

The Canadian Congress of Labour explicitly endorsed the CCF in 1943 and continued to do so throughout the remainder of its existence. It set up political action committees to implement this policy. Its efforts certainly helped the CCF to win power in Saskatchewan in 1944 and to retain it ever since; to maintain its position as the official Opposition in British Columbia for most of the past twenty years; to become briefly, though for the second time, the official Opposition in Ontario from 1948 to 1951; to win a few seats in the Nova Scotia Legislature; and to carry some industrial ridings in the House of Commons in the elections of 1945, 1949, 1953 and 1957. But on the whole the results were not what the Congress had hoped.

The Canadian Labour Congress at its first convention adopted a compromise policy on political action, leaving its provincial Federations, its local Councils and, of course, its autonomous affiliated unions free to follow whatever line they saw fit, and authorizing its Political Education Committee, under the guidance of the Executive Council, to initiate discussions with other free trade unions, the principal farm organizations, the co-operative movement, the CCF and "other parties pledged to support the legislative programme" of the Congress, in order "to explore and develop co-ordination of action in the legislative and political field". So far, no such discussions have taken place. The Ontario and British Columbia Federations and some important local Labour Councils have endorsed the CCF and several important unions that already were supporting the CCF have continued to do so.

This is, necessarily, hardly more than an impressionistic sketch of the history of the Canadian Labour Movement. Of the constant preoccupation of the Congresses with specific union problems, with questions of health and safety and general working conditions, and with a host of other matters, it has said nothing; nor has it so much as touched on the various unions which make up the central organizations and are, for many purposes, far more important—the affiliated unions do all the collective bargaining, have most of the money and are fully autonomous. It has barely mentioned the important Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour. But, again, the history even of the Congresses, let alone the particular unions, has yet to be written. Until it is, any summary must be preliminary, tentative and subject to drastic revision.

Labour Union Statistics.—Tables 33, 34 and 35 give historical and current figures on union membership in Canada.

33.—Membership of Labour Unions in Canada 1927-57

Year	Members	Year	Members	Year	Members
	No.		No.		No.
1927.....	290,282	1937.....	383,492	1947.....	912,124
1928.....	300,602	1938.....	381,645	1948.....	977,594
1929.....	319,476	1939.....	358,967	1949.....	1,005,639
1930.....	322,449	1940.....	362,223		
1931.....	310,544	1941.....	461,681	1951 ¹	1,028,521
				1952.....	1,146,121
1932.....	283,096	1942.....	578,380	1953.....	1,219,714
1933.....	285,720	1943.....	664,533	1954.....	1,267,911
1934.....	281,274	1944.....	724,188	1955.....	1,268,207
1935.....	280,648	1945.....	711,117	1956.....	1,351,652
1936.....	322,746	1946.....	831,697	1957.....	1,386,185

¹ Figures for 1949 and previous years are as at Dec. 31; figures from 1951 are as at Jan. 1.