

1896 the convention again resolved that unity with the Patrons was desirable and instructed its Executive to be represented at any meeting the Patrons called. The Dominion election of 1896 pretty well did for the Patrons but the idea of co-operation with farm organizations persisted and in 1910 the Executive recommended appointment of a special committee for this purpose.

From then until 1941, labour seems to have been too preoccupied with more urgent matters to give this one much attention. In that year, the TLC declared that "the well-being of labor is inseparably bound up with the prosperity of the farmer"; expressed its fear that "many farmers" would be "driven off the land" and "forced into competition with workers thereby driving down wages"; and announced its "sympathy and support for the farmers to secure adequate debt protection and parity of farm prices". The CCL declared in favour of co-operation with farm organizations and of government aid in marketing farm produce in any friendly country. The next year the TLC called on the Government to help the farmers meet the shortages of machinery and services. In 1946 both Congresses supported the Alberta farmers' strike; the older declared for "close co-operation" with national and provincial farm organizations; the younger suggested a conference of "Labour organizations and the official spokesman of the farmers" to work toward "complete unity in our demands for social security". In 1947 the CCL declared its support for the farmers "in their attempt to get a fair price for their products", and in 1948 pledged itself to do all it could to promote "farmer-Labour-teacher" co-operation for "common aims and objectives". In 1949 the TLC listened to a speech of greeting from the President of the Alberta Farmers' Union (already affiliated with the Calgary Trades and Labor Council). In 1951 the CCL called on the Government to work out with farm organizations "a just farm price-structure". The next year the older Congress had another speech of greetings, this time from the President of the Interprovincial Farm Union Council, and the other Congress declared for a "National Co-ordinating Committee of Farm and Labour organizations". From 1953 to 1955 both Congresses had farm speakers each year; so did the new CLC at its founding convention in 1956. In February 1954 the two Congresses and the Interprovincial Farm Union Council set up the Farmer-Labour Economic Council, which still exists.

Another subject of great importance which has had a place in almost every meeting of the national central organizations is political action. The Canadian Labor Union dealt with it in 1876 and 1877. The Congress of 1883 unanimously resolved that "the working class of this Dominion will never be properly represented in Parliament or receive justice in the legislation of the country until they are represented by men of their own class and opinions". The 1886 convention reaffirmed this and the members pledged themselves to "use their utmost endeavours, wherever practicable, to bring out candidates for the local and Dominion elections" or, where this was not "deemed advisable", to support the candidate "who pledges himself to vote for most planks of the platform of this Congress". The 1887 convention dropped this last part and adopted the remainder unanimously. The 1889 convention set up a committee to consider forming an "independent political party" and recommended the organizations to nominate candidates where practicable and elsewhere to support the party which was prepared to do most for Labour. In 1892, on motion of two French-Canadian delegates, the convention resolved to "take into consideration the advisability of forming a labor party". Perhaps as part of the consideration, the 1893 convention invited its member organizations to answer four questions: (1) Are you in favor of the present industrial system? (2) Are you in favor of the so-called co-operative system of productive (sic) distribution and exchange? (3) Are you in favor of the communistic system of government? (4) Have you any other system better than the above to suggest? (Strange to say, there were almost no replies.) In 1895, by a very narrow majority, the convention voted to admit "sections of the Socialist Labor Party" (this was repealed in 1896) and resolved that "labor organizations should now unite for independent political action".

But some organizations had already been taking political action. In 1874, Ottawa elected the first Labour M.L.A. in Canadian history. In 1883, the Toronto Trades and