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The longshoremen of Halifax

1900 - 1930;

their living and working conditions.

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Examiners:

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Abstract

The longshoremen of Halifax have traditionally been one of the largest groups of labourers in the city. During the period 1900 to 1930 they began to capitalize on their numerical strength and on the potential their job held for paralyzing the province's economy with a well-timed work stoppage. They became one of the strongest and most easily identifiable units of the proletariat, and during every stage of their evolution towards a cohesive work force they were representative of at least some of their fellow unskilled and semi-skilled workers. A study of the dockers' lives and work therefore makes possible the advancement of some speculative generalizations about the life of the Halifax proletarians.

The thesis will attempt to convey the author's impressions of the longshoremen's position within the community and of their relationship to both the Halifax workers and the élite through a study of the importance of the port to Nova Scotia and the rest of Canada; the living conditions of the working class; the working conditions of the dockers along the waterfront; the stages of unionization; and a survey of the strikes during this period. Some parallels will also be drawn to the societies of longshoremen in other ports in Canada and the United States.

In a recent number of a widely read magazine the following effusion was given to its readers.

"If the Germans destroyed the British fleet and starved the British people the whole world would stand aghast at the cruelty of war. But when the dock labourers' unions go out on strike, causing starvation, prices to reign and women and children to suffer because food is scarce, then we may also speak of the cruelty of peace. Some of us would choose the tyranny of war rather than the tyranny of unrestrained and unbridled trade unionism. An intelligent educated despot is always to be preferred to an ignorant, untrained demagogue...."

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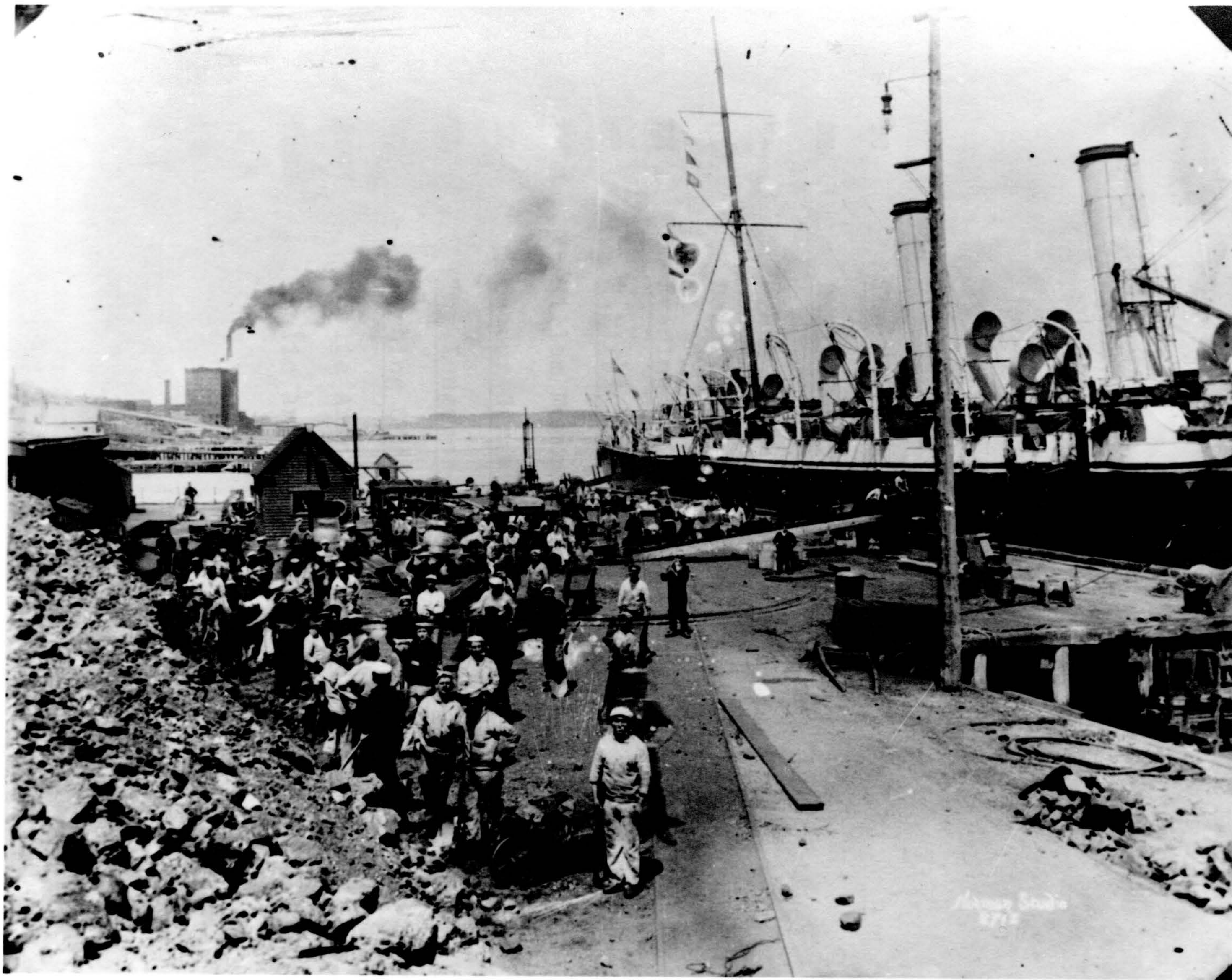


ABBREVIATIONS

AR	*Acadian Recorder*, Halifax
TC	*The Citizen*, Halifax
DE	*Daily Echo*, Halifax
DL	Department of Labour
DLL	Department of Labour Library
EM	*Evening Mail*, Halifax
HH	*Halifax Herald*, Halifax
KMLA	Killam Memorial Library Archives
LG	*Labour Gazette*
TL	*The Longshoremen*, Erie, Pa.
MC	*Morning Chronicle*, Halifax
PAC	Public Archives of Canada
PANS	Public Archives of Nova Scotia
HLA	

Introduction

This thesis is an attempt to explain the living and working conditions of the Halifax longshoremen during the period 1900 to 1930. It is hoped that a study of this group will provide a better understanding of the history of the working class in Halifax and in Canada. This particular part of the Halifax proletariat was selected because of its numerical and apparent organizational superiority in relation to other unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the city. The dockers also had the potential to paralyze the economy of the city, the province and even the country to some extent as a result of their strategic job location. They were therefore an identifiable group and a crucial subculture in Halifax society.

The word longshoreman is derived from the phrase 'man along the shore' and for the purpose of this thesis the terms long-shoreman and docker will be interchangeable. Although these terms did have different connotations in the 18th and 19th centuries, by the 20th they had assumed the same meaning. The men who are considered to be longshoremen or dockers in this text were those who considered longshoring to be their profession, which they sought to practise on a year-round basis. They were usually union members and formed the hard core group of élite, experienced, and dependable workers on the docks. Coming from the waterfront community of Halifax, the majority of dockers were white, of Irish-Catholic ancestry and had followed the job patterns of their

fathers, uncles or brothers. The casual labourers who sought work sporadically along the waterfront, in rhythm with depressed conditions in other fields of employ, are outside the consideration of this study, although they represent the larger portion of the annual workforce.

The longshoremen of Halifax, or any group of longshoremen, are extremely hard to classify in the strata of the working class. Their job entails both the brute strength required for most manual work and the necessary knowledge to stow cargo properly and to handle what machines were used in longshoring. The only compromise which can be reached is to label most aspects of the skills involved in docking as unskilled or semi-skilled labour.

The thesis attempts to place the longshoremen of Halifax into their proper perspective, following the progression of the port in the economic structure of the city and the province of Nova Scotia and concluding with a survey of the various strikes and work stoppages along the waterfront. The first chapter provides a brief outline of the economic state of Nova Scotia and the role of the port of Halifax. It presents the general evolution of the port out of the nadir reached with the decline of the windjammers in the mid-1800s to its 20th century zenith as the second largest Canadian seaport on the Atlantic Ocean. The second chapter describes generally the religious, ethnic and racial composition of the city during the first thirty years of the 20th century, and then concentrates on the social characteristics of the working class, especially labourers and dockers. Residential segregation, homeownership, mobility, the cost of living, and the

damaging effects visited on Halifax by the war, the explosion of 1917, and the Spanish influenza, which drastically altered the demography of the city, are examined.

Chapter three deals with working conditions on the docks. Speculations are offered concerning wages, safety and compensation, hours, mechanization and the overall affect of the speed-up which followed the general acceptance of steamers. Chapter four covers the reaction of the longshoremen to the change of work rhythm which, while altering work conditions, also enabled the dockers to voice more effectively their discontent with their working state. Unionization is traced from its embryonic stages in the 1850s to its maturation in the Halifax Longshoremen's Association (HLA) local 269, by 1907. The last chapter describes the major strikes and slow-downs which occurred on the docks of Halifax. Although the relations between labour and management were generally harmonious (or passive) they did occasionally break down, with ensuing hostilities manifested by strike action.

An awareness of the interaction of the longshoremen with the port, the economy, and others in the working class and in the city is essential to appreciate the role of the dockers in Halifax and perhaps to gain a better understanding of the part of all elements of this society. As in any such study of a group of workers there are few readily accessible sources of information. Proletarians did not keep diaries and works left by their contemporaries in the upper echelons of society are decidedly biased. One is therefore forced to sift through newspapers, company records (in this case the Pickford and Black

Stevedoring Company), and miscellaneous journals and leaflets published by the local Trades and Labor Council. Hypotheses are also made by comparative analysis of facts known about other longshoremen and ports in Canada, Great Britain and the United States. The HLA, local 269, was a source of both inspiration and frustration. The members of the executive were quite helpful and agreeable to being interviewed; however, the records of the union were closed to this researcher. The recollections of several men, such as John J. Campbell, a former president of local 269, and John Fisher, past president of Pickford and Black Shipping Company, did provide much of the detailed, descriptive information of the thesis not attainable in the printed primary sources.

The story of the longshoremen of Halifax is partially presented in this thesis. Unfortunately there is much information missing and more questions are asked than answered. The termination date of 1930 is perhaps a tantalizing and frustrating choice because the union is finally consolidated and the welfare of the workers improving. The thesis does, however, provide a basis for additional research on the working class of Halifax as well as on its longshoreman. These men and women have been neglected for too long and their history can no longer be avoided if a composite picture of Maritime urban life is desired.

Chapter One

The Role of the Port in the Economic Development of Halifax and Nova Scotia.

'Warden of the Honour of the North', 'Gateway to the Atlantic', 'Gateway of the Dominion': these described the promised role of Halifax as Canada entered the 20th century. Halifax was rising to assert its position as the major port and commercial centre of the Maritime provinces and therefore of the Dominion. In spite of local skeptics, boosterism prophesied that the 20th century did not belong to Canada alone; it was fused to the future of Halifax. The editor of the Bluenose, writing in November 1900, expressed sentiments which remained a popular theme of Haligonian life during the next three decades.

> You have heard how Upper Canadian business houses have been cutting into our trade and threatening to ruin the business of the city? Of course you have... But have you ever heard anyone say that there is in Halifax a dry goods house that carries the war into Africa... and takes the ground right from under the feet of Montreal houses? Have you?... You have never heard how spices and chocolate, biscuits and confectionary, lime juice, rope, clothing... and many other products of the industry of Halifax and Dartmouth are sold, some of them all over the world, have you? Of course you haven't. It never occurs to people that these things are so. But they are... You may depend upon it,

Halifax is prosperous and progressive.[1]

But in the following decade this sentiment, although always in the background, was modified, restructured, and even silenced temporarily by the Great Depression.

As Halifax entered the second decade of the 20th century the evaluation shifted from one of accepted fact to one of hopeful prophecy. The Halifax Herald editorialized in December 1911, "Halifax will some day become one of the greatest ports on the Atlantic seaboard."[2] By 1922, in a speech given by Peter Garnier, secretary of the HLA, the evaluation had shifted once more. Garnier spoke of the condition of Halifax compared to the rest of Canada and noticed that not only labourers, but all classes of Haligonians shared the same prospects. Immediate prosperity seemed remote and perhaps unattainable. He wrote:

> Yes! There is always a hope; but does that hope present itself now? The working class are always hoping for better days - days of prosperity they pray for them, long for them, but few see them....
> I have no great hope for 1922. I do not believe that a change for the better can come soon; the outlook for the year is not bright... We must have courage and battle this year, if for nothing more than an existence. There is no more tomorrow; there is only now.[3]

These changes in sentiment reflect the overall pattern of Halifax's economic progression from 1900 to 1930.

Although Halifax and Nova Scotia experienced oscillation in their economies, the shipping world remained relatively stable. Over the thirty-year period shipping conditons in Halifax

actually improved and experienced an overall growth. Because of increased port activity the longshoremen enjoyed a moderately prosperous existence compared to the rest of the city's labourers. The permanent longshoremen of Halifax were probably the most influential, as well as the largest, group of workers in the city. Therefore this is a study of a prominent, representative group of unskilled and semi-skilled workers in Halifax.

I Economic Background

Historically Halifax was a city which performed two identifiable but interdependent economic functions. It was the major political and commercial metropolis in Nova Scotia and an international port and base of the British army and navy on the western shore of the Atlantic. Both its domestic and international roles relegated industrial pursuits to a decidedly secondary position behind transhipment of staples and imperial contracts. An editorial in the Halifax Herald, 30 December 1916, stated:

> Halifax is essentially a trading centre.... The commanding position of the city in so far as the rest of the province is concerned, its magnificent and spacious harbour so easy of access, no doubt contribute largely to this fact....[4]

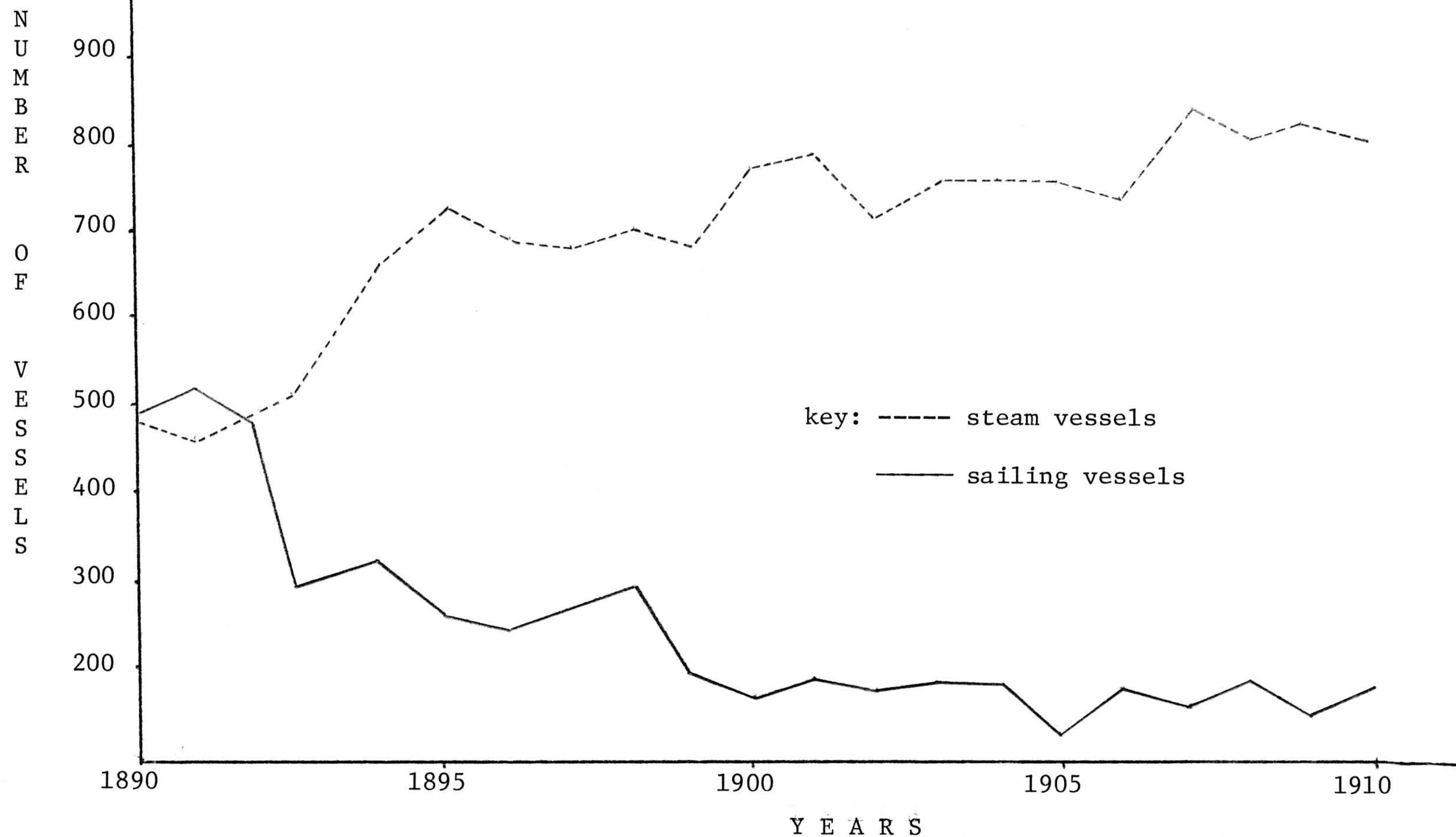
These functions were dependent on the world famous Nova Scotia sailing vessels. In the days of the sailing ships, these 'windjammers' were found in ports around the world. Men such as Enos Collins and Samuel Cunard had capitalized on the ideal location of Halifax in the North Atlantic trade triangle

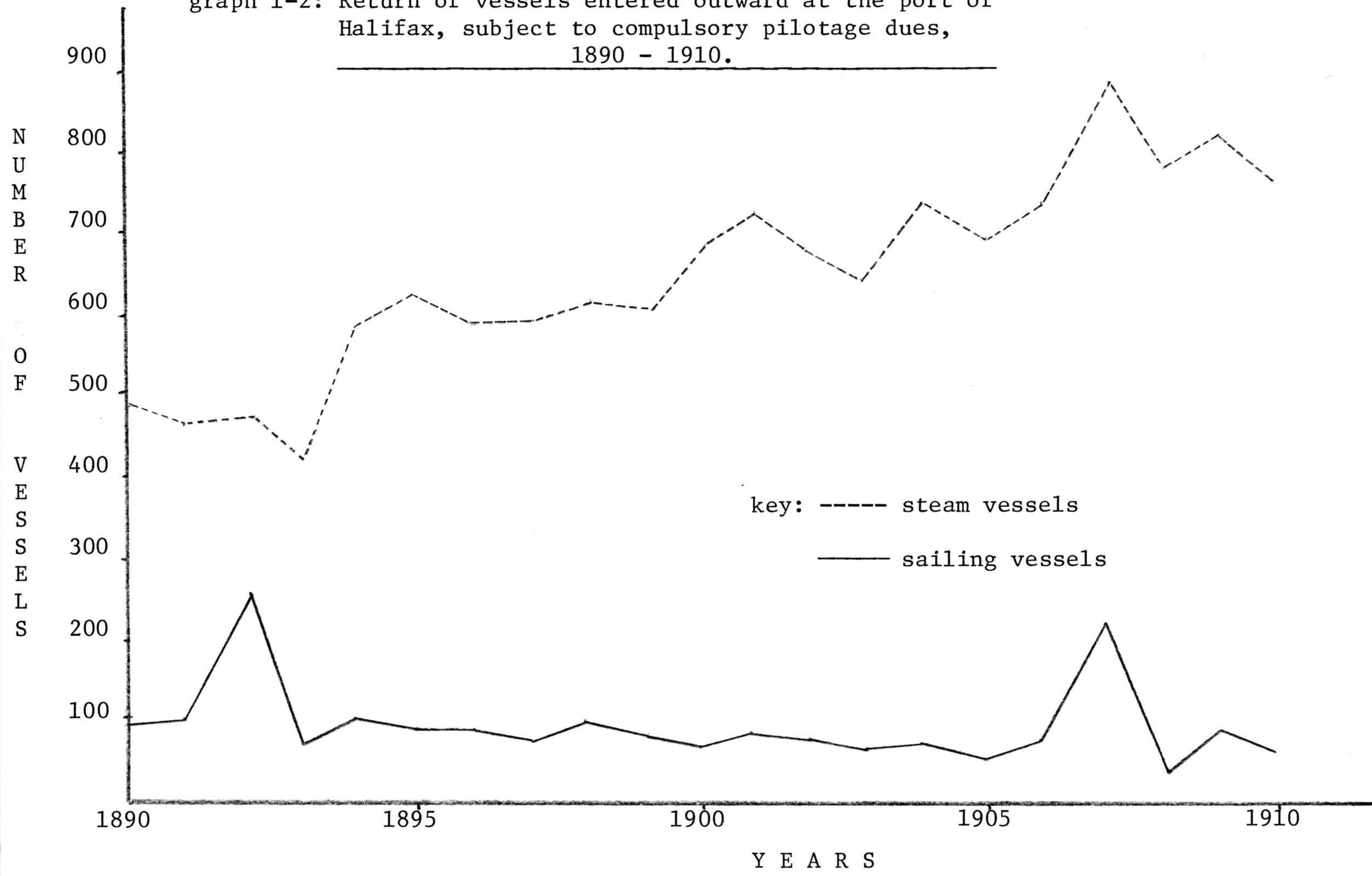
and had consolidated the original commercial nature of the city. The economy of Nova Scotia, however, suffered severely with the rise to ascendancy of the steamship during the American Civil War. By the 1870s steam vessels were supreme in the shipping world because they were able to keep fixed schedules and thereby facilitate the movement of perishable cargoes. They were also stronger, more durable and easier to maintain than wooden ships, and thus completely dominated the transoceanic trade between Canada, Britain and the West Indies. This left only the long haul voyages and bulk commodity movement for the barques and brigantines and even this trade suffered after 1869 when the Suez Canal was opened. The improved steam engine, which consumed less coal, not only provided more space for cargo, but also ended the importance of Halifax as a coaling-up station in the transatlantic shipping traffic.

Graphs 1-1 and 1-2 dramatize the decline of the sailing vessel in the port of Halifax. By 1900 the sailing ship was, for the most part, limited to the coastal and Newfoundland trade, and primarily serviced the fishing industry. The number of sailing vessels was likely higher than these figures indicate since vessels under 120 tons were not subject to pilotage fees and so were not included in statistics issued by the Department of Marine and Fisheries.[5]

The province of Nova Scotia had abundant timber resources and thus had been able to build sailing vessels with a relatively low capital outlay, enabling it to compete in the world ship-building industry. Lacking a convenient, inexpensive source of iron, however, it could not retain this position in the building

graph 1-1: Return of vessels entered inward at the port of Halifax, subject to compulsory pilotage dues. 1890 - 1910.





graph 1-2: Return of vessels entered outward at the port of Halifax, subject to compulsory pilotage dues, 1890 - 1910.

of steamships, and without this operational base, any innate advantage was lost. To accelerate further the decline of Halifax, its value as a bunkering stop was diminished with the discovery of coalfields near Chesapeake Bay. Their greater proximity to the southern ports which were the destination of most British ships soon enabled their replacement of Halifax as a fuelling stop.[6]

A series of international economic events in the latter half of the 19th century also had drastic repercussions on the Nova Scotian economy. In 1866 the United States terminated the Reciprocity Agreement with British North America. Under the aegis of this trade treaty, as well as the stimulus provided by the American Civil War and internal railway construction, the province had survived admirably the predicted depression after the removal of preferential trade arrangements with Great Britain in the 1840s. The end of the reciprocity treaty, however, coincided with a reversal in the province's economic progress as changing market demands and new technological inventions altered world trade patterns and left Nova Scotia adversely isolated. Therefore the province had to look to the neighbouring British colonies for surrogate partners.[7]

Events were developing north of the 49th parallel as well. The political union of 1867 promised to reverse the economic decline of the Maritimes. The completion of the Intercolonial Railway (ICR) in 1876 was hailed as Nova Scotia's saviour from tariff and transportation woes. New markets in the west were to become available to Halifax entrepreneurs and financial losses on eastern oriented trade were to be easily recouped from profits

made in central Canada. Thus,three years later, the National Policy was also welcomed enthusiastically. It was "embraced by much of the Maritime business community as a new mercantilism which would establish that stability which the region had enjoyed under the old British order."[8]

For the first few years following the implementation of the National Policy, the Maritimes experienced a dramatic growth in its manufacturing sector, despite the stagnation of most of the primary industries and the population exodus from the area. There existed a misguided hope that the Maritime provinces were to become the industrial centre of Canada,[9] but this dream was based on the extremely shaky foundation of small family firms with limited capital. Gradually, the fantasy of an eastern-led continental take-over dissolved in the reality of central Canada's superior monetary resources and related factors such as markets, skilled immigrants, and patronage.

