

It was only in the last three decades of the century that unified bonds were formed in the shape of national and international unions covering the whole country, local central organizations linking unions in a locality, and a national central organization. Even then, and even after certain legal restrictions had been removed, unionization proceeded at a slow pace. Unions tended to concentrate on the organization, by craft, of skilled workers and, for the most part, the fast-growing work force of semi-skilled and unskilled workers remained outside the movement until well into the twentieth century. In the late 1930s, spurred on by the organizing efforts of newly-formed industrial unions, a period of expansion began, which, apart from a slackening off in the early 1960s, has continued to this day.

From its beginnings, the Canadian labour movement has had close ties with that of the United States, and, in its formative years, immigrant workers from Britain contributed substantially to the organization of employees in this country. These influences have been incorporated into a movement that has, however, a distinct Canadian character.

The local union, made up of employees in a particular plant or locality, is the basic unit of labour organization. Its members may be drawn from a particular occupation or trade (craft union) or may include all the workers of a plant or industry without regard to occupation or trade (industrial union). They pay dues directly to their locals and elect officers who, in turn, are responsible for business matters, including the relations between their local and the employer or employers whose employees it represents. The members exercise their rights in regular meetings of the local organization, which may have anywhere from one to several thousand members. For the most part, a local is a subsidiary but integral part of a larger union organization, which may be international, national or regional in scope. Some locals are, however, chartered bodies of one of the central labour congresses, and a few exist as independent entities in the sense that they are not affiliated with any other labour organization.

The majority of organized workers in Canada are in locals chartered by international unions, i.e. unions with headquarters in the United States but with locals in both that country and Canada (62 per cent of members). About one-third (34.9 per cent) are in national or regional unions that confine their activities to this country. The remainder are in locals directly chartered by a central labour body (0.6 per cent) or are independent locals (2.5 per cent).⁽⁴⁾

International, national and regional unions organize and charter locals in industries or trades as defined in their constitutions. They are responsible for laying down general policy, assisting locals in the conduct of their affairs and co-ordinating their activities. Funds are obtained through *per capita* taxes, and regular conventions of delegates from the locals are held at which general policy is decided upon and officers are elected.

(4)

See Table 3, P. 12.