1851 a branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, a British organization composed of metal mechanics, was established in Toronto. In the years immediately following, other branches were organized in other Canadian cities, the society having the whole Dominion for its operations. In 1888 the United Machinists and Mechanical Engineers of America was formed, and, in competition with the Amalgamated Society, entered the field for the membership of eligible craftsmen. The first Canadian lodge (No. 103) of the new body was formed in Stratford, Ont., in 1890, while lodges in Montreal (No. 111) and in Winnipeg (No. 122) were organized before the close of the same year. After the extension of its jurisdiction into Canada, the name of the organization was changed in 1891 to the International Association of Machinists. Subsequently the last named body added considerably to its membership, having at one time 17,809 members in Canada; at the close of 1928 the membership stood at 8,165 comprised in 86 local lodges. On the other hand, the Amalgamated Society never added very greatly to its Canadian following; the largest number of local branches and members on record was in 1919, when they stood at 24 and 3,000 respectively. Negotiations were opened in 1919 by the general officers of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and the International Association of Machinists, with a view to affecting an amalgamation. As a result, the Amalgamated Society, on Sept. 30, 1920, withdrew its operations from Canada and the United States, where branches were also in existence, leaving the whole North American continent to the International Association of Machinists.

Another British labour organization to found branches in Canada was the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, now the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, which in 1860 chartered a branch in London, 21 years before the establishment of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, now the chief organization of the craft in North America. In this case also, arrangements were finally made whereby members of the Amalgamated Society became also members of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, but retained their connection with the former body for its beneficial features. By a decision of the United Brotherhood in 1922, members of local branches of the Amalgamated Society were prevented from holding certain official positions in the district councils; the United Brotherhood also refused to grant charters to the local branches of the Amalgamated Society formed after the plan of unification became effective. These decisions led to a division, in an effort to overcome which the Amalgamated Society sent a delegation to Canada and the United States, which proposed that the members of the Amalgamated Society should join the United Brotherhood. In 1923, the latter organization gave the branches of the Amalgamated Society until March, 1924, to unite with it, with the same standing they held in the Amalgamated. All branches in the United States and a number in Canada accepted this proposition. The Canadian branches which refused these terms were classed as affiliates of the British organization until 1924, although they were not controlled by the parent body. In that year the British headquarters granted complete autonomy to the Canadian branches, which then organized as the Amalgamated Carpenters of Canada.

With the practical elimination of the British organizations, the North American field has been left entirely to the labour organizations originating on this continent. These labour bodies are for the most part in affiliation with the American Federation of Labour, which, in addition to dealing with trade matters, speaks for the organized workers of the United States on the subject of legislation. In Canada, the legislative mouthpiece of internationally organized labour is the Trades and Labour Congress, which body is representative of the international labour movement, as its