> Far from gaining the flow of western trade that had been hoped for, Halifax seemed chiefly to have acquired increasing competition from larger central Canadian firms - all this, and world depression and the British government reducing expenditures on the Halifax base.[10]

Halifax and Nova Scotia still enjoyed a substantial industrial growth during the 1880s. The expansion of the consolidation movement led by Montreal capitalists ended that progress. The Halifax area became a branch-plant centre catering to the dictates of its St. Lawrence based capitalists who chose to limit output as well as expansion. The Maritime region was becoming a colonial appendage of the economic interests in central Canada. The British lumber market, the one remaining

hope for provincial self sufficiency, went into a decline in the mid 1880s and did not revive until the late 1890s. This, coupled with over-production in the cotton cloth and sugar industries, completed the demise of self control over the economic future.

> In the meantime the Haligonians went on blissfully with the only considerable industry left to them by confederation, that of supplying the needs of the British garrison and fleet. There was, indeed, one new industry, a sugar refinery; for there was still a West Indian trade. But the old manufacturers which once kept the city humming and clanging were gone and the steady decline of prosperity made itself felt on every hand.[11]

Life was not quite as desperate as indicated in the above account. There was simply a relocation of funds and power. By the early 1900s the economy had stabilized and there were good signs of a financial revival. Hence the optimism portrayed in the editorial of the Bluenose in 1900 seemed justified. The table below perhaps best illustrates this point: Halifax was actively participating in the boom period which occurred in Canada at the turn of the century.

Table 1-1 Manufactures of Halifax, 1891-1911

	1891	1901	1911
no. of establishments	348	104	112
capital ($)	5,297,885	6,637,888	14,068,713
no. of employees	4,021	3,203	4,014
salaries & wages ($)	1,160,039	1,238,385	1,735,348
cost of materials ($)	4,412,637	4,502,707	7,628,014
value of products ($)	7,198,143	6,927,552	12,140,409

[12]

Inefficient and small operations were replaced by large consolidated firms. The dramatic decrease in the number of firms and employees indicates that family firms, unable to rival those of central Canada, either merged with the intruders or went bankrupt. For example, in 1898, 25 manufacturing firms failed; in 1899, 21; 1900, 18; 1903,15; 1904, 20; and the trend continued more or less constantly, throughout this period.[13] Those firms which survived, however, prospered, and some of the money they made remained in Halifax. Capitalization during this period increased 25.3% in the first decade and 111.9% in the second. The value of the products manufactured, while undergoing a loss of 3.7% up to 1901, recovered to show an increase in the next ten years of 75.2%. All of this progress had occurred despite the loss of the British garrison in 1906. As the garrison was replaced by Canadian men, money and contracts, the loss was probably not as great as was first feared.

In 1907 Canada experienced a slight recession, but by the early 1910s conditions had stabilized favourably. By 1914 the Halifax newspapers were rejoicing over the fact that the 'so-called general depression' seemed to have missed the city and that Halifax was enjoying a season of prosperity despite the numerous commercial failures.[14] A period of relative affluence returned to Halifax at the beginning of World War I. "If Halifax was being incorporated in[to] the continent[al system], it retained its essential strategic importance as a focal point for transatlantic communication."[15] With the outbreak of war, the port became the centre for the allied forces' North Atlantic war manoeuvres.[16] War related industries were developed to serve

the immediate needs and the service sector of the city enjoyed an extremely secure position. Wages and consumption were high, and the city again enjoyed the external appearance of stability and prosperity. This state lasted until 1921 when world demand declined, resulting in the collapse of the post war inflationary boom.[17]

It would seem then that Garnier's pessimistic statement in 1922 truly indicated the plight in which Halifax and its citizens found themselves. Hope for a 'better life' was replaced by the attempt to survive the depression. Halifax was particularly hard hit. Government contracts were allowed to lapse and were not renewed. There was an international shipping depression; the whole province, in fact, suffered from this economic plight. There were no glorious, roaring twenties for Nova Scotia. By 1925 the population drift to the west and the U.S.A. had started again. Immigration to Canada had resumed following the war, but it by-passed Halifax in search of a more promising future than the city appeared to be able to offer.[18]

"Face the year with Courage" was the slogan proposed by the Halifax Herald in 1926.[19] The Citizen, the city's labour newspaper, began to trumpet the cause of the port and argued that with its improvement the situation could be vastly improved. The one sure resource of Halifax was the port. Its restoration would create jobs which, in turn, would enable the people to stay in Nova Scotia.[20] From 1927 until 1929 conditions did improve, only to stop abruptly with the Great Depression. Those interim years, then, offered only a respite in the continuation of Nova Scotia's depressed state. The phenomenon of the post-war 'bust' had been

restored.

II The Port

All of these gyrations shaped the economic destiny of Halifax. However, the one constant and stable factor throughout was the harbour. It was undoubtedly the pervasive influence. Without the port which developed on the western shore of Chebucto Bay, it is unlikely that Halifax would have entered the 20th century as anything more than a local fishing village. It was this harbour which had attracted Cornwallis in 1749 and it remained the city's main asset. As H.S.Prince wrote, Halifax:

> ... is endowed by nature with a magnificent harbour, which as a matter of fact is one of the three finest in the world. In it a thousand vessels might safely ride at anchor.[21]

The Halifax harbour covers an area of over nine square miles and is one of the world's deepest and most commodious, with a floor depth of seventy feet at low tide. The entrance is five and a third miles and it is thirteen and a half miles to the head of Bedford Basin, making a huge inner harbour. The whole area is sheltered and rarely has problems with gale force winds. The only real climatic problem which the port experiences is fog. The placement of Wilson Carbide bell buoys at quarter mile intervals was proposed in 1909 to negate the inconvenience caused by such weather conditions and to enable ships to proceed under all but the most extraordinary circumstances.[22] Earlier in the 19th century, the harbour was occasionally frozen over for short

periods, but this problem was overcome with the advent of ice-breakers which allowed the navigation season to become a reliable twelve months long. The harbour does not have to contend with a current, and the tide is negligible, having a height of only six and a half feet. Halifax is also one of the few ports in which dredging does not present a serious and costly problem since no major river empties into the harbour bringing with it clogging slit.[23] Probably the greatest natural advantage the port of Halifax has over its rivals on the Atlantic seaboard is the fact that it can be entered directly from the ocean at any state of tide. This, of course, makes it most convenient for shipping firms, and it eliminates the need for costly inshore shipping insurance.

Another natural feature of the port is that it is the most easterly commercial port on mainland North America and thus is the one closest to Europe. It has been noted that:

> Located some 500 nautical miles north-east of the Port of New York, Halifax had unique geographic features... The coastline of North America places Halifax virtually astride the "Great Circle Route" between New York and North Europe-United Kingdom. Vessels plying this trade route as a matter of course come within twenty miles of Halifax.[24]

Halifax then, as well as having a natural harbour with potential as a transhipment centre, is the nearest port of refuge for vessels which become damaged or short of supplies while in the North Atlantic area. The nearby Cape Breton coal-fields enabled port authorities to keep their bunkering facilities well stocked to meet emergencies.[25]

As proof of Halifax's strength of location, H.L. Chipman, who was appointed General Manager of the Plant Shipping Line in May 1900, established the company's head office in Halifax because he considered Halifax to be a more central location than either New York or Boston and therefore it would be more convenient for the transaction of the general business of the line.[26]

Halifax possessed a superior natural harbour and a highly beneficial geographical situation. It lacked, however, the final stimulus to enable it to become a truly great and valuable peace-time port: a sizeable hinterland to spur port activity with demands for imports and exports. Moreover, Halifax lacked any suitable staple export which was in great demand in foreign markets.[27]

Halifax was perched on the extreme eastern edge of Canada in a province that experienced alternating economic states of stagnation and regression, compared to the activities of central and western Canada in the early 1900s. The large railway interests of the united Canadas completed in the 1850s a line which would ensure Montreal and points west of a continuous, year round trade entrance and exit. Unfortunately for Halifax, the line, the St. Lawrence - Atlantic, joined Montreal to Portland, Maine. Halifax had to wait twenty years until the political giants of Canada, through a myriad of intricate manoeuvers, finally delivered the Intercolonial Railway (ICR). Even this was a feeble alternative, since the ICR went only as far west as the Great Lakes and therefore did not provide direct access to the western Canadian grain fields. To make matters worse, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), Canada's only profitmaking line,

established its eastern base at the port of Saint John, New Brunswick, Halifax's major eastern rival.

Halifax did benefit from some of the promotional trade incentives initiated by the Federal and British governments in the late 1800s and early 1900s to revive the lagging British economy. In 1897 Canada legislated a preferential tariff for Imperial goods and in 1907 the Tariff Act provided for an intermediate level of lower duties once commercial treaties were negotiated with most favoured nations. By the 1920s there was a 10% preferential rate of duties on British goods which were landed at any Canadian port. These tariff inducements assisted the Atlantic coast ports and helped deflect some of the most damaging aspects of the post World War I shipping depression.[28]

The British preferential tariff persuaded several of the major international shipping lines to come to Canada,and therefore Halifax, in order to benefit through the transhipment of goods to the U.S.A. from Canadian termini. As this tariff was a bonus from which all Atlantic coast ports could benefit, it did not uniquely ameliorate Halifax's position. F. Maclure Sclanders, Secretary of the Maritime Board of Trade wrote that, "By means of economic disabilities artificially imposed, and in spite of all they could do, the Maritimes have been hopelessly shackled and consistently discouraged."[29]

The shipping interest of Halifax, however, seemed intent on performing acts of self sabotage. For example, until 1928 there was no single harbour authority exercising jurisdiction over the port. The Board of Trade made a haphazard attempt at convening the major shipping interests and establishing a

committee of sorts, but because of the very individualistic and competitive nature of these firms, the board achieved little. No records were kept; no coherent, all embracing policy statements were issued because the prerogative of individual action was jealously guarded. The Halifax piers, such as Hart's, Mitchell's, Butler's, Boak's, and Pickford and Black's, were self contained and self directing units which prevented concerted action.[30]

The first attempt at joint action came after the 1925 federal election, when a group of Maritimers was sent to Ottawa on the ticket of 'Maritime Rights'. Perhaps one of the most important consequences of its presence was the establishment of the Duncan Commission in 1926 to investigate the state of the Maritime ports. The commission advised that the development of the ports of Halifax and Saint John be carried out by the local harbour commissions with total discretion to improve the port facilities within the guidelines determined by the national government. On 1 January 1928 the Halifax Harbour Commission was established. However, it did not have total control of the harbour area since private wharves were allowed to remain in operation.[31] It was not until 1936 when the entire harbour was incorporated into the National Harbours Board's system that private ownership of piers ended.

Halifax had experienced a rather erratic development and modernization of port facilities. In the 1880s, to complement the rapid industrial growth of Nova Scotia and to cope with the beginning of full scale immigration, the port's capacities were steadily enlarged and modernized. The deep water terminus was

finished by the ICR in 1880, and two years later the federal government erected a grain elevator. In 1889 the Halifax Graving Dock Company was opened, the largest dry dock on the Atlantic seaboard of North America. Halifax benefited from its status as both a provincial capital and a British defence-base since money was more readily spent to ensure that the city maintained its influence and respectability.[33]

Harbour facilities did not appreciably improve from that point. New and enlarged piers and berths were all necessary to accommodate the growing size of the average steamship, but they were not built. A complacent attitude had pervaded the bureaucracy of the shipping world, which seemed satisfied with the existing harbour accommodations despite their increasing inability to handle the demands made by the daily shipping traffic.

> The port facilities of Halifax... [were] ... a straggle of small, decrepit wharves (needle wharves) and sheds along Water Street. Only the Intercolonial Railway terminal on Water Street, reached by a spur line from Richmond, had rail connections or adequate berthings for steamships of even medium size. The huge new lines on the North Atlantic run could not be berthed at all.[34]

There was no action locally to improve the port despite the opening of new markets for Nova Scotia goods in Europe and in the southern hemisphere countries after the Boer War. There was now a constant demand in Great Britain for Annapolis Valley fruit; the fisheries had increased production and their products were being bought in the West Indies, Brazil, Spain, and Italy. The dilemma concerning facilities which accompanied this prosperity seems to have been met with total indifference by the local

shipping interests. This attitude prevailed until the 1920s when the Halifax interests finally woke to the possibility that profits could be increased if port facilities were improved. Yet, even then, they had to rely on federal government assistance and direction, a continuation of the early patterns of external support.

In 1911, the Dominion Government proposed to finance a remodeling of the ocean terminals; the work was well under way by 1913. Since the federal government already owned the Richmond and the deep water terminals (see map 1-1)[35] it was now determined to improve the port's handling facilities by erecting concrete piers and quays and by building the necessary connecting railway lines. It would have been too expensive to build the new project next to the deep water terminals, that area being already occupied by private shipping interests. The government decided to build the new terminals in the undeveloped south end of the city. The total cost of the plan was budgeted in 1913 in excess of $51,000,000. Needless to say, this contract excited world-wide attention. The Evening Mail declared optimistically the "port of Halifax to be Made Equal of Any on Continent."[36] The Longshoremen, official organ for the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), reported that

> It is believed by the Government, as well as the people of the maritime provinces of Canada, that with the completion of the terminal schemes and the inauguration of service on the National Transcontinental Railway, Halifax and St. John will take a lion's share of the traffic between Great Britain and America, especially mails, passengers and fast freight. For this consummation they rely to a great extent on the fact

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> that Halifax is 650 miles nearer to Liverpool than is New York.[37]

World War I intervened however and most of the project had to wait 15 to 20 years for completion. Only those items which were deemed necessary for a successful war effort were continued. Work did not begin again in full on the terminals until 1926, after the recovery from the post war shipping depression.

The construction of the new south end terminals fell off drastically during the war period. In 1906 there were 15 berths at all railway piers; in 1927 there were only 17, though of a larger capacity. This was a better fate than that enjoyed by the north end terminals which were to a large extent ignored during this whole time span. The explosion of 1917 destroyed five of the seven berths at Richmond and these had not been repaired by 1927. The space for ships at Deep Water remained eight berths.[38]

After a long and uncertain development, the harbour facilities promised by the federal government in 1911 were finally completed in the early 1930s. The port, which had been barely able to accommodate middle sized steamers in the first decade of the 1900s, was now fit to welcome any sized vessel and to handle all types of cargo. It was complete with grain elevators, conveyor belts, cold storage facilities, and coal handling depots.[39] Halifax, however, was a general cargo port with no one export or import dominating the traffic. As a result, vessels which came to discharge their cargo and load up again often had to change berths a number of times since each pier was equipped to handle only a certain type of cargo.[40]

The modernized facilities were most impressive. Shipping did increase rapidly and steadily into the 1930s after the post war setback. But the whole episode seemed to have been beset by a myriad of unforeseen problems which prevented Halifax from truly attaining the stature of a premier port. The same can be said of the circumstances which surrounded the building of the Halifax shipyards.

The Graving Docks were built in 1880s to serve the needs of the British navy and any miscellaneous trade that found its way to Halifax. In 1907 the docks were shunted from the British to the Canadian authorities and were then virtually ignored as an operative force in the city until the war. In 1919 they were renamed the Halifax Shipyards and modernized, and they again came to serve that most immediate and temporary need, the rebuilding of merchant and naval fleets. However, when the most pressing vacancies had been filled, the yards ceased construction and began to serve as a repair depot. Halifax had again assumed a role,that of supplier of war-time essentials, which lacked a peace-time foundation.

III Winter Trade Rivalry

The most important example of this tendency to respond to external, short term needs in a major way and then to fade to secondary status can be seen in the standing of Halifax within the Canadian shipping world. Halifax was a surrogate Montreal during the winter months when the latter's port was frozen and inaccessible. During these few months, all the major shipping

lines, such as Cunard, White Star and Dominion, arrived in port with their biggest, most modern vessels, loaded with cargo and passengers for central Canada. For the other seven months of the year, however, most of Halifax's trade was restricted to coastal business with Newfoundland or the U.S.A., transhipment of goods en route to and from England and the always dependable West Indian traffic.

At the turn of the century, it appears that most Haligonians were resigned to this five month role of wet nurse to the Canadian economy, a further manifestation of central Canada's colonization of Nova Scotia. Headlines in the Halifax Herald seem to have had this recurring theme; "Halifax the Port Always Accessible: Steamers Failing to Get Up the St. Lawrence Run For This Harbour."[41] Out of this pride came a new fear, a jealousy of both the old Maritime competitor, Saint John, and the new American rival, Portland, over control of Montreal's winter trade. Any favour shown either of these cities sparked letters of protest to the federal government.[42] The following notice, found in the Acadian Recorder, demonstrates the urgency of this conflict of interest.

> The engagement is announced of a widower M.D. of the "WOULD BE WINTER PORT OF CANADA" and a highly esteemed widow of "THE WINTER PORT HALIFAX". The wedding will take place in a few months.[43]

This was indeed a vital matter of concern to Halifax. A list found in the Labour Gazette gives the number of tons of freight sent out from Halifax government piers (Deep Water) in 1908.

Table 1-2 Monthly Total of Freight Tonnage at Government Piers, Halifax, 1908.

Month	Amount (tons)	Month	Amount (tons)
January	8,112	July	2,372
February	8,368	August	2,610
March	9,272	September	2,300
April	8,892	October	2,836
May	4,617	November	2,574
June	4,274	December	5,198 [44]

The pattern is apparent. Export traffic began toward the end of November into December and peaked during the months of January through to April, settling down in May to the more local export trade. Any winter rivalry could be disastrous, since total diverted traffic from government and private wharves was sizeable. The winter trade was essential to keeping the port economically viable during the slack summer season. During the summer, ships could reach Montreal and Quebec City and therefore had only to stop in Halifax to deliver or receive cargoes destined for that city. It will be seen later that shipping did improve for Halifax during the 1920s and that effects of the sharp, seasonal variations were therefore smoothed to some extent. The following table 1-3, gives the opening and closing dates of navigation for the Port of Montreal from 1900 to 1926. An inversion of these terms will give the appropriate dates for Halifax's peak periods.

Table 1-3 Port of Montreal: Dates of Opening Closing of Navigation for the Years 1900-1926

Year	Opening Date	Closing Date	Year	Opening Date	Closing Date
1900	21 April	10 December	1914	22 April	15 December
1901	21 April	10 Dec.	1915	18 April	13 Dec.
1902	3 April	8 Dec.	1916	20 April	18 Dec.
1903	2 April	10 Dec.	1917	19 April	7 Dec.
1904	25 April	9 Dec.	1918	21 April	17 Dec.
1905	19 April	12 Dec.	1919	14 April	12 Dec.
1906	20 April	5 Dec.	1920	14 April	11 Dec.
1907	23 April	15 Dec.	1921	29 March	14 Dec.
1908	29 April	10 Dec.	1922	13 April	6 Dec.
1909	19 April	1 Dec.	1923	29 April	18 Dec.
1910	3 April	10 Dec.	1924	18 April	12 Dec.
1911	26 April	30 November	1925	10 April	12 Dec.
1912	29 April	15 December	1926	2 April	6 Dec.
1913	16 April	27 Dec.			

45

As the Montreal shipping season fluctuated in length from seven to eight months, Halifax was also affected. Its seasons of prosperity oscillated with Montreal's annual periods of sleep.

The use of Portland as Montreal's natural winter port obviously upset Haligonians. Cries of 'national suicide' filled the editorial pages of Halifax's papers.

> Let the docks at Halifax be idle. Let St. John docks be silent.... Are we not engaged in the noble work of making Canada a nation by building up the trade of Portland, Maine....

> What are we in Canada for? Why not all move to Portland? Let us inquire of the government of the day and seek their advice. Let us ask them if they think we had better all pull up stakes and move to Portland - Canada's Winter Port?[46]

IV Shipping

The constant growth of shipping in Halifax during this period was hampered by annual irritants. A study of the greater picture does manage to disclose the more substantial long-term fluctuations and overall progress of the port. Table 1-4 illustrates the overall growth in shipping tonnage during the first thirty years of the 20th century.

Table 1-4 Shipping Tonnage for the Port of Halifax, 1901-1930.

Date	Tonnage	Date	Tonnage
1901	1,707,785*	1909	2,208,722
1902	1,627,533*	1910	2,342,463
1903	1,417,386*	1911	3,111,535
1904	1,744,577	1912	3,182,023
1905	-	1913	3,901,094
1906	3,040,568	1914	4,289,228
1907	-	1915	4,471,346
1908	2,051,906	1916	6,465,188

Date	Tonnage	Date	Tonnage
1917	-	1924	7,308,915
1918	15,592,186	1925	11,720,840
1919	-	1926	11,352,000*[1]
1920	8,000,000*[1]	1927	-
1921	5,637,206	1928	15,000,000*[1]
1922	4,989,890	1929	16,351,692
1923	7,000,000	1930	17,500,000*[1]

[47]

It is hard to analyse any particular reason for the sudden upsurge in tonnage in 1906 and the decrease in 1908 since there are no figures for the years 1905 and 1907. The most likely explanation for the decrease would be that it was a reaction to the recession of 1907-08. Looking at the figures for 1904, 1906 and 1908 an ellipsoid pattern emerges and the two intermediate, (and missing) years probably would have given substance to the hypothesis. However, the recession must not have been too severe, for the longshoremen's strike of 1907 was settled quickly and in the men's favour,indicating a fairly prosperous shipping year,and the growth continued after 1908.

There was a constant, positive growth in tonnage until the war years when there was a substantial increase. The general prosperity of the nation, the inflow of tourists, the rapidly expanding apple export trade, and the export of coal which was to peak in 1915, were factors contributing to this pattern. The war figures, of course, represent an artificial demand situation, which extended for a few years beyond the war when

Canada was exporting primary materials, grain, lumber, and so on to war-ravaged Europe. An international shipping depression occurred in 1921 and 1922, primarily as a defensive reaction to the post war inflationary conditions. Halifax recovered remarkably quickly from this depression and in fact showed rapid progress throughout the rest of the decade.

A glance at the shipping tonnage of Halifax, Quebec City, Saint John, and Montreal for a six-year time span, 1908 to 1914, when all regions of eastern Canada were experiencing the same general economic conditions, shows that Halifax was doing comparatively well.

Table 1-5 Comparative Study of Shipping Tonnage of Halifax, Saint John, Montreal and Quebec City, 1908-1914.

Year	Halifax Tons	Saint John Tons	Montreal Tons	Quebec City Tons
1908	2,051,906	1,859,137	2,68-,---*	1,788,---*
1909	2,208,722	1,725,384	2,71-,---*	1,802,---*
1910	2,342,463	2,042,24-*	2,8--,---*	1,874,---*
1911	3,111,535	2,468,182	3,270,707	2,441,499
1912	3,182,023	2,012,425	3,385,951	2,223,845
1913	3,901,094	1,906,449	3,643,679	2,477,842
1914	4,289,228	2,027,070	4,077,208	2,724,140[48]

There is little reason to doubt the comparative relationship of these figures. While it is true that Montreal fell behind Halifax in 1913 and 1914, one can only surmise that the former port

suffered longer and more severely from the recession of that period. It was still 'the' port of Canada, hampered only by its winter inactivity. Saint John and Quebec City were and remained subsidiary depots, surviving on the remnants of the shipping world left by Halifax and Montreal. Saint John continued its decline in comparison to Halifax, for it was recorded in the Halifax Herald, 11 May 1920, that there were 1,151 total clearances for sea from the port of Halifax, while only 661 vessels left from Saint John.[49]

Because of Halifax's lack of a hinterland market, it was primarily an export forwarding and import receiving port. This role can be seen from a survey of the import to export value ratio. As quantity cannot be equated with value, the differences indicated below do not have to correspond exactly with the tonnage figures of table 1-4.

Table 1-6 Value of Goods Imported and Exported from Halifax, 1909-1930

Date	Import Value ($)	Export Value ($)
1909	8,407,269	9,769,143
1910	9,050,370	10,015,309
1911	9,836,974	12,156,019
1912	11,512,546	15,467,270
1913	12,196,236	15,747,247
1914	11,546,554	19,157,170
1915	10,712,585	32,175,231

Date	Import Value ($)	Export Value ($)
1916	9,873,799	78,843,487
1917	9,240,000*	141,582,170
1918	12,138,652	-
1919	-	-
1920	20,532,135	54,562,947
1921	19,864,865	34,414,298
1922	21,757,645	37,059,107
1923	-	35,500,000*
1924	24,902,726	36,279,512
1925	26,500,000*	36,525,000*
1926	26,092,509	38,724,812
1927	30,000,000*	40,000,000*
1928	-	-
1929	36,209,100	48,711,590
1930	37,109,000*	44,690,000*[50]

The value of Halifax exports increased substantially when it was finally given direct transcontinental railway linkage in 1915, although the port did not really benefit from this advantage until the end of the war. It could then act as a grain depot, and in 1925, with the construction of the second elevator, the port assumed more than its previous auxiliary role. From 1922-1923 business began to revive from the post war slump, and by 1926 the positive trend had reestablished itself.[51] The import-export figures for the early 1920s should be viewed with some caution, because post war inflation had caused prices to

soar, and the value of the goods shipped through Halifax may not truly indicate their worth in a more stable economic environment. The progressions, however, of the import-export value totals do correspond to those demonstrated in the figures for the amount of shipping tonnage through the port.

