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Date: September, 1974

Author Sharon M. Reilly

Title The Provincial Workmen's Association of

Nova Scotia 1879 - 1898

The Provincial Workmen's Association
of Nova Scotia, 1879-1898

by Sharon M. Reilly



Sharon M. Reilly

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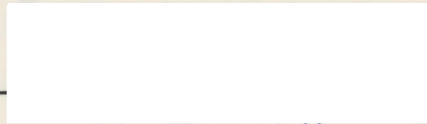
Degree Masters of Arts

Convocation Fall Year 1979

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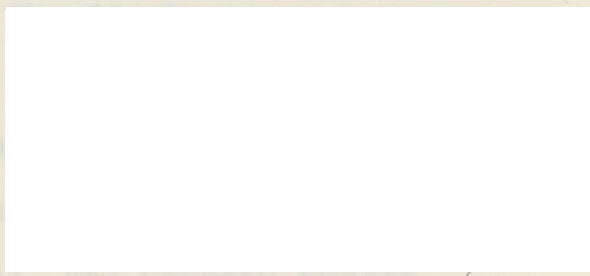
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This thesis examines the history of the Provincial Workmen's Association of Nova Scotia, from its formation in 1898 to the resignation of the union's first Grand Master in 1917. The study begins with a description of the coal industry in Nova Scotia during the late 19th century. The region's attempts to industrialize in response to the National Policy are discussed in relation to the coal industry. The difficulties experienced by the miners as a result of these changing economic conditions are considered in the second chapter, and the formation of the P.W.A. is described. The early organizational activities, constitution, ritual and structure of the society are also detailed. The following chapter investigates the three tactics employed by the P.W.A. to protect the rights and improve the condition of the Nova Scotia miners. The utility and ideological underpinnings of each method - strikes, government lobbying and electoral politics - is considered in order to clarify the degree of success achieved by the union in its stated goals. Chapter Four focuses more directly on the ideology of the P.W.A. "Loyalist" and "rebel" attitudes toward the coal masters, the increasing alienation of the miners from their work resulting from the development of industrial capitalism, and the growth of trade union consciousness and working class awareness are described. The influence of Robert Drummond on the Nova Scotia miners is also discussed. The fifth and final chapter describes the rank and file discontent with leadership that emerged in the late 1890s and culminated with the company store dispute in 1896. The "invasion of the Knights of Labor" and the resignation of Robert Drummond are examined. Final conclusions are then presented, followed by an epilogue, which describes briefly the path taken by the P.W.A. from 1898 until the dissolution of the union in 1917.

Abstract

This thesis examines the history of the Provincial Workmen's Association of Nova Scotia, from its formation in 1879, until the resignation of the union's first Grand Secretary in 1898. The study begins with a description of the economic background of the province's coal trade during the 19th century. The end of the "golden age" of wood, wind and sail, and the region's attempts to industrialize in response to the National Policy are discussed in relation to the coal industry. The difficulties experienced by the miners as a result of these changing economic conditions are considered in the second chapter, and the formation of the P.W.A. is described. The early organizational activities, constitution, ritual and structure of the society are also detailed. The following chapter investigates the three tactics employed by the P.W.A. to protect the rights and improve the condition of the Nova Scotia miners. The utility and ideological underpinnings of each method - strikes, government lobbying and electoral politics - is considered in order to clarify the degree of success achieved by the union in its stated goals. Chapter Four focuses more directly on the ideology of the P.W.A. "Loyalist" and "rebel" attitudes toward the coal masters, the increasing alienation of the miners from their work resulting from the development of industrial capitalism, and the growth of trade union consciousness and working class awareness are described. The influence of Robert Drummond on the Nova Scotia miners is also discussed. The fifth and final chapter describes the rank and file discontent with leadership that emerged in the late 1880s and culminated with the company store dispute in 1896. The "invasion of the Knights of Labor" and the resignation of Robert Drummond are examined. Final conclusions are then presented, followed by an epilogue, which describes briefly the path taken by the P.W.A. from 1898 until the dissolution of the union in 1917.

Acknowledgements

In the researching and writing of this thesis I have received assistance from the Dalhousie Graduate Studies Program and the Dalhousie Research and Development Fund. I would like to extend my gratitude to the university for this support.

I would like to express appreciation to the members of the Dalhousie History Department's North American Seminar, who commented on the original thesis proposal.

I also would like to thank several good friends whose assistance has been particularly valuable to me in this project.

David Sutherland, who supervised my Maritime history field work.

David Frank, historian of the Cape Breton coal communities, who shared his research with me and provided important insights into the material.

Greg Kealey, a fine teacher and good labor historian, who supervised the researching and writing of this thesis, and without whose continuous support it would not have been completed.

Finally I would like to thank my special friend, Nolan Reilly, who first encouraged me to do graduate work, and who provided a constant source of personal support and intellectual criticism throughout all stages of the study.

Abbreviations

A.M.W.N.S.	Amalgamated Mine Workers of Nova Scotia
Domco	Dominion Coal Company
G.M.A.	General Mining Association
K. of L.	Knights of Labor
P.M.A.	Provincial Miners' Association
P.W.A.	Provincial Workmen's Association
U.M.W.A.	United Mine Workers of America
U.M.W.N.S.	United Mine Workers of Nova Scotia

Introduction

The formation of the Provincial Workmen's Association in 1879 signalled the beginning of a new era of industrial relations and the development of a collective consciousness among Nova Scotia coal miners. The Association represented a type of union distinct from any that had been organized previously in Nova Scotia. The mutual benefit societies and fraternal orders already existing in the mining communities clearly did not meet all the needs experienced by the miners. In his study of the impact of industrialization on 19th century America, Rowland Berthoff¹ distinguished between these "self-help" societies and trade union organizations. Although both groupings were the products of industrial capitalism, fraternal orders had "few practical functions." Instead they served a "moral or spiritual purpose." They helped to bring stability into the lives of men and women who had been cut off from their traditions and their past, not only by immigration to a new land, but by the new industrial age. Labour unions, on the other hand, had definite economic goals and combined these with their social role. These associations sprang "from a spontaneous, unorganized assertion of a common purpose, by men

who asked for only what they had to have if they were to remain men..."²

The P.W.A. embodied both social and economic functions. The "grand title of lodge hierarchy" " Berthoff thought "supplied the established order that modern society had repudiated", and the rites and ritual that "provided esthetics for men who disregarded art and literature as too impractical for everyday life", both flourished within the P.W.A. The Association's capacity as a "fellowship in duress", that is - its role as a labour union intent on protecting the interests of its members at the workplace - was its most important function. It was this aspect that caused hundreds of miners to flood into the organization in the weeks following the successful 1879 Springhill strike. The consolidation of Nova Scotia's coal industry at the end of the 19th century created intolerable conditions at the workplace that forced the miners to reject their traditional loyalty to their coal trade and to adopt a rebel stance instead. Although in practice the P.W.A. involved primarily coal miners between 1879 and 1898, its members accepted the value of industrial unionism and were eager to implement this strategy through the P.W.A. This attitude and the willingness of the miners to struggle with the leadership of the Association for more militant unionism, as shown in the company store dispute and the miners' abandonment of the P.W.A. for the Knights of Labor, displayed a budding

class consciousness that reached maturity in the Cape Breton labour struggles of the 1920s. In the words of E.P. Thompson, "The working class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time, it was present at its own making. "...class happens...", continued Thompson, "when some men, as a result of common experiences...feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs."³ With its purpose of protecting the interests of mariners, in opposition to those of the coal masters and the amalgamated companies, and its cry of "Root hog or die!", the Provincial Workmen's Association represented the tentative, but very real beginnings of the making of a Nova Scotian working class.

Footnotes

1. Rowland Berthoff, An Unsettled People - A Social Order and Disorder in American History (New York, 1971), pp. 272, 444-48.
2. Ibid., p. 448, from Frank Tannenbaum, A A Philosophy of Labor (New York, 1952), p. 66.
3. E.P. Thompson, The Making of the Englishsh Working Class (London, 1963), pp. 9-10.

... in Nova Scotia began approximately 200 years prior to the formation of the Provincial Workmen's Association in 1879. In the intervening two centuries, the coal industry developed into one of the most important sectors of the provincial economy, and in the process, created the particular social and economic circumstances that gave birth to one of Canada's first miners' trade unions.¹ In order to understand the evolution and assess the impact of the P.W.A. on the coal districts of 19th century Nova Scotia, it is first necessary to consider these early years.

Fishermen, explorers and military personnel travelling along the Cape Breton and Nova Scotia coasts in the 17th century originally discovered coal in the new colony. The earliest documented report known is that of Governor Caulfield of Annapolis Royal, who in 1715 praised the high quality of coal at Chignecto.² Although many small and unofficial operations were carried on throughout the 18th century, it was not until 1784 that the British Privy Council legalized the leasing of Cape Breton, and later, Nova Scotian mineral rights.³ Prior to this time British

Chapter I

The Economic Background of the
Nova Scotia Coal Industry

Coal mining operations in Nova Scotia began approximately 200 years prior to the formation of the Provincial Workmen's Association in 1879. In the intervening two centuries, the coal industry developed into one of the most important sectors of the provincial economy, and in the process, created the particular social and economic circumstances that gave birth to one of Canada's first miners' trade unions.¹ In order to understand the evolution and assess the impact of the P.W.A. on the coal districts of 19th century Nova Scotia, it is first necessary to consider these early years.

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imperial policy clearly forbade the development of the coal resource, except to provide fuel to the Royal Navy. Britain's interest in British North America focused on the cod fishery rather than on colonization or development of the land. The fishery had a dual significance. It was important, not only as a wealthy and easily exploited natural resource, but also as a training ground for a vast merchant marine which would provide skilled sailors who could be pressed into service in the Royal Navy in time of war.⁴ Settlements in North America eventually were founded by the British, because of the strategic military significance of the region, but even then coal production remained illegal. The colonies were expected to provide a marketplace for British manufactures, and authorities feared the development of the coal industry would lead to manufacturing and ultimately to economic independence from the homeland.⁵ As the settlement grew, however, it became increasingly less practical to import fuel to the region, and at the end of the 18th century the resource policy was reversed. This news was received enthusiastically by the colonists and resulted in a rapid increase in coal production over the following 15 years. Total coal sales rose from approximately 1,700 tons in 1785 to almost 9,000 tons at the beginning of the 19th century.⁶ This rate of growth did not continue, however, because the new industry faced a number of problems. High production costs, difficulties concerning leases, fluctuating markets, and a

general lack of expertise hampered development. An unprecedented demand for coal generated by the War of 1812 brought the first significant infusion of capital to the Pictou and Cape Breton collieries. Previously unheard of prices were paid for the fuel, but production lagged behind demand and sales for 1812 reached only 9,500 tons.⁷ The loss of this market at the war's conclusion bankrupted many operators and left the industry in chaos.⁸

In order for the coal resource to be developed it was necessary to find a stable market for the product. This was no simple task as the quality and availability of the coal left much to be desired. The crude mining practices of the day were partially responsible for this problem. In 1826, Richard Brown, an engineer working for London's General Mining Association, described the situation at the mines in Sydney in the following manner:

The coal was worked by "holing" across the bord in the middle, "sheering" the sides, and breaking it down by wedging. As no separation of large and small was made, the same price being paid for the whole, the colliers had no interest in making as much large coal as possible, so that before it left the face of the bord the proportion of large coal obtained did not amount to two-thirds of the whole.⁹

The coal was then loaded into two-bushel tubs in which it was hauled to the bottom of the shaft. Here it was emptied into a three-bushel tub, raised 90 feet to the surface, dumped into a shoot, and discharged into 12-bushel carts.

If a vessel happened to be loading at the time, the carts were driven over a rough, shaky road... to the wharf. When no vessel was loading, and also in winter, when navigation was closed, the

coals were deposited in a large heap near the wharf, over which the carts were dragged. As sometimes 3,000 to 4,000 tons were accumulated in one heap ready for shipment, it may be easily conceived that, after undergoing so many removals, with a final crushing by the horses and carts, the coal was reduced almost wholly to slack before it reached the vessel.¹⁰

This largely deteriorated product, available only in the navigation season, had to compete with carefully prepared, freshly mined British coal for the New England market. Not surprisingly, sales did not increase significantly under these conditions. In 1827 only 12,000 tons of coal were sold.

Although few profits were made during these years, the vast potential of Nova Scotia's coal fields was realized and local capitalists determinedly continued their attempts to exploit the resource.¹¹ In 1827 these colonists were shocked when it was announced that the General Mining Association (G.M.A.) of Great Britain had been granted exclusive rights to the colony's coalfields.¹² When the G.M.A. arrived in Pictou that June some local operators, realizing resistance would be useless, simply sold out. Others such as Adam Carr, "gave them six months of hard warfare", before finally giving up his mines.¹³

It was an extremely strange twist of fate that first brought the G.M.A. to Nova Scotia, and the story is repeated in virtually every account of the province's coal industry. King George III willed the mineral rights of the colony to his favourite son Phillip, Duke of York, in the late 18th century. The grant was lost after the king's

death, and it was not until 1825 that it was recovered and its intention made known. The deed was then turned over to Phillip by his brother, George IV. The Duke, who was known for his continual financial problems, soon leased the mineral rights to the jewelry company of Messrs. Rundell, Bridge and Rundell in payment for a personal debt. This party of merchants also comprised the General Mining Association which owned copper leases in South America. With the exclusive rights to the mineral deposits of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, the G.M.A. intended to extend its search for copper. The Duke, for his part, had not only settled an extravagant jewelry account but had secured an income for life by way of royalty payments. Ironically, Phillip was dead within six months.

Meanwhile, many Nova Scotians wished a similarly untimely ending would come to the G.M.A. The colony had its own entrepreneurs who were anxious to exploit its resources and they had no need of outside competition, much less the G.M.A. monopoly. In 1826, for example, Samuel Cunard applied to Lieutenant Governor Kempt to lease the Cape Breton coal mines for 30 years. Although offered substantially more revenue than the G.M.A. was to pay, the governor refused.¹⁴ The monopoly shrewdly dealt with Cunard by making him their local business agent. This action did not appease the rest of the province, however, and the monopoly became a source of constant agitation and complaint. The 1837 Reform Assembly included the monopoly

in its list of grievances to the Throne.¹⁵ Whenever the G.M.A. failed to comply with the terms of its lease by not opening newly discovered deposits of coal within a stipulated period of time, local capitalists demanded the leases for themselves. One such instance occurred in 1846. The monopoly was forced to begin operations at the Joggins site in order to prevent Abraham Gesner and his Halifax associates from gaining a lease for it.

Despite this lack of popularity, the G.M.A. is usually credited with making a considerable contribution to Nova Scotia's coal industry. Sales increased from just over 12,000 tons before its arrival in 1828, to almost 253,000 tons in 1857, when the monopoly was finally broken. Several railroads, two steamships, and an iron foundry were put into operation by the company and more than 1,500 men were employed in Bridgeport, Pictou and Sidney.¹⁶ By 1840, \$360,000 had been invested in the industry by the G.M.A., yet no profits had been realized. This was due in part to the immensity of the monopoly's capital expenditures. The problems encountered by earlier leasees also had not yet been overcome. The lack of winter ports continued to hamper the industry and even in the summer Pictou and Sydney harbours offered limited facilities. Delays were frequent and costly, and while a more skillful removal of the coal had been achieved, forced banking continued to result in a deteriorated product.

External factors also intervened to create problems.

Between 1828 and 1835, England first decreased and then removed its export duty of 11s per ton from British coal. Even more problematic was an increase in competition from American producers for what had previously been considered an unlimited U.S.A. market. Canal and railway building during this period drove productivity in the American mines up and transportation costs down. In 1842 Congress further moved to protect the coal industry by imposing a \$1.75 per ton tariff against foreign coal.¹⁷ Cape Breton exports to the U.S.A. dropped that year from almost 32,000 tons to under 17,000 tons. Nova Scotian coal could gain entry to the southern market only at little or no profit.¹⁸

In addition to these difficulties the G.M.A. encountered antagonism from the community in which it dwelt. Numerous complaints were made to the monopoly as well as to local authorities concerning the poor service and high prices of the G.M.A. Typical was the petition of Alex Fraser of New Glasgow, who in 1838 requested Lieutenant Governor Campbell to grant him a licence to mine coal, for the "sole purpose to cheapen the article of fuel...to... himself and the public."¹⁹ Local politicians were sensitive to this anti-G.M.A. sentiment and as early as 1845 the Nova Scotia Assembly considered legislation to break the monopoly. Following the institution of responsible government in 1848, Joseph Howe took advantage of his new position to pass an "Act respecting Casual and Territorial Revenue." This legislation had the effect of removing the ownership

of Nova Scotia's mineral rights from London to Halifax. In addition to appeasing public agitation the government stood to gain financially from this move. The G.M.A. had negotiated extremely favourable terms with the British government in 1826 and, with the privileged monopoly out of the way, Howe re-allocated the mineral rights at a much higher rate and collected the revenue.²⁰ Nova Scotian capitalists were eager to become involved once again in the coal industry and supported the government in this initiative.

The Nova Scotian public, government and capitalist class thus came together in the middle of the 19th century to demand the right to exploit their own resources. Confronted with this pressure and its own economic problems, the G.M.A. was forced to reconsider its general strategy. On 20 August 1857 the monopoly relinquished its exclusive hold on Nova Scotia's mineral rights. A select but limited 44 square miles of coal fields was all the G.M.A. retained of its original princely grant.

The G.M.A.'s decline came at a time when Nova Scotia was experiencing the great expansion and revitalization of its economy known as the "golden age". In his study of this period, Maritime historian S.A. Saunders pointed out that two major developments gave rise to the new era.²¹ One of these was the extensive program of railway construction that was carried on in the region, beginning in Nova Scotia in 1854. By the advent of Confederation the province had

spent a total of \$10 million on railways. One hundred and forty-seven miles of track were laid, linking Halifax to the province's Fundy shore.²² Similar expenditures in New Brunswick helped to link the region's centres, while the completion of the Grand Trunk line between Montreal and Toronto in 1856 made Upper Canadian markets more accessible. Far more important than the railways, however, were internal developments stimulated by a rapid expansion in world trade. Shipbuilding, forestry and agricultural production, the fisheries and coal mining all were boosted in Nova Scotia by this new world prosperity.

Coinciding with this period of expansion, and dramatically affecting Nova Scotia's fishing trade and coal industry, was the Reciprocity Treaty effected with the U.S.A. in 1854.²³ During the ten years of free trade, exports from Nova Scotia to the United States rose from 25.8% to 41% of all products sold outside the colony. Coal exports to the U.S.A. began a rapid climb in 1854 and showed an amazing increase of 385% by the time of the treaty's abrogation in 1865. In that year 73% of all Nova Scotia's coal sales went to the U.S.A.²⁴ The American Civil War (1861-1865) served to intensify the demand, but such advantageous conditions could not last forever. When both reciprocity and the war ended in 1865, the coal industry was damaged seriously. Exports dropped from an all time high of over 465,000 tons to less than half that total by 1868. Ten years after the treaty ended Nova Scotia

exported a mere 72,000 tons of coal to the U.S.A.²⁵

The colony was forced to turn more eagerly than ever before to Upper Canadian and Maritime markets. For a time this presented no problems, as the loss of the American market coincided with a general turning inward from an Atlantic to a continental economy. Confederation in 1867 held the promise of continued railway building and industrialization for Nova Scotia. An unlimited marketplace for Maritime products was envisioned that would stretch as far as the Pacific Ocean. Immigration policies would fill the west with consumers. Not all Nova Scotians perceived these developments as advantageous, as the province's initial rejection of Confederation testifies. The work of D.A. Muise has shown clearly, however, that this attitude was a transitory one and by 1869 a majority of Nova Scotia's federal representatives had come to favour the union.²⁶ After this date federal politics in Nova Scotia were dominated by the Conservative Unionists for 30 years. Election results during this period show a division existed between those areas of the province whose future prosperity depended on the continuation of traditional commercial Atlantic trade patterns and those whose potential rested with the emerging industrial economy of Canada. Areas which were tied securely to the new age by the railway or their potential for industrial development supported Confederation heartily.

The coal districts of Nova Scotia - Cumberland,

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Pictou and Cape Breton Counties - naturally fell into the pro-union camp. Coal was expected to fuel the new economy in two ways: firstly, through its traditional role as a raw resource for export to distant markets; and secondly, by serving as the basis for industrial development within Nova Scotia. With the "only commercially viable coal and iron deposits in the Dominion, and...the potential, under the tariff, of controlling most of the Montreal fuel sources",²⁷ it was fully expected that Nova Scotia would become the industrial hub of Canada. For a time the province appeared to be developing exactly in this manner. Tariffs against foreign coal combined with the growth of coal consuming Canadian industries to create an unsurpassed demand for the product. Consequently, by 1872 total coal sales outstripped the previous grand figure of 636,000 tons in 1865 to reach almost 786,000 tons, despite the fact that sales to the U.S.A. amounted to only 154,000 tons. Not only did the Quebec industrial market and the demand generated by the growing railway network make up for the loss of sales to the U.S.A., but Nova Scotia's home market expanded to consume approximately 50% of all coal produced.²⁸ Further protection of the industry was still needed, however, for total sales slumped to 634,000 tons in 1876. The National Policy enacted by the federal Conservatives in 1879 was designed, in part, to deal with this situation. The policy legislated high protective tariffs, not only against foreign coal, but also to foster the growth of

infant Canadian industries. As a result, "the decade following 1879 was characterized by a significant transfer of capital and human resources from the traditional staples into a new manufacturing base."²⁹ "Between 1881 and 1891 the industrial growth rate of Nova Scotia outstripped all other provinces in eastern Canada."³⁰

The effect of this growth on the coal industry was tremendous. In 1880, the year the new tariffs were installed, coal sales jumped from 689,000 tons the year before to 955,000 tons, and continued to increase throughout the following years to reach almost 3,000,000 tons at the turn of the century.

Despite this impressive beginning, development of the Nova Scotian economy soon was cut short and the new found prosperity declined sharply.³¹ The demise of this thriving economy can be partially understood by considering developments within the coal trade during these years. David Frank has referred to the breaking of the G.M.A. monopoly as "Nova Scotia's only successful revolt against the straitjacket of underdevelopment in which foreign control has clothed so many of its industries, including the coal industry."³² Unfortunately this revolt was not one of enduring success. In 1858 the province's maturing bourgeoisie seemingly held the potential for the full development of Nova Scotia's resources and the creation of a prosperous industrial economy. This group, which had its roots in the waning era of "wood, wind and sail," had

always relied on the export trade for its well-being. The new era of "coal, iron and steel" demanded the full industrialization of the regional economy to ensure continued prosperity. Although a strong and diversified economy could have developed out of the coal industry, secondary industries were not generated successfully within the region. Like fish and timber before it, coal never advanced much beyond the status of an export commodity, and utilized only a minimal labour force. Rather than struggle to create a self-sufficient home economy, Maritime capitalists involved themselves in the concentration and centralization of capital in central Canada, where a vibrant industrial economy evolved at the expense of the Maritimes.

A closer look at developments in the coal trade in the second half of the 19th century is necessary to understand how Maritime underdevelopment occurred. As suggested earlier, the initial response of Nova Scotians to the return of free enterprize in the wake of G.M.A. monopoly was a flurry of excitement and activity. Between 1858 and 1870 21 mines were opened in Cape Breton alone. In 1864 application was made for the leasing of 1,200 square miles of land throughout the province and at least 30 individuals or companies began the search for coal. Two years later, however, only 19 of these leasees were paying royalties and only ten produced more than 1,000 tons of coal. A major problem lay with inexperienced and speculative operators, who gave little thought to long

range planning, safety, or economy. In Cape Breton, for example, the painstaking but effective pillarage system was ignored, forcing the miners to work larger and larger areas. Eventually this method absorbed more capital than the other and deep pits with roofs supported by pillars of coal had to be dug anyway. Incompetence and greed thus led to costly overdevelopment. In 1875 the provincial Mines Report observed that at least \$1,250,000 had been wasted in the duplication of railway and harbour facilities.³³ At the same time, this equipment was lacking in other coal districts. A shortage of skilled labourers, competition from American and British coal, and relatively small markets also contributed to the chaos.³⁴

Providing the backdrop for the coal industry was the larger setting of the emerging Canadian economy. While the National Policy originally appeared to Nova Scotians as an opportunity for industrial growth, it actually evolved as an instrument for the domination of the province by central Canadian capital. Despite the 50 cent per ton tariff imposed on foreign coal in 1879 and the resulting expansion of the industry, Nova Scotian coal was never able to enter the vital Ontario market and even the Quebec exchange was unstable. Although spin-off industries and coal consuming manufactureries should have thrived around the coal source, their development was hampered by numerous problems.³⁵

Nova Scotian industries sprang up by the dozens in response to the National Policy, only to find that they could not

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compete with central Canadian capital.³⁶ This process did not always occur without a struggle, as recent work on "Busy Amherst" has shown, but in the end Maritime industries succumbed.³⁷

In the coal trade, two major problems existed. First was the industry's dependence on distant and uncertain markets. Second was private, corporate control of the industry, mostly by foreign capitalists, who had little or no interest in the region. Now recognized by a number of Maritime social historians as the indirect result of capitalist development and the concentration and centralization of capital, this process of uneven development and the division of labour between regions eventually brought underdevelopment and poverty to Nova Scotia.

The process occurred quickly in Cumberland County, where local operators did not begin leasing the mines until 1863. By 1870 Halifax and Saint John merchants had moved in to incorporate the Springhill Mining Company. Despite their efforts over the following decade, which included the formation of the Springhill and Parrsboro Railway Company in 1872, these regional capitalists eventually withdrew in the face of significant competition. In 1880 a Montreal group headed by John McDougall, David Morrice and L.A. Sénécal bought 80% of the bonds of the Springhill and Parrsboro Railway Company from 15 Saint John bondholders. In 1883 the group completed the takeover with the purchase of the Springhill Mining Company, which was at

that time the largest single producer of coal in Canada.³⁸ The following year the two enterprises were merged to form the Cumberland Railway and Coal Company.

The coal fields of Pictou County experienced a similar fate. In 1864 two cousins from the area by the name of McBean were granted a lease to mine seams in the eastern end of the Pictou coal fields. By 1872, however, these local operators had passed their lease on to Joseph B. Moore of Montreal. Moore then formed the Vale Coal, Iron and Manufacturing Company Ltd. The following year he entered into an agreement with fellow Montreal financiers Hugh Allan and Benjamin Hutchins. "There is no doubt," wrote historian James Cameron, "...that Sir Hugh Allan's resources financed construction of the railway, the wharf at Pictou Landing, construction of the surface plant, the miners' houses and the mine's development."³⁹ The head office of the Vale Company was on Montreal's McGill Street and Hugh Allan was its president. Moore acted as vice-president and Hutchins as secretary-treasurer. Also present in Pictou was the Halifax Coal Company, but its regional connection was in name only. After 1872, the company's lease, formerly the property of the G.M.A., was turned over to Sir George Elliot of London, England. The Halifax Company was merely a subsidiary of Elliot's extensive British industrial mining complex. A third major leasee was the Acadia Coal Company Ltd., which was organized in New York City in 1865. Among the company's directors was only one Canadian,

Sir Hugh Allan. In 1866 the Acadian Coal Company was operating two seams in the area which developed into the community of Acadia, later Westville.

Despite the vast amounts of capital invested in Pictou's coal fields, the trend toward consolidation continued. In 1886 the Vale, Halifax Coal and Acadia Coal companies merged to form the Acadia Coal Company. A relieved George Elliot commented that the Halifax company was certainly the "Toughest proposition he had ever tackled" and turned his attention back to his British concerns.⁴⁰ Meanwhile the son of Sir Hugh Allen, Hugh Montague Allan, became president of the new enterprise. The only company operating in Pictou that refused to join the merger was the Intercolonial Coal Company of Westville. This independent stance, however, did not reflect a major attempt by local capitalists to maintain a grip on the province's economic development. The plea of some Nova Scotian businessmen, such as Halifax's G.A. White, for local control of home manufacturers and industrialization based on the province's coal was not general.⁴¹ The opportunity for full development in Pictou was lost long before, when in 1865, the Great Seam was discovered by John Campbell. Campbell approached Halifax businessmen in an attempt to raise capital, but to little avail. Only two men, Hon. Benjamin Weir, later Canadian senator, and U.S. Consul Judge Jackson gave even minimal support. Campbell therefore turned to Montreal capitalists and found investors in

G.A. Drummond, the son-in-law of sugar refinery millionaire John Redpath, and the Molson family, which had made its fortune in the brewery industry. Drummond became president of the company, which carried on independently until 1953.⁴²

Because these mergers occurred relatively early in the Cumberland and Pictou coal fields, the problems of overdevelopment and mismanagement were largely avoided. In Cape Breton, however, numerous companies competed fiercely in an unstable industry throughout the 1870s and 1880s. By 1892 most operators were unable to make a profit. In the midst of this confusion, two important figures in the history of the coal industry entered the scene. These were Boston financier Henry M. Whitney and Colchester's B.F. Pearson. These men engineered the creation of a coal syndicate that would eventually lead Cape Breton to bankruptcy. The provincial government assisted in this development by granting the new Dominion Coal Company a 99 year lease over the mineral rights of Cape Breton Island. David Frank has called the formation of Dominion Coal the most decisive single event in the history of the island's coal industry, for it represented "the triumph of the strategy of the development of the coal industry by means of the export trade."⁴³ As Eugene Forsey wrote in 1933, the period which began with unrestricted competition in the coal fields ended with the domination of the industry by a very small number of operators.⁴⁴ Even more devastating than this was the fact that these were British, American and Montreal

capitalists, whose only interest in the region was in the profits they could squeeze out of the coal industry. The dream of Cumberland M.L.A. George Forrest, who pleaded for a more logical development of the province's resources so that Nova Scotia could become to Canada, the "Manchester of England, Ireland and Scotland," would never be realized.⁴⁵ Instead, as Nova Scotian Premier W.S. Fielding proclaimed, Dominion Coal would carry out "what nature had intended", the shipment of large quantities of the province's coal to the United States. Later events served to continue the process of underdevelopment that was set in motion during these years. The formation of the Dominion Iron and Steel Company by H.M. Whitney in 1899 and the later creation of Besco, the British Empire Steel Corporation, by Roy Wolvin in 1921, would complete the process.

