

Section 9.—Organized Labour in Canada*

At the beginning of 1955 there were 1,268,207 labour union members in Canada, practically no change from 1954. The individual unions are listed in Table 35 showing their memberships as at Jan. 1, 1955. At that time the majority of these unions were affiliated with a central labour congress, the three largest of which were the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, the Canadian Congress of Labour and the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour. These organizations are discussed briefly in the 1955 Year Book, pp. 818-819.

At a labour convention held in Toronto, Apr. 23-27, 1956 the union of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and the Canadian Congress of Labour was sealed, effective May 1, 1956. The product of this merger is the Canadian Labour Congress which brings into one organization more than 1,000,000 union members, while guaranteeing the existing jurisdictions and established bargaining relationships of all affiliates. The preamble to the CLC Constitution, which sets forth its aspirations, reads as follows:—

“Dedicated to the proposition that Canadian workers as free citizens are entitled to secure and protect their mutual welfare and that of their families by all legitimate means, this autonomous Canadian Labour centre is brought in being.

“Inherent in this proposition is the attainment of its economic, social and legislative objectives through the organization of Canadian workers in free trade unions, the promotion and advancement of their interests in all fields of common endeavour by the utilization of their collective strength, abilities and resources.

“Founded to contribute to the realization of the legitimate aspirations of those who toil for a living, this organization will not deviate from the pursuit of the cause of peace, freedom and security for all peoples.

“It will at all times hold true to the high levels and principles of social justice on which the Labour Movement was founded.

“Unalterably opposed to corruption and totalitarian ideologies in all forms, it will utilize every resource at its command to combat these evils wherever they may be found. It will seek to eliminate tyranny, oppression, exploitation, hunger and fear, as well as discrimination on the basis of race, colour, creed or national origin.

“With a keen appreciation of the tremendous responsibilities which it has assumed, this organization accepts the challenge of the future to foster and defend the principles of democracy in the economic, social and political life of the nation.”

The Constitution of the Congress provides for the establishment of an Executive Committee consisting of the President, the Executive Vice-President and the Secretary Treasurer, an Executive Council comprising the three principal officers and 13 Vice-Presidents, and a General Board which includes the Council plus one principal Canadian officer of each affiliated organization. The biennial convention is the policy making body of the Congress. The Executive Council, which is to meet at least three times a year, officiates between conventions and the General Board functions in a consultative and advisory capacity.

The Executive Council was empowered at the convention to negotiate the terms of affiliation of the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour, the One Big Union and the Canadian membership of the United Mine Workers of America.

* Information concerning unions is published in the Department of Labour annual publication, *Labour Organization in Canada*.