Grains, especially wheat, and coal, deals, livestock, fish, apples, and potatoes were among the major products found in most export cargoes. Manufactured goods, sugar, liquors, crude petroleum and molasses were some of the goods imported into Canada through the port of Halifax. The most important incoming cargoes for a long time, however, were immigrants and the mails.[52]

V Conclusion

Throughout the period 1900-1930 Halifax enjoyed a steady increase in shipping business both of a coastal and transoceanic nature. This relatively prosperous state was most incongruous when viewed in the greater context of economic depression and stagnation, especially during the 1920s. Halifax was firmly established by the start of the 20th century as Canada's second leading Atlantic seaport, after Montreal. This position was no longer based on the presence of the Imperial defence force but rather on the city's own commercial value to the nation, primarily as a winter port.

Every port is unique, each has its own characteristics. Halifax was a *mélange* of excellent natural attributes and a weak supporting cast. There was no hinterland and therefore no market to stimulate trade traffic. The shipping

personalities in the city spent more time in trying to out-manoeuvre each other than in promoting the interests of the port. It was the natural Canadian winter port for Montreal; unfortunately, Portland was closer, cheaper, and had stronger political backing. Its weaknesses meant that it could not sustain the growth stimulated by the war, and it experienced a plummeting depression in the peace that followed. There were,in short, too many detrimental characteristics for the 'fine natural harbour' to combat.

Yet the city of Halifax and the province of Nova Scotia depended upon this port. It was the most influential factor in their economic evolution. And because the port was so prominent in the make-up of Halifax, the longshoremen who worked along the waterfront were equally important. They were the largest group of labouring men in Halifax as well as the most influential. A study of this group, so central to the economy and life of Halifax, and indeed Nova Scotia, is not a study of a group in isolation. They were the centre of the working class in Halifax.

Chapter One

1. The Bluenose, 3 November 1900, in P.R. Blakeley, Glimpses of Halifax (Belleville, Ont. 1973), p. 46.

2. Halifax Herald (HH), 27 December 1911.

3. The Citizen (TC), 3 February 1922.

4. HH, 30 December 1916.

5. Sessional papers, Department of Marine and Fisheries: Marine (Ottawa), port records for inward and outward entered vessels, Halifax, 1890 - 1910.

6. Ibid., 1884, appendix 10, pp. 127-28.

7. S.A. Saunders, Economic History of the Maritime Provinces (Ottawa, 1939), pp. 103-55.

8. T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes, 1880 - 1910," Acadiensis, Spring 1972.

9. Ibid., pp.3-5.

10. J.M.S. Careless, "Aspects of Metropolitanism in Atlantic Canada," in Mason Wade, Regionalism in the Canadian Community, 1867 - 1967 (Toronto, 1969), p. 126.

11. T.H. Raddall, Halifax: Warden of the North (Toronto, 1971), p. 223.

12. Canada, Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 3, table XL.

13. HH, year end reviews.

14. Ibid., 31 December 1914.

15. Careless, "Aspects of Metropolitanism", p.127.

16. Ibid.

17. Raddall, Halifax, p. 259.

18. In 1921, the population of Halifax was 58,372. Ten years later it was 59,275 which was a net gain of 903 people or 1.5% increase during a period of traditionally high birth rates.

19. HH, 1 January 1926.

20. TC, 18 April 1924.

21. H.S. Prince, Catastrophe and Social Change (New York, 1920), p.25.

22. Public Archives of Canada (PAC), Sir Wilfrid Laurier papers, Lord Grey to Laurier, 5 December 1909, MG 26 G, v. 732/204792-802.

23. Halifax Harbour Commission, The Open Gateway (Halifax, July 1931).

24. -----. "Halifax: Historic Past, Colourful Present, Assured Future," Atlantic Advocate, January 1973, p.38.

25. The following table emphasizes the advantageous geographical position of Halifax:

Nautical Distances

distance from	Halifax	New York	Boston	Portland	Mtl.
to Europe:					
Antwerp	2,795	3,310	3,128	3,050	3,281
Liverpool	2,485	3,036	2,854	2,776	2,760
London	2,719	3,270	3,088	3,010	3,241
to South America:					
Buenos Ayres	5,701	5,838	5,804	5,849	6,421
Rio de Janeiro	4,611	4,748	4,714	4,659	5,331
to South Africa:					
Cape Town	6,423	6,795	6,776	6,787	7,108

Halifax Harbour Commission, The Open Gateway, March 1931.

26. Morning Chronicle (MC), 14 May 1900.

27. The cities of Saint John and Quebec, while as segregated from suitable hinterland markets as Halifax, did have access to a marketable export, timber. The exclusiveness of the timber trade to those two cities, combined with the heavy international demands for the produce, enabled them to assume roles in the Canadian and British colonial shipping worlds much greater than they should normally have achieved. Their fall from such prominence came about with the lessening demand for Canadian timber and the introduction of another Canadian economy saviour: grain. This new staple required different handling techniques

and therefore was drawn to more logical traffic nuclei such as Montreal.

28. J.B. Brebner, North Atlantic Triangle (Toronto, 1966), pp. 263, 296, 297, 299; HH, 7 August 1906, 31 December 1925.

29. PAC, W.L.M. King papers, F. Maclure Sclanders to King, 15 February 1927, MG 26 J1, c2300, v. 175, p. 125923-24.

30. Interview: John Fisher, June 1976.

31. Halifax Harbour Commission, The Port of Halifax, Annual Report, 1930.

32. The following are a few statistics concerning the immigration flow through the port of Halifax:

date	number	date	number
1903-04	26,916	1908-09	29,972
1904-05	28,677	1909-10	29,972
1905-06	34,050	1910-11	55,712
1906-07	41,657	1911-12	56,257
1907-08	43,964	1912-13	79,195

HH, 31 December 1913.

33. Blakeley, Glimpses of Halifax, pp.27-28.

34. Raddall, Halifax, p. 233.

35. This map is derived from the following sources; PAC, Department of Militia and Defence, RG 24, v. 6359, plan of the city of Halifax, 1914; Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS), Charles Goad, Insurance Plans of the City of Halifax, 1896 and 1914, which Christopher Andreae used in his drawing of the presented map.

36. Evening Mail (EM), 23 January 1913.

37. The Longshoreman (TL), January 1915.

38. HH, 1 January 1915.

39. A partial listing of available berthing accommodation in Halifax, 1934:

location	cargo specialty
pier 9	open storage, coaling and cattle loading
pier 4	general cargo
pier 3	general cargo
quay wall	general cargo and grain
berth 23	grain and general cargo
berth 24	grain and general cargo
berth 26	coaling berth
berth 27	general cargo
timber pile pier	lumber
cold storage	freezing, storing and packing
grain elevator	storage capacity, 2,200,000 bushels

"The ocean terminals comprise piers A and B and Quay Wall with berths 20 to 28. Deepwater terminals comprise piers 2,3, and 4. Most of the private wharves in the city are located between these two terminals."

F.W. Wallace, Canadian Ports and Shipping Directory (Gardenville, P.Q., 1934), pp. 80-84.

40. For example, the Furness, Withy steamer, Newfoundland, loaded 48,000 bushels of grain at pier 25 and then had to move to pier 3 for 2,500 barrels of apples and finally it boarded a number of passengers. HH, 16 March 1926.

41. Ibid., 4 May 1907.

42. PAC, Sir Wilfrid Laurier papers, Edward A. Jones to Laurier, 7 September 1896, MG 26 G, v. 19/6832.

43. Acadian Recorder (AR), 4 January 1900.

44. Labour Gazette (LG), March 1909, p.917.

45. The Longshoreman-Le Débardeur, 1927, p. 21.

46. HH, 30 December 1922.

47. *[1] these figures come from the Canada Year Book, 1902-04.
*[1] these figures are estimates. They include accurate totals for January to November of each year and an approximate weight for December. There were no subsequent accurate listings recorded in the Halifax Herald which is the source for the totals for the years 1904-30. This data was found in the year end reviews of the Herald, usually the 31 December or 1 January editions.

There is no guarantee that the figures from the Herald

are any more accurate than those given in any other source; however, they are used here for two reasons. The first is that they contain the longest uninterrupted run of data and the second is the fact that while they do not totally agree with similar overlapping figures found in such sources as Canada Year Book, the trend portrayed is the same.

Due to the rather casual nature of harbour activities and accounts there is no composite, totally representative data to indicate the number of ships which utilized the port, the type of vessel, or on what basis the tonnage figures were given, gross, net or registered.

The Sessional Papers, Department of Marine and Fisheries: Marine do give a breakdown of vessels and origin of registry, plus tonnage from 1890-1912 and then cease to include this information. In the 1916-17 report and for the next five years, totals are again recorded for ships which paid pilotage fees in Halifax. These figures can not be used in conjunction with any other group, as all vessels under 120 tons were not subject to these dues and those under 200 tons only had to pay once a year. As these excluded the smaller, coastal vessels, which would most likely have been the most frequent callers at the port, they are of little use in this paper.

The Canada Year Book does not record any shipping totals from 1904-13 and in 1920 begins to present their statistics for fiscal years.

Some of the Daily Journals, 1923-30, of the Pickford and Black Stevedoring Company, which was the major firm in Halifax of its kind during this period, are located in the archives of the Killam Memorial Library, Dalhousie University, Halifax, and through them one can see the number of arrivals and departures that one shipping agent handled during that period:

year	arrivals	departures	total movement
1923	137	126	263
1924	161	155	316
1925	201	191	392
1926	179	174	353
1927	153	156	309
1928	191	187	378
1929	175	175	350
1930	165	175	340

Unfortunately there is no information readily available with which to gauge the above activity with other firms or agents. One can not even be sure if these movements originated from all vessels under the jurisdiction of Pickford and Black, or whether they related solely to those ships which sailed under the name of the company.

48. * as the microfilm copy of the Halifax Herald was blurred, the last digits of these numbers were illegible.
HH, 31 December 1910, 31 December 1912, 31 December 1914.

49. Ibid., 11 May 1920.

50. * figures are estimates given for the year in the annual newspaper reports, because the issue was published before final documentation was completed.
HH, year end reviews on shipping.

51. A sign of the increased importance in Halifax in the [illegible] shipping world is the fact that in the winter of 1922 both the Cunard Line steamers and the White Star Dominion Line vessels began to call at the port.

52. Halifax Harbour Commission, The Port of Halifax, Annual Report, 1930.

Chapter Two — Social Composition and Living Conditions in Halifax

The city of Halifax was established because the Imperial Government needed a base in North America from which to control the North Atlantic. That role remained Halifax's raison d'être during most of the 19th century and into the 20th century and the city did not develop many other significant functions. It remained a garrison town. Consequently it evolved as a rather static, closed society with few exceptional periods of growth. When foreign elements did intrude, they were regarded as alien and suitably dealt with. "Although proverbially hospitable", M. Tremaine remarked in the Dominion Illustrated Monthly, "there is little sociability in Halifax."[1]

I Population

Halifax grew very slowly in the 19th century, and by the early 20th century it was losing ground to the newer, more rapidly developing cities in western Canada. Nova Scotians themselves were deserting the tired, stratified east and heading either west or south. Emigration from the Maritimes was not a phenomenon of the 20th century. It was an established and familiar fact of life by the mid 1800s.[2]

The population figures for 1921 present a slightly

different picture because the rate of emigration had decreased for a few years. Some of the men stationed in Halifax during World War I chose to remain in the city and participate in the port's post war affluence. As well, the post war 'baby boom' added substantially to the city's population. However, the depression of the 1920s checked this short-lived increase. Those who had come during the war and those who had come after the explosion of 1917 to help rebuild Halifax quickly joined the traditional native exodus. Emigration and not immigration remained the dominant pattern.

II Religious and Ethnic Composition of Halifax Society

The great majority of Haligonians during the period 1900 to 1930 were native Nova Scotians; indeed, the percentage of native born increased over these years. In the 1881 census, 77.3% of the population of Halifax gave Nova Scotia as their place of birth, and fifty years later the percentage had risen to over 80.0.[3] The next largest groups came from the British Isles and Newfoundland. The latter exemplified the southward draw felt by many British North Americans, since they too were following the common migratory pattern in using Nova Scotia as but a generation rest-stop. A survey of the ethnic and religious loyalties held by the census candidates would seem to verify the common boast that "Halifax is thoroughly English."[4] "British" would have been a more appropriate adjective since Irish and Scottish ancestors were well represented. (See tables 2-1 and 2-2.)

The dominant religio-ethnic groups in Halifax during this period were the Anglican English and the Roman Catholic Irish. These statistics can be taken as giving a fair idea of the relative proportions of the various groups in Halifax; the exception concerns the blacks. Although they do not appear in census reports as a very great proportion of the inhabitants of Halifax, it can be assumed that the blacks "were consistently underenumerated and given many opportunities to pass for white."[5]

Table 2-1 Origins of the Population of Halifax, 1831-1931.

Ethnicity	1881	1891*[1]	1901	1911	1921	1931
African*[2]	1,039	-	713	832	940	-
Dutch	145	-	370	220*[3]	1,303	1,256
English	11,703	-	19,827	22,342	30,902	31,216
French	936	-	2,149	2,105	3,000	3,643
German	2,147	-	1,517	1,748	730*[4]	1,265
Irish	12,802	-	10,427	11,145	10,985	10,761
Scotch	6,511	-	5,853	6,800	8,245	8,000
Others	582	-	82	1,249	2,118	2,311*[5]
Not given	235	-	58	178	52	823

*1 there was no table listing the origin of people in the 1891 census by city, simply for the county of Halifax.

*2 the term African was used in a most ambiguous sense, and since there were no particular references to indicate otherwise, this term must have been used to include all black Haligonians.

*3 the decrease in the Dutch population by 150 could have been caused by emigration from a city totally involved in the Boer War, or by a switch of allegiance during this period.

*4 the decrease in the German population could again be a reaction to hostility directed to this group as a result of World War I and hence, many conversions to the safer Dutch nationality.

*5 the census no longer gives a listing for African nor any indication of where blacks relocated for census purposes.
6

Table 2-2 Major Religious Affiliations of Haligonians, 1881-1931

Religion	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Baptist	2,704	2,854	3,105	3,342	4,570	4,300
Roman Catholic	14,690	15,658	16,693	19,334	23,140	24,108
Church of England	9,326	9,964	10,877	13,174	16,367	17,008
Jewish	16	18	118	236	578	576
Luthern	82	114	47	101	315	334
Methodist	3,610	3,991	4,507	4,591	5,634	33*
Presbyter-ian	4,969	4,876	4,864	5,133	6,628	2,607*
Other	627	470	566	578	1,047	10,000*
Not given	76	492	55	130	93	309

* the substantial loss of adherents in the ranks of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in 1931 and the subsequent increase in the other category in the same year can be attributed to the formation of the United Church from the union of the Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists in 1925.
7

The power pyramid of Halifax was undoubtedly topped by the established families whose members were known as the 'great six hundred'. They constituted the élite of Halifax throughout this period with only a minor interchange of characters. Not

surprisingly, this illustrious group was composed of native, predominantly Anglican, Nova Scotians. In fact, the key to social, industrial, and commercial power in this select group in Halifax was confirmation in the Church of England. Because these Halifax entrepreneurs had close business contacts with the London and Liverpool capitalists, this religious and ethnic affinity is understandable. It is significantly different from that of the Montreal industrialists who so largely dominated the Canadian economy and who were for the most part Scottish Presbyterians by birth or ancestry.[9]

The base of the social pyramid was comprised of the Irish and the blacks. The former were for the most part migrants who came to British North America during the waves of immigration during the period 1815-34. Unlike their countrymen, the 'Famine-Irish', who came to the Canadas during the late 1840s and early 1850s, they had much longer to adapt to and integrate with the surrounding community. The Halifax Irish had had the advantage of arriving in the Maritimes in a relatively prosperous condition, especially compared to the abject misery and total destitution of the later group. Moreover, because these post-1812 immigrants did not swamp the city of Halifax but came in a more gradual manner, the local institutions were better able to cope with their situation.[10] This group of Irish was not entirely self-sufficient, nor was it fully absorbed by the Anglo-Anglican Halifax society; nevertheless, it did become part of the Halifax community. As J. F. Maguire noted in 1868:

> in no city of the American continent do the Irish occupy a better position, or exercise a more deserved influence than in Halifax, ... Formerly the majority of the population of that active and energetic city, they constitute an essential element of its stability and progress. This Irish element is everywhere discernable, in every description of business and in all branches of industry, in every class and in every condition of life, from the highest to the lowest...[11]

While a few of the Irish discovered that vertical mobility was possible in Halifax, the greater number remained but one rung above the bottom of society. The colour of their skin saved them from occupying the base position.

The blacks in Halifax were regarded as a slightly less than tolerable nuisance; they did, however, have their roles.

> The north end of the city, the most severely hit by the blast (the explosion of 1917) was chained off and the inhabitants of Africville hired to clean up the pieces of bodies scattered in the streets and wreckage.[12]

This group of 'Outcast Haligonians' was composed of blacks who came to Halifax in four distinct migrations; those following the American revolution, the War of 1812, the American Civil War, and that from the West Indies at the turn of the century. The earlier groups received land grants from a reasonably compliant British government. However, these colonial officials remained compliant only as long as the grants were some distance from the white settlers. Unfortunately, the blacks were more often than not given the poorer land, and most efforts at farming these plots proved unsuccessful. The pattern

was completed with a gradual gravitation towards the major cities in Nova Scotia, in particular Halifax, where such satellite communities as Preston, Hammonds Plains, Beechville, and Africville were founded.[13] Using these towns as a home-base, the blacks would daily walk to Halifax to seek any employment they could get, usually of a manual nature. Living in the out-lying areas meant that gardens and animals could be kept to supplement meagre earnings. Problems of housing discrimination were thus avoided.[14] Some blacks did, however, venture into the heart of Halifax to join the already established urban blacks. The geographic marginality of the black community clearly reflected their social, economic, and political status in Halifax, which has been perhaps best summarized by Clairmont and Magill in _Africville: the Life and Death of a Canadian Black Community:_

> The history of the blacks in Nova Scotia has not been pleasant. Blacks have been poorer than the average white Nova Scotian who, in turn, over the past hundred years has been poorer than the average Canadian. Throughout their settlement in Nova Scotia, blacks have had to carry a special burden, the burden of the white man's prejudice, discrimination and oppression. The result is that Nova Scotian blacks became marginal people in a relatively depressed region. Marginality denotes here a lack of influence in societal decision making and a low degree of participation in the mainstream of political or economic life.[15]

III Residential Patterns of Segregation.

Halifax, like most cities founded because of a single natural asset, had grown up around the harbour. The first area to be settled lay between the harbour and the citadel. As was the case of most colonial and port towns there was little industrial build-up and thus the area remained primarily residential containing a mixture of ethnic groups and classes. By the 1900s, however, residential preferences and prejudices had expanded along with the city. The south end, or ward 1, (see map 2)[16] was almost exclusively occupied by the more affluent citizens, while ward 6 in the north was exclusively the domain of the poorer inhabitants and contained such communities as Richmond and Africville. By the late 19th century the city aristocrats began moving west of the citadel, thereby vacating the eight block area between it and the harbour for the battle between the working class and commercial interests.

Although there was no complete domestic segregation of black and white Haligonians, there were some definite trends. Almost from the city's founding, the area between Water and Hollis Streets was called Irishtown;[17] in that narrow strip bordering the wharves and piers lived the longshoremen, who were predominantly Irish Catholics, and other white labourers. Because of population pressures and increased real estate values, which led to higher rents in this area, labourers began to move northward to Richmond. It was not a sudden action, but more of a street-by-street relocation. By the 1920s the longshoremen in particular had also begun to resettle in the Kline Heights,

Spryfield, Lakeside, and Herring Cove regions, west of the North West Arm.

Although many of the longshoremen continued to walk to work from these areas,[18] it was the gradual expansion of the electric streetcar lines to the city limits which aided this movement to the suburban areas. The availability of transportation facilitated residential relocation to the less developed, and therefore less expensive, areas of town, such as Kline Heights. Tram fares were not cheap, however, and longshoremen tended to remain in such areas as Irishtown and Richmond.[19] They followed a direct, short path from their homes to the harbour areas. Those who lived in Richmond sought work at the North End terminals and for those in Irishtown, the privately owned wharves or the South End Ocean terminals proved the most popular.[20]

Greenbank was another community dominated by labourers. It was an Irish shanty town in the finest Canadian tradition. This collection of shacks was erected by the ICR in the 1910s and 1920s to serve as temporary shelter for the construction gangs working on the line through the city to the new ocean terminals. It was the one major residential blight in ward 1, situated as it was on Miller Street (now Pleasant Drive) now behind Young Avenue and beside the docks. When the construction gangs had finished working in that area, the longshoremen and other casual labourers replaced them in a squatter fashion.[21] Adjoining Greenbank was Miller's Field. It was a small assemblage of shacks erected by the Halifax Relief Commission after the 1917 explosion and its history and its living conditions closely

paralleled those of Greenbank.

By the early 1900s, it would seem that the Irish had begun to integrate themselves with the other white Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of Halifax. The need for clan identity and constant ethnic reinforcement characteristic of earlier periods in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario does not appear to have been as great and pressing in Halifax.[22] Numerical strength and relative affluence most likely lessened these desires. The fact that areas such as Irishtown still existed probably resulted from expediency and convenience. The Irish constituted the majority of the waterfront labour force, and because Irishtown was accessible to the docks they remained there as an almost pure ethnic unit, though there was no longer any emotional, defensive need for such an arrangement.

The blacks, predominantly labourers with an even slimmer possibility of steady employment, tended to live on the fringes of the same areas that the Irish inhabited. For example, they did not live directly on the waterfront but a few blocks up the hill closer to the citadel. A large number lived on the infamous Albemarle Street.[23] The blacks as well moved north, filling the vacancies created by the movement of the Irish from the centre town towards Richmond. The most uniquely black sector found within the city limits of Halifax was a 13 acre area called Africville. This quasi-isolated and often ignored community was located north on Campbell Road, along the shores of the Bedford Basin. It had come into existence during the 1840s,[24] and it continued to attract black new-comers to city life from rural Nova Scotia because it tended to reinforce the continuous spirit

of community life.[25]

Further evidence as to the segregated nature of Halifax's residence distribution can be found in the Halifax Herald 31 December 1918. A listing of the known dead and missing from the Halifax disaster was given, and of the 1,635 persons in this accounting 1,610 were Caucasian, 10 were African and 11 were Indians. As Richmond suffered the brunt of this explosion it would seem obvious that there were few integrated areas of town.[26]

IV Housing Conditions

In order to understand the life styles and standard of living which the longshoremen of Halifax experienced in the first thirty years of the 20th century, a survey of contemporary housing conditions is essential.[27] Therein lies a major obstacle. Data relevant to housing for Halifax in general is not abundant and so any attempt to interpret it specifically as it applied to longshoremen is a virtually impossible task. However very basic conclusions can be drawn from an examination of the relationship between the working class as a whole and housing conditions. Government data tended to utilize the ubiquitous label 'working man' when it bothered to differentiate at all. This term ran the whole gamut from skilled trades to day labourers relying on brute strength as their hiring asset. The longshoremen, both in terms of skill and wages, lay somewhere in the middle; longshoremen that is, who were employed more or less steadily during peak traffic periods. The seasonality of their employment and the general casual nature of their work denied

them the security enjoyed by skilled labourers such as moulders and printers. But the nucleus of the waterfront workers, those who identified themselves as longshoremen or stevedores in government censuses and reports, had more financial security and opportunity than those who called themselves labourers.