Department of Mines Report, 1901.

7. Production stabilized until the 1827 takeover of the industry by the G.M.A. See appendix.

8. J.S. Martell, "Early Coal Mining", p. 161.

9. Ibid., p. 169.

10. Ibid.

11. Many illegal, or unlicensed operations were carried on in Cumberland, Pictou and Cape Breton in the first quarter of the 19th century. Much of the coal mined illegally was kept for private use but occasionally it was sold in Amherst or Halifax. Many other operations were carried out with full legal sanction and markets for this coal were sought in Saint John, Windsor and Cornwallis. See J.S. Martell, "Early Coal Mining," pp. 162-64.

12. The G.M.A. was granted the mineral rights of Nova Scotia in 1823, sent a surveyor to investigate its holdings in 1826, and arrived in Pictou County 4 June 1827.

Footnotes

1. The Miners' Mutual Protective Association, Nanaimo, B.C., existed as early as 1877. See Paul Phillips, No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia (Vancouver, 1967), p. 7.
2. J.S. Martell, "Early Coal Mining in Nova Scotia", Dalhousie Review, 25, 1945, p. 159.
3. New England traders often stopped along the shore to gather small loads of coal from surface seams. Individuals living in the province would gather the fuel for their personal needs. In 1780 Halifax merchants were permitted to operate a mine at Spanish River (Sydney) to supply local needs. Ibid., p. 156.
4. John Bartlet Brebner, North Atlantic Triangle (Toronto, 1945), p. 74.
5. Ibid.
6. See appendix for table of Nova Scotia coal sales, from Nova Scotia, Journals of the House of Assembly, Department of Mines Report, 1901.
7. Production stabilized until the 1827 takeover of the industry by the G.M.A. See appendix.
8. J.S. Martell, "Early Coal Mining", p. 161.
9. Ibid., p. 169.
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12. The G.M.A. was granted the mineral rights of Nova Scotia in 1825, sent a surveyor to investigate its holdings in 1826, and arrived in Pictou Country 4 June 1827.

13. James M. Cameron, The Pictonian Colliers (Kentville, 1974), p. 20.
14. Particularly favourable terms were secured by the G.M.A. in 1829 when it agreed to pay an annual rental of £ 3,333 and two shillings per chaldron in royalties for every chaldron in excess of 20,000 per year. The measure of chaldrons had not been specified, however, and when royalties came due the G.M.A. insisted on using Newcastle measure, which was double that of the more common Winchester weight. Nova Scotians paid £23,343 to the crown between 1820 and 1828 for 71,159 chaldrons Winchester raised, while the G.M.A. paid only £43,000 during its first 11 years for 460,000 chaldrons Winchester.
J.S. Martell, "Early Coal Mining", p. 167. See also, Phyllis R. Blakeley, "Sir Samuel Cunard", in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, IX (Toronto, 1976), p. 175.
15. J.S. Martell, "Early Coal Mining", p. 167.
16. This figure of 1500 employees refers to 1838. Ibid., p. 168.
17. This duty was imposed against soft coal. Hard anthracite was native to Pennsylvania and needed no protection. Ibid., p. 168.
18. Ibid.
19. J. M. Cameron, Pictonian Colliers, p. 29.
20. Ibid., p. 30.
21. See T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes 1880-1910", Acadiensis (Spring, 1972), p. 6.
S.A. Saunders, The Economic Welfare of the Maritime Provinces (Wolfville, 1932).
S.A. Saunders, Studies in the Economy of the Maritime Provinces (Toronto, 1939).
22. S.A. Saunders, "The Maritime Provinces and the Reciprocity Treaty", in G.A. Rawlyk, ed., Historical Essays on the Atlantic Provinces (Toronto, 1967), p. 177.
23. Ibid., p. 167.
24. David Schwartzman, "Mergers in the Nova Scotia Coal Fields," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1952.

25. Ibid. See also S.A. Saunders, "The Maritime Provinces", pp. 173-174.
26. D.A. Muise, "Parties and Constituencies: Federal Elections in Nova Scotia, 1867-1896," Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers (1971), pp. 183-202.
27. T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy," p. 6.
28. David Schwartzman, "Mergers", p. 78.
29. T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy," p. 3.
30. Ibid.
31. See J. Nolan Reilly, "The Origins of the Amherst General Strike, 1890-1919", (paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association Annual Meeting, Fredericton, 1977) and T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy," for further study of this process.
32. David Frank, "Coal Masters and Coal Miners: The 1922 Strike and the Roots of Class Conflict in the Cape Breton Coal Industry," unpublished M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1974, p. 8.
33. Eugene Forsey, "Economic and Social Aspects of the Nova Scotia Coal Industry," unpublished M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1926, p. 45.
34. Ibid., p. 38.
35. See D.E. Stephens, "Boom Town of Iron and Steel", in the Nova Scotia Historical Quarterly, 4, 1 (March 1974), pp. 23-30.
36. T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy", p. 16.
37. See J. Nolan Reilly, "The Origins of the Amherst General Strike."
38. T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy," pp. 15-16, from the Monetary Times, 15 December 1882 and 8 June 1883.
39. J.M. Cameron, The Pictonian Colliers, pp. 71-72.
40. Ibid., p. 83.
41. David Frank, "Coal Masters and Coal Miners", p. 9, from G.A. White, Halifax and Its Business (Halifax, 1876), pp. 108-109.
42. J.M. Cameron, The Pictonian Colliers, pp. 34, 46.

43. David Frank, "Coal Masters and Coal Miners", p. 12.
44. Eugene Forsey, "Economic and Social Aspects of the Nova Scotia Coal Industry", pp. 46-47. These companies included: the General Mining Association, London, England (1826); Intercolonial Coal Co., Montreal (1867); Cumberland Railway and Coal Co., Montreal (1884); Acadia Coal Co.; Britain, U.S.A. and Montreal (1886); and Dominion Coal Co., Boston (1893).
45. David Frank, "Coal Masters and Coal Miners," p. 12, from Nova Scotia, Debates and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, Halifax, 1893, pp. 71-73.

one of shifting ownership, increasing capital investments, and rising rates of productivity and profits. Integral to this story is the miner, whose skill and life's labour brought about the industry's development. Nova Scotia's adaptation in the late 19th century from a colonial economy based on resource export, to one of industrial capitalism, brought with it a profound transformation in the coal trade. As conditions in the industry changed over the years the position of the miner in his place of work was dramatically affected. When the work to be done in the mines required only a strong body, any unemployed fisherman or farm hand could be called upon to do the task. Later, when the industry became more technically advanced, miners of many years experience were induced by the coal companies to leave their homes in Scotland and elsewhere to live and work in Nova Scotia. Later still, the special status acquired by these skilled workers was lost as a result of changing conditions, and they were forced to unite to protect their rights. It is therefore necessary to consider

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Chapter II

The Miners' Response: The Formation of The
Provincial Workmen's Association in Springhill 1879

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not only the evolution of the Nova Scotia coal industry, but also the miner's contribution to that development and the impact of this change upon his life and that of his family. The following chapter explores the impact of transitions in the coal industry, from the earliest years of mining in Nova Scotia until the end of the 19th century, by which time industrialization had made its influence felt on all aspects of the miner's life. The miners' response to these changing circumstances, and the organization and early activities of the Provincial Workmen's Association are emphasized.

The conditions faced by the Nova Scotian miners in the 1870s evolved out of over a century's plundering of the province's coalfields. The frustrations of these years culminated in a struggle between coal miner and coal master in 1879 that resulted in the formation of the region's first miners' trade union organization. Throughout the 38 year existence of this union, its leaders looked back, time after time, to the days before organization. These men stressed that the P.W.A.

was not the product of mere agitators but sprang into being in response to the wish of men who had been subjected to indignities, who had suffered loss, who were well trodden down, and yet who had in them a sturdy spirit of independence.

The need for it was not created after the society had been formed, but it came to supply a long felt want, a crying need.¹

In the earliest days most mine workers were inexperienced labourers, farm hands or young Irishmen, who had

been employed in the Newfoundland fisheries.² An extremely high rate of transiency was characteristic of these men, and indicated that few found any satisfaction in the employ of the ambitious coal leasees. In Sydney, the men slept and ate in large "cook houses", 40 to a room. They toiled in the mines from five o'clock a.m., until seven o'clock p.m., taking only two one and one-half hour breaks for a shot of rum and meals of pork, bread and molasses.³ They were paid twice yearly, but only after the company store had taken its claim to their wage.⁴ Compared to this primitive situation the position of the miner was improved considerably when the coal industry was taken over by the General Mining Association. On its arrival in Nova Scotia in 1827, the G.M.A. brought with it much more than modern technological devices for the mining of coal, such as the province's "first steam engine, complete with pump, hoisting drum and chain." A "considerable number of Miners, Colliers, Engineers and Mechanics" also were aboard the British ship. These were highly skilled and valued tradesmen, who were accustomed to working in the coal fields of Britain with the best equipment available, and

as such [they] paid high wages. They fix their own prices and will not consent to admit any other person into the works. Sometimes the miners take an apprentice who by payment of a fee obtains the standing of miner, but the employer cannot send a single man among them.⁵

The miners and the operators shared common expectations of prosperity and a mutual respect based on need. A kind of

partnership existed between them and the miner felt a sense of loyalty to the operator and to the coal trade. The Provincial Commissioner investigating conditions at Albion Mines in 1842 was favourably impressed, having found "91 dwelling houses ... 21 smaller houses ... (and) 110 old log houses ... all quite habitable".⁶ Nevertheless, the lavish English mansion built in Stellarton for G.M.A. manager Richard Smith produced envy even among the Halifax elite and stood in sharp contrast to the "quite habitable" dwelling of the miner. When forced to economize after a financial setback in 1842, it became clear which of the "partners" would feel the pinch. Business agent Samuel Cunard wrote to his supervisors,

I have given my best attention to the only means of effecting this reduction and am now preparing a reduced scale of wages which I will endeavor to arrange with the colliers.⁷

Cunard went on to say he expected to encounter resistance from the men; "... your Lordship is well aware of the difficulty which attends a measure of this nature".⁸ The miners had a history of fighting to protect their rights. In 1840 the men had successfully resisted an attempted reduction in wages through strike action and in 1842 this tactic was used once again. On this occasion, however, victory was not so easily attained. The strike began 19 November 1842 and lasted 12 weeks, ending 9 February 1843. During the course of the strike Manager Henry Poole ordered the men's supplies cut off at the company store. One

hundred angry women and children converged on the manager's home at Mount Rundell in response, smashing windows and shouting abuse. When would-be strike breakers appeared they were burned in effigy by the strikers. Eventually a compromise was reached between manager and men, but it was a hard fought battle and only a partial victory for the miners.⁹ Despite this kind of opposition, the control held by the men over their work and lives was slowly being eroded. Conditions became even worse after the G.M.A. monopoly was broken and the industry became dominated by numerous inexperienced operators. Shortsightedness and greed brought chaos and low profits to the trade, which resulted in further exploitation of the men and their families. Frequent disputes occurred over wages, hours of work, and safety conditions in the mines. An attempt to organize the workers was made in Albion in 1864, but little is known about the event.¹⁰ For some time prior to the actual formation of the P.W.A. in September 1879, secret meetings were held by the miners in the protective darkness of the night to discuss their problems and to plan strategies for change.¹¹

It was not an easy time to organize workers in Canada. Trade unions had been legalized only since 1872 when the Trade Unions Act was passed. Public hostility toward unionism remained strong and was reinforced by employers' fear and hatred of workers' organizations. The provincial Mining Act of 1872 retained a traditional

view of the collier, who was expected not to infringe on the rights of his employer nor presume to have a voice in politics. The Act protected private property and kept workers outside of the policy-making sphere of the company, hindering the men's ability to protest poor safety conditions and leaving their wages unprotected.¹² Strike-breaking with the aid of troops, first implemented in Sydney in 1864, became a major weapon of government and capital combined against the workers.¹³ The importation of unskilled labour also posed a serious threat to the miners. Throughout the mining districts of the province, workers and their families struggled to survive the 1860s and 1870s under the oppressive and exploitative hand of the coal masters.

In Springhill, Cumberland County, where the P.W.A. first emerged, mining operations began relatively late. The first coal lease was not granted until 1863.¹⁴ Within a decade, however, Halifax and Saint John¹⁵ merchants incorporated the Springhill Mining Company.¹⁶ An initial capital stock of \$400,000, with provisions to increase it to \$1,000,000, was put forward to prepare for a much larger scale extraction of coal than previously. Until this time, all coal from the area had been hauled by horsecart to nearby Salt Springs or to Amherst, where it supplied the Intercolonial Railroad. Improved transportation was essential before production could begin, and so the Springhill and Parrsboro Railway Company was formed

in 1872 to lay track to nearby Springhill Junction, where it would supply the Intercolonial Railway, and to the port of Parrsboro on the Fundy shore.¹⁷ The following year, 40 colliers and their families arrived from Pictou. The miners were accompanied by William Hall of Albion Mines,¹⁸ who was to manage the new operation. The mine was officially opened and the first coal train was run to Springhill Junction that December.¹⁹

The town expanded rapidly during this period. General stores, a bakery, a post office, several churches and many company houses were erected for the growing mining population. Lodges of a number of fraternal societies including the Masons, Oddfellows and Orangemen were organized. Contrary to the image evoked by its name, Springhill's water supply was limited and water often had to be carried in by train. The initiative for industrial growth thus was lost to nearby Amherst.²⁰ Many residents hoped Springhill would become a railroad centre instead, as proposed lines to Oxford were expected to connect the town with the Short Line and the Northumberland shore. Shipping piers were planned at Pugwash and Wallace.²¹ This development never occurred, however, and the focus of the town remained the coal industry. Almost the entire population consisted of miners and their families.

The Springhill Mining Company progressed steadily, increasing its production every year.²² During the

mid-1870s dividends of 10% one year and 20% another were realized.²³ In 1879 the company expanded into G.M.A. territory at a cost of £60,000. It was at about this time that the directors posted notice of a three cent per box reduction in the men's wages. Unaware of the company's actual financial position, the miners grimly accepted the operators' explanation that the state of the trade demanded the cutback. It was not the first time the men had been made to suffer for the sake of capitalist enterprise, and since they believed the health of the industry to be at stake, they saw no alternative. The bitter truth of the matter became clear to them a few months later, when

the foolishly elated directors chuckled over the easy success which had attended to their first endeavor to add to their already handsome dividends and unwisely came to the conclusion that the men were as clay in the hands of the potter; so up goes, in August, another announcement of a further 3 cent reduction. Their presumption was to their utter discomfiture. The response was ... immediate; the men came out as a unit.²⁴

The men gathered at a rink just beyond the mines and decided to take immediate strike action. Canada's largest and most productive coal mine was shut down. Firing the men's anger was confirmation that the company had suffered no financial losses that year. Rates paid by their major buyer, the Intercolonial Railway, were equal to those of 1878. This fact was made clear in an anonymous letter in a Halifax newspaper which protested the injustice done to the miners. It was signed only, "A Traveller".²⁵ A few

days later the managers became aware of the anonymous writer's identity, and Robert Drummond, a Scotsman low in the managerial hierarchy of the company, was fired. On leaving the company office, Drummond went to the rink where the miners were meeting and asked if "a traveller" might be admitted. He was, and in Drummond's words, "One addicted to extravaganza might say of his reception that it was superlatively cordial ...".²⁶

At a subsequent meeting on 29 August, a unanimous resolution was passed to form a union "to defend the interests of miners", and the Provincial Miners' Association (P.M.A.) was born. A provisional committee headed by President Thomas Leadbetter and Secretary Robert Drummond was selected to draft a constitution and by-laws for the new union.²⁷ Another gathering on 1 September 1879 decided that Secretary Drummond, who was then unemployed due to his revelations to the miners, would be paid a salary of \$40 per month to carry out the major work of the Association. This was a handsome figure compared to the wages of the miners, who made between \$20 and \$30 per month that year.²⁸ Unfortunately the union was not able to take care of its Grand Master in a similar manner. When Grand Master Robert Wilson, who helped to organize the strike, was fired by the Springhill Coal Company early in the new year, the union could afford to offer him only \$50, a handshake and best wishes before he was forced to leave his home to search for work.²⁹

Meanwhile the strike continued, and as their losses mounted, the directors of the company grew agitated. Among the men, however, there was "no disorder, no threats, no rocks or shots fired, as of old through the manager's bedroom window... There was not even peaceful picketing; such was unnecessary."³⁰ After three weeks, the directors sent a representative to negotiate with the men:

His first proposal was to have the last notice withdrawn. The men thanked him and said 'Not acceptable'. He then offered to restore the rate to what it was before the last reduction. Neither was that acceptable.

Mr. Byers pleaded for acceptance, to no avail, the men declared they had been taken advantage of ... and must be recompensed.³¹

The directors' response was angry and drastic. Eviction notices were served by the sheriff to "the body of the workers", who lived in company housing.³² The population of Springhill in 1879 was no more than 1200 and almost 400 men were employed in the mines. It is therefore likely that over half the town's population was expelled from their homes by the company.³³ The men's committee went to work on the problem immediately, "securing accomodation in store lofts, in kindly neighbours' homes, and in hastily internally remodelled barns". The day before the sheriff was to evict them, "Every team in the town was engaged in removing goods and chattels... By night every tenant was safely housed."³⁴

Vacating the houses was a master stroke by the men. This display of solidarity and determination to stand up to

the company finally forced the directors to give in under pressure. A representative was once again sent to Springhill to settle the strike, and the men demanded and received an advance of three cents per ton.³⁵

The hard won victory at Springhill generated a tremendous enthusiasm among all the province's coal miners for union organization, and the P.M.A. expanded rapidly into other coal districts of mainland Nova Scotia. In his capacity as Agent for the Association, Robert Drummond travelled throughout Pictou and Cumberland Counties, calling upon mine workers to unite and join the P.M.A. Before long, additional lodges were organized in Stellarton, Westville and Thorburn. By mid-October, the Association had a membership of 646 men.³⁶

Throughout the following winter months, the union began to investigate and deal with grievances put forward by the men, such as non-payment for the work that preceded the actual cutting of coal.³⁷ A newspaper, the Trades Journal, was founded to serve as the official organ of the Association. In the summer of 1880, two additional lodges, Gladstone at Acadia Mines in Westville and Neptune in South Pictou, were formed. Not only miners but all categories of workers involved with coal production were brought into the union. These included loaders, trappers, underground and overground labourers, checkweighmen, and so on. In Granton, on the Northumberland shore, a lodge of wharfmen who loaded the coal onto ships was formed and

named Visatergo.

The P.M.A. was becoming well known throughout Nova Scotia, but thus far its organizational work had been confined to the mainland. The coal fields of Cape Breton, which in 1880 employed close to 50% of approximately 3,300 miners working in Nova Scotia, remained untouched by the P.M.A.³⁸ Problems of transportation to the Island, which was still without rail service and whose ports were blocked by ice for a large part of the year, were partially responsible for this failing. A letter to the Trades Journal of 4 August 1880, written by "A Workingman", advised that the miners of Cape Breton were in desperate need of union organization:

for the last three or four years, the wages of workingmen have been cut down to the lowest possible figure, and the men themselves harassed in their work to within an inch of their lives....

There were miners ... whose experience could count 20 years, who were disqualified because they could not lift half a ton, or work impossibilities with the coal, men, who by right of their experience, should have been the first authority on such matters. ... is it possible that the men of Cape Breton are so blind to their own interests and what is due to them as MEN, that they cannot see that they are literally made slaves of, by a lot of unscrupulous money grabbers [?] ... The sooner the P.M.A. or some other association is established in Cape Breton ... the sooner will be obtained redress.³⁹

The question of expansion into Cape Breton now occupied the forefront of discussion for the P.M.A., and at the second annual Grand Council held in Truro, October 1880, a decision was reached. It was agreed that

the P.M.A. was interested in organizing not only all mine workers in both Cape Breton and mainland Nova Scotia, but all categories of workingmen in the province as well. In order to make its position known the union adapted its name to the Provincial Workmen's Association (P.W.A.). It was agreed that the union's major work for the following year would be to expand the organization into both the Cape Breton mines and into non-mining workplaces. In the spring, the Grand Council met to plan "The Mission to Cape Breton". It was decided that Robert Drummond would travel to the Island as the Agent of the P.W.A. An assistant selected by Drummond would accompany the Grand Secretary on this organizational campaign. Some members, fearing the wrath of the coal companies, suggested that a body guard be sent along as well. After some discussion, it was concluded that if Drummond carried out his duties "secretly and courteously", and used a secret code in his daily telegraph to the Council, he would be safe enough.⁴⁰

The organizing tour began in spring 1881. A Caledonia, Cape Breton miner named Matthews accompanied Drummond on this campaign. On 13 July 1881, after the trip was completed, the Grand Secretary reported back to the Association in a lengthy article in the Trades Journal. Conversations with miners made it clear, wrote Drummond, that the workingmen of Cape Breton were far from satisfied with their situation and in great need of organization. The men were being exploited in many different ways by

the company. Their major grievances included: low wages; an overly long work day of 12 1/2 hours; the company store where they were forced to buy goods at exorbitant prices; and the checkweighman, who cheated the men out of the full weight of the coal they cut by over-estimating the amount of dirt and stone in each box, and by over-weighing the amount of slack, or unpaid broken coal, mixed in with the round coal. The miners enthusiastically welcomed the opportunity to join the P.W.A., and four lodges were organized during Drummond's stay. These included Drummond Lodge at South Mines, Equity at Caledonia Mines in Bridgeport, and Island and Unity Lodges, also in Bridgeport. After the Grand Secretary's departure, the union continued to flourish, and by October 1881 five more lodges had formed. Membership in Cape Breton alone was reported in the Trades Journal as having reached over 1200. The provincial Mines Reports showed a total of 1724 men working in Cape Breton's mines as of 31 December 1881. Even allowing for fluctuation in the workforce it appears that well over 50% of the Island's miners were organized during these initial six months, and membership in the P.W.A. more than doubled.⁴¹

Following the great success of the Cape Breton campaign, attempts were made to draw other types of workers into the Association. In October 1881, two non-miner's lodges were organized. These were Flint Lodge in New Glasgow, comprised of glassblowers who already belonged

to an international union but felt too isolated from it, and Our Rights Lodge, which included spike factory and foundry workers in Pictou county. Little is known about the influence of these two lodges on the P.W.A., or how long their connection with the union lasted. It was not until 1891 that a third non-mining lodge formed - Amherst's Concord Lodge of boot and shoe workers.

During these formative years, the structure and character of the P.W.A. was developed to suit the needs and aspirations of its members. To a large extent the ideology of the Association was reflected in its official rules and in its ritual. Guidelines for membership and rules of order were drawn up by the provisional Grand Council during the early days of the Springhill strike. It is clear, not only from the rapidity with which these were written, but also from comparisons made with other fraternal organizations such as the Knights of Labor, that the written code of the P.W.A. was neither original nor exceptional. Instead it reflected broad social values in its aim to improve the status of miners.

The membership of the Association was open to all "honest and trustworthy" men, who were 17 years of age or older, working in or about the mines, providing they held no official position within the coal companies. Like the Knights of Labor, members of the P.W.A. were not permitted to be involved in the production or sale of intoxicating liquors. To gain admission to a lodge, a potential

member had to be nominated by a member in writing, and a vote was taken on the issue by the entire body. Again like the Knights of Labor, the candidate was "declared elected" if he "shall not have seven black balls against him". An initiation ceremony followed, the ritual of which was carefully detailed in the Minutes of the Grand Council.

In the ante-room, the Assistant Master Workman informed the candidate:

Our object is not to wage a war of labor against capital, nor to drive trade, by oppressive measures, from our locality; on the contrary, by mutual concessions between master and man, we seek to have it carried on with advantage to both.

The chief objects of the Association are to use fair and legitimate means to secure fair remuneration for our labor; to obtain just legislation whereby our interests may be guarded; to advance, by co-operation and other means, our position materially; and remove any cause which hinders our advancement mentally, morally and socially.

The chief obligation desired of you is that you heartily assist in the obtaining of these objects.

Further, we have promised to stand together as one man when the majority of our lodge calls us to action, and we will expect you to stand with us.⁴²

Having accepted these objects, the candidate was led into the lodge room by the Guardian. The Master Workman "calls up, gives three raps" and the lodge sang,

A hearty welcome we extend,
And hail you as another friend,
Our cause to help to swell our band,
Right welcome then with heart and hand.⁴³

The Assistant Master and Guardian then proceeded to counsel the candidate at length, lavishing proverbs and

advice upon him in the following manner:

A.M. - Do you promise in all things to be faithful to us?

C. - Yes.

Members - Worthy then to be our brother.

N.W. - Calls down, one rap.

A.M. - Do you promise to persevere with us in the attainment of [our goals]?

C. - Yes.

G. - Diligent plodding has been successful where great genius has failed. Yes, most ills would disappear, did men more persevere.⁴⁴

This line of questioning went on for some time, ending with a warning about the importance of regular attendance at lodge meetings, "a rolling stone gathers no moss", and prompt payment of dues, "short reckonings make long friends".

The candidate was then presented with a copy of the Constitution of the order, upon which the motto, "Unity, Equity and Progress" was printed. A detailed explanation of these words followed, the essential points of which were:

Unity: We are banded together so that we may declare accurately our wants, and devise and adopt means whereby our objects may be attained.

Equity: Success can only be obtained through honest industry. In taking a firm stand against the oftentimes dishonest impositions of employers, let not ourselves be unreasonable in our demands. If equity be the base of all our actions, then we may say to capital, "Give the labourer his hire" and fearlessly demand an honest wage for honest work.

Progress: We dare not stand still. Union without action is valueless.⁴⁵

This completed, the lodge again burst into song:

All things must yield to industry and time.
None cease to rise but those who cease to climb.⁴⁶

The ritual at last completed, the new member took his place among his fellows. Just what went on in lodge

meetings in addition to ceremonial practices is difficult to ascertain. It was the lodge's duty to hold regular meetings, to collect monthly dues, to elect council officers annually to preside over the lodge, and to elect delegates to the semi-annual meetings of the Grand Council.⁴⁷ The men were instructed to bring to their lodge any grievance they could not deal with themselves, and were to report all wage reductions or changes in the mode of work. They were forbidden to sign any contract without the prior agreement of all members of the lodge and were instructed to request sanction from the Grand Council before conducting any work stoppage or strike. To carry on an "illegal" strike was to forfeit all claim to financial support and possibly to lose the lodge's charter. The council of officers of each lodge included: the Secretary, who attended to all correspondence and kept records of the proceedings of the lodge and its finances; the Master Workman, whose main duty was to "uphold the dignity of the Council", to preside over meetings and to sign or counter-sign all documents; the Assistant Master Workman; the Guardian, who took charge of candidates during initiation and examined all members at lodge meetings for the password, took charge of all property belonging to the lodge and served notices to members when instructed to do so by the Secretary; the Chaplain, who opened and closed meetings with prayers; the Inside Watchman, who guarded the inner door, admitting none without the password; the Outside Watchman, who prevented the meeting from being

disturbed and made certain no one but candidates entered the ante-room; and the Treasurer.

A similar group of officers was elected by delegates to the Grand Council, the functions of which paralleled that of the lodges, with the exception of the Grand Secretary. Under Drummond's influence this position developed into an extremely powerful post within the P.W.A.

Sub-Councils for each of the three counties, Cumberland, Pictou and Cape Breton, also were formed. These operated much like the Grand Council, making rules and by-laws for their lodges. Less attention was placed by the Sub-Councils on legislative activity than by the Grand Council. Instead these secondary boards concentrated on local activities and the relations of labour and capital. Again, however, no documents remain to provide more information about their activities, and we must infer what we can from Drummond's records.

The ritual used by the P.W.A. included the much dramatized password, which was chosen quarterly by the Grand Master and Grand Secretary, and forwarded to the lodges. Unlike those secret societies in which the password, or a certain handshake or signal, allowed members to identify one another without exposure to a hostile public,⁴⁸ the P.W.A. used the password as a means to induce payment of dues. Only those in "good standing" were given possession of the word, and only those with the word were admitted to or supported by the lodge.