A Home Owners

Home ownership has always been associated with a certain degree of financial stability and status. In Canada in the late 19th and early 20th century, it was most unusual for labouring men to own their own homes. Terry Copp, in his study of Montreal, argues that over 80% of all Montrealers rented their dwelling places, usually from absentee landlords.[28] Similarly, Michael Doucet, lists the following percentages of homeowners among different occupations in Hamilton during the period 1852-81: labourers, 29.8%; railway workers, 16.3%; clerks, 17.3%; merchants, 47.5%; and lawyers, 56.5%.[29]

Halifax, however, did not follow this trend. As early as 1868, J. F. Maguire pointed out the high percentage of home owners among the Irish in Halifax, regardless of their social position:

> ... whether skilled mechanics or mere day labourers, their condition is, on the whole, admirable, and the best proof of their good conduct is the possession by a considerable number of them ... (of) ... a piece of ground on which a house is or is to be erected.[30]

A survey of the ownership status of stevedores and coopers

in McAlpine's Halifax and Dartmouth City Directory, for the years 1896, 1914 and 1930 seems to lend credence to this observation.

Table 2-3 Home Ownership Breakdown of Stevedores and Coopers in Halifax, 1896, 1914, 1930.

Group	1896	1914	1930
Stevedores:			
total sample:	118	493	376
home owners:	90 (76.3%)	331 (67.1%)	294 (78.2%)
tenants*:	28 (23.7%)	162 (32.9%)	82 (21.8%)
Coopers:			
total sample:	131	88	31
home owners:	98 (74.8%)	60 (68.1%)	22 (71.0%)
tenants*:	33 (25.2%)	28 (31.9%)	9 (29.0%)

* the term tenant includes roomers, boarders, and renters.[31]

Extended families' inheritance of the home seems to have been a common occurrence in Halifax. Ownership of the family home was often transferred from father to son upon retirement. (i.e. lack of an occupation listed beside the name of the elder male in the Directory). This practice could have been one explanation for the extraordinarily high level of home ownership. As most Haligonians were native Nova Scotians, the houses had probably been owned by various members of one family or within the same ethnic community, and it had not been necessary to buy on the open market, an expensive proposition.

As Halifax was a slowly growing city during the late 19th century and early 20th century, there would not have been the severe population pressure caused by newly arriving immigrants; consequently there was not a housing shortage. The native

members of the working class experienced little competition for the existing homes, and so prices were not driven out of reach of the more steadily employed labourer. As well, it was not until 1913 that the downtown residential areas faced demolition for the sake of the ocean terminals and the future of Halifax. Therefore, housing that was cheap though of rather dubious quality was still available in the centre of town for the permanent longshoremen.

Perhaps one of the most important factors for this high percentage of ownership can be found in the ethnic composition of the labouring class of Halifax. A majority were Irish, and there seems to have been a strong urge among the Irish in North America to own a home, no matter how pathetic or dilapidated.[32] Aside from the sense of security home ownership created, it meant that gardens could be planted and a few animals kept. Doing so served two purposes; it supplemented food bought from a fluctuating source of wages and reinforced the agrarian way of life which had been left behind in Ireland. There appear to have been very strong ties to the ancestral way of life, manifested in a plot of land, a cow, and some chickens. All of these characteristics were found in Halifax in the early 20th century both in the outlying areas and in the city proper.[33]

Stephan Thernstrom noticed this tendency among the Irish labourers in Newsburyport, Massachusetts,[34] and Doucet's study of Hamilton would also tend to support it. Maguire wrote:

> The house may be rude in construction, mean in appearance, miserable in accommodation, but 'it is a house', in which the owner and his family can live rent free, for it is their property - 'their own'.[35]

In his report on Housing in Halifax, 1932, S. H. Prince corroborates the high percentage of home ownership among Haligonians generally with his statement that 68% of the houses in the city were privately owned, and the greater proportion of these were single unit dwellings.[36] As this is a city percentage, which included all transient rest-stops, manual labourers' dwelling places, etcetera, the McAlpine figures appear to be quite representative.

There are two sources of dissension, however, which would belie the above conclusions. The oral history interviews carried out for this thesis and the government census reports seem to contradict the above. The consensus among the interviewees was that no longshoremen could possibly have owned a house within the confines of the city limits unless it was in the tenement-slum areas of Greenbank or Miller's Field. They did agree though that the movement across the North West Arm was in search of homes that were affordable to the dockers.

It is possible that age has emphasized the difficulties the interviewees faced in their youth. There were certainly barriers to home ownership. City taxes probably were increasing as conveniences became necessities. Halifax had always suffered from having a large percentage of land in the centre of town which was not taxable because it belonged either to the churches or the various governments.[37] Thus as lighting systems had to be modernized, sewage pipes laid, the expenses mounted. A letter to the editor in the Halifax Herald, 31 December 1913, said in part: "Nearly every working man in the city who is trying to own his home has had his assessment raised from $200 to $800."[38]

Construction costs were also increasing, especially during and immediately after World War I and this may have led to a decrease in the number of new homes being built and sold at prices accessible to workers.[39] However, the figures gleaned from the McAlpine's directory, 1930, seem to prove conclusively that groups in the labouring élites, such as the permanent stevedores, were able to withstand these economic pressures. The problem of the shortage of suitable housing was overcome to some extent by subdivision and the conversion of singlefamily dwellings into multiple-owned units.

It is harder to account for the discrepancy between the census information and other sources of data. The following data, table 2-4, is given in the 1921 and 1931 census reports.

Table 2-4 Home Ownership, City Average for Halifax 1921 and 1931.

	1921		1931	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total no. of families:	12,889	100	13,354	100
Owners:	4,312	33.5	4,695	35.16
Renters:	8,577	66.5	8,659	64.84

[40]

The figures for 1921 are perhaps not inaccurate. The explosion of 1917 devastated almost one square mile of Richmond, which was almost completely comprised of working class homes. It is not then, too hard to envision a drastic decrease in ownership still existing five years later, for compensation to

the victims was very slow in coming and quite inadequate. The established tradition of home ownership among the workers probably did encourage a strong desire to reattain their own dwelling place, overcoming obstacles which might have been insurmountable in a less well-oriented traditional society.

The totals for 1931 are a different case for they conflict drastically with the evidence found by Prince and that recorded in McAlpine's. There is one possible explanation for part of this deviation. There was a fair amount of squatting within the confines of Halifax, such as in Greenbank, Miller's Field and Africville, through to the 1930s, and so the government data might have been based on land owning.[41] What has to be remembered, moreover, is that the McAlpine figures are dealing with the stevedores and permanent longshoremen who constituted a decided minority among the entire dockside community. Their jobs were more secure, they were established, mature men, a very stable element in the working class of Halifax. Hence their home-ownership rate would be much higher than that of the casual labourers.

B Renters

Longshoremen who did not own their homes had to rent or board. The married men who came to Halifax from such villages as Sheet Harbour and Prospect to work on the docks during the winter months left their families behind and boarded in town. Usually they stayed with resident longshoremen they knew or worked for. If not, these winter visitors went to boarding

houses such as those located at #32 and #34 Morris Street.[42]

Finding a place to board does not seem to have been a serious problem. However, it was very difficult to find an affordable home to rent. Rents in Halifax for homes, between the years 1900 and 1930, increased by 300% for houses with conveniences, i.e. water closet, indoor tap. Wages for longshoremen meanwhile had risen by only two and a half times. Table 2-5 illustrates the increasing amount that rent took from the longshoremen's wages. This table shows an ideal wage, the optimum a longshoreman could hope to earn if he worked a full 50 hour week and a 52 week year. Needless to say, none ever did.

Table 2-5 Maximum Annual Salary for Longshoremen, 1900-1930, plus monthly average rentals in homes with conveniences and their percentages of total salary.

Date	Hourly Day Rate	Optimum Annual Wage	Average Monthly Rental	% of Wage
1900	$ .20	$ 520.00	$10.00	23
1907	.25	650.00	-	-
1912	.28	728.00	15.00	27.6
1916	.30	780.00	20.00	30.7
x	.40	1,040.00	25.00	28.8
1919	.45	1,170.00	30.00	30.7
1920	.65	1,690.00	37.50	26.6
1922	.55	1,430.00	40.00	33.5
1923-24	.65	1,690.00	35.00	24.8
1927-28	.70	1,820.00	35.00	23.1

[43]

These percentages may be deceiving, because they represent the maximum a man could have earned for a full year. Longshoremen experienced many periods of inactivity during the year and the home renters were probably casual dock workers, whose work was even less regular than the established stevedores. The ratio of wage to rent must then have been much higher than indicated in the above table. The full impact of these ratios is seen in a report on "Cost of Living" issued by the Department of Labour, 1932, which gives the Labour Gazette breakdown of budgets, allocating 18.5% of a total budget as the amount that should be spent on rent.[44] If that was the ideal situation, the Halifax longshoremen who rented must have had a hard time trying to allocate properly the rest of their wages for food, fuel, and clothing.

The rents shown in table 2-6 were collected for the Labour Gazette by the local correspondents in Halifax. If table 2-5 is accurate to any extent, one can only assume from the rents listed in the following table that many Haligonians were living in rented homes with a minimum number of conveniences.

Table 2-6 Average Rents Charged for a Six Room House in Halifax, 1900-1930.

Date		Price		Date		Price	
	W.C.		No W.C.		W.C.		No W.C.
1900	$	$10	$	1903	$10-14	$	$8-10
1901		10-14		1904		-	
1902		10-12		1905		-	

Date	W.C.	Price	No W.C.	Date	W.C.	Price	No W.C.
1906	$	$ -	$	1919	$30	$	$20-25
1907		-		1920	30-45		25-35
1908		-		1921	40		25-35
1909		-		1922	40		25-35
1910		12		1923	35		20-30
1911		15		1924	30-40		20-25
1912	15		10	1925		-	
1913	15		10-12	1926	30-40		20-25
1914	18		9	1927	30-40		20-25
1915	20		15	1928	30-40		20-25
1916	20		12-15	1929	30-40		20-25
1917	25		18-20	1930	32-40		20-25
1918	25		18-20				

[45]

An article appearing in the 1 February 1901 issue of the Morning Chronicle declared "Halifax, with a population of 45,000 has 500 vacant homes."[46] If that was indeed the case it would explain the high rate of home ownership since the city was obviously experiencing a buyer's market. However it would not explain the following 29 years of demands for more housing that the working man could rent at a fair rate. The Labour Gazette reported in October 1904 that the supply of available dwellings for the working man was not equal to the demand and so caused many families to board or share homes. It attributed this scarcity to

> The arrival of Imperial troops, many of whom are married men with families [which], has greatly increased the demand for homes within the past two years, landlords giving the members of the force the preference, as their rents are paid by the Imperial Government.[47]

The building of the great Ocean Terminals caused serious dislocation among labourers who had lived along the southern end of the waterfront, from Greenbank to the foot of South Street.[48] The Halifax Herald reported that around 200 families were forced to move because the land on which they lived had been expropriated.[49] This relocation put additional stress on conditions which were already showing signs of over-extension. With the advent of World War I more demands than ever were made on Halifax's rental accommodations. It would seem that what few residential buildings were being erected were for single family home buyers and not for renters.[50]

The 1917 explosion devastated the area bounded by Robie to the west, Leeds to the north, Russell to the south and the harbour to the east. This was a high density area and 10,000 Haligonians were left homeless. Added to the disaster victims' housing problems was the fact that many men were returning home from the war and were being reunited with their families in Halifax. The Halifax Relief Commission did try to remedy this problem with permanent projects such as the New Hydrostone District, Hennessy's Field and temporary relief homes to house the victims until permanent ones could be built. These temporary dwellings were supposed to last for only two or three years and were erected at the garrison grounds and on the Commons.[51]

These homes were far from satisfactory and were often described as tenements.

> ... the working men and their families would be compelled to take houses on Henessy's Field - buildings that would eventually go to decay or sink in the swampy earth and that all the while would be a menace to the health of the occupants. And this happened, ... in spite of the fact that before the explosion the city health board had refused permits to build houses on Hennessy's Field, on account of the unsanitary condition of the land, and yet the Relief Commissioners deliberately or blindly, built on this unsanitary land.[52]

Complaints about housing continued throughout the 1920s. The Independent Labour Party campaigned on a platform that called for more working class houses to be built.[53] But the poor conditions continued to exist. A number of housing projects were started throughout this period by well intentioned citizens, such as those of the Local Council of Women, who,for philanthropic ideals and reasons of social control, campaigned for the erection of decent, commodious,and sanitary dwellings for the working man. Many of these existing homes of the labouring classes were indeed a menace to public health. All these projects failed through a lack of public support and private financing.[54] In 1919 the federal government on the advice of the Housing Committee passed an Order-in-Council, P.C. 2997, which offered a loan to the provinces "for the purpose of promoting the erection of working class dwelling places to relieve population congestion." Three hundred thousand dollars was offered to Halifax through a recommendation of the Housing Committee but it was turned down by the

City Council. The Council declined to borrow the money, arguing it could not afford the 5% interest. Thus Halifax at the zenith of her 20th century economic fortune chose to keep working class housing conditions at their nadir.[55]

C Relocation within the City

Herbert Brown Ames discovered that Montrealers in the Griffintown section of town had to face "the constant necessity to move on because of inability to satisfy the claims of the landlord." In fact, "in a year not half these families could be found at their former addresses."[56] The May-Day-Moving-Day was a well established Montreal tradition. Michael Katz, in his study of mid 19th century Hamilton, has revealed a similar pattern of high transiency among renters.[57] In Halifax, however, it appears that labourers and stevedores did not relocate with as great a frequency.

Tables 2-7, 2-8 and 2-9 represent a survey of the residential mobility patterns of a sample of 231 stevedores and labourers between the years 1900 and 1930.[58] The tables give the composite figures for this sample and the breakdown of data examined pertaining to tenants and home owners. The first figure represents the number of people in each group; the second, that number as a percentage of the total sample. Because over the years there was a significant number of transients, here taken as individuals who appeared only once in the directories, it was necessary to adjust these figures for a stable population. Accordingly, the third figure represents the number as a percentage of the stable

Table 2-7

Sample Residency Table of Home Owners and Tenants, Halifax, 1900-1930

NUMBER OF MOVES	Length of Residency (Years)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 plus
1.	68 29.4 1	30 12.9 18.4 2	13 5.6 8 3	10 4.3 6.1 4	2 0.8 1.2 5	8 3.4 5 8	3 1.3 1.8 13	1 0.4 0.6 18	2 0.8 1.2 26
2.		10 4.3 6.1 1	6 2.6 3.7 1.5	6 2.6 3.7 2	4 1.7 2.4 2.5	11 4.7 6.7 4	3 1.3 1.8 7.5	4 1.7 2.4 9	1 0.4 0.6 13
3.			4 1.7 2.4 1	1 0.4 0.6 1.3	2 0.8 1.2 1.6	7 3 4.3 2.6	7 3 4.3 4.3	- - - -	1 0.4 0.6 8.6
4.						6 2.6 3.7 2	3 1.3 1.8 3.25	2 0.8 1.2 4.5	2 0.8 1.2 6.25
5.						2 0.8 1.2	2 0.8 1.2	1 0.4 0.6	2 0.8 1.2

	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 plus
6.							1 0.4 0.6 2.5	- - - -	1 0.4 0.6 4.3
7.							1 0.4 0.6 1.85	- - - -	- - - -
8.								1 0.4 0.6 2.25	3 1.3 1.8 3.25

KEY

first figure: no. in sample in that group

second figure: % of that group in total sample

third figure: % of that group in stable sample

fourth figure: average stay for the no. in each sample group

total in sample: 231 men

average residency: 3.02 (3.86) years

Table 2-8

Sample Residency Table of Home Owners, Halifax, 1900-1930

Number of Moves	Length of Residency (Years)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 plus
1.	34 24.6 1	20 14.5 19.2 2	4 2.9 3.8 3	5 3.6 4.8 4	2 1.4 1.9 5	5 3.6 4.8 8	3 2.2 2.9 13	1 0.7 0.96 18	2 1.4 1.9 26
2.		5 3.6 4.8	5 3.6 4.8	3 2.2 2.9	2 1.4 1.9	8 5.8 7.7	2 1.4 1.9	3 2.2 2.9	1 0.7 0.96
3.			1 0.7 0.96 1	1 0.7 0.96 1.3	1 0.7 0.96 1.6	4 2.9 3.8 2.6	5 3.6 4.8 4.3	- - - -	1 0.7 0.96 8.6
4.						5 3.6 4.8 2	1 0.7 0.96 3.25	1 0.7 0.96 4.5	2 1.4 1.9 6.25
5.						1 0.7 0.96 1.6	2 1.4 1.9 2.6	1 0.7 0.96 3.6	1 0.7 0.96 5.2

	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 plus
6.							1 0.7 0.96 2.5	- - - -	1 0.7 0.96 4.3
7.							1 0.7 0.96 1.85	- - - -	- - - -
8.								1 0.7 0.96 2.25	2 1.4 1.9 3.25

KEY

first figure: no. in sample in that group

second figure: % of that group in total sample

third figure: % of that group in stable sample

fourth figure: average stay for the no. in each sample group

total in sample: 134 men

average residency: 3.35 (4.11) years

Table 2-9

Sample Residency Table of Tenants, Halifax, 1900-1930

Length of Residency (Years)

Number of Moves	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 plus
1.	34 36.6 1	10 10.8 16.9 2	9 9.7 15.2 3	5 5.4 8.5 4	- - - -	3 3.2 5.1 8	- - - -	- - - -	- - - -
2.		5 5.4 8.5 1	1 1.1 1.7 1.5	3 3.2 5.1 2	2 2.1 3.4 2.5	3 3.2 5.1 4	1 1.1 1.7 7.5	1 1.1 1.7 9	- - - -
3.			3 3.2 5.1 1	- - - -	1 1.1 1.7 1.6	3 3.2 5.1 2.6	2 2.1 3.4 4.3	- - - -	- - - -
4.						1 1.1 1.7 2	2 2.1 3.4 3.25	1 1.1 1.7 4.5	- - - -
5.						1 1.1 1.7 1.6	- - - -	- - - -	1 1.1 1.7 5.16

	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21 plus
6.									
7.									
8.									1 1.1 1.7 3.25

KEY

first figure: no. in sample in that group

second figure: % of that group in total sample

third figure: % of that group in stable sample

fourth figure: average stay for the no. in each sample group

total in sample: 93 men

average residency: 2.32 (3.01) years

population, and the last, the average number of years between each move for an individual in the group. Many of the transients were probably rural Nova Scotians who, because of poor harvests or strikes in industrial or mining communities, drifted into Halifax. As well, some of the transients were recorded during, or just after the war years, and they were obviously drawn by the high wages sparked by a scarcity of labour in the war-related industries.

The percentage of transients who are listed in the directories as home owners was 25.3% and for those who appear as renters, 36.6%. The difference in these percentages would seem to verify the hypothesis, advanced by Katz that non-home owners show a stronger predilection for movement out of the city than do property holders.[59] Nevertheless, both renters and home owners experienced pressures related to their working class existence. One of the class-linked social pressures that might have forced Haligonians to move as frequently as they did was fire and the lack of adequate fire protection. The census reports of 1921 and 1931 record that 89.04% and 90.6% respectively of all dwellings in Halifax were constructed of wood,[60] and fires were frequent and disastrous. Moreover, the situation was worsened by the fact that these Halifax houses were heated by wood or coal stoves. For example on 5 November 1918, 16 families were burned out of their homes in a fire that swept through the building in less than 10 minutes.[61]

Thomas H. Raddall in <u>Halifax: Warden of the North</u> saw a perverse benefit from these inadequacies.

> In truth, fire was a benefactor in the

> old crowded wooden city, whatever the monetary suffering. The irony of later days was that twentieth century alarm systems and fire-fighting apparatus perpetuated the wooden slum which in the olden days was swept away at least once in each generation, and which long defied the efforts of hopeful committees dedicated to slum clearance.[62]

D Type and Size of Houses

It would appear that by the 1920s the conditon of working class housing in Halifax had reached a shocking state. Single homes were becoming fewer in proportion to the total number of dwellings and although there was more space (i.e. rooms per person), the family units had also grown, thereby practically negating the first advance. The figures as recorded in the Canadian census were: an average family size of 4.18 in 1921 and 4.56 in 1931. The number of rooms per person was 1.12 in 1921 and 1.23 in 1931.[63] The following tables, 2-10, 2-11, illustrate the transformation in home type found in Halifax in 1921 and 1931 and also the number of rooms in each dwelling.

Table 2-10 Available Housing in Halifax (percentage) 1921 and 1931

Type	1921	1931
Apartment	10.15	25.60
Row or Terrace	9.15	4.98
Single homes	62.68	55.30
Semi-detached	17.63	13.31
Not given	0.39	-
Hotel, rooming house	-	1.41[64]

Table 2-11 Number of Rooms in Dwelling Places in Halifax, 1921 and 1931

Number of rooms	Number of dwellings 1921	Number of dwellings 1931	Number of rooms	Number of dwellings 1921	Number of dwellings 1931
One	37	210	6-10	5,391	5,715
Two	152	842	11-15	793	355
Three	336	1,350	16-20	115	25
Four	1,188	1,897	20 plus	75	14
Five	1,055	1,753	Not given	83	4
			Total:	9,225	12,147 [65]

Because the number of large homes, those with 11 or more rooms, decreased from 1921 to 1931 and the number of small houses increased substantially, one can only assume that subdivision of the larger, mansion-like buildings had begun. Obviously the newer dwelling places which were constructed were either smaller in size or were apartment buildings.

This change in the size of accommodations was true for the entire city of Halifax. The 1931 census printed a special report on characteristics of typical working class dwellings in Halifax. The average number of rooms in these housing units was five; the average size of the families was six. The Real Property Inventory of the United States (1934) stated that "one room per person has been assumed to represent an adequate amount of housing space." [66] Halifax's working class then did not have adequate living space. Prince's 1932 survey of Halifax revealed that among the lower income groups there was an average of 1.9 families to one house and a home could be an apartment consisting

of perhaps a single room.[67] For example, Miller's Field, the slum of Greenbank, had 738 residents in 1925 and a total of 614 rooms on the site.[68] In 1932 Prince had outlined the options of Halifax's labouring community: "The lack of an adequate supply of good houses is compensated for in either of two ways; first, by the utilization of inferior and condemned houses; and the second, by the reduction of floor space per family."[69]

E Sanitation

Overcrowding in housing is usually associated with unsanitary conditions. The shacks in Halifax were almost impossible to heat during the winter because of their structural imperfections, and therefore windows were usually nailed down or sealed with rags to act as insulation. The homes were usually heated by kitchen stoves which only warmed that room, and families tended to congregate in the kitchen which had a minimum of ventilation. This was hardly the most healthy of situations.[70]

The 1934 report on Characteristics of Typical Working Class Dwellings in Halifax indicated that most such buildings had a bathroom, electricity, running water, and a water closet.[71] What it omitted to report was that such facilities in the apartment, row or semi-detached dwellings were usually common to the whole unit.

> In regard to sanitary conveniences the survey shows the common tap and sink to exist in many quarters ... Members of families frequently must travel two or more flights of stairs to water supplies.

> Toilet accommodation is distressingly inadequate and inconvenient. The sanitary regulations requiring one on a basis of twenty people, even were they always observed, are faulty, and the location frequently in dark, unventilated cellars is a further matter for condemnation.[72]

Areas such as Greenbank, Africville and Miller's Field did not have either water or sewage provisions throughout this period. The common neighbourhood well and old-fashioned privy had to serve these areas. To make matters worse, the city's night soil deposit pits were located in Africville.[73] The North End also suffered from "a disgraceful state of water supply" which was a "direct menace to the health of the residents."[74] Even when the water supply situation had been rectified, the city continued to hesitate over the installation of adequate facilities for the removal of waste water and excreta.

These conditions were typical to the working class, but there is some evidence that they were prolonged and perhaps exacerbated during the latter period of this study by flaws in the socio-economic structure of Halifax itself. Table 2-12 lists the death rates for Halifax, Saint John, Montreal and Toronto between 1901 and 1931.

Table 2-12 Percentage of Death Rates in Halifax, Saint John, Toronto and Montreal 1901, 1921, 1931.

City	1901	1921	1931
Halifax	11.19	15.3	15.7
Saint John	9.29	16.64	14.48
Toronto	19.05	11.27	10.69
Montreal	22.54	-	12.89

[75]

The difference in the rates is striking; both Halifax and Saint John began with rates better than those of Montreal and Toronto and ended with rates that were worse. The larger cities were able to capitalize on the advances in medical knowledge and to utilize health facilities to lower the death rates; the smaller cities were not able or willing to incorporate such knowledge into their public health programmes. In the case of Halifax, whose economy would seem to have declined in the 20th century, the city was unable to initiate or sustain expensive urban renewal projects that would have alleviated the living conditions of its working classes. The longshoremen suffered accordingly.

V Food and Fuel

Diet was another crucial contributing factor affecting the health of the working class. Unfortunately, it is impossible to do more than hypothesize on the eating habits of the proletarian. This speculation is based on such circumstantial evidence as ethnic traditions, food prices, locally obtainable food supplies, and the price of other necessities such as shelter and clothing.

Historians have discovered that the diets of the English and Irish working class in the British Isles during this period were extremely starchy and lacked adequate protein.[76] It can be assumed that such eating habits were also prevalent in Halifax because of the ethnic traditions of most of the manual workers. However, Haligonians had available to them a plentiful and cheap source of protein and minerals to supplement the

starchy food: fish. Well into the 20th century, haddock, cod, mackerel, perch, eels, and clams could be caught in the Bedford Basin.[77] As apples were one of the biggest export items to pass through Halifax en route overseas, they were also relatively inexpensive in season. Thus Haligonians possessed some advantages that workers in the interior, more densely populated cities did not have.

The Eastern Labor News, in recommending one of the local restaurants for its superb food and reasonable prices, gave the following standard menu for its combination meals;

> Breakfast: oatmeal and cream, small steak, bread and butter, tea or coffee. 15¢
>
> Supper: fish cakes, baked beans, cake, bread and butter, tea or coffee. 15¢ [78]

The overall price of food during this period fluctuated wildly, especially during the war, but it did show a constant upward progression until the depression of the 1930s.

Table 2-13 Schedule of Retail Food Prices, Labour Gazette, Halifax, September 1900, 1910, 1920 and 1930.

The food	1900 (¢)	1910 (¢)	1920 (¢)	1930 (¢)
Bread (lb.)	2.5	4.	9.3	8.
Oatmeal	-	3.5	8.	6.4
Milk (qt.)	6.	6.	15.	12.5
Eggs (doz.) mean-price	21.5	22	77.5	43.2
Butter (lb.) " "	24.5	26.5	71.5	33.5
Evaporated apples (bu.)	-	8.	30.	-
Beef-shoulder rib	12.	14.	32.	24.1
Pork-salted	10.	17.	35.	24.6
Tea mean-price	20.	40.	61.	53.9
Fresh Fish	-	12.5	10.-25.	12.-26.
Lard	-	22.	40.	22.
Mutton	-	15.	35.	29.
Beans (lb.)	4.5	5.	14.	8.5
Sugar - yellow	4.25	5.5	21.	5.7
Flour (25 lb.)	60.	75.	$2.20	$1.13

[79]

The pattern of food prices seems to have reflected the wage trends of longshoremen. However, since wages had decreased in value in proportion to the extreme rise in rents, (see tables 2-5 and 2-6) there was less money available to spend on food, and the dietary habits of the working class must have suffered accordingly. Fuel prices experienced similar patterns to those for food and rent.

Table 2-14 Schedule of Retail Fuel Prices, Labour Gazette, Halifax, September 1900, 1910, 1920 and 1930.

Fuel	1900 ($)	1910 ($)	1920 ($)	1930 ($)
Coal oil (gal.)	.27	.18	.40	.35
Coal - anthracite	7.00	7.00	24.00	16.00
- bituminous	-	6.00	14.00	11.25
Wood - hard (cord, 128' cu.)	-	8.00	14.50	14.00
- soft (cord, 128' cu.)	4.00	7.00	9.30	7.00

[80]

Three of the basic life essentials - food, fuel, and shelter - had increased significantly during this period. For example, in 1914, the Labour Gazette estimated that for a family of five to exist they would have had an expenditure of $13.51 a week for these three basics. In 1924, the estimate had risen to $20.20.[81] Both of these figures were based on summer-time data when the need for fuel was minimal and both excluded the cost of winter clothes, boots, and sundry other necessities. It is true that wages for the Halifax labourers had also risen on a per hour basis, but that does not mean that the respective number of hours worked remained constant. Another hidden element is the quality of life that the citizen could now obtain with his higher

wages. Housing prices and rents had soared and what were deemed working class dwellings in the later period were inferior in construction and in the amount of floor space. People's attitudes and expectations change in a thirty year period. Their perspective is reshaped, and so items which were once considered to be luxuries become essentials with availability and usage. The question is, though, could Halifax's proletarians fit into this natural evolution or were they compelled to spend their lives merely dreaming about obtaining these conveniences.

VI World War I, the 1917 Explosion and the Spanish Influenza

There were several events during these thirty years that seriously disrupted the pattern of life in Halifax. The Boer War and the Great War, while not physically damaging the city, did cause dislocations and unnatural movements in wages and prices that were never totally readjusted or compensated for in the ensuing years of peace.

World War I did bring one souvenir to Halifax which left in its wake death, destruction, and irreparable memories for those who survived: this has since been labelled the 'Great Disaster', the Halifax Explosion of 1917. On 6 December 1917, there "occurred a catastrophe which had been privately feared and officially ignored ... the explosion of a large quantity of munitions."[82] The Mont Blanc, a French steamship loaded with trinitrototuol (TNT) and other highly volatile munitions, collided in mid channel with the Belgium relief vessel, the Imo. The collision set off a chain of chemical reactions which cul-

minated in the explosion, the blast of which was heard over a hundred miles away.

One square mile of the Richmond area of town was levelled The wooden buildings were either splintered like kindling by the shock waves of the explosion or destroyed in the ensuing fires caused by over-turned heaters and stoves. Thirty-five million dollars worth of property was destroyed in Richmond and greater Halifax. Over 2,000 Haligonians were killed, over 6,000 injured and 10,000 were left homeless.

> And when the fires had at last abated, the north end of the city of Halifax looked like some blackened hillside which a farmer had burned for fallow in the spring.[83]

A city of children, women, and old men had been attacked by a greater enemy than the **triple entente - bureaucratic negligence.** Floating bombs are not usually brought within the confines of friendly territory, even under war conditions.

Relief plans were put into effect: rationing food, distributing clothing, furniture, erecting temporary housing, in an attempt to regain some semblance of normalcy. Money was granted the Halifax Relief Commission (over $30 million by various governments, institutions, and private citizens) to help with the reconstruction of the city, but the war was still in progress and recovery was hampered. Temporary homes, meant to last only a year or two, were thrown together with tar paper and wood.[84] Five and seven years later their occupants still awaited permanent shelter. Compensation claims were slow in being settled if they were at all. Not one surviving victim

received full payment for the loss of his property.

The explosion did not seriously damage the business area of town. Broken windows were replaceable. But factories and plants, such as Hillis' Foundry, the Dominion Textile Company's factory, and the Dockyard were reduced to partial shells. The workers again suffered, for these were their places of work. Family, friends, homes, churches and jobs were all lost.[85] A survivor recalled: "We tried to forget, if forget we could what we had seen and gone through then."[86] Homes which had been purchased in the pre-1910 period when the working class could and did buy houses, were destroyed and these people had to regain their homes in a sellers' market which meant that they had to accumulate more capital than before to achieve this end.

Halifax was still reeling from the blow of the explosion when the Spanish influenza attacked its citizens. Although it remained a threat from June 1918 through to 1922, it peaked during the fall of 1918. In final assessment almost a hundred Haligonians died[87] and a portion of those that suffered but did not die were invalided by heart and nervous disorders.[88] Spanish influenza tended to fester in overcrowded homes, such as those in the North End and in the relief tenements on the Commons and the Exhibition Grounds,[89] and it principally attacked young adults. There probably would have been more deaths, had not the Halifax Municipal Council closed all public places, such as the churches, theaters, restaurants, and schools, for a period of five weeks, since the flu was spread by germs in the air.[90]

The war, the explosion and the Spanish influenza: with these three events, the city had lost a substantial proportion of its young adults, the so-called 'leaders of the future'. This, combined with the shifting economic conditions, left the city's proletariat with new, increased disadvantages and widened the social distances between it and the élite.

VII Conclusion

Halifax had a multi-tiered society, segregated along lines of class and race. The working class itself exhibited such segregation in both its choice of dwelling place and, as will be seen later, occupation. The longshoremen were white; the coal handlers and freight porters were generally black. Africville and Richmond, Preston and Kline Heights, Albermarle and Hollis Street; all were both specifically working class residential areas and distinctly the homes of respectively white labourers and black labourers.

The segregation and a feeling of strong class identity were undoubtedly intensified by the deterioration of the economic position of the labourers as a unit in Halifax. Although the senior longshoremen, the stevedores for example, were able to maintain ownership of their homes and thus some social prestige, there seems to have been a gradual reduction in the comfort and quality of these dwelling places. Former single-family homes had been subdivided into multiple-family residences without much care taken to ensure the appropriate space distribution. Wages had increased over this period and had kept

fairly close to the overall cost of living but had failed to provide for the increased accepted and expected standard of living. This incapacity to furnish contemporary norms of human comforts had its roots in Halifax's powerlessness to compete - even to participate - in the continental economy and was further magnified by the war and the depression of the 1920s.

The longshoremen were among the more fortunate of the casual working force in Halifax because shipping and the port did not suffer as drastic a decline between the 1880s and 1930s as did other sectors in the local economy. Jobs were by no means abundant or secure but the hard-core group of qualified stevedores enjoyed a comparatively comfortable standard of living. They experienced the unifying experience of general working class existence but not, because of their relatively secure position, the demoralization. These men were therefore able to take their place at the forefront of Halifax's proletariat.

Chapter Two

1. M. Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," Dominion Illustrated Monthly, September 1892, p.473.

2. Canada. Census Reports, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931.

3. Ibid., 1881, 1931.

4. anon. View of Halifax. N.S., The Empire Port and Eastern Gateway of Canada (Halifax, c.1910), p.l.

5. Robin W. Winks, "Negro School Segregation in Ontario and Nova Scotia, " Canadian Historical Review (June 1969), p.166.

   Emigration is another possible explanation for this drastic decrease in the black population. There was some return to the surrounding towns of Preston and Hammonds Plains as well as a token migration to the new industrializing towns of Amherst and Stellarton, and a southward movement to the New England states. But these general movements were not substantial enough to account for more than the natural birth rate. The solution to the problem of these wildly divergent population figures, from the provincial trend, must be in southward or westward migration. R.W. Winks states in The Blacks in Canada (Montreal, 1971), that there was a great exodus of Maritime blacks to the United States between the years 1870 and 1900. And in his yet uncompleted PhD research, Alan Brookes of University of New Brunswick, has found corroborating evidence of such a movement. Benjamin Janey, barber; Charles Newman, carpenter; and George Riley, porter; were just a few of the black Haligonians who went south, in this instance to Boston.

6. Canada. Census Reports, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931.

7. Ibid.

8. Tremaine, "Social Life in Halifax," p. 473.

9. T.W. Acheson, "Changing Social Origins of the Industrial Elite, 1880 - 1910," in Porter and Cuff, Enterprise and National Dvelopment (Toronto, 1973), pp. 55, 62.

10. Raddall, Halifax, pp. 177-78.

11. J.F. Maguire, *The Irish in America* (London, 1868), pp.3,5.

12. *Mail Star* (Halifax), 30 June 1976.

13. Frances Henry, *Forgotten Canadians: the Blacks of Nova Scotia* (Don Mills, Ont., 1973), pp.5-20.

14. Interviews with Clayton Harris, Beechville and Mr. Beals, Cherrybrook, N.S., held by *The Black Historical and Educational Research Organization*. Project co-ordinator, B.A. Jones (Halifax, August 1971).

15. D.H. Clairmont and D.W. Magill, *Africville, the Life and Death of a Canadian Black Community* (Toronto, 1974), p. 39.

16. This map was designed by Christopher Andreae, using the following two maps as a basis: PANS, Charles Goad, *Insurance Plans of the City of Halifax, 1914*; and PAC, Department of Militia and Defence, RG 24, V. 6359, plan of the city of Halifax, 1914.

17. Raddall, *Halifax*, p.74; Interview: John Fisher.

18. Interviews: Harris and Beals, *The Black Historical and Educational Research Organization*.

19. In June 1920 the fare was raised to 7¢ from 5¢ for a one way trip with no mention of transfer rights.The longshoremen, when working, earned 65¢ an hour, day shift, and therefore a return trip would have cost them 14¢ or 22% of an hour's pay.

20. Interviews: David Quinn and Gordon Raftus.

21. *Ibid.*, David Quinn, Gordon Raftus and John Fisher.

22. For an in-depth study of the Irish community in the Canadas, see M.S. Cross, "The Shiners' War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830s," *Canadian Historical Review*, 1972; "Stoney Monday, 1849: The Rebellion Losses Riot in Bytown," *Ontario History*, September 1971; Kenneth Duncan, "Irish Famine Immigration and the Social Structure of Canada West," *Studies in Canadian Social History* (Toronto, 1974), Suzanne Cross, "The Irish in Montreal, 1867 - 1896" (unpublished MA thesis, McGill University, 1969), and J.I. Cooper, "Social Structures of Montreal in the 1850s," *Canadian Historical Association Report*, 1956; "The Quebec Ship Labourer's Benevolent Society," *Canadian Historical Review*, 1949.

23. Albemarle Street was situated close to the barracks of the British and Canadian troops garrisoned in the city and advantage was taken of this prime location with the establishment of brothels, blind pigs, etc. So distasteful did its reputation become that the citizens living on the street finally petitioned the city for permission to rename it. They did receive authorization and the street's name was subsequently changed to Market Street.

24. Clairmont and Magill, Africville, pp.96-103.

25. Because Africville was completely separate from the main body of Halifax, in terms of social amenities, it was underdeveloped even compared with the most depressed areas of the inner city and thus, unless specified, will not be included in further discussions of social conditions existing in Halifax.

26. HH, 31 December 1918.

27. If a man only worked on the docks in a casual fashion, it is unlikely he would consider himself a longshoreman since that title usually implied membership in the local union. Union membership did not guarantee work but there existed a greater chance in securing what was available if one had a card. To further illustrate this point, Gordon Raftus, assistant business manager, local 269, ILA (Halifax), said that there were over 1,000 longshoremen in 1930. But as only 376 men were so listed in the city directory, it can be deduced that approximately 37% of all men who worked on the docks considered themselves to be full-time stevedores or permanent longshoremen.

28. Terry Copp, The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897 - 1929: The Anatomy of Poverty (Toronto, 1974), p. 70.

29. Michael Doucet, "Working Class Housing in a Small Nineteenth Century Canadian City: Hamilton, Ontario, 1852 - 1881," in Kealey and Warrian, Essays in Canadian Working Class History (Toronto, 1976), p.91.

30. Maguire, The Irish in America, p. 5.

31. Coopers were also surveyed as their economic position, declining due to mechanization obsolescing their skills, would have put them on a similar financial level of most of the permanent longshoremen. This also acted as a check to see if the high percentage of home owners among the dockers was an eccentricity peculiar to this group or a city phenomenon.

McAlpines' Halifax and Dartmouth City Directory (Halifax), 1896, 1914, 1930.

32. Interview: John J. Campbell.

33. Ibid., John Fisher, Gordon Raftus, David Quinn.

34. Stephan Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 156-57.

35. Maguire, The Irish in America, p.6.

36. S.H. Prince, Housing in Halifax, A Report (Halifax, 1932), p. 11.

37. Raddall, Halifax, p.260.

38. HH, 31 December 1913.

39. Ibid., 30 December 1916.

40. Canada. Census Reports, 1921, 1931.

41. Interview: Terry Punch; Evening Mail (EM), 9 January 1913.

42. Interview: John Fisher.

43. LG, wage agreements between the longshoremen of Halifax and the shipping companies, 1900, 1907, 1912, 1916, 1919, 1920, 1922, 1923, 1927.

44. PAC, Department of Labour, "Cost of Living Memorandum" (1932), RG 27, v.158, no. 611.2:1.

45. LG, "Schedule of Rents of Houses for Workingmen," September 1900; October 1901; July 1902; "Schedule of Related Food Prices, Halifax, September 1910 to 1930 incl.

46. MC, 1 February 1901.

47. LG, October 1904, p.368.

48. Raddall, Halifax, p.268.

49. HH, 31 December 1913.

50. Ibid., 30 December 1916.

51. TC, 7 April 1922.

52. Ibid., 6 June 1919.

53. AR, 12 April 1920.

54. HH, 3 February 1909.

55. LG, April 1919, p.447; TC, 19 September 1920.

56. Herbert B. Ames, City Below the Hill (Toronto, 1972), pp.74-75.

57. Over the ten year period, 1850 - 1860, 43.3% of the home owners and only 11.8% of the renters in Katz's survey were still living in Hamilton, usually at the same address.
Michael J. Katz, The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City (Cambridge, Mass.; 1975), pp.131-32.

58. The sample names were chosen because they were the last names of the members of the executive committee of the longshoremen's strike of 1907 and due to the strong religio-ethnic ties of the longshoring community it was assumed that these names would be quite common among the dockers. The surnames which were thus selected were; Coolen/Coolin, Griffin, Hubley, Joy, Martin, Quinn, Ring, and Whalen/Whelan. Labourers were included in this sample because although the term stevedore was used in the directories, longshoreman was not. But men who had been recorded with the occupation labourer for a number of years, suddenly were listed as stevedores, which would give the impression that the men labelled as stevedores were older and more steadily employed at the docks while those dockworkers who were casuals, were listed as labourers.

59. Katz, The People of Hamilton, Canada West, pp.21,78.

60. Canada. Census Report, 1931.

61. During the 19th century Halifax did not have professional firemen and it was not until well into the 20th century that the volunteer system was replaced. However the concession to practical prevention was obviously too much for the city's budget-minded councillors; until the 1920s they refused to hire two shifts of men to work alternate watches (Blakeley, Glimpses of Halifax, pp. 119-22; TC, reports scattered throughout the issues in the 1920s).To supplement this inadequate fire protection many of the major firms in Halifax hired the United Protection Company, a local organization that for a monthly fee would make regular patrols around its clients' properties to ensure that all was safe (Interview: John Fisher).

62. Raddall, Halifax, p.191.

63. Canada. Census Reports, 1921,1931.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Canada. Census Report, 1931, v.12, p.451.

67. Prince, Housing in Halifax, p.11.

68. TC, 8 May 1925.

69. Prince, Housing in Halifax, p. 11.

70. Ibid., p. 61.

71. Canada. Census Report, 1931, v.12, p.451.

72. Prince, Housing in Halifax, p. 12.

73. Clairmont and Magill, Africville, p.113; TC, 2 January 1925.

74. Eastern Labor News (ELN), 11 March 1911.

75. Canada. Census Report, 1901, 1921, 1931; Dominion Bureau of Statistics: General Statistics Branch, Vital Statistics, 1920-21, 1930-31.

76. Gregory S. Kealey, Hogtown. Working Class Toronto at the Turn of the Century (Toronto, 1971), p.26.

77. Clairmont and Magill, Africville, p.57; Interviews: Mrs. Blanche Clarke, Mrs. Grace Bishop.

78. ELN, 17 December 1909.

79. LG, October 1900, p. 98; October 1910, pp.472-73; October 1920, pp. 1396-1403; October 1930, pp. 1216-21.

80. Ibid.

81. TC, 13 January 1919, 4 July 1924.

82. Raddall, Halifax, p.250.

83. Prince, Catastrophe and Social Change, pp. 26-29.

84. HH, 5 November 1918.

85. Michael J. Bird, The Town that Died (Toronto, 1967), pp.96-97.

86. PAC, anon, My experiences in the Halifax Disaster. Anonymous Report by an Irish American, p.14.

87. HH, 2 November 1918.

88. PAC, Department of Health and Welfare, "Booklet: Influenza Epidemic of 1918, by J.J. Heagerty," RG 29, Accession 75-6/163, Box 25, file 311-52-2, v.1.

89. HH, 29, 30 October 1918.

90. AR, 17 October 1918; HH, 4 November 1918.

Chapter Three

Working Conditions on the Halifax Docks

Life on the Halifax waterfront had a distinct existence; it was a world unto itself. Although the longshoremen's sub-culture was part of the larger working class community, there was a minimum of interchange between the permanent hard-core longshoremen and the casual labourers who made up the bulk of Halifax's working class. Of course, longshoring is an international occupation with certain characteristics which can be identified wherever it is practised. At the same time, every port has its own peculiarities based on the nature of its commerce and industry and its locale. Not surprisingly then, the longshoremen of Halifax, during the period 1900-1930, experienced various internal and external pressures which were unique to them; yet in many ways they behaved similarly to longshoremen across the continent.

I Group Characteristics

One of the dominant characteristics of the Halifax longshoremen was their practice of nepotism. Various longshoremen interviewed stated that prejudice did not exist on the Halifax docks, as it did in Montreal, New York and Quebec. However, the more subtle practice of preferring to hire family or friends lends weight to the opposite argument.

Most of the longshoremen were native Nova Scotians and predominantly Irish-Catholic, and these characteristics were perpetuated.[1] Any man who attempted to work on the docks and who did not share them was usually viewed as a potential strike-breaker or company spy. Occasionally a non-Irish, non-Nova Scotian, white did manage to gain admittance to the waterfront community, but the social composition of longshoremen did not change substantially throughout the years 1900 to 1930. Blacks have never been accepted by the local longshoremen. It is hard to analyse what reinforced this collective identity: the ethnic origins of the labourers or the nature of their work. Ethnic unity was a common characteristic of most ports.

The average longshoreman of Halifax was over 25 years of age.[2] Most of the men were married and had large families; the more children a man had, the greater his chance for financial security in his later years. Before the introduction and extensive use of mechanization, longshoring was a physically demanding job requiring the strength of a mature male. Although some of the dockers started to work at the age of 17, most did not obtain any degree of permanency until their early or mid twenties. As there was no pension or retirement fund, the longshoreman consequently worked as long as he was physically able. If a man had been a responsible and valuable employee, he was sometimes able to secure permanent employ in his later years as a night watchman with one of the shipping agencies.

The Halifax longshoremen were a relatively stable group of labourers. John Fisher, past president of Pickford and Black, the largest native stevedoring and shipping company in Halifax

during this period, recalled in an interview that the longshoremen were "of a pretty good class of men (not morally good, for they drank a lot) as labouring men went. They were just good family men. Even though they were poor and of the working class, they (some) were real gentlemen."[3]

II Dock Hierarchy

A definite hierarchical structure existed on the docks of Halifax. However, there was very little opportunity for vertical movement because most of the qualified longshoremen of Halifax did the same work, had an equivalent job knowledge, and received a standard hourly rate of pay. The shipping companies were the ultimate controlling agents of all employment along the waterfront. Halifax was a minor port of call to most of the international shipping lines, and so they employed local agents. These agents in turn either contracted stevedoring firms to secure the necessary number of longshoremen or hired them themselves. Within this structure, the shipping companies were responsible for all port fees and the cost of the longshore work. The shipping agents or stevedoring firms oversaw the discharging and loading of cargoes and the hiring of the necessary labour force. Within these firms, a superintendent oversaw the company's entire operations for every ship in port. This responsibility was primarily an office job and therefore an assistant, called either a walking boss or foreman, was hired. He was responsible for directing the on-dock work and for the direct hiring and firing of men. The walking boss travelled between ships instructing the gang bosses

as to which cargoes to load and where to stow them. If a large vessel was being loaded, a longshoreman usually acted in the capacity of ship foreman for that particular job. The ship foreman worked in conjunction with the ship's captain and together they oversaw the work of all gang bosses on board. Each gang boss was responsible for the work being done in his assigned hatch by the members of his gang. The gang members, the lowest in this hierarchy, did the actual loading and discharging.