Regalia was also a part of every P.W.A. function. All officers wore a distinctive sign of their position at lodge meetings. At sessions of the Grand Council regalia was even more elaborate, although no specific accounts remain of it. For public gatherings of the Association such as anniversary celebrations, members were instructed to "procure regalia, as per sample forwarded"⁴⁹, to distinguish themselves.

Seals also were adopted for use by the Association. A two-hand pick, handle up and crossed by saw and hammer, denoted both the Grand Council and Sub-Councils. Emblems made for officers retained the image of the pick, but added various other symbols to convey rank. The sign of the Master Workman was a gavel and pick; the Assistant had cross-picks; the Chaplain used the book of knowledge; the Guardian, scales of justice. The seal of the Inside Watchman portrayed a sword and square while that of his Outside counterpart showed a sword and shovel.

Additional seals were selected by each of the lodges and used to stamp official documents, petitions, membership cards and so forth to prove authenticity.⁵⁰ Finally an official flag was chosen for the P.W.A., the design of which can still be seen today in extant copies of the Trades Journal.

The P.W.A. was a long time in coming, but the years of oppression had created a situation so desperate that the organization was able to flourish despite the general

distrust of trade unionism pervading 19th century Canada. As the coal industry became more and more consolidated into the hands of a shrinking number of owners, the ability of the individual worker to exert any control over the workplace situation disappeared. An increasing alienation of the men from their work propelled the miners toward unionism. The development of centralized control of the coal industry was not an entirely new phenomenon to the men who remembered the G.M.A. monopoly, but in the 1870s, a new intensity emerged in the industry. More men were working, more coal was being produced, more profit was being taken, and the workers were becoming increasingly frustrated with their position within the entire scheme. The sense of loyalty once felt toward the coal masters by the men was seriously impaired as differences between the interests of the men and those of the owners became more apparent.

Once the miners' Association was formed, lodges sprang up, almost spontaneously throughout the coal districts of Nova Scotia. In areas such as Sydney Mines and Westville, where hundreds of men were employed, two or three lodges were organized in one town. Lodges like Pioneer, Cameron, Union and Island far surpassed the average in numbers and strength, with between 100 to 300 members each. Many smaller lodges also were organized, to accommodate the less active mines, and some such as Neptune and Visatergo claimed only 15 to 20 members. With the barrier to

Cape Breton overcome, and the Trades Journal carrying the news of every event and every struggle waged by the P.W.A., the Association opened its doors to literally every coal miner in Nova Scotia.

The need to unite as many workers as possible to fight for the men's rights became obvious. For this reason it was decided from the beginning that all categories of workers employed at the mines must be united, if the union was to succeed. Although many different classifications of labourers were employed at the mines, each one having a separate task and a different rate of pay, all workers associated with the mines were welcomed into the P.W.A. Although it is impossible to ascertain whether a particular segment of the mine workers, such as the prestigious coal cutters, led the drive to organize, it is clear that all levels of workers were actively involved in the union. The Minutes of the Grand Council, for example, show where wharfmen, overground labourers, and boys, all expressed dissatisfaction at one time or another. For this reason the P.W.A. can be categorized as an industrial union, rather than a craft organization, even prior to the formation of a lodge of glassblowers in 1882. To a limited extent other non-mining workers and even more remarkably, women workers, eventually became involved in the P.W.A. Clearly, working people were beginning to see themselves as a group sharing certain important things in common. In particular they saw that the interests they shared

often clashed with those of their employers.

This is not to suggest that the P.W.A. was an overtly class conscious or radical organization. Aspects of the Association, other than its role as a labour union, presented the more cautious worker and the general public with a more readily sanctioned image. Indeed, one of the major aims of the Association was to make the mining population a respected segment of society. The values espoused in the ritual and constitution of the P.W.A. stressed thrift and sobriety, hard work and diligence - all popular and respectable social mores of the day. As a fraternal organization the P.W.A. brought workers together on a regular basis in the lodge, and increased ties among the men on the job, where previously a religious, ethnic or job difference might have separated them. The miners were united within a protective - but also a fraternal society - which encouraged them to strive for goals similar to those of the rest of society. Within the P.W.A., the miners began to feel more a part of that society, even while struggling to protect and advance their interests as unionized workers.

14. This deed was owned by William Simpson. See Robert H. Morrow, *Springhill* (Saint John, New Brunswick, 1891), p. 182.

Footnotes

1. Canada Department of Labour, Provincial Workmen's Association of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, typescript, by-laws and Minutes of Proceedings of the Grand Council 1879 - 1917, October 1886, p. 116.
2. J.S. Martell, "Early Coal Mining," p. 169.
3. Ibid., pp. 158, 170.
4. Ibid., p. 170.
5. Ibid., p. 171, from Joseph Howe, "Eastern Rambles," in the Nova Scotian, 22 July 1830.
6. J.S. Martell, "Early Coal Mining", pp. 170, 171.
7. J.M. Cameron, The Pictonian Colliers, p. 28.
8. Ibid., p. 29.
9. Ibid., p. 143.
10. Ibid.
11. Paul MacEwan, Miners and Steelworkers, p. 9.
12. Charles Ochiltree MacDonald, The Coal and Iron Industries of Nova Scotia (Halifax, 1909), p. 202.
13. Troops were sent into Cape Breton to break strikes in 1864, 1876, 1882, 1904 and 1921-25. See Don Macgillivray, "Military Aid to Civil Power: The Cape Breton Experience in the 1920s", Acadiensis, III (Spring 1974), pp. 45-64.
See also Don Macgillivray, "Cape Breton in the 1920s, A Community Besieged", in B.D. Tennyson, ed., Essays in Cape Breton History (Windsor, Nova Scotia, 1973), pp. 49-67.
14. This deed was owned by William Simpson. See Robert H. Morrow, Springhill (Saint John, New Brunswick, 1891), p. 182.

15. Shares were held by Alexander MacFarlane, Senator, Wallace, N.S., President; William E. Vroom, Saint John, N.B., Treasurer; and Magee Brothers, James L. Dunn, Sanford Fleming, Edwin Frost, R.B. Dickey, Hall and Fairweather, J. and W.F. Harrison, George McLeod, John W. Nicholson, W.J. Richie, Robert Reed, Charles J. Stewart, George F. Smith, R.P. and W.F. Starr, W.W. Turnball, John F. Taylor, Wm. L. Black, J.P.C. Burpee and Charles Meritt, Each man held between 100 to 1,000 shares worth \$50 each.
See Robert Morrow, Springhill, p. 180.
16. The Springhill Mining Company was incorporated 18 April 1870 by the Nova Scotia House of Assembly.
17. E.N. Sharp of Saint John, N.B., headed this enterprize. The initial capital stock was one million dollars with allowable increases to five million. John Taylor, John D. Thompson, George Hibbard and John T. Wilde were among the directors.
18. William Hall originally came from Durham, England.
19. The Springhill - Parrsboro line was completed in 1877.
20. Following the great mining explosion of 1891 known as the "Springhill Disaster" a water pumping system was installed to supply the needs of the town. Bertha Scott, Springhill (Springhill, 1926).
21. Shipping piers on the Northumberland shore were seen as a means of making mainland coal competitive with that of Cape Breton which used water transportation instead of rail. Upper Canadian markets were at stake in this contest. See Bertha Scott, Springhill.
22. C.O. MacDonald, The Coal and Iron Industries, p. 173.
23. Robert Drummond, Recollections of a Former Trade Union Leader (Stellarton, Nova Scotia, 1926), p. 26.
24. Robert Drummond, "The Beginnings of Trade Unions in Nova Scotia", Evening News (New Glasgow), 7 July 1924.
25. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 30.
26. Ibid.
27. The committee included Robert Drummond, Thomas Leadbetter, Robert Wilson, Samuel Wilson, Alexander Ferguson, John Dooley, William Boran and Alexander Ross. See P.W.A., Minutes, p. 1.

28. Labourers and boys received even less pay-\$19 and \$13 per month respectively. Figures for Springhill itself are not given. See Journal of the House of Assembly, Mines Reports (1881), p. 37.
29. Trades Journal, 18 February 1880.
30. Robert Drummond, Evening News, 7 July 1924.
31. Ibid.
32. According to Drummond's account in the New Glasgow Evening News of 7 July 1924 no more than 800 to 1,200 persons inhabited Springhill in 1879. Unfortunately census data for 1871 and 1881 does not isolate the town. According to the census, however, average family size was five persons. Census data shows there were 324 men employed by the Springhill Mining Company in 1879, 243 of them underground. Subtracting boys leaves 195 workers. Even if only one-half of the men lived in company housing that still means 500 people were evicted from their homes.
33. In his article in the Evening News, cited above, Drummond says the population of Springhill in 1879 was between 800 to 1,200. The Mines Reports of 1880, p. 56, tell us that Springhill had 243 underground workers, 147 coal cutters, 48 labourers, 48 boys, 80 surface workers and 6 men employed in construction in 1879.
34. Robert Drummond, Evening News, 7 July 1924.
35. Ibid.
36. Lodges organized were:
 Springhill, Pioneer, no. 1 by 1 September, 1879.
 Westville, Cameron, no. 2 by 11 September, 1879.
 Stellarton, Fidelity, no. 3 by 18 September, 1879.
 Thorburn, Vale Colliery, McBean, no. 4 by 22 September 1879.
37. Trades Journal, 30 June 1880.
38. The Mines Reports for Nova Scotia for 1881 and 1882 show the following number of men employed in mining in the three counties:
- | | | |
|-------------|------|------|
| | 1880 | 1881 |
| Cumberland | 423 | 547 |
| Pictou | 1434 | 1271 |
| Cape Breton | 1412 | 1724 |
39. Trades Journal, 4 August 1880.

40. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 62, also P.W.A., Minutes, 7 April 1881, p. 11.
41. Although 1,200 men organized of a total of 1,724 is 70% this figure seems unrealistically high. It seems likely that the 1,724 figure reflects a work force reduced by seasonal unemployment while Drummond's figure of 1,200 members in Cape Breton reflects a seasonal peak.
42. P.W.A., Minutes, p. XXIV.
43. Ibid., p. XXV.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., p. XXVII.
46. Ibid.
47. One delegate was permitted for every 100 members.
48. Both the Knights of Labor and the Knights of St. Crispin used a secret password and/or signs to denote membership in the society.
49. Reports from the first anniversary celebration describe which lodges attended in regalia. See Trades Journal, 29 September 1880.
50. In the 1890s Concord Lodge of the Amherst Boot and Shoe Works promoted the stamping of all their products with their lodge seal, a trademark by which consumers could identify union made goods.

government lobbying and electoral politics. Although these activities were carried on simultaneously, they are considered here in two parts, beginning with the strikes fought by the union.

Chapter III

The Work and Accomplishments of the P.W.A.

Introduction

Most histories of the P.W.A. describe the first 19 years of the organization as prosperous ones in which the union came to fight its battles in the political arena and was able to reduce the number of strikes and lockouts in the industry dramatically. The long list of amendments to the Provincial Mining Act¹ effected by union lobbying has become tangible evidence of the Association's success to most students of the period.

To what degree the direction taken by the P.W.A. in its efforts to "protect and advance the interests of miners" actually represented these workers and strengthened their position in relation to capital is not so obvious. In examining the work carried out by the Association, it is important to be aware of the degree of influence and quality of direction imposed on it by Robert Drummond, and of the nature and extent of dissenting tendencies existing within the union.

The P.W.A. used three distinct tactics during the Drummond years to protect the rights and advance the interests of the miners. These included strikes,

government lobbying and electoral politics. Although these activities were carried on simultaneously, they are considered here in three separate parts, beginning with the strikes fought by the union.

Part One: Strikes

The colliers of Nova Scotia realized that continuous struggle against the coal masters was necessary to ensure their survival, and carried with them a tradition of direct action to protect their rights. Evidence of this is seen in the numerous strikes at Albion Mines throughout the 1840s, in the turbulence at Sydney Mines in 1864 and Albion in 1865, and in events leading up to the formation of the P.W.A. in 1879. Speaking to a representative of the Royal Commission on Labour in 1888, one Stellarton miner assessed the situation in the following manner:

When times are dull and the men are plenty, then the master absolutely fixes the price; when times are good and the men not so plenty, and when the men are thoroughly organized, then they generally have something to say, and that is the way it goes;

When the men are situated so that they can command a fair price they sometimes get it ... and they sometimes have to go out on strike to get what they think is just, and that is why we have strikes.²

To such men the P.W.A. represented a new armament, a means of organizing for the battle. Robert Drummond assured the miners that

the right of ... workingmen to set a price on their own property - their labouring strength - is unquestionable and the sooner the employers recognize that right the better for them and us.³

While the P.W.A. promised "to advance materially its members", it would seek only "such improvement ... of remuneration of labor as the state of the trade shall allow."⁴ Drummond asserted that "As an Association we do not believe much in strikes, but are forced to look upon them for want of something more modern as necessary evils."⁵ The Grand Secretary advocated a series of peaceful procedures to be used by the men when disputes arose over wages or workplace conditions. Only after all other means failed were they to consider a work stoppage, and that could be carried out only with the approval of the Grand Council and Drummond. It is, therefore, not surprising that only four strikes of any significance were fought by the P.W.A. with the support of the Grand Council during the 19 years of Drummond's tenure. Since the men pledged "union for action" when they joined the Association they were no doubt confused by this reluctance to strike. Many unsanctioned work stoppages occurred anyway. Numerous strikes were held in Springhill without official approval, for example, but without union support they received little publicity or financial aid.⁶ The four strikes that were sanctioned by Grand Council provide some insight into what issues were considered to be vital and how the official battle between company and union proceeded.

The first call to action came from the members of Cameron Lodge in mid-October 1879. A telegram was rushed

off from Westville to the Grand Secretary, requesting an emergency meeting of Council to discuss a wage reduction imposed on men at the Drummond Colliery of the Intercolonial Coal Company. Several pairs of men had been asked to split pillars of coal and were promised 33¢ per yard advanced and 16¢ per box filled. At the beginning of the month they were paid at this rate, but later discovered they were getting only 37¢ per yard, which caused an overall reduction in their wages. Manager Robert Simpson denied ever having promised the higher price. The men were prepared to take immediate strike action, but Drummond advised the lodge to send a committee to speak with Simpson first. After only two meetings, the old rate was restored. This easy victory, apparently possible because the manager was taken aback by the men's show of strength, was celebrated enthusiastically as the union's first success. Mr. Simpson was not intimidated for long, however, for when grievances arose in the new year, the men's committee was unable to obtain a hearing. Drummond resisted sanctioning a strike for some time, but as the manager became more openly hostile toward the union, the men's spirits sank and it became clear that the very survival of the P.W.A. in Westville was endangered. Pushed to these limits, Drummond gave in and allowed the men to strike.

Simpson immediately evicted the miners from Company housing. As he refused to meet with union spokesmen, the men filed into the manager's office to

represent themselves in person. Whether all 170 members of Cameron Lodge managed to squeeze into the office is not known, but the demonstration of solidarity no doubt impressed their manager.⁷ Still no settlement was reached, and a number of frustrated miners threatened to revert to the more violent tactics of the past and talked of firing shots outside Simpson's bedroom window in the night. Drummond reacted brusquely to these threats, arguing that such tactics were unsuitable to the present day. He warned that he would revoke the lodge's charter or resign his position if necessary to avert such action. The men acquiesced but Simpson had heard already the rumours and applied for militia protection.⁸ The arrival of troops on the scene was treated lightly by the miners, and the two groups fraternized freely, their only contest being over a game of cricket.⁹ Some members of the militia were actually company employees who no doubt sympathized with the strikers.¹⁰

Meanwhile the company was busy searching for non-union labour to re-open the mine. In Pictou and Cumberland counties, where the public was aware of the situation in Westville, Simpson's efforts went unrewarded. Eventually, however, he succeeded in bringing 11 men in from Cape Breton. On learning that a strike was in progress, the Cape Bretoners refused to "black-leg" and joined union ranks.

Finally, following communications between the Grand Secretary and the directors of the Intercolonial

Coal Company in Montreal, President George A. Drummond arrived in Westville to settle the strike. The president agreed to meet with the union committee, providing all its members were company employees. Robert Drummond was excluded from the negotiations, but the president of Intercolonial Coal had nevertheless overruled Simpson's stand by recognizing the P.W.A. To the Grand Secretary, this alone signified victory. A compromise was quickly reached concerning the original grievances and the men returned to work.¹¹ Unfortunately, the settlement was not completely acceptable to all workers: banksmen, who stored the coal beyond the pithead for later removal, were forced to accept a 10¢ reduction in their daily earnings. The Grand Secretary minimized this loss, and maintained that the P.W.A. had won a far more important and fundamental right - that of union recognition.

Even that victory had its limitations, however, for president George A. Drummond had refused to see the Grand Secretary, and as Robert Drummond later confided,

I am not sure that ... [Manager Robert Simpson] kept his plighted [pledged] word to cease hostility to the Union. He may have in a way, but if so then he concentrated his attack on the Association's [Grand] Secretary.¹²

In later disputes Simpson continued to refuse to deal with Drummond, meeting only with the lodge committee, and referred to the Grand Secretary as that "clatty little bug-bear" from the union.¹³

The second major strike by the P.W.A. was fought

against the General Mining Association in Lingan, Cape Breton County. This long and bitter struggle lasted from 8 March 1882 until 24 April 1883. Trouble first began in December 1881, when Manager Donald Lynk advised his employees to sign a document pledging that they would have nothing to do with any union while working for the G.M.A. The men, who had formed Coping Stone Lodge of the P.W.A. that July, refused to sign the paper. A confrontation was temporarily avoided because the mines were becoming idle for the winter season, but when work resumed in February trouble seemed inevitable. Before long, Lynk discharged 15 union men without explanation, while non-union workers remained on the job. A committee from Coping Stone Lodge approached the manager to offer to share what work was available with their unemployed brothers. Lynk refused, adding that he did not recognize their union and would not be influenced by it.¹⁴ Clearly a battle was shaping over the continued existence of the P.W.A. in Cape Breton. The Trades Journal warned the miners that

Lynk ... is determined ... to put down and eradicate the union from Lingan.

The discharged men ... asked him his reasons for so arbitrarily discharging them. His gracious answer ... was, "I have no cause against you and if", taking pen and paper, "you sign this and leave that dud union you can get your work back immediately ..."

Thus it can readily [be] seen what Mr. Lynk's motives were and that he not only aimed a blow at the Lingan local but at the P.W.A. as well.¹⁵

On 7 March, the lodge demanded that Lynk discharge all non-union men or take back the 15 he had fired, and again he refused. The following day, having obtained the sanction

of the Grand Council, the Lingan workers walked out on strike.

The company's first move was a familiar one. All those living in company houses were ordered to leave by 1 May, and coal supplies to the men's families were cut off. The company also began a search for new workers to replace those on strike. Efforts within the province failed because the confrontation was well publicized and few miners were willing to "black-leg". Lynk therefore arranged for Rev. John Murray to recruit men overseas, and on 9 May 1882, 30 miners arrived at Lingan from Scotland. Unknown to the company, Robert Drummond was in Scotland when the trouble at Lingan began, and happened to return to Nova Scotia on the same ship carrying the agent and his men.

The Secretary soon made acquaintance with Mr. Murray's miners. For several days conversations [were held] with them, before Mr. Murray discovered who was taking so great [an] interest in the miners he had brought from Scotland. The discovery had been made too late; the seed had been sown and had taken root in receptive soil.¹⁶

When the ship docked at Halifax, Drummond sent a telegram to Lingan, and upon arrival "off the northern head", via a company tow boat, the Scottish miners were welcomed in full force by the members of Copping Stone Lodge. Manager Lynk, general manager Richard Brown, the non-union workers, and 14 constables who had been called in to protect the new recruits stood by astounded as the Scots joined the strikers. The Trades Journal that week carried headlines

reading, "THE G.M.A. OUTWITTED BY THE P.W.A. - SCOTCH MINERS BROUGHT OUT UNDER FALSE PRETENSES SIDE WITH WORKMEN".¹⁷

The strike continued, and in June Mr. Swan, a G.M.A. director, arrived from London with the intention of settling the strike. He offered to reinstate all strikers, except for six union leaders. The men refused. The lodge then offered to settle by arbitration, but Swan declined. The director also spurned meeting with the Grand Secretary, and the strike continued into its fifth month. By 13 September only 31 of the original 96 members remained in Copping Stone Lodge, the rest having moved on. The Trades Journal argued that the strike was a senseless waste to company, province and men alike, and that the Government should force arbitration, but nothing came of the suggestion. In December, the company moved nine blocks of houses to Low Point on Spanish Bay to accommodate employees at that location.

At the beginning of 1883, Lynk announced that work was available but said the union committee could "go to hell". In desperation, the men began to return to their jobs. By 14 April 1883, 26 of a former 102 employees were back at work.¹⁸ The Trades Journal offered no sympathy to these men, but published their names in a list of "blacklegs" to shame them, and warned that no union man would ever work beside such traitors again. The paper urged the members of Copping Stone Lodge to continue the strike and encouraged

the other lodges to send all possible financial support to Lingan. Fearful that the strike would be lost, about 65 union men from Cow Bay, Bridgeport, Sydney, Glace Bay and Reserve Mines travelled to Lingan, "to induce by reason and calm argument the men ... working in Lingan to quit."¹⁹

Richard Brown, Donald Lynk and Constable Musgrave met the delegation outside the mine on 19 March and instructed the workers to pay no attention to the union men. A fight broke out between the two groups. Reports of the event varied dramatically. The Trades Journal allowed for a "bloodied nose", while other sources claimed a riot had occurred. The version related by the Pictou News sided heavily with the company:

Seventy or eighty unionists came here yesterday and surrounded Lingan when the men were returning from work and attacked them. They badly kicked the engineer and the blacksmith and struck several others including the manager. At night the rioters increased in number and visited the workmen's houses and dragged men outside and beat them severely.... The rioters have charge of the place.²⁰

A call for military aid was sent out to A.P. Caron, federal Minister of the Militia, with a request that the federal government establish permanent forces in Cape Breton. Meanwhile 110 officers of the 19th Regiment in Halifax were alerted and 25 volunteers from Sydney were brought in to maintain the peace. The services of the militia were never actually used, but they remained in the town for some time and provided a constant reminder of the battle that was being waged.

In April, Lynk and Brown finally decided to meet with the lodge committee, and by 24 April terms had been agreed upon and the strike was called off. As in previous strikes, the Trades Journal proclaimed the settlement at Lingan a P.W.A. victory because union recognition had been achieved.

... the General Mining Association ... met its match in the P.W.A. ... no manager in C.B. will risk an encounter with the workingmen's Association unless ... fortified with the assurance founded on proper views of equity and fair dealing that his cause will bear inspection and intelligence and impartial criticism.²¹

Yet it was certainly less than total victory. Like the Westville strikers before them, the miners at Lingan were forced to accept a wage reduction. Once again the Journal glossed over the matter, referring only to "... the little reduction that occurred",²² and never speaking out against it. Before the strike coal cutters were paid 55¢ per ton; afterwards they received only 40¢. The company tried to justify this cutback in terms of their own losses during the strike, ignoring the suffering of the workers and their families. This was not the only issue that the P.W.A. found itself compromising over. The six men who had taken the lead in organizing the strike, the same men Swan had earlier refused to take back but whom the union had stood behind, were now deserted by the P.W.A. These men were not permitted to return to work when the strike ended, but were effectively exiled from Lingan. After more than a year of misery and starvation, the men had little

choice but to make this concession, yet the Grand Secretary maintained that the strike was a total P.W.A. victory. Union recognition was achieved! The loss of the men's desperately needed wages and the firing and banishing from their homes of the most outspoken union leaders in the lodge were considered of less significance. Despite their bestowing of union recognition, it seems unlikely that Swan and the G.M.A. felt particularly threatened by the bed-ragged little group that carried on as Copping Stone Lodge.

The third strike sanctioned by the miners' union was against the recently amalgamated Acadia Coal Co., in the winter of 1887. This merger, effected by Montreal capitalist Sir Hugh Allan,²³ drew together the Acadia Co. of Westville, the Halifax Co., holders of Albion and McGregor Mines of Stellarton, and the Vale Coal, Iron and Manufacturing Co. of Thorburn.²⁴ The mines were operated under the general management of Henry S. Poole.²⁵

In mid-December 1886 notice was given to the workers at Albion Mines that in 14 days their "term of service" would expire. The company purposely created this atmosphere of uncertainty to set the stage for a reduction in wages. An announcement to that effect was made shortly thereafter, the details of which amounted to a 20% cutback.²⁶

A committee of union men from Fidelity Lodge approached Manager Poole with the plea that it was impossible for them to cope with a reduction as they had barely survived the past 18 months under current rates. Wages had not

increased over the past five years but the cost of living continued to rise.²⁷ Poole argued that it was necessary to reduce costs so that the new company could compete with Springhill, and refused the men's offer of arbitration. A special meeting of the Grand Council was held in Stellarton and the assembly agreed that the union had but one course of action: "It is bad to strike and be pinched with hunger, but many times worse to submit to be plucked by grasping capitalists." The P.W.A. refused to "tamely and meekly submit to imposition, injustice and fraud ... and ... allow a soul-less corporation ... to drive them to the wall."²⁸ Strike action was unavoidable, and the men walked off the job 31 December 1886. A one dollar per week levy was collected from members of the P.W.A. on the mainland, and generous contributions were made to the fund by the Cape Breton lodges as well.²⁹ Four weeks passed without any sign of change. At this point, Acadia and Vale workers decided that sympathetic strike action on their part would be more effective than continued financial support, and the entire holdings of the Acadia Coal Co. were shut down.

This was the first time the P.W.A. had taken on one of the huge, amalgamated companies. Over 1,000 men were out on strike. While this show of solidarity and strength of numbers made the P.W.A. appear powerful, the problems encountered in maintaining such a strike betrayed the weaknesses of the organization. Two basic problems were brought to the union's attention by the event. First of

all, the P.W.A. realized how feeble it was financially. Fees paid to the Association in the past were used simply to keep the society functioning. The Grand Secretary was paid a salary, delegates to the meetings of Grand Council received a per diem rate and the Trades Journal was published. Little money remained from this to support families on strike. In the past, the call had gone out to the various lodges for financial support when the Grand Council sanctioned a strike. Even then difficulties were encountered, as the strike at Lingan showed. Now the P.W.A. had literally thousands of mouths to feed. Drummond declared that a regular strike fund had to be set up if the union planned to do battle with the amalgamated companies in the future. This realization brought the P.W.A. face to face with a second basic question, namely determining its strategy in light of the merger movement within the coal industry. Despite the P.W.A. motto which claimed "strength lies in unity", the creation of a mass based union able to withstand lengthy struggles with capital was not the ideal to which Drummond aspired. Instead the Grand Secretary pushed the P.W.A. toward government arbitration. In the case of the Acadia strike, both the company and the local government were assailed by the union on this issue of arbitration, and the P.W.A. even prepared a delegation to enter into negotiations.³⁰ The government refused to interfere, however, and Manager Henry Poole had his own ideas about how the strike could be ended. Two

proposals were made by Poole to the strikers. One of these offers was extended to a number of men who were prominent in the union. He suggested the strike could be speedily ended if the men would sign a document reading:

Know all men, by these present, that we, the undersigned, do, severally and jointly, agree in resuming work with and accepting work from the Acadia Coal Co., to accept and abide by and be amenable to all the existing rules, terms and regulations, rates and requirements and that frankly and without reservation whatsoever.³¹

The men naturally refused to relinquish the very rights they were on strike to secure, and no one signed the paper. Poole offered to decrease the reduction which had set the strike off if the men would forfeit two weeks wages to make up for the company's loss. This also was refused.

It appeared that the union would win the strike, when pressure was put on the Acadia Coal Co. by Graham Fraser of the New Glasgow Steel Works, to re-open the mines. The steel company depended on Acadia coal for its operation, and, with its supply cut off, was forced to shut down. Fraser had already pleaded unsuccessfully with Drummond to re-open one mine to supply the steel works, arguing that workers in New Glasgow should not suffer unemployment because the miners were on strike. Now Poole allowed Fraser to open one seam. The venture proved less than rewarding, much to the satisfaction of the union.

The attempt of the Steel Works Co'y to run the McBean sit with all manner of nondescripts and New Glasgow loafers, niggers and blacklegs - has ... proved an utter and expensive failure.³²

A fiery debate ensued between Fraser and Poole over the

question of allocating responsibility for the debt incurred, and both became even more anxious to see the strike ended.

Unfortunately, the union was not faring very well either. After 18 weeks without pay or adequate support from the union, the men were ready to compromise. The details of the settlement are not totally clear, but when work resumed 15 May 1888, 30 men were left behind. One of these miners, Robert Gray of Stellarton, explained that the 30 men were dismissed in retribution for their union activity and participation on the strike committee. Gray had been employed at Albion Mines for 19 years at the time of the strike, but received no special consideration from the company for his lengthy service.³³ According to all reports the strike ended in a compromise, satisfactory to both union and company, but in fact the P.W.A. was forced, for a second time, to forfeit the right of all its members to employment without discrimination.³⁴ This concession was significant because from the beginning the union had stressed that, "the strike was no ordinary one", for it involved much more than wages alone, "it involved the future existence of the P.W.A., in short it was a trial of strength between the merger and the P.W.A."³⁵ By successfully barring the 30 union activists, the company proved itself to be the stronger of the two. Robert Drummond refused to place much emphasis on this aspect of the outcome, stressing instead that the strike was useful in instigating a movement toward government arbitration.

Later that year an arbitration bill was in fact introduced to, and passed by, the Nova Scotia Legislature. How effective the bill actually was, was seen in the events of the fourth and final major strike fought by the P.W.A. before 1898.

This strike took place in Springhill in summer 1890. Grievances had been building up among the members of Pioneer Lodge for many years before this eight week struggle. As early as 1884 the miners were complaining about the Cumberland Railroad and Coal Company, which threatened that year to bring 400 men from northern France to Springhill to replace those men who refused to accept a 10% wage cut.³⁶ The following year another reduction was forced on the miners in light of the then current depression. The company promised to increase wages as soon as possible, and Drummond encouraged the men to accept the reduction.³⁷ The company's promise apparently was never kept, for in 1888 Pioneer's delegates to the Grand Council complained once again that incomes were unbearably low. An average wage of only \$10 was earned by the men that February. Reductions could not be fought by the lodge because British immigrants and other strangers kept arriving who, by reason of their own desperate circumstances, could afford no sympathy for the union and accepted whatever pay they could get.³⁸ A special committee was struck to investigate the problem, but the following October, the same complaint was made to Grand Council.³⁹ The delegates from Springhill blamed

the federal government and its immigration policy for the dismal situation. A second committee was appointed to look into the matter. That month, a letter appeared in the Trades Journal calling on Pioneer Lodge to "Wake up ... and let us have some justice". The author, who identified himself as "Old Zeek", complained that

Some time ago, we were told that we could, at any time have access to the company's books ... [in reality], we are scarcely permitted to see whether or not our work is booked correctly; and if we say anything about this we are told to go elsewhere.⁴⁰

Old Zeek also complained that work had fallen off lately, and to make matters worse, non-union men were arriving on the scene. Grievances continued to pile up, and when yet another wage reduction was announced in 1889, Pioneer Lodge declared that the time had come to test the government's new Arbitration Act. Springhill was suffering from overcrowding, good men were being forced to go elsewhere, and the National Policy, with its immigration objective, was turning into a disaster for the coal miners.⁴¹

Six months later, Pioneer's application for compulsory arbitration remained blocked by a technical objection on the part of the company's agent. Drummond urged patience, advising the men that the company obviously was aware that an official decision would go against it or it would not be fighting arbitration so hard. Victory was only a matter of time. The men, however, were prepared to apply a familiar Cape Breton motto to the situation, "By wisdom, wile or war! We will

attempt to secure our rights by fair means ... when that fails ... there is but one expedient left - a strike, and with it what will."⁴² During summer 1890, the situation reached crisis proportions. The men demanded the cessation of the "billy fair play", the docking system which penalized them unfairly for including stone and broken coal in their boxes. They were forced to hoist the "slack", or broken coal, because it constituted a fire hazard, and could scarcely see to distinguish stone from coal in the meagre light of the pit. The miners were not paid for the weight of either the stone or slack they sent up, but the company was able to sell and profit from the broken product. As in the past, nothing was done about these grievances.

In June the men informed the Grand Secretary that they intended to strike. Pioneer's membership had diminished considerably over the years because of the union's refusal to fight for the men's rights.⁴³ Now Drummond realized he could procrastinate no longer; the survival of the P.W.A. was once again at stake. Pioneer asked for little aid from the Grand Council, but support from the surrounding community was overwhelming. The press was clearly on the side of the miners. The Halifax Herald called the actions of the Cumberland Coal and Railroad Co. "barefaced ... injustice",⁴⁴ and the Eastern Chronicle told its readers that "the case of the miners seems so clearly right and strong; their demands

so reasonable that [they] obtained a very powerful sympathy".⁴⁵ Public pressure became so strong that Premier W.S. Fielding and Edwin Gilpin of the Department of Mines became involved in negotiating a settlement which was considered acceptable to the miners.⁴⁶ The strike ended 28 August 1890. The arbitration bill on which the union had staked so much had not been implemented, however, and the men were left without any means of protecting what they had won.

These were the four major strikes fought by the P.W.A. under Robert Drummond. In each case, the decision to strike was made, not because the men were abused or exploited beyond endurance by the coal companies, but because the survival of the union was at stake. Only this ultimate threat could force Drummond to resort to such action. The Association executive never considered itself to have lost a strike completely, because it claimed victory even when wages were lowered and union leaders fired, so long as the P.W.A. continued to exist. Never was a strike, whose issues were wages alone, supported by the Grand Council. At such times, "The Grand Secretary was wont to travel around to each scene of disturbance and endeavor to smooth out the troubled waters",⁴⁷ through peaceful negotiation.

At one point in his Recollections, Drummond related the story of a chance meeting with company director Swan, many years after the Ligan strike. "...had I known

as much about you at the time I met you as I know now," Swan told Drummond, "there never would have been that long drawn out strike at Lingan."⁴⁸ The Grand Secretary concluded that Swan had been misinformed as to the real aims of the P.W.A. An analysis of the four strikes described above suggests the coal companies did, indeed, have less to fear from the P.W.A. than the Springhill strike of 1879 or that of Albion in 1880 may have led them to believe. The Grand Council clearly did not approve of this most powerful weapon of the coal miners, and avoided it whenever possible.

... to keep the P.W.A. an open society, subject to the laws of the land, than to encourage the growth of a secret, and by implication, subversive society. The application was therefore accepted.⁴⁹ The decision to seek incorporation was an unusual move for a Canadian labour union at this time. To Grand Secretary Drummond, however, it represented just one more step toward making the P.W.A. and its members a fully integrated and respected part of society. Drummond was interested in placing the P.W.A. in a favourable spotlight in the public eye, for it was there, and in the political arena, that he hoped to have the greatest impact.

The P.W.A. exerted considerable energy during the Drummond years lobbying for the extension of the franchise, government arbitration and various legislative amendments favourable to miners. This effort had to be motivated largely by the Association's leadership, because a

Part Two: Government Lobbying and Legislative Reform

Occasional strikes and "calm negotiation" with management over labour - capital disputes were only a minor part of the P.W.A.'s program for improving the position of the Nova Scotia miners. More typical of the line of action developed by the union in the 1880s was its application for incorporation to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly in 1882. The members of the House were not anxious to sanction such an organization, and the bill caused considerable debate. Finally it was decided it was more prudent to keep the P.W.A. an open society, subject to the laws of the land, than to encourage the growth of a secret, and by implication, subversive society. The application was therefore accepted.⁴⁹ The decision to seek incorporation was an unusual move for a Canadian labour union at this time. To Grand Secretary Drummond, however, it represented just one more step toward making the P.W.A. and its members a fully integrated and respected part of society. Drummond was interested in placing the P.W.A. in a favourable spotlight in the public eye, for it was there, and in the political arena, that he hoped to have the greatest impact.

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traditional lack of involvement in politics of any kind was prevalent among its membership.⁵⁰

Very few miners had the vote after Confederation because they did not meet the stipulated property qualifications. In 1881 for example, only 200 of 1,271 mine workers in Pictou County were enfranchised - a mere 15%.⁵¹ In Cape Breton, where most of the miners lived in company housing, the ratio was even lower. Writing in 1881, Drummond suggested that fewer than 10% of all Nova Scotia's miners had the right to vote.⁵² Those who were enfranchised were generally the coal cutters, the most highly skilled and best paid of the mine workers. These men considered themselves to be independent tradesmen in partnership with the mine owners. As has been pointed out in the studies of David Frank,⁵³ Allan Dawley and Paul Faler,⁵⁴ a tradition of loyalism to the coal masters, or to the coal trade as a whole, existed among miners in pre-industrial societies. This loyalty was based, not only on the notion of partnership between coal master and coal miner, but on the realization that the coal industry was a highly risky and competitive business. The miners were committed to fostering the health of the trade even if it meant accepting reductions in their own wages. They aligned themselves politically with the coal masters in support of whatever candidate or party seemed most sympathetic to the welfare of the coal industry. Any dissident was easily found out and dealt with at election time as no secret ballot

existed before the 1870s. extension of the franchise.

Robert Drummond wished to establish in the minds of the workingmen their right to political independence and the possibility and utility of taking political action. He intended the P.W.A. to be an instrument by which the miner could learn to use the political system to his own advantage by selecting candidates "who will work for their interests and advance their claims".⁵⁵ Without the union to force politicians to be responsible to the mining communities there would be "no one to press for the passage of measures looking to the amelioration of the condition of toilers."⁵⁶ In his editorials Drummond cried out for justice, and declared that

... any system of representative government that does not include ... representation of the great wage earning class ... is a mere farce.... We know the cry will be raised that we are setting class against class ... but we reply that the worst kind of class representation is that which we have [now], where every class but the labouring class is so well represented...

[the workingmen] have not a single representative on the floor of either house...⁵⁷

The demand for universal manhood suffrage was made by the P.W.A. as early as 1881,⁵⁸ but the debate intensified sharply in the mid-1880s when the Association decided to run its own candidates in local elections. In an attempt to have the property qualifications surrounding voting rights altered, various petitions were sent to the federal and provincial governments. One of these went to Premier Fielding on 27 February 1885 "from the miners of

Westville, praying for the extension of the franchise, and that the peculiar position of the coal mining communities, [in which 80% of the miners rented company houses] should be taken into consideration."⁵⁹

Meanwhile, the Trades Journal carried editorials to gain the workers' support on the issue.

The time has come when the workingmen of Nova Scotia ... must rally behind their forces and demand ... representation in our Legislatures. Too long have the interests of the working classes been overlooked ... trampled upon and treated with contempt ... by both political parties.... Our interests must be guarded well ... by representatives of our own choosing ... [T]he ballot must be the means to secure our just desires, maintain our rights, put good men in power, and hurl tyrants from the position they [disgrace]. Let us go forward, fearing no man. Let their be one aim - advancement, 'Organize', AGITATE.⁶⁰

The Trades Journal further asserted that every man and woman who paid taxes should have the right to vote in order to exert some influence over how their money was spent. In summer 1884, Fielding announced that he was not in favour of universal suffrage but was willing to extend the franchise somewhat. Meanwhile, John A. Macdonald introduced a bill on the federal level to extend the Dominion franchise. Until this time, the federal government had used the provincial franchise legislation in determining its electorate. Regulations varied from province to province. In Nova Scotia, male citizens over 21 years of age and having real estate valued at a minimum of \$150 or having total property of \$300, were

permitted to vote. These select few constituted only 15.2% of the population, indicating that a large number of adult males were excluded.⁶¹ Macdonald's supporters urged him to broaden voting rights, "and all expected that the newly enfranchised would be so carried away by gratitude as to vote Conservative."⁶² The 1885 franchise bill therefore made special concessions for fishermen, allowing them to include the value of their vessels and other equipment in assessing their total property. For the most part, however, the bill was not progressive but actually made income qualifications higher than those existing previously in all provinces except Quebec.⁶³ Almost nothing had been done for the mining population. The P.W.A. was disappointed by the limited nature of the bill, and it was decided that both the lodges and legislative committee of the Grand Council would continue to lobby for a further extension over the following year.⁶⁴ At the same time, Drummond urged the lodges to appoint committees to ensure that all members recently made eligible to vote had their names placed on the electoral roll, irrespective of political affiliation. In October 1887, a bill proposing complete manhood suffrage was drawn up by Pictou Liberal Jeffrey McColl, and presented to the provincial government with the P.W.A.'s endorsement.⁶⁵ The following year petitions were sent by the various lodges to Premier Fielding. In 1889, the government of Nova Scotia finally extended the franchise to a vast majority of working men:

every man earning \$250 yearly, or living in a company house became eligible to vote. Robert Drummond assured the Premier that the miners would "show their gratitude in a tangible manner when opportunity afforded."⁶⁶

A second motive guiding Drummond in his efforts to politicize members of the P.W.A. was the legitimacy that political involvement might afford the union, and the socially elevating effect of projecting the miners as an interest group to be reckoned with at election time.

... the man who has no vote ... is without influence, is looked upon as a nonentity; and a society composed of men having no influence politically is lightly esteemed.

If the workingmen are to have their proper place in society and be accorded their position in the management and affairs of the nation, they must first demonstrate the political influence they are able to wield.⁶⁷

A standing committee was, therefore, created by Grand Council to deal exclusively with the promotion of legislation advantageous to miners. The lodges were asked to discuss possible areas for legislative reform and bring their ideas to the Grand Council. They were advised that they would be asked to circulate and sign petitions drawn up by the standing committee which Drummond and other committee members would carry to Halifax.

Only a few months after the organization of the P.W.A., the union began lobbying members of the provincial government for amendments to the Mines Regulations legislation. As early as May 1880, the Act was revised to

improve government inspection of mine ventilation systems.⁶⁸ The following year, the Grand Council was successful in pushing for the examination and certification of underground managers and overmen, and later challenged the exclusive hold of the mine managers on the board of examiners.⁶⁹ Many complaints were lodged with the government over the inadequate inspection of the mines, and in 1884 two deputy inspectors, William Madden and Patrick Neville, were appointed to assist Inspector Edwin Gilpin in mainland Nova Scotia and Cape Breton.⁷⁰ Workers' committees also gained the right to inspect safety conditions in the mines and to file reports to the government. In addition to the many amendments regarding safety, regulations were passed to guard the rights and status of the workers. In the mid-1880s, it became law that a mine worker had to serve a two year apprenticeship before becoming a coal cutter, thereby retaining some of the traditional control of the miners over their trade. The miners also won the right to appoint their own checkweighmen to record their daily production, to select their own doctors, and to be present at coronor's inquests and to question witnesses. An important breakthrough in the field of education for miners came when schools of technical education were made available, "with a liberal government in power who owe not to afford the mining class an opportunity of acquiring ... [the] fundamental principles [of the trade]. At the present day every occupation ... [needs] all the aid that the most advanced discoveries in science can afford.... but This is especially true of the miner."⁷¹

Another important means to self improvement through education was won when the minimum age for boys entering the mines was set at 12 years and it became mandatory that these young apprentices be able to pass a literacy exam.

One of the most important legislative issues facing the mining population during these years was government arbitration of disputes between labour and capital. The settlement of strikes by this means was one of the fundamental aims of the P.W.A., and arbitration was continually proposed to the companies by the lodge committees when workplace disputes arose. Few managers were anxious to allow government representatives to interfere with private enterprise, however, and no real progress was made. After much lobbying by the P.W.A., the Liberal government of Nova Scotia agreed to take on the issue. In autumn 1887, "the first measure of the kind ... ever introduced into any parliament"⁷² was placed before the Nova Scotia House of Assembly. Although the bill was readily passed through the representative legislature, it was blocked in the upper house due to the "influence of capitalists and mine owners."⁷³ Apparently an unguarded statement in the Trades Journal had led the mine owners to fear that government arbitrators might not treat them as well as they would like. "With a liberal government in power who owe nothing to the managers", read the article, "arbitrators will not be selected who have leanings toward capital".⁷⁴ Despite this opposition, the bill was not dropped, but

distributed by the government for comment and criticism. In 1888, compulsory arbitration was made law. Drummond triumphantly announced that the workingmen's "... influence, politically and socially, is extending as surely as the influence of those formerly all powerful is changing value".⁷⁵ The miners, too, were pleased with the new legislation, as evidence given to the Royal Commission of 1889 on the Relations of Labor and Capital shows. Miners Maurice Johnston and Neil A. Nickerson, for example, both of Stellarton, stated that they thought the bill was a good one. R.H. Brown, manager of the Sydney Coal Mines in Cape Breton, on the other hand, was clearly opposed to the legislation.⁷⁶

Unfortunately, the bill's utility in negotiating settlements proved to be severely limited, as the situation in Springhill in 1890 made clear, for "the managers repeatedly evaded it."⁷⁷ Writing in 1925, Eugene Forsey asserted that the arbitration bill was, "a law which the modern Labour Movement regards as little less than a scandal".⁷⁸ Perhaps the greatest effect the bill had was to tighten the relationship between the Liberal government and the P.W.A. The opposition press in Halifax referred to the legislation as Fielding's "capture of the Grand Secretary".⁷⁹

The value of all legislation effected by the P.W.A. during Drummond's time similarly comes into question. "In 1896, the Grand Secretary declared that the miners of

Nova Scotia were in advance of those of any English-speaking country with regard to legislation,"⁸⁰ but it is not clear from the long list of reforms promoted by P.W.A. lobbying that the Association was entirely successful in this area.⁸¹ While some progressive changes clearly were made, including the introduction of schools of technical instruction for miners and government aid to relief societies, it appears that other legislative measures seldom moved beyond the statute books onto the coal fields. Improved ventilation was certainly to be applauded, yet gas explosions continued to occur throughout the 1890s, including one at Springhill in 1891, which killed 121 men and boys.⁸² Increased inspections of collieries was also effected, but as late as 1894, Caledonia and Old Bridgeport mines had to wait up to two years to have their coal scales checked officially and in 1897, the Grand Council was still working on the problem.⁸³ Increased safety inspections were obviously less effective than they might have been, for rather than decreasing, the number of deaths and maimings in the mines actually increased through the 1880s to the 1890s. Perhaps the government, with its lenient attitude toward the companies, was somewhat responsible for this situation, as the following statement from the 1884 Department of Mines Report inadvertently suggests:

... as a large percentage of the preceding accidents [20 fatalities in 1883] were due to breakage of machinery, iron, etc., it would be well for colliery

managers to consider if the unusual activity of the coal trade over the past few years has not led to a more rapid wear and deterioration ... than was formerly the case.⁸⁴

As for men who were killed or injured catching rides on rakes and back balances at the end of the day's work, instead of trudging several miles to the surface on foot, no pressure was exerted on the companies to provide the safe transportation the men continually solicited. Instead, the inspector commented rather detachedly, "It is strange how men will try to steal a ride to save themselves a safer, if more tedious, journey on foot."⁸⁵

Another issue never satisfactorily dealt with concerned the unjust docking of broken coal, or slack. The men were given the right to elect and pay their own check-weighman, but his power remained limited and the problem persisted throughout the 1890s. Fortnightly payments, though officially promised to the men, were made only sporadically by the companies. As for government arbitration, it is clear that the law never worked, despite Drummond's claim, that prior to the passage of the bill, "labor was not recognized as a party of equal privileges with capital. But now the workingmen's case is recognized as worthy of hearing". It is also important to realize that many of the grievances of the miners never reached the House of Assembly, just as many disputes at the workplace never received strike sanction by the Grand Council. In his analysis of the evidence given to the Royal

Commission of 1889, Eugene Forsey differentiated between the "official demands of the P.W.A." which included a minimum age of 12 years for miners, an apprenticeship system and schools of mining, and those of the rank and file which stressed fortnightly payments, benefit societies, and the abolition of company stores.⁸⁶ Many conditions suffered by the miners were never altered. No employer liability, in case of accidents, or life insurance policies were created.⁸⁷ Illegal fines continued to be handed out to the men for drinking,⁸⁸ and miners responsible for unavoidable damage to company equipment were fined at over double the real cost of the item.⁸⁹ Toward the end of the century, coal cutting machines began to compete with human labour power, but the union did nothing to check this assault on its members.⁹⁰

The P.W.A. between 1879-1898 also failed to reduce the length of the work day. Boys under 18 years of age in Ontario and Quebec were limited to an eight hour day, or a 48 hour week by 1903. In British Columbia the Metalliferous Mines Act prohibited labour in excess of eight hours per day regardless of age and in 1904 this legislation was extended to include coal miners.⁹¹ In the United States the eight hour day was achieved in 1898.⁹² In Nova Scotia, however, it was not until 1919, after the P.W.A. had dissolved, that workers won this right.⁹³

Drummond tried to avoid dealing with this issue, no doubt because it was such a difficult one. Perhaps he

feared defeat. In April 1890 he suggested that the possibility of going after shorter hours of work would have to be considered carefully and the men's attitude "assessed" before any action was taken on the matter.⁹⁴ Yet evidence given to the Royal Commission on Labor made the miners' position on the subject clear long before, as did various articles that appeared in the Trades Journal over the previous decade.

In 1880, for instance, an editorial in the Trades Journal suggested that, by reducing the workday to eight hours from the current ten, room would be made for 20% more workers. The subsequent increase in the cost of productivity would be neutralized by a rising market demand. The eight hour day was "the means to employ every industrious miner, abolish strikes, allow intelligence to thrive, burn the black list."⁹⁵ The topic reappeared frequently throughout the following decade, but the eight hour day was not won. At the October 1890 meeting of Grand Council, Neal H. Nickerson from Fidelity Lodge in Stellarton addressed the problem:

It has been admitted by workmen all over the world that it is high time the hours of labor were reduced. We, in Nova Scotia should not be behind in agitating for an eight hour law.... Miners being on contract are inclined to overwork themselves ... the long hours undermines their health... miners work severely, scarcely taking time for meals. They are deprived of light, and frequently of pure air ... wages are so small that men cannot afford to take an occasional "off" day, and therefore a shorter day is desirable.⁹⁶

Brother N. McDonald agreed, "With some," he said, "it is

from bed to work, from work to bed."⁹⁷ "Men should have time for improvement and recreation too," continued Pioneer Brother John Fletcher. "We should apply for a law!"⁹⁸ Unfortunately for the miners, such a law was another 29 years in coming.

Perhaps the greatest single problem not solved or even seriously tackled by the P.W.A. during Drummond's leadership was that of low wages. In September 1897, the union was still calling for a minimum daily wage of one dollar. Overcrowding in the mines proved to be the greatest source of starvation wages during the 1890s, but the union was unable to have the number of men hired restricted to an efficient figure. Little sympathy was forthcoming from the leader of the P.W.A. on this issue. His attitude was made clear in a statement made in 1884. Drummond urged the men to live "frugally and economically," because "the future outlook for labour does not warrant the throwing away of wages on that which tends to poverty and rags". Despite the fact that hours had not been reduced and productivity was well up over the past few years, the men's pay had not even kept up with the increased cost of living. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, the familiar slogan,

Eight hours work, Eight hours play,
Eight hours sleep, two-fifty a day!⁹⁹

continued to be heard throughout the coal districts, despite all Drummond's legislation.

Part Three: Electoral Politics

The third and final element in the P.W.A.'s campaign to improve the position of the miners involved moving the Association's members, from the relatively simple task of lobbying government members for legislative reforms, to direct participation in electoral politics. Perhaps the earliest realization that the union would have to exert its political power came in 1880, when the Association first applied to the provincial Conservative government of Hon. Simon Holmes for certain legislative reforms. A number of minor concessions were granted, but the government refused to allow miners to sit on the official Board of Examiners, which issued safety certificates following the inspection and approval of mines. Only managerial personnel were permitted on the board. When this crucial right was refused, Drummond commented that the action displayed the government's "thorough contempt ... for the miners ... which possibly they will have cause to regret". He warned Holmes that "the miners are a power politically, if they would only realize it, and show a proper determination at election time."¹⁰⁰

June 1881 saw the first direct involvement in politics on the part of the P.W.A., when dual by-elections were held in the federal ridings of Colchester and Pictou counties. The Trades Journal came out strongly in favour

of Pictou's Conservative candidate John MacDougall. This support was clearly an endorsement of the National Policy of the federal Tories. With the help of the miners' vote MacDougall outpolled his Liberal opponent, J.W. Carmicheal, by over 200 votes.¹⁰¹

The following December, members of the P.W.A. took their first independent steps toward political action, when Cameron Lodge of Westville formed its Workingman's Political Club. The members, 20 of whom were enfranchised, pledged to vote only for those candidates who promised to take up the cause of the workingmen. By the time of the next provincial election in early 1882 the club had almost 80 votes and agitated for the placement of a workingman's candidate on the Conservative ticket for the provincial House of Assembly. The group was not successful in this campaign. Although three Conservative members were elected from Pictou, Robert Hockin, C.H. Monro and Adam Bell, none was a labour candidate. The election was won with 24 of 38 seats by the Liberal Party under the leadership of W.T. Pipes and W.S. Fielding.¹⁰²

Drummond continued to stress the value of workingmen's candidates after this defeat, but he also suggested to Premier Pipes that the Liberals might benefit from P.W.A. support, if the miners found themselves being dealt with in a just manner by the new government.

In provincial politics ... it is an impossibility to say where liberalism or conservatism begins or ends....

In selecting for the House of Assembly let [the workingmen] cast politics to the wind, and

select men who will work for their interests.¹⁰³

If the P.W.A. was not treated well by the Liberals, however the government would be opposed by the union and all the miners it could influence.

A federal election 20 June 1882 saw the P.W.A. back Tory candidates William MacDonald and William MacKenzie MacLeod, to help to defeat a third Tory, Murray Dodd, who was an attorney for the coal companies. MacDonald and Dodd won the two seats with 1297 and 1237 votes respectively. MacLeod came in third with 1124 ballots and Liberals N.L. McKay and H.F. McDougall trailed behind with 1013 and 934 votes each.¹⁰⁴

In November 1882 an active member of the P.W.A. contested an election for a public office for the first time, when mine worker Walter Young opposed mine manager Mitchell in the Lingan, Cape Breton municipal election. Although Young polled only 30 votes,¹⁰⁵ the election represented a significant breakthrough in Nova Scotia labour history, for the struggle between labour and capital was, for the first time, fully fought out in the province's political arena. Because the miners' federal vote was effectively tied up in support of the National Policy of the Conservative party, Drummond concentrated the Association's efforts in the provincial sphere. Having achieved a number of amendments to the Mines Act from the provincial Liberals between 1882-1884, the union supported that party's return to power in August 1884. W.S. Fielding

succeeded W.T. Pipes as premier of Nova Scotia. The Trades Journal discussed the election results:

... we are more than pleased at the results of last week's election in Halifax. Considering ... that the P.W.A. ... received but a faint show of justice at the hands of the last government, we determined on the accession of the present government to power, to render it an independent support, and ... we intend to do so until its actions disappoint our confidence.

For this partial heresy we have a suspicion that some ... would like to read us utterly out of the conservative ranks, but ... it is more a matter of principle than of party; we have no intention of taking the hint.¹⁰⁶

The hint, apparently, was a suggestion that the P.W.A. proclaim itself Liberal or Conservative, but not try to support one party provincially and another nationally. Drummond assured his readers that provincial support of the Liberal government would, in no way, alter the Association's loyalty to the federal Conservatives or their tariff policy. He maintained that local elections must be fought on local issues and be kept totally independent of Dominion affairs.¹⁰⁷

In 1886 the P.W.A. became involved in electoral activity to a far more intense degree than at any time previously. At the October 1885 meeting of Grand Council, Drummond prepared the delegates to take the plunge by warning them that anyone not recognizing the great importance and legitimacy of political action by the P.W.A.:

... does not fully comprehend the situation, is behind the times, and ignores or is truly ignorant

of the surest method of securing those benefits and privileges which ... our Association ... aims to attain.¹⁰⁸

The P.W.A. was not about to "form a workingmen's party, as opposed to the parties already existing",¹⁰⁹ but did intend to elect its own labour candidates to represent the mining population in the House of Assembly. Two members were nominated by the union to contest the 16 June 1886 provincial election. James B. Wilson, of Pioneer Lodge, ran as an independent labour candidate in Cumberland county. He ran as a fifth candidate in a traditionally Tory riding, so stood little chance of actually being elected. It was considered important, however, that labour at least put in an appearance, and Pioneer Lodge contributed half of its memberships dues for three months to finance the campaign. Robert Drummond was nominated in Pictou, and was approached by both Liberal and Conservative parties to run on their tickets. Because the Liberals allowed him independent status, Drummond accepted that party's offer, despite the fact that the majority of those nominating him in Pictou were Tories.¹¹⁰ Drummond ran as a third Liberal candidate along with Jeffrey McColl and J.D. McLeod, against Tories Robert Hockin, Dr. Monro and Adam Bell. Both Wilson and Drummond lost, but the Fielding government was re-elected with 29 of the 38 seats. Wilson fared worse than expected, collecting only 341 ballots compared to Thomas R. Black, who won the seat with 2083 votes. Although Drummond was also defeated he attained a more credible showing of 2,498

votes, and the county sent a Liberal member, Jeffrey McColl, to Halifax for the first time in 19 years.¹¹¹ Rightly or wrongly, Drummond credited P.W.A. support with this upset, which he interpreted as a victory for labour. The miners' vote, nevertheless, had shown itself to be traditionally aligned rather than solidly behind P.W.A. candidates. As a result the politically active miners emerged from this election not only fearful of running labour candidates again, but also questioning the value of future political involvement of any kind.

At the October 1886 meeting of Grand Council, these doubts were raised and members challenged the authority of the Grand Secretary and the political path down which he was leading the Association. Drummond countered this attack with a critique of the miners themselves. He argued bitterly that the problem was not one of mis-guided effort but that irrational party affiliations had caused labour's poor showing in the last election.