In traditional dock terminology only the superintendent and walking boss would have been called stevedores since they were the men who were skilled in the art of loading ships and keeping them properly balanced; an art of the utmost importance in preventing a ship from rolling once it reached the ocean. However, by the 1900s, the title stevedore had come to include ship foremen, gang bosses, and usually all men who regarded longshoring as their sole occupation.[4] The word dockworker also had a traditional connotation for a specific waterfront job. The dockworkers, or dockers, were the men who brought the shipments to and from the sheds and vessels but never went aboard. This job was considered more menial than that of the on-board ship labourer. As Halifax did not have many longshoremen, these distinctions were less rigidly enforced than in some of the larger ports such as London and New York and the terms longshoreman and dockworker were used interchangeably. The elite members of the longshoring world were the winchmen and the hatch-tenders, who were also usually the gang bosses. These men controlled both the speed and shape of loading and were also responsible for the general safety of the gang through their direction of

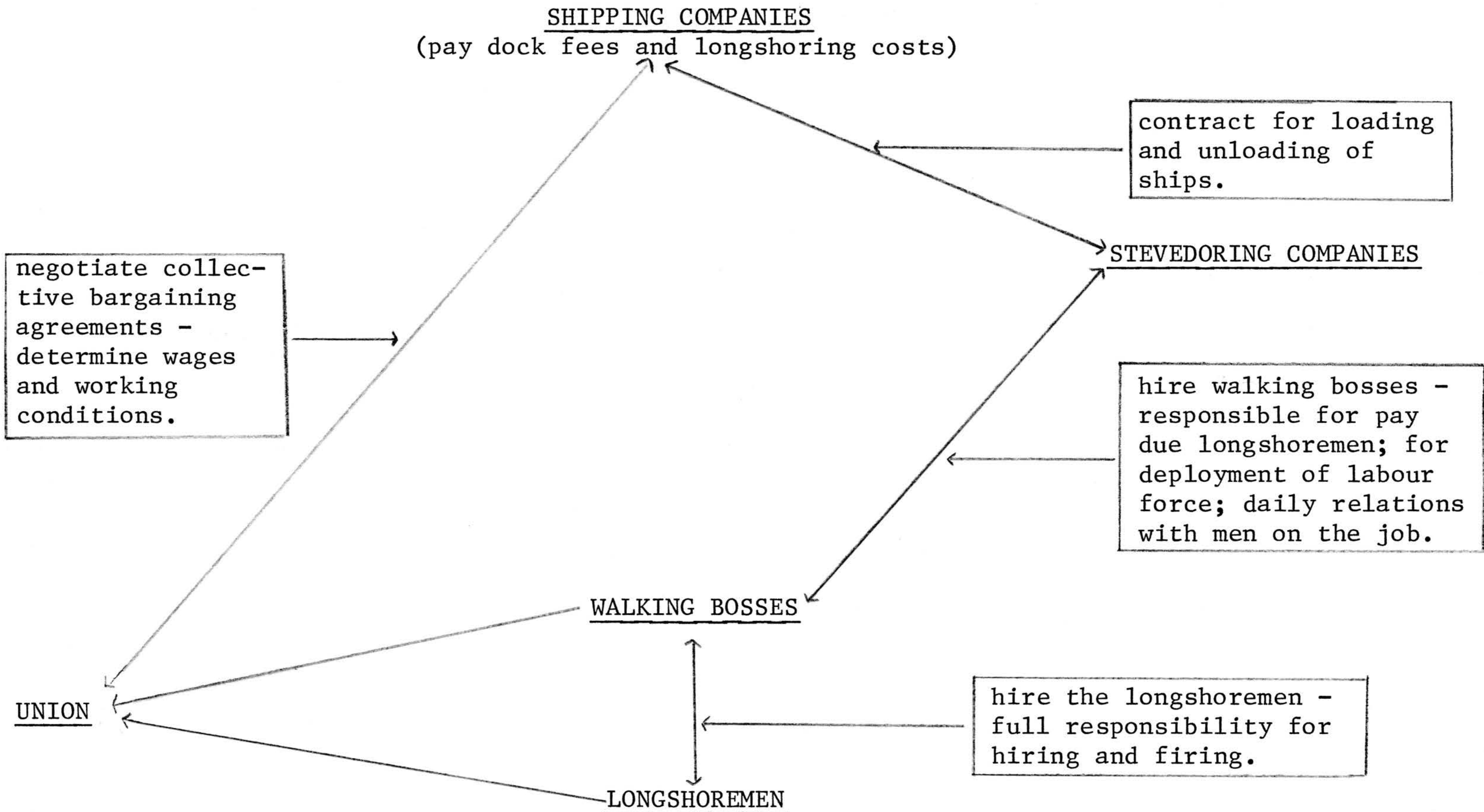
both load placement and the positioning of the longshoremen in the hold or on the deck.

Longshoremen had a minimum of contact with management excluding the walking bosses. The superintendent, the walking boss and, later on, the foremen and some gang bosses were the only men, who had any form of permanent association with the shipping companies. They were usually on the payroll with a guaranteed wage. Chart 3-1 illustrates these labour relationships and demonstrates the distance of the labourers from the actual authorities who controlled their employment.[5]

The longshoremen loaded and discharged cargo to and from the ships and went back and forth between the freight sheds or storage areas for the shipments. However, their duties ended at the sheds. The inside and outside freight porters processed the commodities from that point to the railway cars. Although the freight porters were dock-side workers, they were not considered longshoremen. Coal handlers, who worked in the bunkering sphere of port activity, were also outside the realm of longshore work. Both groups, however, were eventually allowed to affiliate with the International Longshoremen's Association, (ILA), but only as distinct locals.

Most of the men who worked the docks were without any company affiliation. For this reason it is impossible to know exactly how many did seek and find employment. Some longshoremen, however, were fortunate enough to be members of company gangs, such as those of Furness Withy, Pickford and Black, Plant, and Red Cross.[6] Membership in a company gang meant for a longshoreman that he was the first to be offered work on any ship

chart 3-1: Structure of labour relations at the port of Halifax, 20th century.



which came into port belonging or affiliated to the specific steamship company. These preferential gangs, comprised of the steadier, more dependable and skilful longshoremen, usually worked for one company, but they were not exclusively contracted to that firm. When work was scarce, these gangs could freelance at any other pier. A system of lending gangs between the various stevedoring companies existed which ensured that all firms had access to the more skilled workers.

III Hiring Practices

The hiring of longshoremen in Halifax was usually done on a gang basis. This practice was to assure maximum efficiency because a work rhythm was attained as soon as the gang's members were familiar with their work and with each other. But once a gang was hired it did not mean that it had a guaranteed job for the duration of that ship's stay in port. When more experienced gangs finished their work and became available for hire, the younger, newer gangs were summarily replaced. The shipping companies never carried enough men to work more than one or two vessels at a time. When additional labourers were needed, a shape-up was called, and the supplementary workers were chosen from the hordes of casual labourers who waited around the docks.[7] However, the number of jobs available was restricted because the Halifax longshoremen never had an official closed-shop agreement with the shipping companies; as a result coastal vessels in particular used their own crews for loading and unloading, thereby reducing the number of potential jobs.

Throughout the years, the shipping companies became accustomed to specific call-out times for the shape-up. Although it would seem that this was never included in any working agreement between the two parties during the years 1900-1930, the hours were traditionally set at 7 a.m., 1 p.m., and 6 p.m.[8] This system theoretically gave all dockers an equal chance to be hired. Daily notices appeared in the papers such as the following one from the Halifax Herald, 19 December 1925;

> The White Star liner Regina from Liverpool with 15 cabin, 90 third class passengers, 192 bags of mail and 450 tons of cargo is due at 9 o'clock this morning and will dock the south side of pier 2.[9]

Such notices enabled,at least,the literate workers to determine which pier offered the best opportunity for employment.[10] Call-out times were universal, and men who had not been hired at the first pier they went to had little chance to be picked for work at that call-out anywhere else because they could not reach the next hiring pier in time to be included in the selection process. The companies did not always strictly adhere to the calling-out hours. Occasionally a ship would enter port during an interim period and would hire the necessary longshoremen immediately without waiting for the next call-out hour. The unemployed dockers were thus more-or-less compelled to wait around the piers, in case of such an event. It was not until the mid 1930s that the HLA was strong enough to eliminate this hiring procedure and introduce their own alphabetical plugging-in system of 'first come, first hired.'[11]

Many different hiring methods were used throughout the ports

of the world. For example, the men at Vancouver gathered at the ships' port-side to be chosen, while in cities where longshoremen's unions were better organized, such as Saint John, N.B., the hiring hall, run by the local union, did the actual processing of men after having received the necessary information regarding numbers and piers from the stevedoring companies.

During the period 1900 to 1930 the Halifax longshoremen had passed through two methods of hiring and had begun to move into a third. Initially, the men gathered at the freight shed gates in a large semi-circle, called a horse-shoe, of about 20 men across and an indefinite number of men deep. The walking boss walked along the inner fringe of the horse-shoe, on the ship side of a restraining chain and selected the men needed either to fill vacancies in the already chosen gangs or to form additional gangs. The men had to wait in the open, regardless of the weather, and hope to attract the favourable notice of the walking boss. The men in the first row did not necessarily have the best chance to be hired because the foremen would often reach across this human barrier, shoving the 'rejects' aside, and tap the chosen few on the shoulders. Finesse and manners were not a high priority for a walking boss, who quite often achieved his position through his ability to command the respect or obedience of his peers through the strength of his personality or the fear which he managed to instil.

After the HLA had acquired a hall of its own (c. 1907), the process was altered slightly. The chain which had been used at the shed entrances was moved inside the union hall. The men still

had to range themselves behind it, always striving to get to the front row where they would be perhaps more visible. Although this method of hiring was still patently unfair, the dockers were at least able to remain dry and reasonably comfortable while waiting for a job. During the 1930s the union controlled the process of employment, and the union hall became the 'hiring hall'. The longshoremen were dispatched to the various jobs on a more or less equal basis, providing that those applying for work were either members of the union or card men.[12] A 'plugging-in' alphabetical rotation system was used. Whenever a docker wanted to work he went to the hiring board in the hall which displayed the names of all union and card men. He would then place a colour-coded pin beside his name indicating his availability for work and his special skill. The dispatching officer would then send the men out to the various piers using a continual rotation process of selection.

Before the union had gained control over the allocation of jobs, the hiring practices were blatantly discriminatory. The foremen knew beforehand which men they wanted to hire and, although the choice was supposed to be based strictly on such criteria as strength and job knowledge, personal preference usually dominated the exercise. Vacancies which occurred in the company gangs were most often filled by a personal acquaintance of the gang boss. Favouritism led, at times, to deference towards the walking bosses. Nepotism was also rampant in this process, with brothers and sons usually being hired before unrelated strangers with comparable or even better abilities. Boarders as well were chosen with great alacrity, for if the

boarder did not work his stevedore-landlord could not collect any rent.[13] Obviously, under these circumstances men did not even bother to show up at any call-out where their personal enemy presided.

J. S. Woodsworth, who worked on the Vancouver docks in 1919, describes the despair and frustration experienced by longshoremen who were not company dockers:

> A hundred men stand on the street in front of the Auxiliary Hall (union hall) on Cordova Street, It is 8 o'clock on a foggy morning in October. They are waiting for a possible job. The longshoremen proper have the preference. If there is a rush, the orders for men are turned over to the Auxiliary ...
>
> How patiently they wait! They have been waiting since 7 o'clock. They will wait all morning. Some of them will be back in the afternoon. Some will wait on the chance of a night job. They waited all day yesterday in the rain. Day after day they have been waiting for the past week.[14]

This glut of casual workers was not unique to Halifax. It was "the fundamental characteristic of waterside employment, and more than anything else it moulded the attitudes of the port worker."[15] This surplus was due to the irregularity and seasonality of ship arrivals. The supply of dockers was plentiful and at times even unlimited, because no controls were exercised to maintain a continuous level of employment. And "unless the supply of labour is limited, the tendency of the seasonal character of an industry is to produce a labour pool in excess of normal needs to meet the seasonally recurrent peaks of production."[16] There was no attempt made by the dockers to control or decrease the number of surplus labourers.

This lack of action was probably due to a basic mistrust, in this port as well as in others, of innovation and a fear of deviating from the practised patterns. The status quo, even though it produced job and worker redundancy, offered a sense of security to the longshoremen through its familiarity.

IV Loading and Discharging Ships

Halifax was a general cargo port without a dominant staple export and therefore there were no specialty gangs which worked solely one type of cargo. These exclusive teams appeared in Halifax only during World War II,[17] and they were limited to the handling of grain and munitions. Previously there had never been a concentration of any one staple which was heavy enough to warrant the restriction of its movement to one group of men. Therefore, every docker was eligible for employment on all vessels.

There were between 18 and 20 men, plus a boss, in each gang, depending on the size of the holds in the ship. On an average, four gangs worked on a vessel per shift; coastal ships employed their own crews to load or discharge and it would appear that this practice did not meet with any resistance from the HLA. Of the 20 men in a gang, eight usually worked in the hold in alternating shifts of work and rest, the latter called spelling or welting. There was also a hatch tender and a winch man. The remaining members were found on the deck of the ship and on the dock. During the night shifts there were usually a couple of extra men in each gang to compensate for working in the dark and

to lessen the possibility of accidents by eliminating most of the solo jobs.[18] An average gang could load between 25 and 30 tons of general cargo an hour, although some commodities, such as pit props (4 in. wide by 12 ft. long deals), took longer since their placement in the hold was a more delicate and dangerous operation.[19] Timber loading was a highly specialized skill acquired through a rigorous and lengthy apprentice-like training period. Because of the exclusive skills required for fast, efficient loading, ports such as Quebec and Saint John, which were dependent on the export of this staple, had to pay higher hourly wages to their timber loaders. This factor, along with the exclusiveness of the membership, produced the first real longshore organizations at these ports. Cities such as Montreal and Halifax did not have a similar, dominant cargo which encouraged a need for an elitist group of dockers, and therefore unionization had a slower, more precarious start.

Because certain of the government piers at Deep Water, and later the Ocean Terminals, had specific cargo handling facilities, vessels often had to change berths to finish loading or discharging. Therefore gangs also had to change locations or, as more commonly occurred, when the relocation involved a significant distance, new gangs were hired. If a ship was not completely stowed, all gangs working on it had a different amount of work. Most of the vessels which came to Halifax were only partially filled in the city before continuing on to another port. Therefore, a couple of holds were lightly stowed in comparison to the other holds.[20]

The transition from sailing vessels to steamships had

abruptly altered the work rhythm of longshoremen throughout the world because strict schedules required fast turnarounds.[21] However, until World War I, when sheer necessity forced a change, very primitive methods prevailed in longshoring: "basically, the degree of mechanization ... [was] ... governed by the size of loads; on the one hand, the unit that one man could handle, on the other hand the capacity of the typical vessel."[22] The hand hook, used to drag cargo to and from the point of hoisting, was still very much in evidence.

Big hand trucks (wheel-barrows), weighing between 150 and 200 pounds and balanced on one wheel, were used in the movement of loose, bulk commodities. Sacks of flour, loose grain, etc. were loaded on these trucks, adding average weight of 600 pounds to the load, and they were then deftly manoeuvred along the dock and up a narrow gangway to the ship deck. Once the trucks were on board, the other members of the gang transferred the load to its place in the hold where the remaining gang members stowed it in the designated location. The overflow of grain, from the one elevator and conveyor belt system, was also transported by hand cart and shovelled into the hold until 1927, when a second grain loading system was finally installed.[23] The following picture, 2, illustrates the method used in coaling up vessels in Halifax in 1903 which was quite similar to the general procedure followed in the loading of most kinds of cargo.[24]

The donkey engine had been introduced to the port of Halifax in the 1880s,[25] and by the 1900s most ships which docked at the piers had progressed from using this auxiliary, floating apparatus by itself to a method of combining it with their own derrick

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H.M.S. Ariadne Coaling

winch set-up: there were two derricks on board, each outfitted with a winch. But since the shipping companies did not see the necessity of hiring two winch men, only the on-shore derrick was used, and thus loading was accomplished through a method known as the 'bridal falls'. Once the cargo had been brought to the ship's side, it was attached to a guide-wire which was threaded through the winch. The donkey engine then powered the winch, and the cargo was dragged up a sloping ramp or gangway along the deck of the ship and then tipped through the hatch into the hold. The sole reason for the two derricks during this period was to ensure that the winch system could be used regardless as to which side of the ship was shore berthed. In the late 1930s, both derricks were finally used: the two guide wires were attached to the same load and thus the on-board winchman had better control over his machine. The on-shore derrick winch lifted the cargo up into the air while the off-shore combination directed its path, thus speeding up the loading process.[26] An article which appeared in the Citizen, 18 April 1930, summarized this new process:

> When a ship docks the first gang goes aboard, sorts the cargo and sends it up in nets, slings and clips. A man on the deck acts as a signal man and the winchman obeys his commands. When the cargo reaches the dock it is placed on trolleys or barrows and trundled to waiting cars or set aside for further distribution. When a ship is loaded the process is reversed.[27]

Whatever the method used in loading or discharging cargoes, the process was most frequently one of a mind numbing, body exhausting, factory assembly line. Monotony was the most overwhelming feeling experienced by the longshoremen, followed

closely by muscle strain and frustration. J. S. Woodsworth made the following observation which came from his own experience of working on the docks of Vancouver:

> He shoves his truck to the sling. The loaders put on four cases - - one-two-three-four. He "breaks" throwing his truck into balance. Then across the shed he wheels his load. The pilers stand ready to receive it. He throws up the handles and by a deft movement withdraws the blade of the truck, leaving the four cases one on top of the other ready for the pilers. Then back he slowly wheels his truck to the sling - - one-two-three-four. His load is ready. Across the shed again, a trucker ahead of him and a trucker behind him going through the same motions. Back and forward - loaders to pilers - pilers to loaders ...
>
> So it goes - day after day - and the days stretch into weeks and the weeks into indefinite years ... [28]

With the use of new forms of technology came two of the greatest banes of the Halifax longshoremen, as of all dockers, the "speed-up" and "double-ganging". "The stevedore must be strong and fast for the great shipping companies with keen eyes on the schedules demand speed. There ... [was] ... always a dozen men to take the place of one who may drop out."[29] Speed ensured that the shipping companies kept their business competitive. Train connections would have been missed if the cargoes were not discharged at once. Because perishable produce made up a large part of the cargo shipped through Halifax, it too needed immediate attention. Therefore double-ganging was occasionally instituted to hasten the loading of commodities. Two gangs of men would be assigned to one hold, the expected result being that the work would be completed in half the time. The double

gang style of employment also had a subtle advantage for the shippers. Because gang allegiance was particularly strong among longshoremen, when two gangs were pitted against one another in the same hold there was a tendency to prove that one was superior to the other. Thus a competitive spirit developed, which was very satisfying to the stevedoring companies which paid on an hourly basis. M. A. Ryan wrote in The Open Gateway "Stevedoring is really a tradition at Halifax for such pride is taken in their work that longshoremen actually vie with one another to give steamers the quickest possible despatch."[30]

While this competition undoubtedly helped the companies move their ships out of port more quickly, it did not benefit the longshoremen, although for a while the union did support double-ganging because it thought the method would ensure a more equal amount of work for more longshoremen. As a result of the short-term, intensified periods of work for longshoremen, casual workers were drawn to the docks seeking employment. Therefore, a much larger labour force than was actually needed evolved to fill this immediate demand. However, double-ganging created less work and less money for the permanent dockers. Fortunately for the finances of longshoremen of Halifax, the holds of most of the ships which entered the port were too small to accommodate double gangs.[31]

It is impossible to give an accurate figure for the time it took to discharge and load vessels in Halifax; unknown variables, such as type of cargo, size of ship, and gangs employed, preclude any such computation. Ships recorded in the Daily Journals, or logs of Pickford and Black, seem to have spent an average of three

and a half days in port,[32] which included docking, changing of berths, discharging of cargo, and the loading of new commodities. Although the process of discharging and loading simultaneously was not unknown, it was quite uncommon because most of the vessels lacked the necessary hold capacity and the cargoes were usually so diversified that the essential facilities were located at different berths. There was also a vessel hierarchy: steamships received preferential treatment over schooners and transatlantic steamers over coastal vessels. Discrimination on the waterfront had spread even to its inanimate parts.

One thing is quite apparent from a survey of the logs of Pickford and Black. Few ships arrived in port on the weekend, and if they did, they were usually not serviced until the Monday because Sunday was a holiday and the dockers had to receive double pay. There were two types of cargoes and one type of boat which proved the exception to this rule. Mail boats and passenger ships always received immediate attention because of their contents, and the Cunard boats, known as the A boats on the docks. The A boats entered port at noon every Saturday starting in 1923, and the longshoremen who were hired worked straight through in order to have the vessel ready to leave by 10:00 a.m. Monday. This was one of the conditions of the vessels coming to Halifax. The longshoremen complied with these terms because "Cunarders" represented the closest thing to job security. Once a man obtained a job on the A boats and performed satisfactorily, he was rehired for as long as he wanted. However, once a longshoreman quit, he was never rehired by the Cunard agents.[33]

V Waterfront Safety and Compensation

The haphazard method of loading the ships, the always present demand for more speed and faster turnaround, and the cavalier attitude towards dockyard safety displayed by the shipping companies all combined to create poor working conditions on the docks and minimal safety precautions. Accidents were an omnipresent reality in longshoring. If there can be a bright side to this facet of longshoring in Halifax, it was the infrequency of fatalities. The highest annual number of fatal accidents listed in the Labour Gazette between the years 1905 and 1930, which occurred between July 1911 and June 1912, was four.[34] The nature of the cargo loaded at Halifax may have contributed to this low figure; between July 1906 and June 1907, two men were killed on the docks of Halifax and 11 in Saint John.[35] This startling difference was most likely attributable to the predominance of deal shipments through the port of Saint John. Deals were an extremely difficult and dangerous cargo to handle.

Crushed fingers, broken toes and limbs, and strained backs were among the most common of the non-fatal injuries in Halifax, and they usually occurred either towards the end of a shift when fatigue had set in or during bad weather when decks were slippery from rain, snow, or ice.[36] Longshoring was replete with potential accident traps such as gangways, hatchways, access to holds, decks, faulty loading and unloading equipment, machinery, and gear.[37]

In 1931 the Halifax Harbour Commission set out written safety codes and allocated responsibilities for maintaining these standards among the stevedoring contractors, general foremen, gang foremen, and longshoremen. These codes emphasized the fact that properly repaired equipment and general conditions were a managerial responsibility.[38] The text also admonished the dockers to cooperate in all safety precautions. Dockers, who were accustomed to riding cargo hooks, strongbacks, and beams as a fast and convenient means of transportation, were prohibited this practice. Therefore, although most of the responsibility for accidents was rightfully attributed to the unconcern of shipping management, the carelessness of the longshoremen themselves was also censured.

There was another peril that plagued longshoremen: consumption, or pulmonary tuberculosis (TB). The Eastern Labor News recorded in January 1911 "that during the past two years over 50% of the deaths [of men engaged on the waterfront] have been the result of that dread scourge, consumption."[39] The HLA's 1911 annual review reported that of 13 families receiving union death benefits, seven were those of men who had succumbed to TB.[40] The disease is caused by a variety of factors, the most prominent being damp, cold weather. Considering that longshoremen had to work in all kinds of weather it is not surprising that so many Halifax dockers were thus affected. Work was only halted on the docks during driving snow storms or heavy downpours because the cargo could have become damaged and the holds filled with water. The Pickford and Black Daily Journal for 28 and 29 January 1925 had the following notation:

Wednesday, 28 Jan., 1925: Chaleur loading.
Temp. holds reported at #1 34°F, #5 37°F.
7 p.m. same. oil stoves in hold all night.

Thursday, 29 Jan., 1925: Chaleur 9 a.m.
holds #1 38°, #5 40°. [41]

A factor contributing to the incidence of TB among longshoremen was undoubtedly the amount of dust they inhaled, especially during the loading of grain. Halifax did not become a major grain shipping centre until the late 1920s, but as early as 1912 the Acadian Recorder reported:

> It does not require a vivid imagination to mentally follow this stream of fast flowing grain, the fierce cloud of dust that is raised by the sudden outpouring that finds its way into the bowels of the ship, dust so dense, that the men whose duties are to level and to distribute the cargo to all parts of the vessel, are isolated from one another and must carry a light which in many cases is not visible at a distance of three feet from longshoremen sweltering in the dust-laden air in the ship's hold.[42]

It was not until the 1929-30 wage agreement between the HLA and the shipping companies of Halifax that it became optional for the dockers to remain in the ships' holds while grain was running. But TB was always considered a natural disease and thus outside the sphere of the meagre private and provincial compensation benefits available to the workers of Nova Scotia.

Accidents occurring while the employee was at work fell under the terms of the provincial Employers' Liability for Injuries Act, introduced in May 1900. This act enabled workmen (manual labourers), or their beneficiaries, to claim compensation from the employing party. The money so distributed was assessed

and collected from all employers included under the act and distributed by a central provincial body. If the victim had known of the existence of defective gear prior to its malfunction and had nevertheless continued performing his job, he was not eligible for compensation. The injured man also could not claim compensation from his employer if the injury was caused by the carelessness of a co-worker.[43] Riders such as these placed the onus of proving innocence of negligence on the longshoremen and not on the employer. Because jobs were scarce and work-related pressures from such things as the speed-up were constant, longshoremen did not often report potential hazards. There was always someone else willing to take their place and to work under less than ideal conditions. If a longshoreman was injured, the only solution was to seek legal counsel and sue the shipping company for remuneration, which the company would or would not pay after being notified of the suit. Few labourers, however, ever had the financial means to resort to such recourse, especially after they had been injured and were unable to work.[44]

In April 1910, the province of Nova Scotia passed the Workmen's Compensation Act which went into effect 1 February 1911.[45] Although it specifically included longshoremen, the dockers seem to have had problems preventing them from collecting. The <u>Eastern Labor News</u> reported on 25 February 1911, that since the inception of the act, four minor accidents had occurred on the waterfront, but not one of the injuries had come within the scope of the act.[46] It was a beginning, however, as the <u>Halifax Herald</u> recorded on 30 December 1911;

> Perhaps the most important feature in labour legislation during the past year was the coming into operation on the first of February of the Nova Scotia Workmen's Compensation Act. Notwithstanding the fact that this act is far from being as effective for the benefit of workers as it should be, it has been a boon to many injured workmen in the province and its passage meant a long stride in the march of modern labour protective legislation. The workmen of the province should familiarize themselves with it provisions, so as to be enabled to take full advantage, of every favourable clause. Many injured workmen are being defrauded out of their just rights, mainly because of an utter lack of knowledge of this law.[47]

Perhaps more heartening for the longshoremen was the appointment in 1917 of the president of the HLA, John T. Joy, who had been the act's principal lobbyist, as the labour representative on the Compensation Board. A true representative of labour was now looking after the interests and rights of workers.

The act was not overly generous to the victims or to their dependants. Partial disability payments were granted at a rate of 55% of the workmen's wages or earning capacity at the time of the injury and were to last only as long as the labourer remained disabled. Burial expenses (not to exceed $75.00) were covered as were monthly payments to the widow and dependants, at a rate of $20.00 per month and $5.00 per month respectively, the total not to surpass $40.00 per month. But under no circumstance was the total compensation to exceed 55% of the average earnings of the workman and payments were to "continue only as long as in the opinion of the Board it might have been expected, had the workman lived, he would have continued to contribute to the support of the dependants." An attending physician had to

submit proofs of the longshoremen's claims.[48] However, labourers did not have the money to utilize the services of general practitioners and so were compelled to use company appointed doctors. These doctors had allegiance and similar loyalties to the shipping interests and it was a common complaint of most workers that the doctors were not as impartial as could be hoped for.

In 1915 the act was amended, but the major sections pertaining to the claims made by the dockers and payments remained roughly the same. In 1920 another amendment to the act was passed raising maximum compensation payments by $10.00 per month and the total cumulative payment to $60.00 per month for dependants. This increase was not enough to keep pace with the period's rapid inflation. To the 55% figure was added the proviso that there be a minimum weekly allowance of $5.00. Full medical and hospital aid was introduced, although limited to 30 days.[49] Prior to 1920 only special cases, approved by the board, had received this benefit. There were some improvements in the range of the bill, but it was still not as effective as those in other provinces. In Ontario, for example, a disabled worker was entitled to 66.6% of his earnings.[50]

Throughout the 1920s the bill was constantly revised, but with few tangible benefits for the workers. The Citizen complained that "the trouble with the Workmen's Compensation Act is the high cost of administration and the low rate of compensation."[51] The paper also editorialized that

> ... when a workman is injured, after a lot of red tape and tomfoolery, if he is lucky he gets 55% of the amount of his wages

> for as short a time as possible, except of course, any special favorites, where it may be continued a little longer.[52]

Towards the end of the 1920s, more humane factors were included in the act: in 1927 artificial limbs were supplied and kept in working order for one year;[53] in 1928 frostbite was added to the schedule of industrial diseases, which greatly benefited longshoremen,[54] and finally, in 1929, the basis for compensation was increased to 60% of a labourer's average earnings.[55]

Still, the Nova Scotia longshoremen were more fortunate than some of their colleagues working in the United States, because they at least were covered by a compensation act and were entitled to payment regardless of the fact that the accident occurred on board ship or on the wharf, and irrespective of the nationality of the vessel or the trade in which it was engaged. American stevedores, on the other hand, were not entitled to compensation if they were injured while on the vessel being discharged or loaded, or on the gangplank.[56]

VI Some Speculations Concerning the Number of Longshoremen, Hours Worked and Wages

Hiring methods, work conditions, and injuries and their compensation have been examined, but we have still to consider the number of men involved, the hours they worked, and the pay they received. Unfortunately nothing absolute can be said about these questions. Datum concerning the permanent group of longshoremen of Halifax is sparse. The work patterns of the many transients are impossible to trace. Not even the company gangs

had a guaranteed number of hours each week. Some estimates remain of the number of men who belonged to the HLA (see chapter four), but since the port of Halifax was never a closed shop during this period, the figures include only a certain percentage of all waterfront workers. In fact, because it is impossible to determine the number of ships which entered the port and their tonnage, one cannot even compute potential man-hours of work on the docks. In spite of these qualifications, it is possible to say something about the hours worked and the wages earned by longshoremen.

The following is an excerpt of a confidential report submitted to the Department of Labour on 12 February 1942 by Vincent C. MacDonald, demonstrating the perennial uncertainty of work on the Halifax docks.

> The immediate point is that under existing conditions the supply of work (i.e. of tonnage to be handled) fluctuates enormously as between days, weeks, months and seasons. This is a cardinal fact affecting both the shipping and stevedoring companies and the longshoremen. Tonnage available is the work supply which constitutes the Demand for Labour; variation in the one necessarily affects the other.[57]

The longshoremen experienced long spells of work alternating with equally long spells of idleness. There were specific shifts with starting and finishing hours, meal times etcetera, which were established initially through tradition and later in wage agreements, but it would seem that they were cited to lend an aura of normalcy to longshoring. In most instances, when the dockers obtained a job they were compelled to forgo these luxuries and to work as long as they were required to by the

stevedoring agents. Shifts of over 20 hours were not uncommon,[58] although in the 1912 agreement dockers had the option of quitting work after 20 hours without prejudicing their chances for re-employment.[59] A letter to the editor of the Acadian Recorder in 1902, signed "from a longshoreman," gave a breakdown of the number of hours per day worked by the men hired for the S. S. Oruro: the distribution was 15, 9, and 20 hours, or 44 hours in a three day span.[60] The Labour Gazette in 1913 estimated the weekly hours of work as 60 but gave no indication as to how many men were included in this sample or in what part of the year it was taken.[61] It can be assumed that any longshoreman who tried to adhere to the utopia of an eight or nine hour day usually did so only once, because he probably would not have been rehired.

In October 1923, the ILA, Atlantic District, declared a shortened work week of 44 hours- or five and a half eight hour days. The Halifax shipping firms and agents declared that this demand was impracticable. Although an ideal number of hours for longshoremen to work, it was not suited to the traditional work rhythm of dock life. Realistically, it is doubtful that any docker in Halifax worked as many as 44 hours a week for any extended period. It was certainly not a common occurrence in Halifax, for a 44 hour week at 65¢ per hour meant that a docker would have earned $28.60 per week or $1,487.20 per year, and no substantiating evidence to that effect was found.

Theoretically, the day shift started at 7:00 or 8:00 a.m., depending on the season, and ended at 6:00 p.m. The night shift ran from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 or 8:00 a.m. After 1907 a wage differential was introduced for the night shift, and it would

seem that most shippers tried to remain within the confines of the ten hour day. The superintendent had to calculate whether it was cheaper to pay the longshoremen overtime or to face the penalty levied for over-extended dockage time. The following table, 3-1, comprises hours recorded in the Pickford and Black stevedoring payroll for the years 1920, 1922, 1924, and 1926.[62] It indicates that although the cheaper day shifts were preferred, night shifts were not eliminated. To a large extent the choice was determined by the nature of the vessel's cargo and the policy towards turnaround as dictated by the steamship companies to their Halifax agents.

Meal hours were from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., 12:00 to 1:00 a.m. and 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. When the longshoremen were asked to work through their eating hour, they received double pay, but no food. Sundays, Christmas, Good Friday, and Labour Day also merited double wages.[63] By 1920, the Halifax longshoremen were also being compensated over and above the normal wage schedule for their toil on vessels stranded or wrecked or those on fire or carrying munitions. They had won payment in 1909 for travelling time to and from vessels.

The struggle to gain payment for waiting time, that is, the period between the moment of hire and the actual commencement of work, was a more tedious battle and one not completely settled to the longshoremen's satisfaction or advantage. Again it was in the 1920 wage agreement that the dockers were first paid for this inconvenience. They received the full rate for the first hour of waiting and half rate for each succeeding hour. Prior to this date, dockers were fortunate if they received any

Table 3-1 Amount of Hours Recorded Monthly in the Stevedore Pay Rolls of Pickford and Black for the years, 1920, 1922, 1924 and 1926.

Month	1920 Day	1920 Night	1922 Day	1922 Night	1924 Day	1924 Night	1926 Day	1926 Night
January	45,765	12,172	17,402	2,356	24,289.5	3,131	22,071	2,004
February	46,591	16,029.5	13,002	578.5	28,644.5	2,992	19,233.5	4.490.75
March	47,363.5	11,175	27,256.5	5,945	24,494	5,419	22,409.5	9,079.5
April	56,945	14,061	28,244	5,065.5	18,179	3,584	25,629	4,315
May	35,516.5	3,585	23,769	3,026	19,283.5	1,023.5	14,561.5	1,798.5
June	47,788	8,791	18,762	1,547	9,746	1,196.5	14,841	692
July	45,633.5	5,580	23,307.5	1,346	15,975	2,037.5	15,019.5	806
August	22,493	3,425.5	25,897	29,835	13,581.5	860	10,561.5	1,006
September	26,706.5	2,322	12,425.5	1,550.5	16,099	1,168.5	21,745	4,168
October	16,776.5	2,098	11,129.5	1,397	19,281	2,974	13,374.5	4,401
November	11,980.5	2,600.5	18,670	2,947.5	15,264.5	2,066.5	19,576.5	5,224
December	16,648.5	2,251	14,623.5	2,631	21,133.5	4,323	21,893	8,815.5

money at all for the waiting period, especially in the early 1900s when the rule was no compensation. This rule was a particularly unfair practice since once the longshoremen were hired, they were committed to work for that stevedoring firm. If the ship was late in arriving or work was suspended through a lack of shunting facilities, the dockers were unable to go and seek employment on any other vessel because they would then have jeopardized any further chance of employ by the first firm. The longshoremen not only had to wait indefinitely, they had seldom any place to stay while they waited. Pickford and Black converted part of one of their dockside sheds to act as a shelter and lunchroom for the permanent gangs,[64] but it appears to have been the only such facility available. In January 1929 the harbour commission promised a shelter or rest place for the longshoremen at Deep Water, but in July of that year proper sanitary conveniences had still not been provided.[65]

The Report of the Commission on Hours of Labour, published in 1910 by the commissioner of public works and mines for the province of Nova Scotia, stated that, "It is difficult to ascertain how many hours per week each man gets on the average through the season and equally difficult to ascertain how much each earns on the average."[66] There is, however, one set of tangible data available and that is the uniform schedule of hourly wages received by all longshoremen for work performed on the docks of Halifax. The dockers were paid hourly and, depending on the shipping company, received their wages either weekly or, less commonly, after the completion of the work assigned for each ship.[67] Table 3-2 lists the wage schedules

and the year of each revision.[68] Although there was an overall rise in wages, they were obviously not isolated from fluctuations in the Nova Scotian economy. The relative strength of both bargaining parties can also be discerned and will be discussed in the following chapter.

Some average wages are listed in sources such as the Halifax newspapers and the Canadian census reports. Just how average they are is a debatable point: they would appear to be not too far removed from the truth for work of such a decidedly irregular and seasonal nature. The Acadian Recorder reported in 1902 that the average weekly wage for Halifax dockers did not exceed $6.00.[69] Five years later, the Halifax Herald gave a year round mean of $9.00 a week, with a low monthly rate of $20.00 and a high of $50.00, or $11.50 a week.[70] During the 'near strike' of 1912 the shipping agents of Furness, Withy, and Pickford and Black, reported to the papers that the average wage for dockers was $11.18 a week. John T. Joy, president of the HLA, disputed the accuracy of such a figure, claiming that the foremen's wages had been included to raise the average.[71] The Labour Gazette correspondent reported in 1913 the summer wage for a 60 hour week was $13.50 and that the winter wage was $15.00.[72] Finally, the Canadian census report for 1931 gave yearly average incomes for Halifax longshoremen in 1921 and 1931 as $670.00 and $549.00 respectively which average to $12.88 a week in 1921 and only $10.55 ten years later.[73] If all these figures are at all representative of the mean pay for dockers they would suggest that in spite of an hourly wage increase of 350% from 1907 to 1930, the average yearly income remained

Table 3-2 Schedule of Hourly Wages of Halifax Longshoremen, 1866-1932.

	Weekday Shifts		Holiday Shifts	
Date	Day	Night	Day	Night
	(¢)	(¢)	(¢)	(¢)
1866[1]	15	15	15	15
1872[1]	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5
1880[1]	20	20	20	20
1884[1]	25	25	50	50
1886[1]	20	20	20	20
1902	20	25	40	50
1907	25	30	50	60
1912	28	35	56	70
1914 (Hudson's Bay)	40	50	80	$1.00
1916	30	35	60	70
X [2]	40	55	80	$1.10
1919	45	60	90	$1.20
1920	65	75	$1.30	$1.50
1922	55	65	$1.10	$1.30
1924	65	75	$1.30	$1.50
1928	70	80	$1.40	$1.60
1932	63	72	$1.26	$1.44

relatively stagnant after 1907, despite the fast rising cost of living. A decreasing standard of living must then have been the result.

As the bulk of yearly earnings were accrued during the peak shipping season, the longshoremen then would have had to try to budget their gross income to compensate for the less productive months.[74] Since the 'big pay' was not very big, the longshoremen's salary had to be supplemented by the earnings of their families. It was not uncommon for the docker's wives, who did not usually go outside the home to work, to add to the family income by taking in laundry or performing other such jobs. The children, however, did work outside the home as soon as it was possible for them to do so.[75] It is no wonder that an editorial in the <u>Halifax Herald</u> contained the last few closing sentences:

> Can the 'longshoreman take his wife and dress her as she ought to be dressed and go to church on Sunday; can the 'longshoreman dress his children and send them to Sunday school as they ought to go? Should the 'longshoreman go to church on Sunday, should his children go to Sunday school, should he be permitted to marry and have children? Citizens of Halifax, wake-up, give your working man a chance, give him fair wages for a fair day's work and everything will be the better for it.[76]

In 1929 longshoremen in Halifax were among the best hourly paid in Eastern Canada as evidenced by the following hourly wage schedule: Halifax, 70¢; Charlottetown, 60¢; Saint John, 70¢; Quebec, 60¢; and Montreal, 65¢.[77] It is impossible to speculate, however, whether the average wages, which were determined on the accrued number of hours worked during the year, were comparable

or whether the Halifax longshoremen, who received the highest hourly rate, worked fewer hours and therefore earned less than their counterparts in the other ports.

The bane of all longshoremen was the seasonal fluctuations in port activity. As was reported in the Labour Gazette in 1942, "Seasonal and other fluctuations of work together with the daily uncertainty of employment tend to impair the workers' efficiency and to reduce his net annual earnings to a bare subsistence level."[78] Peak periods attracted casual labourers from other fields, and unless the trends reversed themselves, the transients remained around the docks seeking those longshoring jobs which did not require specific skills, thus displacing the permanent longshoremen and decreasing the amount of work. Whenever there were major strikes in nearby towns such as Amherst, New Glasgow and in Halifax itself, a fairly large number of those laid off or on strike simply drifted into town and headed towards the docks.[79] The closing of the port of Montreal in the winter was the beginning of Halifax's annual role as the premier port in Eastern Canada and marked the period of most activity and continuous employment along the waterfront. Men from Prospect, Sheet Harbour, and other nearby fishing villages made an annual pilgrimage to Halifax in order to increase their yearly incomes.[80] There was also an eastward migration of farmers from the Annapolis Valley who left their farms in the care of their families and tried to benefit from the peak employment period on the Halifax docks during a relatively inactive time on the homestead.[81] The following table, 3-3, from the Pickford and Black archival records, illustrates the

importance of the five winter months, when the bulk of the yearly income was earned.[82]

A headline in the Citizen summarized the situation as follows; "Halifax Longshoremen are Hard Workers - Toil All Winter on Freezing Wharves - And the Only Change Spring and Summer Bring is a reduced Chance to Secure Work."[83] The customary dull summer season was occasionally interrupted by bumper crops from the Annapolis Valley. More often, Halifax dockers left the city during the summer months and sought work at the ports of Quebec and Montreal. Others such as Michael J. Murphy, Sr., one of the leading members of the HLA during the 1910s and 1920s, went south to the United States and found employment in ports on the Great Lakes and on the Atlantic seaboard.[84] During the war, when a shortage of man-power and a heavy demand on port facilities occurred simultaneously, the summer season became important for those longshoremen who had remained in Halifax.[85] P. L. Clarey, correspondent for the Labour Gazette in Halifax, wrote constantly to its editor, R. H. Coates, reporting on the state of employment in the city. In a letter dated 15 September 1914, he added the following post scriptum:

> In conversation with Mr. John T. Joy, he informs me the longshoremen have been fairly active this month, so many men having gone into the militia, and a large number absent at Hudson Bay have made for fairly good conditions.[86]

The ports of Hudson Bay also offered employment to many of the Halifax permanent longshoremen during the war. Between 200 and 400 men went annually to the bay for the months of July to

Table 3-3 The Monthly Stevedoring Pay Roll of Pickford and Black for the years 1920, 1922, 1924, 1926.

Month	1920 ($)	1922 ($)	1924 ($)	1926 ($)
January	38,658.80	11,259.49	18,249.12	15,954.26
February	42,327.78	7,533.75	15,714.63	15,956.56
March	39,533.52	18,821.03	20,254.34	21,482.50
April	50,313.86	18,867.70	14,611.32	20,070.28
May	25,743.82	15,056.51	13,400.07	10,923.92
June	37,864.43	11,329.07	7,279.73	10,238.34
July	19,754.00	13,722.40	51,955.84	10,448.25
August	17,246.76	16,168.75	9,492.53	7,926.00
September	19,199.95	8,241.85	11,361.89	10,451.33
October	12,507.29	7,068.44	14,863.83	12,019.60
November	9,767.78	12,461.63	11,505.63	16,708.01
December	12,598.00	9,940.31	17,063.81	20,919.78

November in order to load grain on the vessels using these ports.[87] The pay, exceptionally good, was considered too good by some of their betters, for the dockers did not display the proper respect for the protestant work ethic upon their return.

> About 200 longshoremen arrived home from Hudson Bay the first of the month, each with $420 in his pocket. There has been no complaint of lack of work from these men, and very few of them are anxious to start until they get rid of some of their money.[88]

After the war, however, the labour pool was flooded with an increasing number of ready workers. The longshoremen were naturally affected by this situation. Conditions were hard at the docks for the first few years of the 1920s owing to the general shipping depression, but they seem to have improved by 1924. In a way, the longshoremen were more fortunate than most of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers for their slack season occurred during the summer months when heating fuel was not a necessity and when vegetable gardens could be kept. They had to be so lucky. The Halifax Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor offered assistance only from October to April of each year.

It was not an easy existence for even the longshoring elite. One of Woodsworth's colleagues told him that: "I've tried almost everything but do my best I can't get ahead of the game."[89] And so it was a natural extension from this state for dockers in general to pilfer to compensate for their fate. John Fisher said that "a stevedore thinks it's natural right to pilfer, to take anything he could (sic) take."[90] In 1913 the Halifax Board of

Trade offered a $25.00 reward for information leading to conviction in case of pilfering on the wharves and ships. But it is doubtful if this offer was seriously considered by many of the longshoremen, for it threatened to breach the wall of their solidarity. The informant faced instant ostracism from his peers as well as the possibility of physical assault.[91]

VII Conclusion

Throughout this period, longshoring remained a hard, physically demanding form of employment, carried out under the most primitive of working conditions and relatively unaided by technology. The hard-core among the waterfront workers, the stevedores, foremen, gang bosses and permanent longshoremen, were skilled in the art of loading and discharging ships. They were among the elite of the unskilled and semi-skilled labourers of Halifax because their skill gave them an unwritten guarantee of employment when jobs were available. But they did not comprise the majority of all those who sought work along the piers.

The necessary drudgery and repetitiveness of the actual transhipment of commodities required no other skill beyond that of brute strength and an ability to endure it. Job knowledge and work experience were not all that necessary when labour was scarce. Thus the waterfront became a haven for the unemployed of other trades because hiring was conducted on a casual, day to day basis. In order to combat the uncertainties of dock life, longshoremen tended to develop an extraordinary sense of solidarity towards

their colleagues and an extreme distrust of all outsiders, transients, and managers. The Halifax dockers, already possessed of a solidarity based on their unique ethnic and religious ancestry, had this solidarity consolidated with the establishment of the HLA in 1907.

Longshoremen, as most labourers, had to be hard men to survive the hours and the work pace. Conditions were not ideal and so their personalities appeared distasteful and distorted to those people not involved in such work. Perhaps in order to improve this public image, the ILA adopted as their motto: "Sobriety, Truth, Justice and Morality."[92] It is more than likely though, that if and when this was practised, it was directed solely towards other longshoremen and their families.

Chapter Three

1. Interviews: John J. Campbell, John Fisher.

2. Of all the longshoremen recorded in the 1921 Canadian census report, 75.8% were between the ages of 25 and 49, and there were more men in the over 50 age bracket than in the under 25 one.
   Canada. Census Report, 1921.

3. Interview: John Fisher.
   Fisher's comments could be construed as one class superimposing its social values on another. However the subject of heavy drinking was obviously one which bothered the longshoremen as well because it did taint their reputation. A letter to The Longshoreman from William M'Clausland, local 314, Calais, Maine, stated that:

   > I want to call the attention of the readers of the Longshoreman to a habit which exists among some of our members in nearly all communities, that of indulging in intoxicating liquors. This is a violation of a rule made for the good of our Association. Nevertheless it occasionally occurs that a brother is called upon to be the judge and decide for himself which course to pursue and still preserve his honor and feel satisfied that his decision was beyond reproach.
   > TL, July 1910.

4. Interviews: John Fisher, John J. Campbell.

5. Canada. Department of Labour Library (DLL), Report of the Inquiry Commission on the St. Lawrence Ports, L.A. Picard, D.B.A., Commissioner (October 1967), p.18a.

6. The only time there was a guaranteed minimum wage for Halifax longshoremen was during World War II when qualified dockers were needed; yet most had gone over to Europe or had left the waterfront to work in the more lucrative war-time industries.
   PAC, Department of Labour (DL), "Longshoremen and Stevedoring at the Port of Halifax, General Correspondence, 1942", RG 27, v.664, file 6-5-6-3-4.

7. Interview: John Fisher.

8. Interview: John J. Campbell.

9. HH, 19 December 1925.

10. Charles Barnes, The Longshoremen (Philadelphia, 1915), p.1; Elizabeth Ogg, Longshoremen and their Homes (New York, 1939), p.20.

11. Interviews: Gordon Raftus, David Quinn; Mail Star, 8 July 1976.

12. A card man was one who had a temporary work permit issued by the union.

13. Interviews: Gordon Raftus, John Fisher.

14. J.S. Woodsworth, On the Waterfront: with the workers on the docks at Vancouver - some observations and experiences (Ottawa, c.1919), p.13.

15. John Lovell, Stevedores and Dockers (London, 1969), p.35.

16. G. Stedman Jones, Outcast London (Oxford, 1971), p. 42.

17. PAC,DL, Peter Garnier, president of local 269 to V.C. McDonald, Assistant Deputy Minister of Labour, 1942, RG 27, v.664, file 6-5-6-3-4.

18. Daily Echo (DE), 23 January 1914.

19. Interviews: John Fisher, Gordon Raftus.

20. Ibid., John Fisher, David Quinn, John J. Campbell, Gordon Raftus.

21. C.H. Pritchett, "Technology and the Longshoremen," Canadian Labour (January, 1973), p.6.

22. Ibid.

23. Interview: John Fisher.

24. PAC, National Photography Collection, "H.M.S. Ariadne coaling (Halifax, N.S., c. 1903)," P.A. 28472.

25. Ian McKay, "The Working Class of Metropolitan Halifax, 1850 - 1889" (unpublished Honours thesis, Dalhousie University, 1975), p.185.

26. Interviews: David Quinn, Gordon Raftus.

27. TC, 18 April 1930.

28. Woodsworth, On the Waterfront, pp.11-12.

29. TC, 18 April 1930.

30. M.A. Ryan, "Stevedores Help to Make Port Records," *The Open Gateway* (July, 1931), p.11.

31. Province of Nova Scotia. *Report of the Commission on Hours of Labour* (Halifax, 1910), pp.90-98.

32. For example, the following entries from the logs of Pickford and Black:

    Tuesday, 16 Jan.1923: s/s *Otter* arrived at Halifax from Jamaica (9 a.m.)
    Friday, 19 Jan.1923: s/s *Otter* sailed from Halifax for Cuba and Jamaica (4:30 p.m.)