...the defeat of the candidates has shown ... that workingmen in Nova Scotia ... have not been able to throw off the shackles of party.

[T]he defeat [can] be charged ... to the apathy and indifference, if not open hostility of the workingmen themselves.¹¹²

After further discussion of the issue, in which Grand Master T. Johnston urged the men to "...continue to agitate... [and] break away from the thrall of parties", a vote was taken to confirm the membership's unanimous support for the Grand Secretary. Drummond was re-elected to his post for

another year.

The P.W.A.'s next opportunity for political involvement came when Conservative party leader, Adam Bell, resigned his seat in the Provincial Assembly to contest the Pictou county federal riding in the 22 February 1887 election. Because two Conservative candidates already planned to run for the two positions, Bell ran as an Independent Tory in support of labour. Bell campaigned in the Trades Journal, proclaiming his support of working men and promising to demand government promotion of the coal industry. He called for universal suffrage, as well as for an employees' liability act, which would provide compensation to workmen for injuries on the job not resulting from personal negligence. Bell drew a significant 2,708 votes, but lost to Charles H. Tupper and John McDougall, who polled 3,433 and 3,384 votes respectively. Bell did manage to outpoll Liberal candidate John Yorston by 114 votes, although that did not win him a seat.¹¹³

In the meantime, Robert Drummond prepared to run for Bell's vacated seat in the Assembly. His platform included the call for "legislation for the many, not the few", and the repeal of "all laws retarding the development of ... the province's great source of wealth ... [coal] mining".¹¹⁴ A lien law to protect workers' wages and government arbitration of labour - capital disputes were also included in the Grand Secretary's platform. Drummond never did contest the election, however, for his attention was drawn to the

current strike in Westville. No candidate was elected by the P.W.A. that year, but Bell and Drummond had achieved a measure of success through their campaigns by bringing public attention to the problems facing the mining population.

A county election in Cape Breton in November 1888 saw an active member of the P.W.A. elected to a public office for the first time when Robert Anderson of Banner Lodge, Cow Bay won a seat in the local council by a 15 vote margin. The Grand Secretary jubilantly called upon the miners to "Let this victory inspire [them] with confidence, and renewed alertness and activity."¹¹⁵

At the next meeting of Grand Council the following April, a renewed vigor was indeed evident among the delegates. Grand Master A.D. Fergusson proposed the formation of a Workingman's Electoral Association by the miners, "the object of which was to educate workingmen in ... the right line of action to take ... in political matters."¹¹⁶ As a result such a group formed in Cumberland county the following summer. At the next session of Grand Council that October, the upcoming provincial election was discussed eagerly. It was agreed that the lodges within the jurisdictions of each of the three sub-councils should nominate a candidate to contest the 21 May 1890 election on behalf of labour. In Pictou, Robert Drummond was selected, and ran as a Liberal with P.W.A. support. In Cumberland the Association was unable to find its own candidate, so backed

the two incumbent Liberals, R.L. Black and T.R. Black. In Cape Breton, Angus J. McDonald, a Liberal supporter from Sydney, was nominated. This action caused some dissension within the P.W.A., for Angus McDonald was not only not a miner, but had been the Cape Breton county warden who, in 1882, had called the troops into Lingan to suppress the miners. Drummond argued defensively that McDonald's "action in calling out the militia [had] nothing in the world to do with provincial politics,"¹¹⁷ and eventually Equity Lodge agreed to endorse the man as a labour candidate. A second Liberal candidate, Joseph McPherson, was also nominated in Cape Breton by the P.W.A. Unfortunately, when the final count was in, it was found that most of the mining population had voted Conservative despite the fact that Fielding had campaigned personally in Pictou on Drummond's behalf. The only successful labour candidate, ironically enough, was the controversial Angus McDonald. Meanwhile the Liberal government under W.S. Fielding was re-elected with 28 or 38 seats.¹¹⁸

Although a continued interest in political activity was shown in the meetings of Grand Council during the 1890s, very little work actually was done. Plans to run candidates in the provincial election of 1897 were initiated, but were interrupted abruptly by the invasion into P.W.A. territory by the Knights of Labor, an event which is discussed in a later chapter.

Conclusions

The three tactics employed by the P.W.A. between 1879 - 1898 to improve the social and economic position of the Nova Scotia miners - strikes, government lobbying and participation in electoral politics - all served, to some degree, to achieve this goal. A number of important reforms were won, but generally the union's efforts were only moderately successful.

The P.W.A. supported only four major strikes during these years, and was forced to make major concessions to settle even these. Union recognition was considered by Grand Council to be the most important aspect of strike negotiations. So long as this was achieved, and the union survived, the original strike grievances took on only a secondary importance. The Grand Council refused to permit many other strikes, which the lodges were anxious to fight, cautioning the men to be patient and to "live frugally" instead. Low wages, long hours and many other workplace abuses went uncontested as a result. As grievances among the miners accumulated, strikes often occurred that were not sanctioned officially by the P.W.A. Although Drummond could threaten to revoke a lodge's charter for calling illegal strikes he could not put a stop to this kind of independent action. More than once delegates to the Grand Council had to re-affirm their support for the Grand Secretary when dissention erupted over such issues.

This rebelliousness among the lodges reflected the

desperation of the miners, and the weakness of the P.W.A., which developed with the advance of industrial capitalism. Mergers and the concentration of external control in the coal industry made the companies extremely difficult to deal with. Rather than respond to this situation by building a large and powerful industrial union, the Grand Secretary turned to the government for assistance. This happened despite the fact that the original intentions of the Association were quite different in 1880, when the organization officially expanded to include all categories of workers. At that time an industrial union was envisioned by the miners which would be able to deal with the amalgamated companies. The leadership of the P.W.A. reversed this strategy as it became entangled in strike situations, insisting that mandatory arbitration, with representation from workers, employers and government, was the way of the future. This reasoning denied the identity of interests between government and capitalist enterprise, and failed to deal with the fact that the amalgamated companies, unlike earlier local leasees, had little interest in the problems of the miners. From their offices in Boston, Montreal and London the company directors manipulated the province's coal industry to produce the highest profits possible, without regard for the people or economic development of Nova Scotia.¹¹⁹

Had negotiation and arbitration been effective weapons under these conditions, Drummond might have seen

virtually every coal miner in Nova Scotia flock into the P.W.A. Instead, the Association achieved only minor victories and because of this had to struggle continuously to keep its membership up. The Grand Secretary nevertheless continued to direct the union's energies along the socially acceptable path of political lobbying and legislative reform. So long as the miners were linked within the P.W.A. they constituted a sizable interest group which politicians could not afford to ignore. As a result the Association was very successful in securing protective legislation,^L but unfortunately many of these reforms never moved beyond the statute books onto the coal fields. It became obvious that some other means of exerting the miners' influence was needed. Throughout the 1880s the P.W.A. became convinced that the solution to these problems was to be found in the power of the ballot. During this decade the union fought successfully to have the electoral act amended to enfranchise many more miners, did a great deal of educational work to familiarize its members with political issues, and ran workingmen's candidates in a number of elections. 1886, Fielding passed. Despite the potential political power of the miners the P.W.A. met with little success in the electoral arena during the Drummond era. Neither the educational work done by the union's "Workingman's Political Clubs" nor the extension of the franchise significantly altered voting patterns in the mining districts. Only once, in the 1888

municipal election in Cape Breton, was a member of the P.W.A. elected to public office. Otherwise, labour candidates independent of traditional party affiliations were unable to rally working class support.

The defeat of labour candidates at the polls led the P.W.A. to support established politicians who promised to take up the cause of the miners. Federally the P.W.A. supported the Tories and their National Policy. Provincially the union began by supporting the Tories, but switched their allegiance to the Liberals, once that party achieved power and displayed a willingness to enact reform legislation on behalf of the miners. The feasibility of this strategy depended on the P.W.A. having "good friends in high places." Drummond was well aware of this. Evidence from as early as 1884 shows the Grand Secretary courting the Liberal party's friendship on behalf of the P.W.A. A letter of 11 September 1884 from Fielding to Drummond declined, with thanks, an invitation to lecture from the Fidelity Co-operative Company, no doubt a project of Fidelity Lodge.¹²⁰ A closer relationship developed over the following two years, for in 1886, Fielding passed Drummond's suggestions for appointments to the Legislative Council along to Pictou Liberal C.O. McDonald.¹²¹ The following May, Drummond, along with 34 other Liberal supporters across the province, was sent notice of an upcoming election so that nominations could be made.¹²² In 1891 the link was formalized, and Drummond was rewarded

for his contributions to the Liberal party, when Fielding appointed the Grand Secretary to the Legislative Council of Nova Scotia. Other tokens of appreciation also came Drummond's way, as in 1892, when Fielding assisted Drummond in obtaining an iron and copper lease in Cape Breton.¹²³ In a letter written shortly after this transaction occurred, Drummond expressed his great faith in the Liberal government and suggested to Fielding that his opinion of the premier was so high as to consider him virtually infallible.¹²⁴

The Grand Secretary obviously had good reason to express such a positive attitude toward the premier and his government, but it is not clear that the miners felt a similar gratitude. Although the P.W.A. may have gained prestige from its Grand Secretary's governmental appointment, the miners were no better off than before. They won a great deal of reform legislation in return for their support of the Liberal party, but remained without their own representative in the Assembly to ensure that this legislation was enforced. The tremendous amount of time and effort put into political activity by the union throughout the 1880s taught its members a great deal about electoral politics but failed to bring about many real changes in the workplace conditions of the miners. The confidence in electoral politics expressed by the executive of the P.W.A. was so strong, however, that the Minutes of the Grand Council of October 1889 asserted that the ballot

was like a "badge of Citizenship". Thanks to the P.W.A., the Minutes read, 99% of Nova Scotia's miners had the right to vote, while a decade before only one miner in nine held this honour. With this new power, Drummond concluded, it was the men's own fault if problems such as unfair docking, excessive charges for powder and blacklisting were not investigated and remedied!

Placing the onus of their problems on the miners' own shoulders in this manner and denying the reality of the obstacles they faced can only be seen as an evasion of responsibility on the part of the Grand Secretary. Whether Drummond's attitude showed evidence of sheer blindness, reflected anxiety over the poor results of his strategy for improving the position of the miners, or betrayed a loss of the grass-roots understanding of the miners' problems that he seemed to possess in 1879, will be discussed in the following chapter. Whether the miners basically were satisfied with Drummond's conservative program, or would have preferred to take stronger measures to defend their rights, is also the subject of the following pages.

(These were the original grievances of the men but as the strike proceeded they grew in number) (and the strike was fought)

5. Against the Managers' expressed determination to crush the Union.
6. Against the Managers' pronouncement that he would hire men singly, and dismiss men when and how he choose.
7. That certain men would be discharged who had been active in the Union and the strike.

12. Robert Drummond, Recollections.

13. Ibid., p. 42.

Footnotes

1. Harold A. Logan, The History of Trade Union Organization in Canada (Toronto, 1948), pp. 96-97, and also P.W.A., Minutes, pp. 116, 200-202, 337.
2. Report of the Royal Commission on the Relations of Labor and Capital; Nova Scotia Evidence (Ottawa, 1889). Maurice Johnson, coal cutter, Stellarton, N.S., p. 336.
3. Chicago Progressive Age, in the Trades Journal, 5 May 1881.
4. P.W.A., Minutes, p. IV.
5. H.A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada, p. 171.
6. Canada Department of Labour, John Moffatt, The P.W.A. of Nova Scotia.
7. As of 17 September 1879 there were 170 members in Cameron Lodge.
8. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 82.
9. Ibid.
10. J.M. Cameron, Pictonian Colliers, p. 145.
11. The issues of the strike were summarized by Drummond in Recollections, p. 40, as follows:
 1. Placing men in gaseous places [who were] wholly unacquainted with its nature.
 2. Reducing a Union man's wages.
 3. Discriminating against Union men.
 4. Giving employees inferior coal.

(These were the original grievances of the men but as the strike proceeded they grew in number) [and the strike was fought]

 5. Against the Managers' expressed determination to smash the Union.
 6. Against the Managers' pronouncement that he would hire men singly, and dismiss men when and how he choose.
 7. That certain men would be discharged who had been active in the Union and the strike.

12. Robert Drummond, Recollections.
13. Ibid., p. 42.
14. Trades Journal, 1 March 1882.
15. Ibid., 5 April 1882.
16. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 81.
17. Trades Journal, 10 May 1882.
18. Nova Scotia, Mines Report, 1882, p. 45.
The report shows 102 men working at Lingan in 1881.
19. Pictou, News, 23 March 1883.
20. Ibid., 6 April 1883.
21. Trades Journal, 2 May 1883.
22. Ibid.
23. Sir Hugh Montague Allan, who succeeded his father Sir Hugh Allan as president of the Vale Coal Co., became president of the new merger in 1886.
24. J.M. Cameron, Pictonian Colliers, pp. 50-51.
25. Henry Skeffington Poole, son of former manager of the G.M.A., was the Nova Scotia Inspector of Mines from 1872-1878 and manager of the Acadia Coal Co. from 1879-1900.
26. P.W.A., Minutes, p. 138.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p. 140.
29. Trades Journal, 20 April 1887.
30. The delegates included H.H. Cameron, E. Paul, T. Johnston, N. Nicolson and R. Drummond. P.W.A., Minutes, p. 146.
31. Ibid.
32. Trades Journal, 20 April 1887.
33. Royal Commission on Labor, 17 April 1888.

34. Ibid.
35. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 54.
36. Trades Journal, 30 July 1884.
37. P.W.A., Minutes, April 1885, p. 76.
38. P.W.A., Minutes, April 1888, p. 174.
39. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1888, p. 185.
40. Trades Journal, 10 October 1888.
41. P.W.A., Minutes, April 1889, pp. 194-195.
42. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1889, p. 205.
43. There were 200 members in good standing in 1890. After settlement of the strike numbers had increased to 400. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1891, p. 227.
44. Halifax, Herald, 21 August 1890.
45. New Glasgow, Eastern Chronicle, 28 August 1890.
46. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1890, p. 212.
47. H.A. Logan, Trade Union Organizations in Canada, p. 95.
48. Trades Journal, 11 November 1885.
49. Joe Macdonald, "The Roots of Radical Politics in Nova Scotia", Carleton University Honours B.A. essay, 1976, p. 9.
50. Ken Pryke, "Labour and Politics in Nova Scotia at Confederation", Social History, 6 November 1970, p. 44.
51. Nova Scotia, Mines Report, 1882.
52. Trades Journal, 1 June 1881.
53. D. Frank and D. Macgillivray, Dawn Fraser (Toronto, 1976), P.15.
54. Alan Dawley and Paul Faler, "Working Class Culture and Politics in the Industrial Revolution: Sources of Loyalism and Rebellion", Journal of Social History 9, 4 (June 1976), pp. 466-480.
55. Trades Journal, 1 June 1881.
56. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1891, p. 228.

57. Trades Journal, 31 May 1882.
58. Ibid., 28 November 1881.
59. Nova Scotia, Debates and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, 27 February 1885, p. 22.
60. Trades Journal, 11 November 1885.
61. Norman Ward, The Canadian House of Commons (Toronto, 1950), p. 212.
62. Ibid., pp. 216-219.
 In cities qualifications were set at \$300 property for owners and occupants, and at \$2 per month or \$20 per year rent for tenants. In towns, \$200 property, in rural areas \$150 property for owners and occupants \$2 per month or \$200 per year for tenants.
 Sons of property owners, in order of seniority, were qualified where the father had an extra \$300 per son. Fishermen with combined property and equipment valued at \$150 were qualified.
63. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1886, p. 127.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid., October 1887, p. 156.
66. Trades Journal, 3 April 1889.
67. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1886.
68. The exact date was 10 May 1880.
69. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1881, p. 27.
70. Nova Scotia, Mines Report, 1884, p. 27.
71. Nova Scotia, Mines Report, 1883, p. 15.
72. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1887, p. 155.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., April 1888, p. 171.
75. Ibid., p. 170.
76. Royal Commission on Labor, Maurice Johnston, p. 337; Neil Nickerson, p. 343, R.H. Brown, p. 417.

77. John Moffatt speaking in 1905, cited in H.A. Logan, Trade Union Organization in Canada, p. 109.
78. Eugene Forsey, Economic and Social Aspects of the Canadian Coal Industry (Toronto, 1926), p. 17.
79. Trades Journal, 11 December 1889.
80. H.A. Logan, Trade Union Organization in Canada, p. 98.
81. Canada Department of Labour, Fourth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada 1914 (Ottawa, 1915), p. 98.
82. Bertha Scott, Springhill.
83. Royal Commission on Labor, John Peck, Cape Breton, p. 422 and P.W.A., Minutes, September 1893, p. 269, and September 1897, p. 345.
84. Nova Scotia, Mines Report, 1884, p. 27.
85. Ibid., 1885, Accidents.
86. Eugene Forsey, "Economic and Social Aspects of the Nova Scotia Coal Industry", p. 85.
87. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1897, p. 345.
88. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1895, p. 295.
89. Royal Commission on Labor, Neil H. Nickerson, Stellarton, p. 350.
90. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1897, p. 341.
91. Emil Bjarnason, "Collective Bargaining in the Coal Mining Industry of Canada 1825-1938", unpublished M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1965.
92. David Frank, "Coal Miners and Coal Masters."
93. Ibid.
94. P.W.A., Minutes, April 1890, p. 210.
95. Trades Journal, 14 July 1880.
96. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1890, p. 219.
97. Ibid.
123. Ibid., 503, 3, 2 December 1892, 6 December 1892, p. 232.
124. Ibid., 503, 5, 16 December 1892, p. 234.

98. Ibid., September 1890, p. 212.
99. Ibid.
100. Joe Macdonald, "Radical Politics", p. 7.
101. Trades Journal, June 1880.
102. Joe Macdonald, "Radical Politics", p. 10.
103. Ibid., pp. 12-13.
104. Ibid., p. 36.
105. Ibid., p. 11.
106. Trades Journal, 27 August 1884.
107. Ibid.
108. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1886, p. 107.
109. Ibid.
110. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 160.
111. Joe Macdonald, "Radical Politics", p. 19.
112. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1886, p. 118.
113. Joe Macdonald, "Radical Politics", p. 38.
114. Trades Journal, 9 February 1887.
115. Ibid., November 1889.
116. P.W.A., Minutes, April 1889, p. 198.
117. Trades Journal, 27 November 1889.
118. Joe Macdonald, "Radical Politics", p. 32.
119. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1893.
120. Public Archives of Nova Scotia, W.S. Fielding Papers, Letterbooks 1884-1888, 489, 11 September 1884, p. 163.
121. Ibid., 490, 28 February 1887, p. 196.
122. Ibid., 490, 20 May 1887, p. 306.
123. Ibid., 503, 5, 2 December 1892, 6 December 1892, p. 232.
124. Ibid., 503, 5, 16 December 1892, p. 234.

Chapter IV

Rebels or Loyalists? The Ideology of the P.W.A.

and the Beginnings of Class Consciousness

Among the Nova Scotia Miners

The ideology that characterized the P.W.A. cannot be classified as either "loyalist" or "rebel" in the manner outlined in Alan Dawley's and Paul Faler's study of "Working - Class Culture and Politics in the Industrial Revolution."¹ The union displayed neither the acceptance of an "overriding mutuality of interests between labor and capital" nor an "overriding antagonism" between the two.² This is evident from the Association's advocacy of union organization and strikes simultaneous with its support for the traditional political parties. This combination of seemingly conflicting attitudes was evident in the events surrounding the formation of the P.W.A.

When the miners of Springhill first united in strike action against the coal operators in September 1879, a great deal more was at stake than simply the threatened wage reduction. Had that alone been the issue the men would have been satisfied when the cutback was revoked and returned to their jobs. Instead, they demanded that the reduction of January 1879 also be withdrawn. Then, basking in the power

unity bestowed upon them and determined to maintain their position of strength, the men pledged to band together to protect their rights and formed the Provincial Miners' Association. This chapter explores the philosophy permeating this important development and how the ideology of the P.W.A. evolved between 1879 - 1898. The formation and activities of the Association described here reflect the emergence of trade union consciousness among the miners of Nova Scotia, the tentative beginnings of industrial unionism and a greater degree of class awareness during these years.

Recently historians have begun to investigate the "making" of the Canadian working class, the theme Edward Thompson applied so creatively to his studies of industrial England.

Making, because it is a study in an active process.... The working class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making...

class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs.

The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born - or enter involuntarily.³

Steven Langdon in "The Emergence of the Canadian Working Class movement, 1845 - 1875",⁴ has traced this development in central Canada. Langdon examined the advance of industrial capitalism during this period and the resulting

"growth of organizational cohesion and of class consciousness among central Canadian working people."⁵ While important differences did exist between the economies of central and eastern Canada, Langdon's work on the early stages of industrialization provides a helpful example for the study of similar developments in Nova Scotia.

One important feature of industrial capitalism was the emergence of a self-regulating, impersonal labour market characterized by the breakdown of older, personal, paternalistic employment ties.⁶ With industrialization the employer no longer felt any obligation to support his employees during times of cyclical depression and simply dismissed excess workers when convenient. The social cost of the capitalist trade cycle was no longer shared by employer and employee alike, but borne primarily by the workers. In their study Dawley and Faler summarized the effects of the advance of industrial capitalism on working people in Lynn, Massachusetts.⁷

The economic changes of the industrial revolution intensified competition among wage earners, cheapened their skills, undercut their security, attacked their standard of living, increased their dependency, and lowered their social position.⁸

The result of these conditions in the United States in the 1820s and 1830s was widespread class conflict and collective action on the part of the workers that permitted the formation of working class institutions. The earlier work of Karl Polanyi, the object of which was to "bring out ... the social implications of a particular economic system,

the market economy that grew to its full stature in the 19th century,"⁹ discovered the same tragic results of the industrial revolution in Great Britain. It was in response to this social dislocation, he wrote, that "a political and industrial working class movement sprang into being" in England.¹⁰ Thus in studies of the growth of industrial capitalism in England, the United States and central Canada, a pattern of social dislocation, class conflict, and the emergence of working class consciousness and institutions occurred.

Langdon detected three stages to this working-class response in central Canada, which confirm the earlier analyses of Thompson and the others referred to above. The first stage, "when workers' collective action was tentative, isolated and trade oriented", was characterized by ad-hoc, non-institutional united action. Occasionally, continuing workingmen's organizations developed, but these remained small and confined to particular trades and cities. This stage existed in the Nova Scotia coalfields from the early 1860s until the formation of the P.W.A. in 1879.

Although the coal industry was an important sector of the economy during the first half of the 19th century, it was not until well after the termination of the G.M.A. monopoly that the advance of industrial capitalism began to make itself felt in Nova Scotia. The miners faced many hardships and disputes with the coal operators were

frequent, but because the organization of the work process was still pre-industrial in nature, a paternalistic relationship existed between the coal master and the coal miner. During the G.M.A. years the ownership of the industry, although distant, was understood and reluctantly accepted by the miners. The people could readily identify with the local control centred at Mount Rundell, whether it was to admire the premises or attack them, as they did in 1843. During the brief period following 1858 when the industry was taken over by local interests, the employer was usually a long time resident of the area, involved in and concerned with the community. He had limited wealth and power, but was a leading member of the local society and highly regarded. Operations were generally small and individual hiring and bargaining over coal prices occurred with some intimacy. The miner saw himself as an independent craftsman, selling the coal he cut to the operator, so a sense of partnership existed between employer and employee. When a miner was injured in the pits it was not uncommon for an operator to make a token payment to his family or provide free coal or rent in the company house for a time. To some extent these attitudes continued into the 1880s. The men who formed the P.W.A.'s Brunswick Lodge, for example, chose the name in honour of their manager.¹¹

During this pre-industrial period the miner was a highly skilled and respected craftsman in his community who had undergone a lengthy apprenticeship to

the trade, often with his father. He knew all aspects of the work and owned and cared for his own tools, lantern and other equipment. He worked independently and with little supervision, so that despite the long hours and otherwise oppressive conditions, he was his own master. He produced daily a commodity that was vital to society and took pride in his work. Control of the workplace operation rested in the miners' hands. Under these conditions it was accepted that good times in the coal trade were to be shared by all, as were the bad. The miners were therefore willing to tolerate unavoidable hardships, such as low wages, for the sake of the survival of the industry.¹² As late as the 1870s the miners did not define their interests as being essentially different from those of the coal operators. This conciliatory attitude clearly limited the extent to which miners could act collectively to defend their interests, and reflected a lack of class consciousness among them.

It was during the chaotic years of expansion in the coal industry following 1858 that the miners began to lose their traditional control over their trade. Many unskilled workers were drawn into the industry to open the new seams and to compete with skilled miners in the rush to exploit the coal resource. The erosion of the craft became a serious threat to these men who had worked all their lives in the mines. The alienation of the labour market in the

coal fields began with this expansion but became significant when mergers in the industry resulted in large amounts of capital being invested and greater numbers of men being employed by each company to ensure large scale production of coal. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s the weaker companies dropped off or were taken over by a few major enterprises. The visibility of the coal operators that existed previously diminished as ownership of the mines fell to Montreal and Boston capitalists. The consolidation of the industry into these few powerful hands had a similar effect on the coal trade as did the appearance of factories in manufacturing. Industrial capitalism and the spread of impersonal labour relations forced workers to move from an identification with their employers to a greater sense of solidarity with their fellow workers. During this period of consolidation in the coal industry, Nova Scotia miners were forced to take collective action to protect themselves, and with this solidarity grew sufficient trade consciousness to permit the formation of the P.W.A.

Springhill was the largest coal mining operation in Canada in the early 1870s, employing well over 300 men and boys in 1879.¹³ Impersonal as this situation must have been, compared to the smaller operations where as few as six men might be employed, a certain degree of loyalty to the operators was shown by the men. The wage cut of January 1879 was accepted, despite the hardship it

entailed, because the men were convinced the operators had no choice due to the depressed state of the trade. What spurred the men on to resist the reduction of the following September was the knowledge that the company was deliberately deceiving them concerning the selling price for coal. Exploitation of this kind was intolerable, and the men were supported fully in their decision to strike by their families and the community. It is important to note that when the miners believed the cutback was a result of the company's loss in revenue they reluctantly accepted it. They did not go on strike until they discovered their employers' deceit. The notion of the operator as a senior partner of the coal miner was seriously challenged as a result of such conflicts and a new image of him as a potential enemy began to form. The combination of increasing alienation from the coal operators among the miners and the creation of a vast labour force in one trade and locale, along with the skilled miners' loss of their traditional control over the trade, presented the concrete circumstances for the growth of trade union consciousness and the beginnings of working class awareness. The realization that two categories of people existed in the coal industry, whose interests, while sometimes coinciding, were nevertheless antagonistic, permitted the creation of the most powerful weapon the miners could muster - the Provincial Workmen's Association. The slogan of the P.W.A. was apt - "Strength lies in Unity".

The formation of the P.W.A. in 1879 signalled the rise of the second stage in the development of a class conscious workers' movement among the miners of Nova Scotia. In Langdon's study, this phase was characterized by the movement of workers

away from an identification with employers in their trade to a greater sense of solidarity with their fellow employees, in other cities and in other trades.¹⁴

This process was also evident among the miners of Nova Scotia, for although the P.W.A. functioned essentially as a trade union for mine workers between 1879 - 1898, it carried with it more than just a trade union ideology. From its inception as the Provincial Miners' Association the organization involved all categories of workers employed in the mines. Skilled coal cutters of many years experience sat in lodge meetings along with overground loaders who might be paid only one half of the cutters' wage, or with 17 year old boys who perhaps only tended to the horses underground. Even the younger boys, who could not yet belong to the union, were involved in junior lodges where they were primed to play an active role in the P.W.A. in later years. Once the Association became firmly established in the mines it began to consider drawing in other categories of workers.

The first attempt to expand in this direction was made when the Trades Journal was founded, and addressed itself to those in "the Mine, Workshop and Farm". An

editorial in the 23 June 1880 issue initiated debate on this question by suggesting that the Association open its doors to "all categories of workingmen". A great deal of discussion ensued in letters to the editor, particularly regarding the need to reach miners in Cape Breton. The matter was discussed at the October 1880 session of Grand Council in Truro, and it was agreed at that time to welcome all workingmen into the organization. The name, Provincial Miners' Association, was thereupon amended to the Provincial Workmens' Association, to facilitate public recognition of the change.

The P.W.A., in 1880, was very concerned with projecting an impressive public image and the decision to expand was made immediately after the first anniversary celebration of the organization. The purpose of this event, which attracted almost 900 miners and their families to Stellarton on 22 September 1880, was primarily to exhibit the strength of the union. When Flint Lodge #17, composed of New Glasgow glass blowers, was organized the following year, the Grand Council agreed that the more men the P.W.A. had in it the better. Whatever their occupation, more members meant more strength, more funds and more ammunition to fight for their cause. When Our Rights #18, a lodge of spike factory and foundry workers, formed in October 1881, the Trades Journal proclaimed, "There is room in the Association for all workingmen who see the

power and beauty of organization."¹⁵ Unfortunately, these lodges died out before long, and the P.W.A. was unsuccessful in organizing additional non-mining locals during the 1880s. The entry of Amherst's boot and shoe workers as Concord Lodge in late 1891 stimulated renewed interest in such expansion. At the meeting of Grand Council the next September, H.H. Davies of Amherst spoke strongly in favour of amalgamating workers from various trades within the P.W.A.

There were large numbers of millmen in different parts of the country [Davies said] and numbers also at the tanneries who knew none of the good effects of union. Efforts should be made to have an understanding with other unions in N.S. and the U.S.¹⁶

Davies noted that in New Brunswick he said that he was a member of the P.W.A. and his audience was quite surprised to learn that the union was not for miners only. Davies urges that workmen in all parts of the province be informed that "the P.W.A. is a society organized on a broad basis, and suitable to all trades. And moreover a society that has been tested and tried."¹⁷ E.B. Paul of Pioneer Lodge agreed with Davies, and suggested, perhaps without a full knowledge of the facts involved, that "As soon as the workmen of Amherst discerned that the P.W.A. was for all classes of workmen, they abandoned another society and cast their lot with us."¹⁸ He was more cautious than his brother from Concord Lodge, however, on the question of extending the P.W.A. into areas of the province where other labour societies already existed. He was also concerned about the difficulties

of organizing an industrial union, for

and there was sure to be difficulty in arranging a basis of union. Each society had its leaders. [Were we to] amalgamate the other society might wish its leaders retained and we would insist on the retention of ours. If they will join us we will be only too happy to get them in [but there will be obstacles.]¹⁹

Davies, Paul and A.B. McGillvray of Cape Breton, were appointed to prepare a committee report on the matter, and returned with the following motion which was carried by the delegates:

That the Grand Secretary use all means to make it known through the press that the P.W.A. is open to all trades and labourers, and not confined to those employed in the mining industry.²⁰

The Grand Secretary pointed out that previous non-mining lodges had failed for a variety of reasons. Flint Lodge folded because the American glass blowers' association insisted they re-group as an independent local of the U.S. body. The iron workers' lodge collapsed owing to "the diversity of employment of its members". Drummond nevertheless supported renewed efforts to expand the P.W.A. into various workplaces.

The revival of the push toward industrial unionism, while meeting the general approval of the Association, clearly was instigated by the delegates from Concord Lodge. Prior to their affiliation with the P.W.A. these workers had secretly joined the American Knights of Labor. When the management of Amherst's Boot and Shoe Company discovered that Local Assembly 2209 K. of L. had been organized, they attempted to force the men to abandon the

union by uniting the town's business elite on the issue and then firing 50 workers.

The dispute stretched [from the time of the firings, 2 May 1890,] into July when [manager] M.D. Pride, realizing total victory was impossible, decided to permit the organization of a lodge of the Provincial Workmen's Association.²¹

As Davies' promotion of industrial unionism testifies, the influence of the K. of L. was not eradicated by management's efforts, but "remained alive within Concord Lodge."²² In 1893 for example,

the introduction of unskilled labour into the Amherst Boot & Shoe Company moved Concord Lodge to secure an amendment of the P.W.A. constitution to permit women members.²³

Later Concord Lodge won P.W.A. support for a boycott of Amherst Boot and Shoe Company products until the company agreed to use the union label.²⁴

In accepting these changes the P.W.A. was clearly moving ideologically toward a deeper level of class consciousness. It was not until after the invasion of the Knights of Labor in 1898, however, that significant progress was made by the Association toward industrial unionism. Drummond made it clear that he would like to see the P.W.A. assist others, in addition to the miners, but felt that outside of Halifax members of a given trade in one locale were too few in number to organize into a lodge. Sufficient numbers were to be found only in the province's capital, and the P.W.A. had no desire to interfere or compete with the several union locals already established there.²⁵

Consequently, although both the leadership and membership of the P.W.A. supported industrial unionism in principle, their energies during the Drummond era were consumed almost entirely by their work among the miners. The attitude adopted by the P.W.A. toward immigrant labour also reflected a developing trade union consciousness, and to some degree, working class awareness among the Association's members. Like workers in other trades, the miners were forced to protect their status and wage levels by uniting to restrict the numbers of workers allowed into their occupation. The "spreading labour market", like the growth of impersonal labour relations, was a trend of industrial capitalism that undermined the position of the worker. The growing flood of unskilled, immigrant labourers desperate for employment and wages of any kind greatly endangered the position of relatively well paid, experienced miners. As early as 1881, the P.W.A. discussed how to restrict foreign labour in the mines, and pushed for the previously mentioned apprenticeship legislation as one means of defence.²⁶ The miners asserted that immigration "seeks to degrade the morals of the people", by bringing in paupers under false pretences and forcing them to work for starvation wages.²⁷ Appeals were made again and again to Prime Minister Macdonald in protest of this policy,²⁸ and in 1885, the Trades Journal celebrated when the federal government reduced its aid to immigration grant by 70%.²⁹ The problem was not solved

with this action, however, and protests and petitions continued throughout the 1890s.³⁰

The Trades Journal also made it clear that the importation of immigrant labour was one aspect of the National Policy it opposed. "The National Policy is doing well enough, "it stated, "But ... if miners are imported ... into the Country then the [Nova Scotia] miners will not reap the benefit of the policy."³¹

The complaint that there were too many men in the mines to permit all to make a fair wage was a common grievance. Speaking to the Royal Commission on Labour in 1888, Springhill miner Charles Runney stated that because of overcrowding the men could move only enough coal to the surface to make half a day's pay, although they worked underground for a full day. He concluded that he had been better off in his home town of Lanarkshire, Scotland, where the pay was less but the cost of living was lower as well.³² Another Springhill miner, Neil Nickerson, protested that immigrants were being deceived regarding the rate of wages and availability of jobs in Canada; "paupers" were being brought in to labour for miserable wages while native Nova Scotians were put out of work.³³ In 1888 delegates to the Grand Council from Pioneer Lodge attacked government leaders for refusing to protect labour by allowing British miners to be lured to the province by a "certain Church Emmigrant Society" which gave deceptively glowing accounts of work and wages in Nova Scotia."³⁴

In the Immigration also provided the mine managers with a means to keep wages down. In 1884, for example, the director of the Cumberland Railway and Coal Company warned his men that he would bring 400 workers from the north of France, if they did not accept a 10% wage reduction.³⁵ Foreign labour threatened the job security of Nova Scotian miners in another way as well, for the coal companies readily brought in these new men as strike breakers. Attempts were made a number of times to use Cape Bretoners for this purpose, but although these miners were sometimes enticed to a conflict bound location in their search for work, they often joined union ranks upon learning that a strike was in progress. This happened during the Albion strike of 1880, when 19 Islanders were brought to Westville by an agent of the International Coal Company, only to join the P.W.A.³⁶ During the strike at Lingan in 1882, the G.M.A. thought it would avoid this problem by taking the "scab labour" approach one step further and importing miners from Scotland, but they too refused to break the strike. Workers' solidarity of this kind was not always evident, however, largely because of overcrowding in the mines. It was, therefore, imperative that the P.W.A. find other means to discourage strikebreaking. Langdon found

The critical sanction that gave workers their power ... was their ability to stop strike-breakers from finding jobs if a strike were won.

A second imperative grew from the maturing spread of the impersonal labour market ... locals began to keep in touch with (one another's) affairs, to discourage cross-city strikebreaking.³⁷

In the case of the P.W.A., lists of strikebreakers, or "blacklegs" were kept by the lodges and published in the Trades Journal. In addition to this, members were issued with identification cards marked with the lodge's seal, so a miner travelling in search of work could prove he was not a scab labourer and readily be accepted into a new workplace.

The plan to implement "check-listing", or the "closed shop", to strengthen the union was an early one in the P.W.A. In the 13 October 1880 issue of the Journal McBean Lodge announced that as the vast majority of men in that area belonged to the union, they intended to present a list of all non-union mine workers over 17 years of age and the names of all those whose union dues had not been paid for three months to the mine manager and ask that these men be discharged. Drummond made his position clear regarding those miners who refused to join the union when he asserted, "There can be no neutrality, they must side either with the masters or side with their fellow workmen".³⁸ Nevertheless, the "closed shop" was not won by the P.W.A. until 1907, and the union's control over wages, workplace conditions and foreign labour was severely limited as a result.³⁹

Not only was trade consciousness aroused in the miners by the deplorable conditions they faced, but also a greater understanding of their position as members of the working class in general. Recognition of the workers'

need for mutual aid, regardless of individual trade, is apparent in a public statement made by the P.W.A. in support of west coast workers who called for an end to Chinese immigration. The statement is clearly racist, but must be considered in the context in which it was made. "...the Chinese," it read, "are a most undesirable class of immigrants ... a curse to any community ... they undermine its morals, and spread disease while contributing but a trifle to the permanent prosperity of the country."⁴⁰ Canadian workers in this period feared that with the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway the Chinese would flood the labour market across the country, putting skilled tradesmen out of work by providing plenty of cheap, inexperienced labour. The vehement attack made on the Chinese was based on the economic circumstances which the miners faced, and was not unlike that of other workers' organizations of the time. It was not only the Chinese, but all foreign labour that the P.W.A. opposed, in its efforts to protect the jobs and standard of living of its members.⁴¹

It is interesting to consider the P.W.A.'s position on the National Policy of the federal Conservatives as a reflection of the ideology of the union. It is clear that both coal miners and coal masters were vigorously in favour of the new trade scheme and credited Macdonald's policy with the lively state of the trade in the early 1880s. Following his organizational trip through

Cape Breton in 1881, Robert Drummond reported in the Trades Journal,

we met only one man who was not inclined to give the N.P. the greater part of the credit for the unusual bustle at the mines. Almost all the miners and the majority of the farmers and traders in Cape Breton are loud in their praises of the protective policy of the present government.⁴²

Later when a letter to the Journal suggested it was not the National Policy, but world influences, that were responsible for the increased activity in the coal trade, Drummond argued that the reader was greatly mistaken. He admitted that the new 75¢ per ton import duty was not enough to give Nova Scotia coal access to the Ontario market, which American mines continued to supply, but pointed out that the National Policy had brought four sugar refineries and one molasses plant to Nova Scotia, which together used 50,000 tons of coal annually. The free trade carried on during the years of the Reciprocity Treaty had destroyed the local sugar trade and the cotton industry as well. Since the implementation of the National Policy, the Londonderry Iron Works also was prospering, and the coal trade was active as never before. "Abolish the duty", wrote Drummond, "and ... Nova Scotia miners will [be forced to] ... work for ... starvation wages, or find other sources of employment."⁴³

When rumours of a renewal of reciprocity in trade reached the Journal in 1884, Drummond again rejected the idea. He predicted the coal trade of Nova Scotia would

become the province's greatest industry and cautioned that it must be fostered, but not by removing the tariff on coal. Instead, he wrote, "... increase [the tariff] a little until the establishment of Iron shipbuilding yard[s], Rolling mills, Smelting furnaces, etc. and the consequent home consumption renders the duty of little importance."⁴⁴ Drummond admitted that despite the National Policy, the price for coal was not "so remunerative as might be desired, but we are inclined to the opinion that the coal masters are to great measure to blame". Rather than establish a set price for their coal, the various operators strove to undersell one another, resulting in minimal profits and wages. Drummond expressed the hope that the P.W.A. would "act as a restraint and induce the managers to act in concert in agreeing upon a selling price for coal."⁴⁵

Drummond and the miners appeared confident that, with the new security in the coal trade resulting from the National Policy, the P.W.A. would be able to push the coal masters for higher wages and better working conditions. Continued prosperity and further industrialization seemed imminent in Nova Scotia, and the miners intended to get their share of the wealth. Eventually, it became clear that the coal trade was not thriving as the National Policy promised. After a decade in which the miners' wages barely moved forward, the value of the policy came into question. In April 1889 Drummond remarked to

other members of the Grand Council that he was beginning to doubt the utility of the National Policy. American coal had firmly captured the Quebec market, proving that the tariff was not sufficient protection, and Drummond now questioned the federal government's interest in the coal trade. The large coal companies, he thought, were now in favour of a return to reciprocity. The Grand Secretary was critical of these people for not clamouring for a higher tariff, which he considered to be in the best interests of the coal trade. Drummond's complete alignment with the provincial Liberals in the 1890s signalled the end of his advocacy of the National Policy and of his support for the federal Tories.

Some other ideological attitudes of the P.W.A. can be seen in the pages of the Trades Journal, the newspaper of the society. Devoted to "the Interests of the Mine, Workshop and Farm", this four page weekly, edited by Robert Drummond, was published from 4 January 1880 until June 1898.⁴⁶ No formal connection linked the Journal to the P.W.A. until October 1880 when the Grand Council decided to purchase the paper from Drummond on behalf of the Association.

The Journal included news items of general interest, in the manner of other newspapers of the day, but its major thrust was directed toward the mining population. Articles ranged from those presenting factual information on the state of the coal trade, including transfers in ownership

of the various companies, productivity statistics, and details on coal sales and shipping, to reports on working conditions and the activities of the P.W.A.⁴⁷ One of the stated aims of the Journal was to support the cause of any member of the P.W.A. unjustly dealt with by the coal companies. An early issue of the paper condemned the firing of Grand Master Robert Wilson from the Springhill Coal Company, making it clear that Wilson had committed no offence other than organizing men into the P.W.A. The Journal thereby hoped to deter the companies from committing such blatant acts of injustice in the future, and warned:

... if from any unjust cause, or from his connection with the Association, any man is discharged, we shall consider ourselves at liberty, and JUSTIFIED, in using every available weapon in our possession, not merely in defending our cause, but in attacking the party who was the cause of the discharge.⁴⁸

Lodges were encouraged to use the Journal to publicize grievances that would otherwise go unnoticed by the public. It was thought that the coal operators were sensitive to public criticism and would be more responsive to complaints if their public image was jeopardized.⁴⁹ The Journal therefore developed into a public forum for the discussion of working conditions in the mines. Ventilation systems, black lung disease, the need for fortnightly rather than monthly payments, the extension of the franchise, arbitration, the company store, hours of work, the relative merit of different types of lanterns and the

safe use of explosives were all discussed at length in the pages of the Journal.⁵⁰ Conditions at the various collieries also were discussed, so the miners were able to make comparisons, and perhaps assess where they were at a disadvantage. Strikes and lockouts were also reported and the progress of these struggles was covered in the paper. Appeals for financial assistance for strikers were made alongside lists of "blacklegs" barred from the P.W.A. for strikebreaking. Accidents in the mines also were reported, followed by appeals for funds for those injured, and further discussion of safety conditions.⁵¹ This, in turn, led to the suggestion that a general fund be established into which all members would pay dues on a regular basis as accident insurance. The Journal also was used as a newsletter by the lodges to announce their formation, the election of officers, or dates for meetings.

The paper also served the Grand Council in this manner, carrying detailed reports of its bi-annual sessions and announcing the names of those elected to the executive offices each year. The annual P.W.A. anniversary celebration was announced, planned and reported on each year. Sports events participated in by lodges or lodge members were also recorded in the Journal, displaying the union's enthusiasm over such activities. On one occasion a 100 yard dash was run between the apparently well known "McDougall of Nova Scotia" and Jos McNeil of Reserve Mines, Glace Bay. Questions of tactics for the union also came up

for discussion in the Journal, the most popular controversy perhaps being that of whether "force or suasion" was the better means of recruiting new members into the Association.

Politics was another major area of attention and reports were made of events in the local legislature, detailing what bills were put forward, and what was said in the ensuing debate.⁵² Federal government activities and platforms received as much observation as that of the provincial government. The relevance of these issues to the working class often was commented upon, as frequent articles on the National Policy of the Macdonald government show. Election results, both federal and provincial, were reported, along with a commentary on their implications for miners. When the P.W.A. became active in electoral politics the campaigns and platforms of its workingmen's candidates were carefully presented in the pages of the Journal, and readers were urged to vote for these individuals.

The paper also reprinted articles from a wide variety of Canadian, American, English and Scottish newspapers. Items on the mining industries in other countries appeared frequently, so the miners were able to compare working conditions, wages, union activities and so on. Information on the Knights of Labor and Alex MacDonald and the Scottish Miners' Association also reached members of the P.W.A. in this fashion. Following his visits to

these localities on behalf of the P.W.A., Robert Drummond also wrote carefully detailed reports on his findings, thus creating a link between the miners of Nova Scotia and their fellow miners in distant places.

Other articles in the Journal ranged in content from stories on "Bears at the Zoo" and "The Famine in Asia Minor" to "Ships of the Future."⁵³ Items might instruct young women in the proper social graces or offer household hints to homemakers. One of the expressed aims of the Journal was to foster a love of literature among working men and women, and so fiction and poetry also appeared in every issue.⁵⁴ The works of Mark Twain were frequently reproduced.⁵⁵

The Trades Journal was directed to the homes of the working class and therefore called upon merchants to advertise in columns if they wished to reach this large group of consumers.⁵⁶ Readers were asked to deal only with those merchants supporting the paper and to boycott those who did not.⁵⁷ The paper was received enthusiastically when it first appeared and within six months had reached a subscription rate of over 300 in Pictou alone. It was expected that at least 400 copies would be needed by 1 August 1880.⁵⁸ Despite such attempts to estimate the demand, the editor was forced to apologize for the shortage of copies the following summer, when circulation exceeded all expectations.⁵⁹ From time to time, however, Drummond urged readers to buy their own copy rather than borrow a

friend's issue in order to increase sales and distribution. Unfortunately no data can be found to show how large circulation of the newspaper was over the years.

One of the Trades Journal's most important functions was the role it played in unifying the membership of the P.W.A. For the first time, miners in Cape Breton had regular contact with those in Cumberland and Pictou counties, and vice-versa. The problems at one mine became known to all through the pages of the Journal, and when a situation became desperate, help was often provided as a result. Strikes that otherwise might never have gotten underway, were supported and strengthened by the various lodges, with the help of the Journal. Perhaps the most impressive example of such an instance was the 1882 Lingan strike, when several communities concerned about their fellow workers' plight, sent a delegation of men to the town to deter the strikebreakers.

As one of the few papers available to, and the only paper directed at, the mining communities and the working class in general, it seems likely that the Trades Journal had a large influence on its readership. Lodge meetings often included the reading and discussion of items in the most recent issue of the paper. Reading aloud for the benefit of illiterate fellow workers was a common practise during the workday down in the mines as well, thus promoting general discussion of important or controversial issues. The Journal acted as an instrument for

promoting the development of working-class consciousness, because in its pages, the miners saw their own problems and interests - their own lives, being discussed - not just those of higher society. Politicians were forced to address themselves to workers, because it was evident that these people were aware of the issues put forward in the Journal, and voted accordingly. The Journal thus helped the miners to achieve a greater prominence in society and greater self-respect. The great potential of the newspaper as a radicalizing element among the miners was, therefore, somewhat undermined, because while promoting greater self awareness and class consciousness, the Journal also tried to involve the miners more closely with the rest of society and advocated a faith in the political process. Harmony with both government and industry was espoused, not struggle.

For an understanding of the origins of the ideology it is necessary to turn to the founder and editor of the Trades Journal, Robert Drummond. In his influential position as editor for the entire life of the newspaper, Drummond played a major role in determining the public image of the Journal, the P.W.A., and the mining population as a whole. The extent to which the Journal was a reflection of Drummond's personal ideology, and where that differed from attitudes held by the general membership of the P.W.A., is difficult to determine. Whether the Grand Secretary used information on the state of the coal

trade to control strike activity, or perhaps used his editorial control to ignore wildcat strikes and rank and file discontent, is a matter of speculation. The effect Drummond had on the P.W.A. is an important question and will be dealt with separately. What Drummond can be credited with was creating a paper that presented a positive image of the coal miner and the P.W.A. to the Nova Scotian public. The ongoing discussion of current events and political issues that went on in the Journal no doubt helped give the miner a degree of political influence previously unknown and helped the Association with the many reforms legislated by the provincial government during these years. The Journal sought to protect the rights of the mining population and advance their interests. With its promotion of literature, its advocacy of thrift and sobriety, and its discussions of Canadian politics and world affairs, the Trades Journal served as an "educator in the realm of the intellectual and the moral."⁶⁰

The Journal reflected the lives of the miners whom it served, and within the limited political and ideological framework described, helped to increase its readers' awareness of their own reality and encouraged them to act collectively to improve their social and political position.

Perhaps one of the greatest problems experienced by the P.W.A. as a result of its confused ideology was the continual siphoning off of union leaders through promotion into the managerial ranks of the coal companies.

One of the first rules established by the Association banned any person holding an "official position" in the mines from the P.W.A. This regulation applied to everyone, including members and officers of the union, once they accepted such a promotion. As a result many active members of the P.W.A. eventually were forced to resign. This decision of the Grand Council was based on the belief that the interests of employer and employee were bound to conflict at some point. Active members of the Association lost to the coal companies included William Madden of Westville, who assisted Drummond in organizing the Cape Breton miners, and acted as Grand Master for the P.W.A. in 1880 and 1881. Madden was later made a manager at Springhill and in 1883 became Pictou's first Deputy Inspector of Mines.⁶¹ J.W. Sutherland, also of Westville, Grand Master in 1887 and Acting Grand Master the following year,⁶² in 1888 became an underground manager at the Black Diamond colliery. He eventually joined the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company as manager of the Marsh Mine near Thorburn.⁶³ Alex D. MacKenzie, Grand Master in 1885,⁶⁴ was made an underground manager at the Vale Colliery in Thorburn.⁶⁵ The list goes on and on.

Official response to these promotions was unquestioning approval. At the April 1888 meeting of Grand Council Drummond proudly announced that with J.W. Sutherland's recent appointment at Black Diamond Colliery, five former Grand Masters, two Assistant Grand Masters and several

other members of the Grand Council now occupied "positions of trust" within the various coal companies.⁶⁶ He went on to say that the Association should be pleased that the men selected for these important positions were those prominent in the P.W.A. The managers of the coal companies no doubt found this method of dealing with troublesome union leaders easier and more advantageous than firing them and thereby inciting union opposition as the Springhill Coal Company did with Drummond and Thomas Leadbetter. According to the Grand Secretary, however, the managers obviously recognized the men's common sense and other good qualities as exhibited in their union activities.⁶⁷ Nothing was said about the loss of leadership to the P.W.A. This attitude reflects the Association's preoccupation with upward mobility and the social acceptability of miners. Instead of encouraging its leaders to remain within the P.W.A. to build a powerful union, it praised them when they abandoned it for personal gain, and took part of the credit for their accomplishment.

One final aspect of the ideology of the P.W.A. that should be considered here can be discerned in the union's movement away from strikes, to political lobbying and electoral politics, described in the previous chapter. This change in strategy reflected a major shift in ideology that was not unique to the Nova Scotian miners' union. The experiments of the P.W.A. in running workingmen's candidates in elections and attempting to solve

labour-management disputes through conciliation and arbitration had all been tried before in other parts of Canada and the U.S.A. by the Knights of Labor and by the miners of Scotland. News concerning labour's efforts in these places reached the Nova Scotia miners through links with individual travellers and also by way of newspapers. In addition to these sources of information, there is also ample evidence in the Trades Journal that Robert Drummond visited the mining districts of Scotland and returned to Nova Scotia bursting with information and ideas picked up there.

Two traditions seem to have come with the Scottish and English miners to Nova Scotia that were formed in the homeland coal districts in the mid-19th century. The first of these evolved in the 1840s, the second in the 1860s. The earlier period saw a powerful miner's movement emerge under the leadership of Jude and W.P. Roberts. In its struggle for higher wages and better working conditions this organization worked to develop a centralized leadership able to organize open conflict with the coal operators. Eventually, however, the combined forces of industry and government succeeded in destroying the movement. The group of the later period carried quite a different ideology from the first Miners' Association. Led by miner Alexander MacDonald, this group avoided the open confrontation tactics of the past and concentrated instead on becoming politically effective. MacDonald came from a

working class background and began labouring in the coal pits at eight years of age. Despite this modest beginning he managed to acquire a small fortune and climb into a high social position. It has been suggested that this "rags to riches" story, reflected in the fact that MacDonald eventually acquired shares in the coal industry in which he had worked as a child, led him to advocate reform rather than radical solutions to the problems facing the miners. As he makes clear in the following quotation, MacDonald's strategy was based on the avoidance of conflict.

I look upon strikes as the barbaric relic of a period of unfortunate relations between labour and capital, and the sooner we get rid of it by the more rational means of the employer meeting the employed, and by talking the matter over, the better.⁶⁸

Arbitration, conciliation and reform legislation were to replace the strike weapon. Friends in high places and a good public image thus became as important as mass strikes by the miners. Class harmony became the organization's goal. MacDonald stressed that the men should strive to meet their employers as far as possible. In speaking to an assembly of workers in Glasgow in 1879 he stated that "Employers had the same right to manipulate their capital as workmen had to manipulate their labour".⁶⁹ MacDonald was elected as a Member of Parliament in 1874 and led the parliamentary struggle to improve wages and working conditions for the Scottish miners. It was this philosophy

that dominated the Miners' Association throughout the 1860s and 1870s. Thus before the P.W.A. even formed, the miners of Great Britain had gone through a transition in organizational strategy, from using openly aggressive methods and frequently employing the powerful strike weapon, to relying on political lobbying and arbitration.

There is no doubt that the precedent which was set in Scotland affected events in Nova Scotia. It is interesting, for instance, to consider the temper of the obituary of Alex MacDonald carried in the Trades Journal, which called the leader,

a man of sterling character, who in fighting for the workingman, fought his way up from a humble rank in society to [a position of] honor in the British Parliament.⁷⁰

With his advocacy of arbitration, parliamentary lobbying and traditional party politics Robert Drummond succeeded in becoming the Alex MacDonald of Nova Scotia. For this, and other reasons, it is obvious that the P.W.A. cannot be fully understood without a more thorough analysis of its Grand Secretary.

Most histories of the Nova Scotia coal industry tend to equate the P.W.A. and the labour movement in the province prior to 1900 with Robert Drummond. Writing in 1926, for example, Eugene Forsey commented:

... the employees were vehemently opposed to the whole Trade Union Movement ... The fears of the operators, however, were ridiculously exaggerated. Drummond, the ruling spirit of the Union for nearly twenty years, was a cautious and genteel Scotsman, and from the outset did his best to avoid all unnecessary friction.⁷¹

James Cameron wrote in a similar vein almost 50 years later, when he introduced the P.W.A. with the explanation:

Its organizing genius and driving force for its first score years was a Scotsman ... Robert Drummond, labour official, publisher and editor, and later member of the Legislative Council of Nova Scotia.⁷²

It is important, therefore, to consider Drummond's background, the ideas he espoused and his impact on the trade union movement in the Nova Scotia coal industry.

Robert Drummond was born in Scotland on 9 October 1840, the son of Robert and Elizabeth Drummond. He was educated at the Greenock Town Academy and moved to Nova Scotia in the 1860s. At some time during this period he married May Alexander, but it is not clear whether they emigrated to Canada together or met there. Drummond had his first experience with coal mining in Lingan, Cape Breton, where he worked both above and below ground. In his Recollections Drummond observed that this was hard, but satisfying work, because "miners are their own masters."⁷³

It was at Lingan, presumably in the late 1860s, that Drummond was involved in his first conflict between the miners and the coal operators. The men had made an unsuccessful bid for an increase in wages, and had resigned themselves to defeat, when Drummond offered to speak to the manager on their behalf. A small increase was won, convincing Drummond of the power of "calm negotiation." After work stopped at Lingan, probably for the winter season, Drummond travelled to Roost Pit, Glace Bay, to

search for employment. Few jobs were available for the miners, however, and Drummond returned to Lingan to open a store. This venture failed because the men were not able to pay ready cash for their merchandise and relied on credit to get them through the winter months. Discouraged, Drummond tried farming in Pictou County, but financial difficulties eventually sent him back to the mines. He found work as a coal cutter with the Intercolonial Coal Company in Westville but was injured in a heavy fall of coal. This twist of fate caused Drummond to be absent from the colliery at the time of the disastrous explosion of 1873 when manager James Dunn and many of the men working underground were killed.⁷⁴ Drummond then moved on to tending the ventilation system at the Black Diamond colliery of the Nova Scotia Coal Company, also located in Westville.⁷⁵ He later became a timekeeper, worked in the company office, and eventually wound up as a bank foreman in Springhill.⁷⁶ Thus, although a well educated and "genteel Scotsman," Drummond had spent a considerable amount of time in the coal fields of Nova Scotia prior to the events of September 1879. He knew the work of the coal miners and understood the problems they faced. As his actions in Springhill in September 1879 demonstrated, he was prepared to fight on their behalf.

Drummond was not the only leader involved in the formation of the P.W.A., but he quickly became the major figure in the organization. As explained previously,

Grand Master Robert Wilson, was eliminated from the leadership of the union early in 1880 when he was fired by the Springhill Coal Company. Drummond was fired as well, but his security in Springhill was assured shortly afterward, when he was made Grand Secretary and the only salaried official of the P.W.A. Drummond was no doubt perceived by the other men as a miner who had "made good," and with his formal education and leadership abilities, he was readily trusted by them. His official position in the P.W.A. was strengthened further in April 1880 when he was made the union's Agent. This meant his salary was increased and his duties expanded to include representing the P.W.A. in disputes between the coal miners and coal masters, collecting and distributing strike benefit payments, and acting in a general capacity as a liason person for the union. The following year the position was expanded again to include the organizing of coal miners in Cape Breton, and at the meeting of the Grand Council, Drummond also was given the responsibility of choosing a paid assistant who would travel to Cape Breton with him.⁷⁷ Drummond thereby became known throughout the coal districts as the representative of the P.W.A.

Drummond gained control over the P.W.A. in other ways as well. At the first meeting of the provisional Grand Council in 1879 keen discussion took place over the question of the adoption of the constitution and rules of order prepared by the executive. Members

debated whether these documents should not be sent out to the lodges for approval before being accepted, but Drummond argued against this plan, telling the delegates they had been chosen to conduct the business of the Association on behalf of their lodges and must do so. The delegates finally agreed and accepted the proposed constitution, which had been written primarily by Drummond.⁷⁸ The constitution included a clause making it mandatory for lodges to attain the Grand Council's permission before calling a strike at any colliery. Later the Grand Council voted Drummond the power to make or second motions at any of the lodge meetings, thereby allowing the Grand Secretary's influence to permeate all parts of the union.⁷⁹

The Grand Council also passed a resolution that "the lodges be instructed not to allow any agreement, contract or other document to be signed by their members before submitting [the] same to the Grand Secretary for approval". Passing this motion, Drummond commented, was "a reflection of the intelligence of the men to be unwilling to sign, fearing they might be taken in."⁸⁰ The men thus voted away their power to make any decisions or take any action independent of or in opposition to Drummond. Two years later it was decided that "no important step political or otherwise nor any request be made the government in connection with any matter specifically affecting the miners unless through the executive of the association."⁸¹ Although it was explained that "the object of the motion

was to keep our forces intact", the results also guaranteed the power of the Grand Council.⁸² Robert Drummond's other major function as editor of the Trades Journal also provided him with a powerful means of influencing members of the P.W.A., as suggested earlier.

The degree of control over the P.W.A. held by Drummond was considerable, but instances of rank and file rebellion were not uncommon. Although the constitution of the Association explicitly stated that lodges were required to obtain permission from Grand Council before declaring any work stoppage, wildcat strikes were reported frequently. Little is known about these strikes because they were generally small and short lived, due in part to their illicit nature. Those reports that do exist are perhaps most often there because they contained a warning to other members to obey the rules of the order or risk suspension. The earliest instance of a lodge's charter being cancelled occurred in October 1884 when Brunswick Lodge in Joggins suspended work without permission. The Council's action was, in fact, superfluous, because the strike ended after only a few days, and the men went back to work on their manager's terms, which included renouncing the P.W.A. Drummond apparently hoped to make the situation work to the Council's advantage by revoking the lodge's charter on a point of principle.⁸³ In June of the following year the members of Visatergo Lodge of Granton requested sanction from the Council to

strike against the Intercolonial Coal Company, which had reduced the wharfmen's wages without prior notice. Drummond was reluctant to allow the strike to proceed, pointing to "the state of the trade", but, as the men became more demanding, permission was finally granted. After a short time, however, many of the men returned to work. Drummond felt this action reflected badly on the union, and having decided "it would be in the best interests of the Association to lop off a rotten branch, the Council deemed it prudent to instruct the Secretary to withdraw the charter."⁸⁴ Apparently a smaller number of lodges exhibiting a good public image was considered more desirable than greater numbers of less controllable members.

A few years later a somewhat different approach was taken by the Council when Pioneer Lodge applied for strike approval. The request was turned down, but qualified this decision with the advice that the lodge might go ahead without permission, "in case of urgency."⁸⁵ It is not clear why the strike was not condoned officially, but it is possible that Pioneer was considered too important a lodge to alienate, while at the same time the "no strike" public image of Drummond and the Grand Council had to be protected.⁸⁶ Several illegal work stoppages at both Joggins and Springhill were reported by the Council at the September 1894 meeting. While allowing that the men had ample reason to be dissatisfied, Drummond claimed that the action showed thoughtlessness and indifference

and maintained that their differences with management could have been "resolved by conference."⁸⁷ No suspensions were made but it was pointed out that the constitution clearly stated "Any lodge coming out on strike without sanction of Grand Council Committee shall forfeit all claim to support and may have its charter revoked."⁸⁸ Two years later wildcat strikes were again reported at Joggins and the newly formed Holdfast Lodge was suspended. This was the second time a lodge of the P.W.A. was organized and then suspended for strike activity in Joggins. The Council refused to take any responsibility for the men involved, and all other members were warned to obey constituted authority.⁸⁹ Drummond clearly exerted a moderating influence over the agitational activities of the miners. He also directed one of the major sources of intellectual stimulation they experienced through his editorial control of the Trades Journal. Partly through the latter medium, as well as in all other functions of the Association, Drummond attempted to assert a particular set of social values as a part of the larger ideology of the P.W.A. This can be seen in the gradual shift in perspective towards the original "Objects of the P.W.A."

The aims put forward in the 1879 Constitution emphasized the social well-being of the society's members as well as economic gain and other goals directly related to work place conditions. Point number one summarized

the general purposes of the Association:

To advance materially its members by promoting such improvement in the mode of remuneration of labour as the state of the trade shall warrant or allow, and generally to improve the condition of working men morally, socially and physically.⁹⁰

A detailed list of goals followed, including "the fostering of habits of thrift, industry, economy and sobriety". In the years following its formation the emphasis in the policy and direction of the P.W.A. tended to shift in two ways. The first was reflected in the shift from strike activity to political lobbying and electoral politics as described previously. Connected to this change was a movement from stressing material gain to promoting the virtues of thrift, sobriety and industry. In his Recollections Drummond asserted that if he were to re-write the Constitution of the Association, he would make these points the first priority, even before the promotion of higher wages.⁹¹ The Grand Secretary felt strongly about the benefits of thrift. Writing in 1884 he said,

In this country there is no workingman, be he ever so poor and humble, who may not, if he will, better his condition with each succeeding year. To do this he must correct the habit of spending every week his full week's earnings....⁹²

Drummond had come to believe that "the provincial coal trade could only thrive with cheap labour, and he therefore helped the men to realize that thrift could be made to benefit them nearly as much as (an) increased rate."⁹³ Drummond urged the men to cope as best they could within the coal industry as it existed, and never challenged the

coal operators' right to set wages as they saw fit or profit from the men's work. He claimed to be able to "point out ... individuals who previous to the formation of the society were over their heads and ears in debt, were helpless and hopeless ... who ... are now able to say that in a money sense they are in debt to no man." This dramatic change was attributed to the work of the P.W.A.⁹⁴

Drummond presented a 13 point lecture for the "man really desirous of improving materially his position ... and anxious to raise himself on the social scale."⁹⁵ (These included advise such as "Never buy a thing unless it is absolutely needed", "Never look to others for help. Let each one rely on himself," and "Aim to live comfortably, while honestly, frugally and temporarily".) Drummond deliberately promoted social mobility among the miners, rather than suggest any kind of division between working people and the upper classes. He told the miners to look at themselves to discover the cause of many of their problems.

The Trades Journal contended that "If workingmen are not prosperous they have themselves to blame ... they seek to make reforms [in their workplace] before reforming themselves. They howl for bigger wages before they have acquired a knowledge [of] how properly to appropriate their earnings.... Unless the society is able to put a stop to the ... practice of drinking, which is keeping many

of our workingmen poor, and despised - and [giving] the whole class a name it does not deserve, then the Association may kick against the tyranny of employers ... in vain. Ignorance will prevail, vice will be rampant."⁹⁶ Drummond went so far in one of his lectures on this topic to suggest that every man could fulfill the common dream of making a visit to Scotland if only he would save the money that went to pay his "grog bill."⁹⁷ Drummond's attitude toward liquor seems rather extreme, and it is tempting to interpret it as a means of avoiding the fundamental issue of inadequate wages. It is also important to recognize that the traditional acceptance of drink was being generally undermined by the development of industrialization. Although the new work discipline that accompanied the factories of the late 19th century in Canada was not as vital in the coal fields, the P.W.A. could not escape the growing wave of individualism that resulted from the breakdown of paternalistic ties between employer and employee.⁹⁸ The impersonal labour force described by Langdon, with its new self sufficiency, was forced to adopt the values of temperance, thrift and industriousness in order to survive. So while Drummond may have been the leading proponent of these values among the miners, their reasons for accepting such ideas had as much or more to do with the changing economy as the Grand Secretary's charisma.

While it is obvious that Drummond had no intention

of drastically limiting the wealth of the coal masters, it is more difficult to determine to what extent the miners themselves questioned the operators' right to profit from their labour. Loyalist and rebel sentiment existed side by side within the P.W.A. When they were particularly hard pressed the miners would strike and fight for their survival - with or without Drummond's permission. No evidence can be found, however, to suggest that any elements in the early P.W.A. wanted to see the overthrow of capitalism. Most members of the Association seemed content with what they considered a fair deal within the boundaries of the free enterprize system. Although Drummond started out as a "rebel," he emerged at the end of his tenure as a "loyalist", comfortable within the Fielding government. Whether he purposefully manipulated the miners to gain control of the P.W.A., or was caught up in the same natural process of the centralization of power that was typical of most trade union organizations in the late 19th century, is difficult to ascertain. Probably both processes were at work. The ultimate effect on the P.W.A. was to weaken its power as a militant trade union and to redirect its energies, away from fighting for higher wages and job security, to the less antagonistic and non-traditional activities of political lobbying and legislative reform.

By considering the "rebel" and "loyalist" aspects of various elements of the P.W.A., from the organization

of the union to its position on immigrant labour and its Scottish heritage, the ideology of the Association comes into focus. Throughout the 17 year period under study both loyalism to the trade and rebelliousness against it existed among the miners and within their union. To a large degree, Drummond promoted the former attitude, through his dual role of Grand Secretary and editor of the Trades Journal. He maintained that everyone involved in the coal industry could get a fair share out of it through mutual co-operation. The men were permitted to fight for their rights only through approved channels. The miners were willing to attempt this strategy, but soon realized its limitations. The alienation from their work and sense of shared oppression that had first brought them together to form the P.W.A. increased as the coal companies consolidated their control over the industry. The men were forced to unite in strikes against the companies in direct opposition to Drummond. As a result tensions developed within the union which were based, not only on a difference in strategy, but on a clash in ideologies. This situation eventually resulted in open conflict between the Grand Secretary and the miners and is discussed in the following chapter.

See respectively, Nova Scotia, Miners Reports, 1880, p. 37.

14. Steven Langdon, The Emergence of the Canadian Working Class Movement, p. 2.

15. Trades Journal, 29 October 1881.

16. P.W.A. Minutes, 6 September 1892, p. 247.

17. Ibid., p. 249.

Footnotes

1. Alan Dawley and Paul Faler, "Working Class Culture and Politics in the Industrial Revolution: Sources of Loyalism and Rebellion," in the Journal of Social History, 9, 4 (June 1976).

2. Ibid., p. 469.

3. E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, pp. 9-10.

4. Steven Langdon, The Emergence of the Canadian Working Class Movement, 1845-1875 (Toronto, 1975), reprinted from the Journal of Canadian Studies (May 1973) pp. 3-13 and (August 1973), pp. 8-25.

5. Steven Landon, The Emergence of the Canadian Working Class Movement, p. 3.

6. Ibid., p. 4.

7. Alan Dawley and Paul Faler, "Working-Class Culture and Politics in The Industrial Revolution," pp. 466-480.

8. Ibid., p. 469.

9. Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation (Boston, 1957), p. IX.

10. Steven Langdon, The Emergence of the Canadian Working Class Movement, p. 5.

11. Trades Journal, 28 February 1883.

12. This attitude was carried to a large extent by the P.W.A. as well, and references to the "state of the trade", or how much pressure the coal industry could tolerate are common the Trades Journal.

13. Albion Mines in Pictou and Sydney Mines were the only larger employers at that time, hiring 584 and 561 men respectively. Nova Scotia, Mines Reports, 1880, p. 37.

14. Steven Langdon, The Emergence of the Canadian Working Class Movement, p. 8.

15. Trades Journal, 29 October 1881.
16. P.W.A., Minutes, 6 September 1892, p. 247.
17. Ibid., p. 249.
18. Ibid., p. 248.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 249.
21. Nolan Reilly, Amherst, p. 7.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 8, and P.W.A., Minutes, September 1893.
24. P.W.A., Minutes, 6 September 1899, p. 353.
25. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1892, p. 247.
26. P.W.A., Minutes, April 1881, p. 22.
27. Royal Commission on Labor, Neil A. Nickerson, p.344, and Robert Gray, p. 347.
28. Trades Journal, 3 October 1883, and P.W.A., Minutes April 1889, p. 195.
29. Trades Journal, 4 March 1885.
30. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1895, p. 305.
31. Trades Journal, 3 October 1883.
32. Royal Commission on Labor, p. 285.
33. Ibid., p. 344.
34. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1888, p. 185.
35. Trades Journal, 30 July 1884.
36. Ibid., 25 February 1880.
37. Steven Langdon, The Emergence of the Canadian Working Class Movement, p. 10.
38. Trades Journal, 5 May 1880.
39. Paul MacEwan, Miners and Steelworkers, p. 19.
40. Trades Journal, 8 July 1885.

41. Royal Commission on Labour, 1889, p. 344.
42. Trades Journal, 29 July 1881.
43. Ibid., 20 December 1882.
44. Ibid., 6 February 1884.
45. Ibid., 29 July 1881.
46. The Trades Journal was published until Drummond resigned in 1898. See Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 273.
47. Trades Journal, 6 June 1883.
48. Ibid., 18 February 1880.
49. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1887, p. 160.
50. See Trades Journal, 6 April 1881, for article on Foorde Pit explosion in Stellarton.
51. Trades Journal, 6 April 1881.
52. Ibid., 6 April 1887.
53. Ibid., 16 June 1880.
54. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1882, p. 37.
55. Trades Journal, 23 June 1880.
56. Ibid., 21 December 1881.
57. P.W.A., Minutes, 8 April 1881, p. 20.
58. Trades Journal, 29 June 1880.
59. Ibid., 29 June 1881.
60. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1889.
61. J.M. Cameron, The Pictonian Colliers, p. 112 and 145.
62. P.W.A., Minutes, 1888, p. 158 and 178.
63. J.M. Cameron, The Pictonian Colliers, p. 98.
64. P.W.A., Minutes, 1885, p. 85.
65. J.M. Cameron, The Pictonian Colliers, p. 145.

66. P.W.A., Minutes, April 1888, p. 170.
67. Ibid.
68. A.J. Youngson-Brown, "Trade Union Policy in the Scots Coal Fields 1855-1885," Economic History Review, Second Series, VI, 1, (1953) p. 41.
69. The Scotsman, 17 September 1879, in A.J. Youngston-Brown, "Trade Union Policy", p. 36.
70. Trades Journal, 9 November 1881.
71. Eugene Forsey, "Economic and Social Aspects of the Nova Scotia Coal Industry," p. 79.
72. J.M. Cameron, The Pictonian Colliers, p. 144.
73. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 14.
74. Ibid., p. 16, and J.M. Cameron, Pictonian Colliers, p. 36.
75. J.M. Cameron, Pictonian Colliers, p. 96.
76. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 21.
77. P.W.A., Minutes, 8 April 1881, p. 15.
78. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 34.
79. P.W.A. Minutes, October 1884, p. 66.
80. P.W.A., Minutes, April 1888, p. 175.
81. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1890, p. 224.
82. Ibid.
83. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1884, p. 63.
84. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1885, p. 92.
85. P.W.A., Minutes, October 1888, p. 187.
86. In his State of the Order report that year Drummond noted that membership had fallen back despite the fact that one new lodge, Victoria in Cape Breton, was organized with 100 members and Cameron Lodge was revived. Even Pioneer Lodge, (usually so strong), had seen a decline.
P.W.A., Minutes, April 1888, p. 167.

87. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1894, p. 278.
88. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1894, p. 281.
89. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1896.
90. P.W.A., Minutes, 1880, p. IV.
91. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 30.
92. Trades Journal, 6 August 1884.
93. C.O. MacDonald, The Coal and Mining Industries of Nova Scotia, p. 212.
94. Trades Journal, 27 June 1883.
95. Trades Journal, 4 July 1883.
96. Ibid., 8 August 1883.
97. Ibid., 19 August 1885.
98. See Rowland Berthoff, An Unsettled People-Social Order and Disorder in American History, on "fraternal societies", pp. 270-290, 360-380, 440-450.

While scattered references to grumbling among rank and file members appeared in the Minutes throughout the late 1880s and 1890s, it was not until the September 1896 meeting of Grand Council that serious trouble erupted within the P.W.A.¹ Then, to quell disruptive rumours about certain Cape Breton lodges being dissatisfied with Drummond and threatening to abandon the Association, the executive called upon all lodges to issue a joint press release proclaiming their confidence in the Grand Secretary. The proposed resolution was recorded in the Minutes of Grand Council.

Whereas, from time to time there appears in the public press violent and malicious attack[s] upon our grand secretary, Bro. R. Drummond, in

Chapter V

Dissolution of a Union: The Company Store

Dispute, The Knights of Labor and the

Fall of Robert Drummond

On 30 June 1898 Robert Drummond resigned as Grand Secretary of the P.W.A. after an 18 year tenure. Little was said in the Minutes of the Grand Council to explain this turn of events, but it was clear that the union faced grave internal problems, and that Drummond stood at the centre of the conflict.

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Whereas, from time to time there appears in the public press violent and malicious attack[s] upon our grand secretary, Bro. R. Drummond, in

which he is all but accused of betraying ... the best interests of the ... P.W.A., and

Whereas such attacks ... convey ... the idea that the members of the association have not the capacity or ... intelligence to understand what they are doing or ... who is likely to best put forward their interest[s]:

Therefore resolved, that this Grand Council hereby give expression to its utmost confidence in the integrity and ability of the grand secretary...²

The members of Keystone and Equity Lodges, initiators of the complaints, refused to join the others in supporting this motion, and were suspended from the Association. These dissidents nevertheless continued their attack on Drummond, and sent a letter dated 24 November 1896 to the Grand Secretary accusing him of being "unfaithful to the best interests of the Association." In his reply of 1 December 1896, which Drummond distributed to all lodges for discussion, it became clear that the dispute focussed on the "company store question". This issue was a grievance of long standing among the Nova Scotia miners, especially in Cape Breton. There, the men were unemployed during the long winter months when ice in the harbours prevented the excavation and shipping of coal. The miners and their families were able to survive the winter season without pay until the operators needed them again in the spring only because the company store gave them credit. They became indebted to the store each winter and over the active summer months the company held back most of their wages to pay their debts. It was impossible for the miners to save enough money to get

through the following winter without credit. A similar pattern developed at the other collieries where the employees were paid irregularly, or at best, monthly. The company stores locked the men into a credit system from which they could not escape, and matters were made even worse because the stores overcharged for their goods. If the miners had had ready cash, they could have purchased their food and other necessities elsewhere for less. In his study of the early 19th century Coal Fields and Coal Industry of Nova Scotia, Richard Brown commented, "We need not wonder that, under this system, the [coal] leasees ... made more profit by the sale of their stores than of their coal."³

The problems created by the company stores and infrequent payments were discussed regularly by members of the P.W.A., as a brief perusal of the Trades Journal shows. In his submission to the Royal Commission on Labor in 1888, Acadia miner W.S. Munsie explained that with fortnightly payments, the men could live on \$5 to \$8 less per month than under the current system of monthly payments, which necessitated buying on credit. Miner Duncan McIntyre of Caledonia agreed, and outlined for the Commission some price differences between the "company" and "cash" stores. His evidence included the following: one barrel of flour cost \$6.25 at the company store and \$5.50 at the cash store; one gallon of molasses was 50¢ compared to 40¢;

one pound of butter cost 22¢ - 26¢ compared to 20¢; and one pound of tea was 35¢ was opposed to 22¢ - 30¢.⁴ The manager of the mine argued that this was an exaggeration, until McIntyre produced receipts to prove his claim. The miner then went on to point out that the average worker's wage was lower than what was needed to permit a decent existence in any case, and that the company stores only intensified the problem.

Equity Lodge of Bridgeport, Cape Breton, had complained of the injustice of the company store system for at least a decade prior to the 1896 upheaval. A letter from the lodge printed in the 19 August 1885 Trades Journal told of the local company store charging 20% more than the cash stores. The less expensive establishments refused to deal with the miners who could only offer credit because the company store had first claim to their wages.

The Grand Secretary was well aware of the problems created for the miners by the credit system. Drummond, himself, had failed to operate a cash store successfully in Lingan in the 1860s because the miners were in debt to the company. In his reply to the dissident lodges Drummond outlined the dispute as he perceived it. Keystone and Equity, he said, took the position that the company stores should be controlled by "legislation in favour of cash payments" and that such legislation should be sought by

the P.W.A. The coal companies would then be unable to garnishee wages, regardless of debts at their stores. The miners would be free to work out their own budgets and would have cash available to deal at whichever store they chose. After some discussion the Grand Secretary moved; "Recognizing that there are evils in connection with the Co. Store system as presently conducted, the Council ... appoint a committee ... to draw up desirable modifications."⁵ A committee was struck and its members, including Robert Drummond, returned with the suggestion

That after a date to be fixed upon by Gd. Council, the men now dealing in Company stores shall have the privilege of discontinuing further dealings; that the Co'y shall not, after a date to be fixed upon deduct from the wages of anyone who has left off dealing in the Company Store, and is in debt to the store, a larger sum than ten per cent of the debtor's earnings. Also that all orders be given monthly and for a specified amount.⁶

The final clause in the proposal referred to yet another problem created by the credit system. The men often found that their own records differed from those kept by the store. The miners were frequently illiterate and, unable to substantiate their claims, were forced to pay the higher sum. It was hoped that a greater regulation of orders would help to end these discrepancies and save the men money.⁷

It was agreed by Council that, if the Dominion Coal Company, the chief antagonist in the company stores dispute, refused to accept these conditions, the matter would be taken before the provincial government.⁸ Drummond was

assigned to convey the decision to the company managers. Their response, he later reported, surprized him. They preferred simply to close the stores than to "do any dabbling". If the men wanted the stores they would remain open - but without interference - otherwise they would be closed. Rather than apply for government legislation, as agreed, the Grand Secretary chose to hold a referendum among the membership to determine a response, and announced a November date for the vote in the Trades Journal.

"You know what took place subsequently", Drummond wrote angrily following the referendum, "though I do not know ... why certain of the collieries did not vote."

It was understood that the vote was to be unfettered, and without canvassing on either side. I understand the officials of the Company did no soliciting ... but I am informed that there was some heavy canvassing by those opposed to the stores...

whoever advised the men ... not to vote, advised them very badly ... Some say, "oh the vote was for, or against, closing the stores. We are not for closing the stores, we are only against the stoppage of money for supplies."

The stoppage of orders for supplies is precisely the same thing as closing the stores. Anyone should know that the Company will not give out supplies ... unless it has security for payment.... This need not be discussed. I state it authoritatively.⁹

Drummond went on to say that every man was free to deal wherever he pleased and if he chose not to deal at the company store he would be paid in cash. He then attacked Keystone's and Equity's petition, claiming that to demand

cash payments was equivalent to demanding a "law to prohibit workmen from giving orders," or the cessation of credit for miners and their families.

Do you imagine I will so disgrace workingmen, in the eyes of the people of the province, as to ask for such a law, and by asking it say: "The men I have fought side by side with for 17 years, are not to be trusted to do with their own as they please; if we do not restrain them by law they will do injury to themselves".

You realize, I presume, what such a law implies ... if any Company is stopped from collecting for itself, it surely will not collect for any other ... there shall be no more stoppages for the P.W.A., or for churches, or in short, for anything.¹⁰

Drummond's refusal to support Keystone and Equity Lodges in their battle against the company stores was perceived by many of the men as a sell-out. The Grand Secretary was unwilling to fight for the basics the miners needed to survive - either for sufficient wages to allow them to manage without credit or, at the very least, for control over the percentage of their wage to be paid to the company stores. He failed the men by accepting the company's uncompromising position on the issue, and his referendum deliberately avoided the real question at stake. Many of the men realized this, and encouraged by active dissident members, refused to participate in the vote.

Since the P.W.A. executive was unwilling to do the job, a bill concerning the company stores was placed before the Nova Scotia Assembly, sponsored by independent merchants from the mining communities and certain P.W.A.

lodges.¹¹ The bill called for cash payments to the coal miners and the installation of special inspectors to enforce this legislation. The official reaction of the P.W.A. to the proposed bill greatly surprized many of the Association's members, for Drummond aligned himself with Dominion Coal to block the legislation.¹²

Siding with Dominion Coal against the miners over the company store legislation was probably the ultimate act of betrayal which lost Drummond the miners' support. The Grand Secretary apparently feared losing the company's friendship by fighting its credit system more than he feared alienating the men by refusing to struggle against it. Without the company's regularly collecting union dues for the P.W.A., as had become the custom, the Association would be placed in serious financial trouble. Drummond's own position and salary could conceivably be jeopardized. He therefore used all the influence he could wield to stamp out the movement against the company stores.

The tempest culminated in 1896 with Keystone's and Equity's accusation of disloyalty. An assembly of Grand Council was summoned in May 1897 to settle the furor. At the meeting the two letters were read to the delegates, and Drummond challenged the offending lodges to prove their allegations. A three hour debate ensued, and in the end a report was submitted to Council stating that the "Grand Secretary had not acted in the best interests of the working men of Cape Breton on the company

store question ... and that criticism ... to this effect was fully justified."¹³ A second report declaring confidence in Drummond was also submitted and it was supported by the delegates in a vote of 12 to 5. Unity Lodge abstained from the vote, presumably because its representatives were divided on the issue. Keystone and Equity were warned to abide by the decisions of Council in the future or to terminate their connection with the P.W.A. Then, perhaps to assure the general membership of its interest in Cape Breton, and to rekindle interest there in the union, the Grand Council agreed to hold the society's annual anniversary celebration in Sydney the following September.

Despite this attempt to resolve the quarrel within the exclusive confines of Grand Council, the company stores remained a major subject of debate among the general membership. The September 1897 meeting of Grand Council was forced once again to devote time to the problem. Drummond complained that he was being criticized unfairly for his part in blocking the company store legislation placed before the House of Assembly. He claimed the practice of having wages stopped at the company office for payment of goods or various fees was "a right" that should be cherished and guarded by the men, not thrown away. "Why", Drummond demanded, "should it be necessary to restrain, by law, that which is permissible for all other classes of workmen ... I cannot be party to depriving the miners of a

privilege enjoyed by other classes of workmen."¹⁴ This attempt to confuse the men on the issue by invoking their pride was followed by a reminder that Equity and Keystone Lodges were once suspended from the union for refusing to accept a similar decision by Grand Council. It was made clear that other troublemakers would share their fate. He cautioned the men to pay no attention to these disaffected members, insisting they had "no regard for the Association but to seek to further their own selfish ends."¹⁵ Drummond's threats and pleas had little effect on the miners, for before the year was out, the anger that had brewed among them for so many years was unleashed in a new direction. Not only was the Grand Secretary driven to resign his post by the events which ensued, but the P.W.A. was almost annihilated as well. This remarkable turn of events has been commonly referred to as the "invasion of the Knights of Labor".

The Knights of Labor, America's largest and most important 19th century labour organization, was formed in Philadelphia in 1869 by a small group of garment cutters under the leadership of Master Workman Uriah Stephens. Until 1879 the Knights operated as a clandestine organization, believing that through secrecy, co-operation and education, unity among working people could be achieved. The K. of L. advocated the universal organization of all workers, regardless of skill, sex, creed or colour. Stephens argued that "labor ... had to be powerful and

unified to cope with the strength of organized capital. The only organization of labor which would meet the power of capital was one which united workers of all trades, and was universal in scope."¹⁶ The symbol of the Knights was the globe, signifying this "Universal Organization." Although the K. of L. was not a radical union, and advocated "no conflict with legitimate enterprise, no antagonism to capital", and supported all laws that would "harmonize the interests of labor and capital", it also recognized that in every trade, capital had its "combinations, and whether intended or not, they crush the manly hopes of labor, and trample poor humanity in the dust." Asserting that "labor is noble and holy", and "labor alone gives life and value to capital", the Knights called for "the complete emancipation of the wealth of the producers from the thralldom of wage slavery."¹⁷

The Knights entered the anthracite regions of western Pennsylvania in 1871, and by the time the P.W.A. was formed were well known for their organizational work among the American coal miners as well as in other trades.¹⁸ In 1879 the K. of L. represented to the P.W.A. all that a miners' union should strive not to be. Drummond was anxious to distinguish for potential members the differences between the two organizations.

The Miners' Association of this Province has no intention of pursuing the tactics of like Associations in the States, who do not seem to be in their proper element unless they cause a

strike every few months. The Society warns all candidates not to expect that it will lend itself to any unjust or illegal measures for the purposes of forcing capital to give more to labour than its just rights...

it cautions against entertaining any views which may lead them to look upon Socialism or Communism otherwise than curses...¹⁹

By 1882, however, with the experience of the Lingan strike behind it, the P.W.A. urged its members to learn from the Knights. In one instance an extract from an address of the K. of L. Chicago District Master Workman to the Chicago Painters' Assembly was published in the Journal. The speech focused on the importance of mutual support and financial assistance among working people. The Journal advised that this message was the "safeguard of the future" for the P.W.A. and its members.²⁰ In 1885 another article appeared in the newspaper which explained the K. of L. struggle with the Wabash Railroad Company. A number of the workers were discharged because of their union affiliation, but a strike by the Knights forced the company to take the men back and to stop asking workers whether or not they belonged to the union. The lesson to be learned here, wrote Drummond, was that the large companies could be fought successfully, but only by this kind of combination by the workmen.²¹ By the mid-1890s however, the leadership of the P.W.A. was forced to reverse its attitude toward the Knights once again, when the American union challenged the Association's jurisdictional authority in organizing the Nova Scotia miners.

The Official reports of the Grand Council suggested that the Knights rather opportunistically used the debate over the company store to push their way into P.W.A. territory.²² Shortly after the 1897 meeting of Grand Council, and its official sanctioning of Drummond, K. of L. organizers entered Nova Scotia and P.W.A. lodges began to abandon the miners' union to join the Knights. Whether these organizers came to Nova Scotia by invitation, or on their own initiative remains uncertain, but rank and file members clearly welcomed the Knights as a more viable means of increasing their bargaining power. Certainly lodges such as Keystone, Equity and possibly Unity had good reason to initiate discussions with the Knights. Other lodges, like Visatergo, which was once suspended in punishment for a wildcat strike,²³ or Pioneer, whose pleas for action on low wages, overcrowding and other problems were repeatedly ignored, quickly followed the lead. An executive report described the events that followed:

In the latter part of 1897 the Knights of Labor invaded the Province of Nova Scotia and carried on warfare for upwards of two years. They ... succeeded greatly in weakening the membership of the P.W.A..... to less than one thousand [from over 1,400 in 1896].²⁴

For a time it appeared as if the P.W.A. was to disappear. Its membership had fallen over half.²⁵

In 1898, A.B. McGillivray, head of the P.W.A. Cape Breton sub-council, took his membership over to the Knights en-masse. That year McGillivray's name appeared as the Cape Breton delegate to the annual convention of the K. of L.

The problems of the remaining P.W.A. members were compounded by the fact that whole lodges were switching unions in this manner and taking whatever buildings and other property they had acquired since their formation over to the Knights with them. Little was left to remaining P.W.A. members except legal battles over lodge effects and ensuing debts.

Of sixteen lodges, only three remained in good standing. The Grand Council was in debt ... Lawsuits had been instituted over lodge property, the debts of which had to be paid by Grand Council.

Such was the state of affairs [in 1899, which left] the P.W.A. a bankrupt and weakened organization.²⁶

Despite this initial show of strength, the Knights were unable to establish themselves securely in Nova Scotia, and the P.W.A. began a gradual comeback. Possibly organizational problems then facing the Knights in the United States prevented their putting maximum effort into the Nova Scotia campaign. Drummond's resignation as Grand Secretary in 1898 also may have encouraged the miners to return to the P.W.A. in hope of effecting further reforms. In any case, by the time of the September 1899 meeting of Grand Council, the Business Committee was able to report that the danger of annihilation had passed and the vitality of the P.W.A. was, once again, on the rise.²⁷

When Drummond resigned from the P.W.A. he left the Association in a confused state. For three months Robert D. Anderson held the office of Grand Secretary, and in December 1898, after William Corbett of Reserve

Mines declined an unanimous election, John Moffatt took over the post.²⁸ Kind remarks were recorded in the Minutes in appreciation of Robert Drummond, and a committee was appointed to make a formal address and presentation to him. Nothing was said to indicate that the Grand Secretary had been driven out of the P.W.A. by a dissatisfied membership.²⁹

It is not clear exactly why Robert Drummond resigned his position with the P.W.A. in June 1898. Throughout the union's battle with the K. of L. he steadfastly refused to acknowledge that the company stores constituted "an evil", or that his refusal to fight against the system was a betrayal of the miners. He clung to the reins of power throughout the bitter days of 1896 - 1898 despite the political enemies he made and the fact that these politicians "secretly and sometimes openly" attempted "to have the Grand Secretary ousted."³⁰ Finally in 1898, on the advice of a friend identified only as "one largely interested in the coal trade", Drummond submitted his resignation and stopped publication of the Trades Journal. Only a week later, he began editing his second newspaper, the Maritime Mining Record,³¹ which was intended to "devote its attention to the coal trade as a whole, and not to a section of it only".³² Drummond carried on as a member of the Legislative Council and governmental advisor on the coal industry, apparently undaunted by the events of the past two years. In 1918 he

published Minerals and Mining in Nova Scotia. The former Grand Secretary retired from public life in 1924 and died the following year at the age of 85.³³

The debate over P.W.A.'s position on the company stores forced a confrontation between the loyalist and rebel elements within the union. The company stores issue reverberated beyond the specific grievance and came to symbolize the oppression and exploitation of the miners by Domco and the other large companies. Drummond's position on the issue was typical of his overall attitude toward the miners' complaints. He recognized that the stores were unfair and injurious to the miners and was willing to pursue moderate reforms in his own cautious way. When Domco refused to implement the union's proposals for changes in the company store system, however, he simply accepted their position and reversed his own attitude. With his articulate control of Grand Council meetings and his referendum he tried to convince the miners to do the same. He was able to persuade some members of Council to let the issue pass but not those who were more seriously affected by the stores. These dissidents were able to rally major support among rank and file members. At first the miners tried to push Drummond to action on the issue, but when all efforts failed, they abandoned the union to join the Knights of Labor. Only after Drummond resigned his position and the viability of the Knights in Nova Scotia crumbled were the miners

willing to give the P.W.A. a second chance. Clearly these men wanted direct action on their day-to-day problems of low wages, long hours and poor working conditions. They no longer expected to get these things from a benevolent employer, and no longer put their faith in politicians, but realized that the times had changed and only a powerful union could protect their rights. Public respect and the right to vote were desirable to these people, but their basic needs had to be met first. Fired by this demand, the P.W.A. would get off to a better start on its next 19 years, but when the union failed them a second time they would abandon it for good. A more militant union would be built by these men that would leave its mark on the history of Nova Scotia.³⁴ A brief outline of the P.W.A.'s final years is presented in the Epilogue following the final conclusions.

7. Ibid.

8. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1896, p. 319.

9. Letter, Robert Drummond to Keystone Lodge.

10. Ibid.

11. Harold A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada (Toronto, 1948), p. 173.

12. In 1899 the provincial government of George E. Murray passed "An Act for the Further Protection of Coal Miners", which was incorporated into the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1900. By this point the legislation had reached to such a degree that it was not only

Footnotes

1. P.W.A. Minutes, September 1896, p. 324.
2. Ibid.
3. Richard Brown, The Coal Fields and Coal Industry of Nova Scotia (London, 1871), p. 170.
 Alternatives to the company stores, co-operative stores owned and controlled by the consumers themselves, were attempted early in the history of the Nova Scotia coal industry. These stores often met with failure. Occasional references to the co-op stores in the Trades Journal explain some of the problems they faced. For example, see the Trades Journal, 28 September 1881 for reports on Springhill and Westville. In some instances the stores did well, as the one operated in Sydney Mines for 21 years. See the Royal Commission on Labour, pp. 426-427.
4. Royal Commission on Labour, pp. 452-469.
5. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1896, p. 317.
6. Letter from Robert Drummond to Keystone Lodge, 1 December 1896, from Public Archives of Canada, Post-Confederation Corporate Bodies, M.G. 28, I, 103, Vol. 248.
7. Ibid.
8. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1896, p. 319.
9. Letter, Robert Drummond to Keystone Lodge.
10. Ibid.
11. Harold A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada (Toronto, 1948), p. 175.

12. In 1899 the provincial government of George H. Murray passed "An Act for the Further Protection of Coal Miners", which was incorporated into the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1900. By this point the legislation was weakened to such a degree that it was not only ineffective, but actually benefited the companies and their stores by establishing their power. While the bill ruled that miners were supposedly to be paid in cash, Section 8 authorized the checking off of store debts, as well as debts for powder, coal, oil, rent, church dues, check-weighmen, a doctors' fees, and perhaps most importantly, union dues. See Paul MacEwan, Miners and Steelworkers, pp. 12-13.
13. P.W.A., Minutes, May 1897, p. 326.
14. Ibid., September 1897, p. 334.
15. Ibid., pp. 330-334.
16. Philip S. Foner, History of the Labor Movement in the United States: From Colonial Times to the Founding of the American Federation of Labor (New York, 1947), p. 435.
17. Ibid., p. 436.
18. Harold W. Aurand, From the Molly Maguires to United Mine Workers: The Social Ecology of an Industrial Union (Philadelphia, 1971), p. 115.
19. Trades Journal, 25 February 1880.
20. Ibid., 4 October 1882.
21. Ibid., 16 September 1885.
22. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1899, p. 360.
23. Ibid., October 1885, p. 92.
24. Canada Department of Labour, Provincial Workmen's Association, John Moffatt Valedictory Report.
25. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1899, p. 360.
26. Canada Department of Labour, Provincial Workmen's Association, John Moffatt Valedictory Report.
27. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1899, p. 360.
28. Ibid., p. 347.

29. Ibid., p. 351.
30. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 273.
31. An extant copy of an August 1922 issue of the Maritime Mining Record can be seen in the Public Archives of Canada, Industrial Disputes File 1911-1924.
32. Robert Drummond, Recollections, p. 273.
33. Bertha Scott, Springhill.
34. It is interesting to compare the Constitution of the W.M.W.N.S. to that of the P.W.A. to see the greater militancy of the 1917 union.

The formation of the P.W.A. in 1879 introduced a new era in labour-capital relations in the coal industry of Nova Scotia. Although the life of the miner prior to the consolidation movement that occurred in the coal industry with the advance of industrial capitalism disrupted this arrangement and made more intense conflict inevitable in the late 19th century. A small number of outside concerns from Boston, London and Montreal took control of the trade in these years and competed aggressively for external markets. The problems encountered by the miners resulted largely from economic constraints imposed by these rival companies in their push for greater profits. This situation and the rapid growth of the industry meant the miners lost much of their traditional control over the workplace. As the men became increasingly aware of the differences between their own interests as workers,

and those of the coal masters, their loyalism began to give way to rebelliousness. The need to organize workers

Conclusions

The formation of the P.W.A. in 1879 introduced a new era in labour-capital relations in the coal industry of Nova Scotia. Although the life of the miner prior to the 1870s was not an easy one, local control and the small size of the industry permitted a paternalistic relationship to exist between the coal operators and the men. A tradition of loyalism to the trade was carried by the miners despite the fact that at times they fought fiercely against the companies to protect their interests. The consolidation movement that occurred in the coal industry with the advance of industrial capitalism disrupted this arrangement and made more intense conflict inevitable in the late 19th century. A small number of outside concerns from Boston, London and Montreal took control of the trade in these years and competed aggressively for external markets. The problems encountered by the miners resulted largely from economic constraints imposed by these rival companies in their push for greater profits. This situation and the rapid growth of the industry meant the miners lost much of their traditional control over the workplace. As the men became increasingly aware of the differences between their own interests as workers,

and those of the coal masters, their loyalism began to give way to rebelliousness. The need to organize workers on a large scale to protect their interests became more and more evident, and propelled the men toward unionism and the formation of the P.W.A. Initially the union appeared to be very strong and militant. News of early strike victories spread throughout the coal fields and membership increased rapidly in the early 1880s. Company managers and directors were alarmed and hostile. The P.W.A., however, was not a radical organization. Its goals for improving the condition of miners placed as much emphasis on enhanced social status as on higher wages or shorter hours of labour. Its strategy for achieving these ends stressed calm negotiation with management and political involvement more than strikes. Although the P.W.A. was able to win a considerable number of legislative reforms during its first 19 years, some of which were undeniably valuable, many of the new regulations were never fully implemented. Some of the most crucial problems faced by the miners were ignored or never tackled seriously by the union. The Association refused to accept the inevitability of antagonism between labour and management, but operated on the assumption that the rational management of the industry could, and would, result in profits for all. At first Robert Drummond seemed to be sincere in his wish to help the miners and followed what he considered to be a worthy Scottish

precedent in his work. Unfortunately, his belief in class harmony was never matched by the Liberal government or by the coal companies. Both parties took advantage of the union's good will, and did not even stop short of sending armed troops to a strike location to suppress the miners. Throughout the 1880s the miners enthusiastically displayed their willingness to try Drummond's genteel methods to protect their interests, but when these tactics failed the men resorted to strikes, despite the Grand Secretary's disapproval. Drummond's refusal to combat the companies aggressively eventually lost him the miners' support. Tensions between rebel and loyalist sentiments within the union ultimately were drawn out in the company store dispute. Secure in his lifetime position as a member of the Nova Scotia Legislative Council, Drummond led the loyalist faction, and alligned himself with the coal companies against the dissident miners. When the Knights of Labor offered an alternative means of organization to these men, they abandoned the P.W.A. in droves. Clearly the miners were convinced that a powerful industrial union prepared to wage major strikes against the huge, amalgamated companies was the only effective way to protect their rights.

Given its weaknesses, and its failure to meet some of the most basic needs of the miners during this period, the P.W.A. can be considered only a moderately successful union organization. Perhaps its most important achievement

was simply in bringing together coal miners from all over Nova Scotia for the first time. By gathering to discuss their problems in lodge meetings, or by participating in political, leisure or strike activities together, the miners developed a greater sense of camaraderie and solidarity than previously possible. They began to see their problems as common ones, imposed on them as working people, and they consequently developed a rebel attitude toward the coal operators in place of their loyalism. Without the experiences of the 1880s and 1890s the miners would not have been prepared to reject Drummond and his brand of unionism as they did in 1898. The seeds of class consciousness sowed by the P.W.A. among the Nova Scotia miners reached maturity in the labour struggles of the 1920s. non-political, temperate and in the interests of the workmen." ² This move away from political lobbying was a carefully determined strategy by the P.W.A. The union had decided to devote its energies to the concrete issues of raising the wages and standard of living of its members rather than simply elevating just their social status. Fighting fire with fire, the union actively adopted the Knights' industrial organizational tactics and began recruiting memberships from all sectors of the Nova Scotia working class. A major victory was won in 1900 when the union achieved its first general

increment, an advance of 10% for all its members employed
by the Dominion Coal Company.³ The following year Fictou
and Cumberland workers a 12% raise in pay.⁴

Epilogue

The Moffatt Years 1898 - 1917

The P.W.A. carried on under the leadership of its second Grand Secretary, John Moffatt, for another 19 years. Like Drummond, Moffatt was a Scot and a newspaper correspondent,¹ but initially at least the new Grand Secretary had a notably different approach to his work with the P.W.A. Under Moffatt's direction the Association launched a desperate campaign to win back the miners. Because of the Trades Journal demise, a second union newspaper called the Searchlight was established, with the intention to be "non-political, temperate and in the interests of the workingmen."² This move away from political lobbying was a carefully determined strategy by the P.W.A. The union had decided to devote its energies to the concrete issues of raising the wages and standard of living of its members rather than simply elevating just their social status. Fighting fire with fire, the union actively adopted the Knights' industrial organizational tactics and began recruiting memberships from all sectors of the Nova Scotia working class. A major victory was won in 1900 when the union achieved its first general

increment, an advance of 10% for all its members employed by the Dominion Coal Company.³ The following year Pictou and Cumberland workers received a 12% raise in pay.⁴ Another significant accomplishment came in 1905 with the signing of the first collective agreement between Domco and the P.W.A. In 1906 the first closed shop contract was won with the Inverness Railway and Coal Company.⁵ These victories combined with the union's province wide organizational drive to bring memberships flooding in. At its peak, over 100 categories of workers were organized, every colliery in the province, large and small, was connected with the union, and membership reached over 8,000.⁶

This overwhelming success of the P.W.A. following Drummond's resignation cannot, however, be attributed simply to Moffatt's new organizational strategy. As suggested in the federal government's 1915 report in Labour Organization in Canada, the Nova Scotia coal industry experienced a significant upswing in the early years of the 20th century. This new prosperity was reflected in these increases in the otherwise low wages of the miners. The report conceded that the P.W.A. probably helped to effect this change but made it clear that the new economic prosperity of the period primarily was responsible.⁷

In his writings from a later period John Moffatt confirmed this analysis. He acknowledged that in 1900 the price received for coal by Domco rose from \$2 to over \$3 per ton. Coal output meanwhile increased from 1,280,000

tons in 1881 to 3,625,000 tons in 1901 and continued to rise.⁸ This favourable situation, said Moffatt, prompted the P.W.A. to call for the raises which the men won in 1901.⁹

Given the prosperous economic situation at the time of the P.W.A.'s successful campaign to raise the miners' wages, it is not surprizing that the union's new found strength vanished when the companies began to economize.¹⁰ This became clear to many of the members of the Association in 1904 when the union was forced to confront the Dominion Iron and Steel Company. In December 1903 the Sydney company reduced the wages of the steelworkers, who were members of the P.W.A. The men were forced to strike after several months of attempted negotiations failed. The company lost no time in bringing in non-union labour and production was scarcely affected. With no hope of victory in sight, the defeated strikers eventually returned to their jobs.

Discouraged by the P.W.A.'s powerlessness, James B. McLachlan of Drummond Lodge contacted the United Mine Workers of America (U.M.W.A.), an International union currently active in the American coal fields and in the Canadian west. U.M.W.A. representative Peter Patterson of western Canada's District 18 arrived in Nova Scotia shortly thereafter, and a second battle over who was to organize the province's coal miners began.¹¹ In 1908, the P.W.A.'s founding local, Springhill's powerful

Pioneer Lodge, reconstituted itself along with nearby Rock Lodge as Local 469, U.M.W.A.¹² Other P.W.A. lodges quickly followed suite.¹³ In March 1909 Cape Breton's famous District 26 was inaugurated. The rival unions found themselves supported by approximately equal numbers of miners and other workers, and a showdown between the P.W.A. and the U.M.W.A. became inevitable.¹⁴

In 1909 strikes were launched by the U.M.W.A. in Springhill against the Cumberland Railway and Coal Company and in Sydney against Dominion Coal. The walkouts, which lasted from August 1909 - May 1911 and from July 1909 - April 1910 respectively,¹⁵ represented a struggle for recognition of the International union. P.W.A. members continued to work alongside non-union labour while the strikes were in progress, protected by armed guards, electrified fences and barbed wire. The Association went so far as to support Domco's request for militia protection from Ottawa.¹⁶ Despite massive financial support from the parent union, a total of over one million dollars, the strikers eventually were forced to concede the struggle and return to their jobs. Both strikes ended in defeat, with the U.M.W.A. rejected by the companies as the official bargaining agent of the men, and legal recognition refused the union by the Nova Scotia House of Assembly.¹⁷ Despite attempts to remain intact, U.M.W.A. membership fell sharply after this point and in 1915 District 26 saw its charter revoked for lack of members.

By this time the P.W.A. was seen by many of the miners as nothing more than a company union. Moffatt made no further serious attempts to keep the men's wages in line with the rapidly accelerating cost of living experienced during the war years. As conditions worsened, James McLachlan began to organize the miners into yet another trade union, the United Mine Workers of Nova Scotia. By 1916 over half of the province's miners had joined the new organization, and tensions mounted between it and the P.W.A. Finally in 1917 a federal Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the situation and to assess the conditions faced by the Nova Scotia miners. The commissioners quickly recommended an immediate increase in the workers' wages, and persuaded the two rival unions to sit down together in negotiations. In June 1917 the Amalgamated Mine Workers of Nova Scotia emerged as an alliance of the two organizations. John Moffatt and several other leading P.W.A. officials thereupon resigned their posts, and James McLachlan rose to take on the leadership of the amalgamation. A year later a referendum held among the men decided by a vote of 98% to affiliate with the U.M.W.A. and District 26 was re-instituted. The Provincial Workmen's Association disappeared from Nova Scotia forever, and the miners of the U.M.W.A. prepared for the tumultuous battles of the 1920s.

Footnotes

1. In his history of the P.W.A. Moffatt mentions that he was the Sydney correspondent with the ottawa Labour Gazette.
2. P.W.A., Minutes, September 1901, p. 375.
3. John Moffatt, The P.W.A. of Nova Scotia, and also P.W.A. Misc. Publications, document dated 11 December 1900.
4. P.W.A. Misc. Publications, #5, 1901.
5. Canada Department of Labour, Report of the Deputy Minister of Labour on the Industrial Conditions of the Coal Fields of Nova Scotia (Ottawa, 1909).
6. John Moffatt, The P.W.A. of Nova Scotia.
7. Canada Department of Labour, Fourth Annual Report on Labour Organization in Canada 1914 (Ottawa, 1915), p. 97.
8. P.W.A. Misc. Publications, #5, 1901.
9. H.A. Logan, Trade Unions in Canada, p. 177.
10. Ibid., p. 178.
11. Paul McEwan, Miners and Steelworkers, p. 19.
12. Ibid., p. 21.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 25.
15. Ibid., p. 31.
16. Ibid., p. 33.
17. Ibid., p. 36.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sales</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Sales</u>
1851	193,499	1881	1,035,014
1852	188,076	1882	1,250,179
1853	217,416	1883	1,297,523
1854	234,812	1884	1,261,650
1855	238,215	1885	1,254,510
1856	253,497	1886	1,373,666
1857	270,293	1887	1,519,684
1858	226,725	1888	1,576,684
1859	270,293	1889	1,755,107
1860	322,293	1890	1,786,111

Appendix A

Nova Scotia Coal Sales 1785 - 1900

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sales</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Sales</u>
1785	1,668	1821	11,388
1786	2,000	1822	7,512
1787	10,681	1823	27,000
1788			
1789			
1790			
1791		2,670	
1792	2,143	1827	12,149
1793	1,926	1828	20,967
1794	4,405	1829	21,935
1795	5,320	1830	27,269
1796	5,249	1831	37,170
1797	6,039	1832	50,369
1798	5,948	1833	64,743
1799	8,947	1834	50,813
1800	8,401	1835	56,434
1801	5,775	1836	107,593
1802	7,769	1837	118,942
1803	6,601	1838	106,730
1804	5,976	1839	145,962
1805	10,130	1840	101,198
1806	4,938	1841	148,298
1807	5,119	1842	129,708
1808	6,616	1843	105,161
1809	8,919	1844	108,482
1810	8,609	1845	150,674
1811	8,516	1846	147,506
1812	9,570	1847	201,650
1813	9,744	1848	187,643
1814	9,866	1849	174,592
1815	9,336	1850	180,084
1816	8,619		
1817	9,284		
1818	7,920		
1819	8,692		
1820	9,980		

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sales</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Sales</u>
1851	153,499	1881	1,035,014
1852	188,076	1882	1,250,179
1853	217,416	1883	1,297,523
1854	234,812	1884	1,261,650
1855	238,215	1885	1,254,510
1856	253,492	1886	1,373,666
1857	294,198	1887	1,519,684
1858	226,725	1888	1,576,692
1859	270,293	1889	1,755,107
1860	322,593	1890	1,786,111
1861	326,429	1891	1,849,945
1862	395,637	1892	1,752,934
1863	459,351	1893	1,485,924
1864	576,935	1894	2,019,742
1865	635,586	1895	1,831,357
1866	558,520	1896	2,047,133
1867	471,185	1897	2,013,421
1868	453,624	1898	2,135,397
1869	511,795	1899	2,419,137
1870	568,277	1900	2,997,546
1871	596,418		
1872	785,914		
1873	811,106		
1874	749,127		
1875	706,795		
1876	634,207		
1877	697,665		
1878	693,511		
1879	688,628		
1880	954,659		

Source: Nova Scotia Department of Mines Reports.

Year Tons Duty

1891 25,431 .75

1892 " "

1893 " "

1894 78,837 (8,000) 40 on round 15 on slack

1895 174,919 "

1896 106,239 .67

1897 " "

1898 " "

1899 " "

Appendix B

Nova Scotia Coal Sales to the United States 1850-1900

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Duty</u>
1850	118,173	24%
1851	116,274	"
1852	87,542	"
1853	120,764	"
1854	139,125	Free
1855	103,322	"
1856	126,152	"
1857	123,335	"
1858	136,743	"
1859	122,720	"
1860	149,289	"
1861	204,457	"
1862	192,612	"
1863	282,775	"
1864	347,594	"
1865	465,194	"
1866	404,352	"
1867	338,492	\$1.25
1868	228,132	"
1869	257,485	"
1870	168,180	"
1871	165,431	.75
1872	154,092	"
1873	254,760	"
1874	138,336	"
1875	89,746	"
1876	71,634	"
1877	118,216	"
1878	88,495	"
1879	51,641	"
1880	123,423	"
1881	113,728	"
1882	99,302	"
1883	102,755	"
1884	64,515	"
1885	34,483	"
1886	66,003	"
1887	73,892	"
1888	30,198	"
1889	29,987	"
1890	50,854	"

Source: Nova Scotia Department of Mines reports. Sales from 1850 to 1872 are from the Philadelphia Board of Trade and are probably underestimated. Nova Scotia coal sales for 1893, ends at 30.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Duty</u>	
1891	25,431	.75	
1892	13,883	"	
1893	16,099	"	
1894	79,837 (9 mths)	.40 on round .15 on slack	
1895	73,097	"	
1896	P.W.A. 174,919 1879 - 1898*	"	
1897	106,279	.67	
1879	1898	98,027	"
1899	153,188	"	
1900	624,273	"	

1. Pioneer, Sydney
 2. Cameron, Acadia and Drummond Mines, Westville
 3. Fidelity, Stellarton
 4. McBean, Vale Mine, Thorburn

1880

5. Gladstone, Acadia Mine, Westville
 6. Neptune, South Pictou
 7. Visatergo, Granton Wharf

1881

8. Drummond, South Mines
 9. Island, Bridgeport
 10. Unity, Bridgeport
 11. Equity, Caledonia Mines, Bridgeport
 12. Banner, Port Morien, Cow Bay
 13. Eastern, Block House Mines, Cow Bay
 14. Keystone, Little Glace Bay
 15. Coping Stone, Lingan
 16. Wilson, Ontario Mine, Big Glace Bay
 17. Flint, New Glasgow
 18. Our Rights, Trenton
 17. Progress, Cape Breton
 18. Brunswick, Joggins**

dates uncertain - 1880s

19. Cape Breton, Sydney
 20. International, Whitney Pier
 21. Rock, Springhill
 22. Victoria, Victoria Mines

1891

Unity, Reserve Mines, Glace Bay
 Concord, Amherst
 Mechanics, Springhill

Source: Nova Scotia Department of Mines Reports.
 The sales from 1850 to 1872 are from the Philadelphia Board of Trade and, are probably underestimated.
 The Nova Scotia fiscal year, since 1893, ends Sept. 30.

1896

Neptune, Louisburg

dates uncertain - 1890s

Golden Rule, Appendix C

Power, New Victoria

Mechanics, Victoria Mines

P.W.A. Lodges 1879 - 1898*

1879

1. Pioneer, Springhill
2. Cameron, Acadia and Drummond Mines, Westville
3. Fidelity, Stellarton
4. McBean, Vale Mine, Thorburn

1880

5. Gladstone, Acadia Mine, Westville
6. Neptune, South Pictou
7. Visatergo, Granton Wharf

1881

8. Drummond, South Mines
9. Island, Bridgeport
10. Unity, Bridgeport
11. Equity, Caledonia Mines, Bridgeport
12. Banner, Port Morien, Cow Bay
13. Eastern, Block House Mines, Cow Bay
14. Keystone, Little Glace Bay
15. Coping Stone, Lingan
16. Wilson, Ontario Mine, Big Glace Bay
17. Flint, New Glasgow
18. Our Rights, Trenton
17. Progress, Cape Breton
18. Brunswick, Joggins**

dates uncertain - 1880s

19. Cape Breton, Sydney
20. International, Whitney Pier
21. Rock, Springhill
22. Victoria, Victoria Mines

1891

Unity, Reserve Mines, Glace Bay
 Concord, Amherst
 Mechanics, Springhill

1893

Cadegan, Victoria Mines
 Holdfast, Joggins
 Maple Leaf, Westville
 Progress, Old Bridgeport

* No copies of P.W.A. Lodges was found among P.W.A. documents. This list has been compiled from references in the literature and is probably incomplete.

** Possibly due to the fact that new lodges occasionally took on the names or lodge numbers of earlier lodges

1896

Neptune, Louisburg

dates uncertain - 1890s

Golden Rule, Dominion No. 1
 Power, New Victoria
 Mechanics, Victoria Mines

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- * No comprehensive record of lodges was found among P.W.A. documents. This list has been compiled from references in the various sources, and is probably incomplete.
- ** Possibly due to some lodges folding, new lodges occasionally took on the names or lodge numbers of earlier lodges

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