    Tuesday, 30 Jan.1923: s/s *Andalusia* arrived at Halifax from Port Antonio (10 a.m.)
    Friday, 2 Feb. 1923: s/s *Andalusia* sailed from Halifax for Jamaica and Cuba (1:30 p.m.)

    KMLA, Pickford and Black papers, *Daily Journals*, 1923.

33. Interviews: David Quinn, Gordon Raftus.

34. *LG*, Table of Industrial Accidents,July 1911 to June 1912, incl.

35. *LG*, Table of Industrial Accidents,June 1906 to May 1907, incl.

36. Interviews: John J. Campbell, John Fisher, David Quinn, Gordon Raftus.

37. International Labour Office, *Guide to Safety and Health in Dock Work* (Geneva, 1976).

38. -----. "Safety Code Covers Waterfront Work," *The Open Gateway* (July, 1931), pp.27-29.

39. *ELN*, 14 January 1911.

40. *EM*, 4 January 1911.

41. KMLA, Pickford and Black papers, *Daily Journals*, 1925.

42. *AR*, 22 October 1912.

43. *MC*, 7 March 1900.

44. Interview: John Fisher.

45. *ELN*, 30 April 1910.

46. *Ibid.*, 25 February 1911.

47. *HH*, 30 December 1911.

48. LG, November 1915, pp.1540-41.

49. Ibid., September 1920, p.1193.

50. TC, 6 August 1920.

51. Ibid., 25 April 1924.

52. Ibid., 5 March 1926.

53. LG, September 1927, p.968.

54. Ibid., September 1928, pp.962-64.

55. Ibid., August 1929, pp.874-75.

56. V.J. Paton, "How Nova Scotia Handles its Extraterritorial Problems with Special Reference to Longshoremen," Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions (Halifax, 1924), pp.21-26.

57. PAC,DL, "Confidential Report: Report of Ship Loading Operations in the Port of Halifax," 12 February 1942, by Vincent C. MacDonald,K.C., RG 27, v.664, file 6-5-6-1, 2.

58. Province of Nova Scotia. Report of the Commission of Hours of Labour, p.93.

59. KMLA, Pickford and Black papers, wage agreement; HLA and s/s companies of Halifax, 1912.

60. AR, 10 April 1902.

61. LG, February 1913, p.885.

62. PANS, Pickford and Black papers, "Stevedoring Pay Roll Records, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1926," MG 3, file 1709.

63. As part of the settlement of the 1902 longshoremen's strike, Thanksgiving Day was also included in this list of official holidays. However, by 1907, it had been dropped.

64. Interview: John Fisher.

65. TC, 25 January 1929.

66. Province of Nova Scotia. Report of the Commission of Hours of Labour, p.95.

67. Interviews: John J. Campbell, David Quinn, Gordon Raftus, John Fisher.

68. The data used in this table came from the following sources:
   1. McKay, "The Working Class of Metropolitan Halifax, 1850 - 1889," pp. 183, 184, 189, 197, 198.

   2. the year is not known for this increase. According to the LG (May 1919, p. 604), the wage increase of 1919 was a 5¢ an hour increase to the new rate of 45¢. Therefore sometime between 1916 and 1919 there must have occurred another salary advance which this researcher was unable to find recorded anywhere.

   3. the remaining figures came from KMLA, Pickford and Black papers, wage agreements; HLA and s/s companies of Halifax, 1902, 1907, 1912, 1914, 1916, 1919, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1927-28, 1932.

69. AR, 3 April 1902.

70. HH, 23,27 May 1907.

71. Ibid., 1 October 1912.

72. LG, February 1913, p.885.

73. Canada. Census Report, 1931.

74. The Halifax dockers worked an average of only 30.13 weeks in 1931.
Ibid.

75. Jones, Outcast London, p.43; TC, 9 November 1923.

76. HH, 29 May 1907.

77. PAC, DL, "Wage Rates of Stevedores in Different Ports in Canada," LG, October 1942, p.54, RG 27, v.664, file 6-5-6-1,5.

78. Ibid.

79. PAC, DL, Clarey to Coates, 14 July 1914, RG 27, v.3.

80. Interview: John Fisher.

81. TC, 18 April 1930.

82. PANS, Pickford and Black papers, "The Monthly Stevedoring Pay Roll, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1926," MG 3, file 1709.

83. TC, 18 April 1930.

84. Interview: John Fisher; -----. "Well Known Trade Unionist and Waterfront Worker," History of the Labor Movement,

(Halifax, 1938), p. 151.

85. HH, 30 December 1911.

86. PAC, DL, Clarey to Coates, 15 September 1915, RG 27, v.3.

87. HH, 30 September 1912; LG, December 1914, p.697.

88. PAC, DL, Clarey to Crothers, 10 November 1915, RG 27, v.3.

89. Woodsworth, On the Waterfront, p.16.

90. Interview: John Fisher.

91. The evidence can be seen that in 1929 only six arrests were made on the docks in connection with the charge of pilferage, despite the fact that over 1,000 union men were working at the docks during the year, plus an indefinite number of transients.
Halifax Harbour Commission. Port of Halifax. Annual Report, 1929, p.29.

92. TL, June 1911.

Chapter Four

The Process of Unionization in the Port of Halifax

Longshoremen possessed a fairly strong group solidarity in their shared religio-ethnic origins. However, the casual nature of longshoring, its irregularity, and its lack of security for all but the upper echelons in the dock hierarchy, imposed the need for a form of organization that went beyond group affiliation. The following is a portion of an editorial, which appeared in the February 1914 issue of The Longshoremen, lamenting the disadvantages inherent in longshoring while stressing the need for strong unions:

> Employment along the Atlantic seaboard fluctuates according to season and the amount of water borne freight. This makes employment more or less casual. The continual coming and going of new faces creates a burden on the regularly employed longshoremen and makes it imperative to have each port organized as solidly as possible, also to have a system of inner organization to enable all the ports to co-operate as one in all matters of mutual interest. [1]

The Halifax Longshoremen's Association, in its myriad shapes, names, and formats, attempted to control all operations involved in the function of the waterfront of the city. Its ultimate affiliation with the International Longshoremen's Association helped to consolidate this effort. The longshoremen of Halifax were eventually able to exert some control over not only wage

schedules, but working conditions.

As early as 1854 the dock labourers of Halifax had organized and struck to secure higher wages. However, as so frequently happened to 19th century labour movements, the *élan* for concerted action disappeared once the immediate goal had been attained. Twelve years later the longshoremen again combined to demand an increase in pay for their toil and, as before, reinforced this action with a strike. Both these strikes were successful, but the casual combinations of labourers on which they were based were short lived. In 1873 there was an effort to form a union in the modern understanding of the word and its function,[2] but it was not until the 1880s that the men formed one of Halifax's largest unions, one which remained constantly in the forefront of the city's labour movements. The dominance of steam technology by the 1880s brought about the speed-up which disrupted the work rhythm and traditions of dock life. Although it placed increased pressure on the longshoremen to meet the steamers' shipping schedules, it also worked to the men's advantage. Dockers, who had always been able to control the pace of work along the waterfront, were now in a far superior bargaining position, based as it was on the urgency for fast ship turnarounds.

This new potential to effectively paralyze the port and the city through work stoppages was the catalytic agent in the creation of a strong union of Halifax longshoremen, who were undoubtedly aware of the successes which their fellow dockers were experiencing in Quebec and Saint John.[3] Although they could not totally emulate these accomplishments at that time

owing to the different nature of the port structures, this knowledge must have offered both encouragement and inspiration in the transition from the early stages of unionization to the mature collective body. By 1930, however, the HLA had surpassed the longshoremen's unions of both Quebec and Saint John in strength; indeed, it was likely the strongest union in Halifax both in numbers and in structure.

From the year 1882, there was a definite organizational process among the dockers of Halifax, although not without the occasional periods of disbandment, loss of membership, and self-initiated withdrawals from larger labour bodies such as the ILA, the American Federation of Labour (AFL) and the Halifax Trades and Labor Council (TLC). These events, however, were neither drastic enough nor damaging enough to halt the progression from a neophyte union, whose sole purpose was to secure wage increases, to the more complete labour organization which actively campaigned for improved working and living conditions for the longshoremen and workers of Halifax.[4]

I Early Association in Halifax

The Halifax Labourers' Union was founded on 13 April 1882 as an association of casual and permanent labourers, longshoremen, and screwmen. This union had some of the aspects of a benevolent society, since a fund was established from which members drew financial assistance and relatives received death benefits. Membership had risen to 325 men three months after its establishment and by 1883 had increased to 518. There was

a large and elaborate executive, composed of an eight man executive and a 12 man council, which supervised the expenditure of dues and fees, distribution of benefits to members of one year standing, and acted as bargaining agents for the new union.[5]

In 1884 the union struck for a reduction in hours and an increase in wages; it won the increase. However, the union faced the omnipresent problem confronting labourers' unions, that of the virtual impossibility of enrolling all potential workers in the union. The non-union men would gladly work as strike-breakers or, after a strike, at a rate lower than that agreed upon by the union and management. Although the 1884 strike had secured wages of 25¢ an hour for weekdays and double time on holidays, by 1886 the wage scale had reverted to the 1880 rate of a straight 20¢.[6] As a Trades and Labor Council historian commented:

> The history of the Labour Movement on the waterfront of the Port of Halifax would make interesting reading. Its earlier record has been a succession of failures. The workmen realizing the necessity of banding themselves together for the common good, would form a union, and a large amount of enthusiasm would be generated, the men crowding into line, and for a time everything would go along successfully, but the reaction would set in and the membership gradually dwindle away again.[7]

The Halifax Labourers' Union did not dissolve despite this setback; in fact it "maintained its cohesiveness and even supplemented its constitutional structure with an ornate system of ward representation."[8] The inability of the union to maintain the wages set by the 1884 agreement must have demoralized some, and

must have caused a loss in membership. The union was reorganized in either 1897 or 1898 as the Port Workers Union of Halifax structured along the lines of straight constitutional representation.[9] A concerted effort to consolidate the position of the union must have been made during the next few years, for in February 1900 the longshoremen refused en masse to work a mail steamer on Sunday unless the steamship companies guaranteed their fines for working on the Sabbath. The Halifax-bound freight had to be taken to Saint John and then returned to Halifax and discharged on Monday.[10] The men obviously were regrouping.

The Port Workers' Union would appear to have been the only representative organ of the longshoremen at that time and it was strictly a local union. By 1901 there appears to have been further reorganization, because in that year two Halifax locals of the ILA were chartered. In August local 274 of the ILA was chartered; just before that, however, in July, the Longshoremen's Association had been chartered as local 269.[11] It is difficult to account for the existence of two ILA locals in a small port such as Halifax. There is no record of whether these locals were based on specific groups within the dock-yard hierarchy.[12] The similarity in the longshoremen's religio-ethnic backgrounds, and the fact that both groups were chartered by the ILA, makes dubious the explanation that separate locals were established because of tensions between cultures or between internationalists and local or Canadian oriented unionists. There is, however, one conceivable interpretation for the existence of two locals. Halifax longshoremen did not work at coal heaving, a distinct

waterfront job requiring hard, dirty labour and regarded as being unrelated to the local longshoring world and inferior in status. It had evolved into something suitable for black Haligonians who were not allowed membership in the Port Workers' Union of Halifax. However, since the blacks had to work alongside the white longshoremen, they might have been viewed as potential strike-breakers if unorganized. The organization of coal handlers would have held the hope of union solidarity prevailing over economic opportunity.[13] In April 1902, the Port Workers' Union of Halifax or the Halifax Longshoremen's Association, local 269,[14] struck for higher wages and improved working conditions. Local 274 seems to have disappeared by this time and its fate can only be speculated; it either merged with local 269, or, if it was indeed predominantly a black coal handlers union, simply ended its ILA affiliation. This latter course seems possible, for there was a supporting coal handlers strike during that of the HLA. The strike ended in partial success for the dockers. They regained the rate of night wages won in 1884, but the day rate remained below that gained 18 years previously.

After the 1902 strike the HLA appears to have entered a period of dormancy which lasted until a strike in 1907; indeed, there is evidence that there was no union at all between these two years. The Halifax longshoremen had severed connections with the ILA in 1902, and they gave up their union charter granted by the federal government in the same year. Newspapers agreed that the union had dissolved after the settlement of the 1902 strike, and the 1906-07 directory of labour organizations compiled by the

Labour Gazette did not list the HLA. Indeed, during the 1907 strike the longshoremen claimed that they were non-unionized and hence were not subject to any decisions imposed by a Board of Conciliation as dictated by the Lemieux Act.

Nevertheless, some basic union structure must have existed. Union records indicate a continuous existence of the Halifax union from 1897-98 to the present day, and the organizational strength exhibited by longshoremen during the 1907 strike would suggest the survival of patterns of unionization at the level of the community structure of the waterfront. In 1907, however, a permanent longshoremen's union was finally established in Halifax:

> During the spring of 1907, murmurs of dissatisfaction were heard along the waterfront, the men feeling that some increase in pay should be granted. Again the spirit of co-operation became rampant and the men gradually came together into one body. Mass meetings were called at which this matter was thoroughly discussed, finally pledging themselves to stand by one another in their request for an increase in wages. May 24th the men ceased work and the most successful strike in the annals of the port was inaugurated. The outcome of the movement was the men receiving their request and the formation of a strong Longshoremen's Union. Since then the union, instead of dwindling away as it formerly did, has steadily grown until it is at present the largest in the city.[15]

The name of this association of longshoremen varies with the source, but whatever the title, there is a consensus of opinion that there was a union of dockers in 1907 and it remained in existence from that date.[16] In 1911 the Allan Line workers and some members of the HLA led a tentative, but apparently unsuccessful, movement towards reaffiliation with the ILA.[17] It

would appear that not all the longshoremen of Halifax were convinced that joining an international union would significantly ameliorate their bargaining position and thus some men wished to remain independent until their union's position was more secure. It is obvious, however, that the International wanted the Halifax union to join its association and worked towards that end.

> The Longshoremen's Association are still making fine headway and one longs to see such a fine aggregation of men connected with our International movement. But let us hope that it will not be long before such a thing is an accomplished fact. If that sterling worker, Brother John Joy along with his brother officers read the prevailing signs it will not be long before the I.L.A. banner will float in Halifax and consolidate the waterfront of the Atlantic coast.[18]

It was not until 15 July 1913 that the HLA received, through the efforts of John T. Joy, president of the local union, and V. P. Tighe of ILA headquarters, its third charter from the International Longshoremen's Association. It became local 269, after a large number of men agreed to this move from local, single union status to an international affiliation.[19]

The HLA grew from 1907. The Eastern Labor News reported in 1911 that:

> The Longshoremen's Association has reached a state of organization on the waterfront that has never been equalled by any organization of the port in that line. Every man who works on the docks does so with a union card in his pocket. The men engaged in the work, no doubt, are fully aware of the results of this good condition of affairs and stand solidly for Trade Unionism.[20]

This optimism prevailed until the start of World War I. Each annual report of local 269, published in the Evening Mail, extolled the advance of the union. In the 1911 report; "the past year ... [was] ... the most progressive in the history of the organization"[21] and in the following year's report: that this was "the most prosperous year ... [the] ... history of ... [the] ... association."[22]

Although there is no consistent source of statistics on union membership, the following table, 4-1, gleaned from a variety of sources, does give some impression of its growth.

Table 4-1 Union Membership

Month and Year	Number of Members
April 1902[a]	700 plus
May 1907[b]	500 plus
January 1909[c]	620
January 1910[d]	600-800
October 1912[e]	800
January 1913[f]	840
January 1914[g]	425-600
x 1916[h]	300-500
January 1920[i]	1,100
December 1929[j]	1,200
April 1930[k]	1,300

[23]

In 1914 the port lost its role as the winter base for the Royal

mail and cargo boats. Around 200 fewer men were employed consistently at the waterfront because these boats had made regular weekly stops at Halifax, resulting in a more or less guaranteed number of jobs for the dockers. Although the Royal boats only carried around 1,000 tons each, the cargo had a higher than normal piece-weight ratio because it consisted of heavy metalware from Bristol. A larger number of labourers was then required to handle it.[24] With the departure of these boats all the longshoremen on the docks had to compete for the remaining jobs.

As is evident from table 4-1, the war years saw a decline in union members. The shortage of labour obviated to some extent the need for a union, since companies, fearing work stoppages, would have invariably met the demands of their men for better wages and benefits. The shipping recession and general provincial depression of the early 1920s reversed the position of strength, however, and longshoremen once more saw the utility of unionization. The HLA solidified its hold over most port facilities, and by the late 1920s and early 1930s only union men were ensured the possibility of jobs in all but the peak periods. Local 269 attained the position where it could effectively influence some of the wage levels, as well as working conditions.[25] John J. Campbell, vice president of local 269 and vice president of the ILA Atlantic Executive, estimates that at no time during this organizational period were there more than 30% non-union men working on the docks.[26]

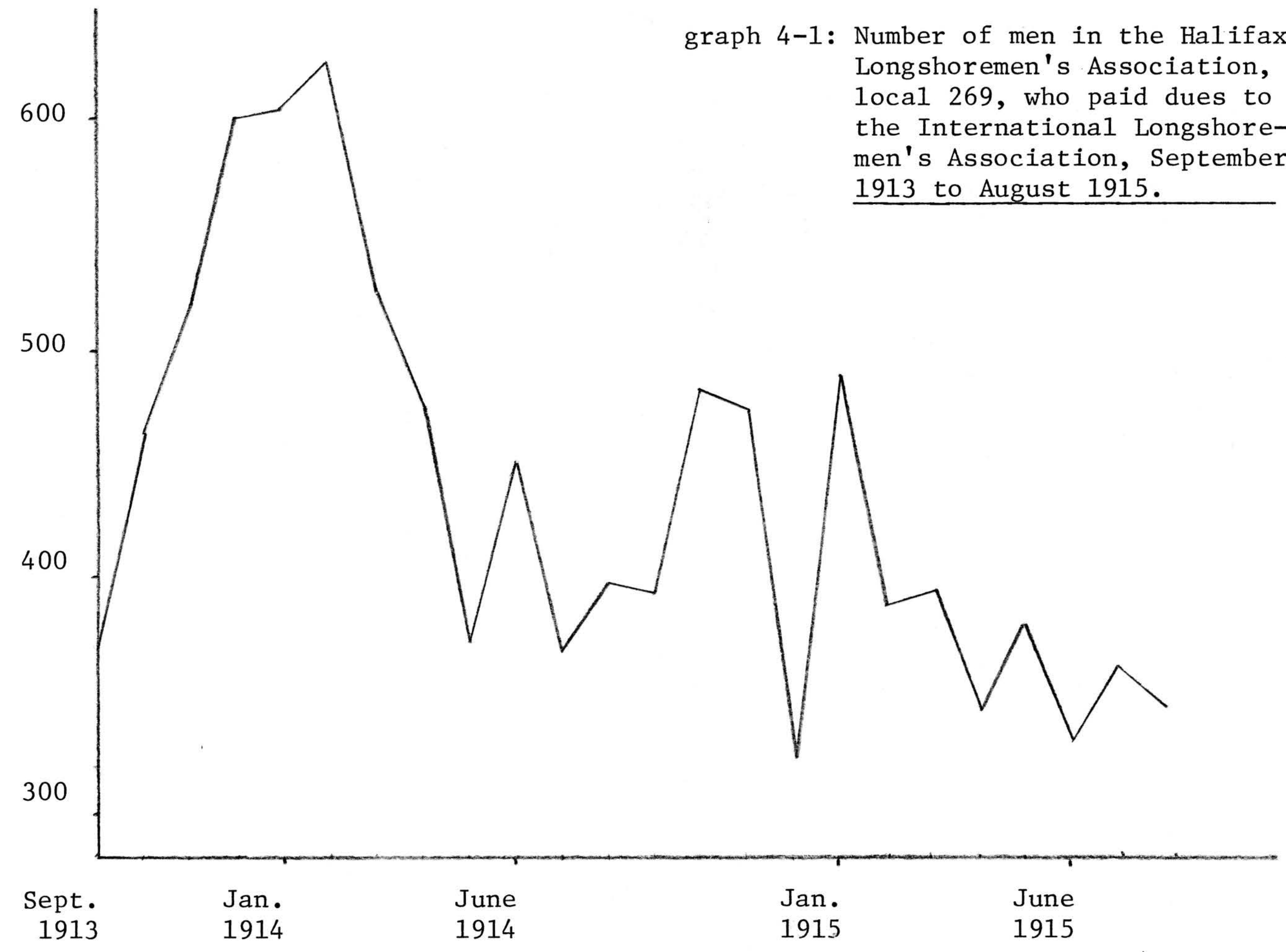
As the amount of work available on the docks of Halifax varied with the fluctuations of the shipping season, so did union

membership. Applications were high during the months of November to April, but for the remaining months union membership sank to those who were permanent longshoremen. The following graph, 4-1,[27] demonstrates the seasonal pattern of union membership.

II Admission to the HLA

Admission to the HLA was based upon the same conditions involved in the hiring process. A man was admitted if he: had served a successful, though unofficial, apprenticeship of quality casual labour on the docks, or if he knew someone in the union executive, whereby the aforementioned probationary period was waived. The executive committee, which ran the union, alone decided which longshoremen and stevedores joined their association.[28] If an aspiring longshoreman met either of the above qualifications he could become a union member providing he had the necessary money to pay the initiation fee and regular monthly dues. He also had to be white. An unwritten though rigorously enforced union regulation prohibited the admittance of blacks into local 269. Thus the HLA was an important bulwark in maintaining racial segregation among the working class in the city.[29]

Membership in the union did not necessarily ensure that a longshoreman would get any work; it merely meant that he became part of the system of preferential hiring. Arthur M. Sullivan, president of the HLA in the 1930s, used to tell the longshoremen as they paid their dues: "We guarantee you nothing!"[30] Membership did, however, lessen the risk of waiting behind the chain



graph 4-1: Number of men in the Halifax Longshoremen's Association, local 269, who paid dues to the International Longshoremen's Association, September 1913 to August 1915.

with the casual labourers, and the member was assured of getting union rates. If a docker was unable to keep up his monthly dues, his name was removed from the union roll and it was only reinscribed after the payment of another initiation fee as well as all dues owed in arrears.[31]

There are conflicting data concerning the actual amounts the longshoremen were required to pay to enter the union and to retain their membership. For the early period, 1907 to 1914, the newspapers seem to be in agreement as to the regular dues but do not mention any initiation fee. With the reorganization of the longshoremen's association in June 1907, members of 'good standing' were expected to pay 10¢ a month towards maintaining the union and its purpose: "the mutual improvement and the consideration of matters of importance in connection with longshoremen's work and the interests of the port in that respect."[32] Between 1907 and 1909 the dues were increased to 10¢ a week[33] and in February 1909, they were again raised by an additional 15¢ to 25¢ a week.[34]

After the war, when unions were generally suffering, coverage of the annual meetings of the HLA disappeared from the papers and from 1920 to 1930 union events receive but scant mention, and that in the Citizen. On 6 January 1930 the Evening Mail reported that the initiation fee was to be increased from $15.00 to $25.00.[35] This report is the only discovered record quoting an initial membership rate, although there are frequent allusions to such a fee in the newspapers. The union representatives who were interviewed, however, stated quite positively that it cost 50¢ to join and 25¢ a month thereafter[36] to remain in the HLA. They could

have been referring to the depression era of the 1930s when a monthly reduction is most probable, but their information concerning the initiation fee is decidedly out of line with that reported in the Evening Mail. One can only surmise, therefore, that there were both regular membership dues and an initiation fee which appeared sometime after 1907.

The HLA managed to collect a substantial sum from these fees. In 1910 the gross income was reported to be $2,664.00; in 1911, $2,240; and in 1912 the cash balance was over $1,500.[37] Although there appear to be no other totals listed, subsequent annual reports mentioned in the newspapers record that the union was in a healthy financial state. Affiliation with the ILA cost $10.00 for the charter received in 1913 and an additional monthly outlay of 15¢ per member.[38] These rates obviously were increased during the following period, but again there is no absolute source of information as to when or by how much.

There is room for conjecture as to what exactly the HLA received from its affiliation with the ILA. Prior to the 1902 strike, the union had been in communication with the international union and was advised to give 30 days notice to the shipping companies of its desire for a wage increase and also to warn them of the possibility of a strike if acceptable terms could not be reached. Because the HLA had already done this, when the headquarters was so informed, they counselled the HLA to call the strike.[39] Nevertheless, there does not appear to have been any concrete benefit such as strike pay derived from this alliance. John Fisher believes that all the ILA was interested in was its proportion of the union dues.[40] This viewpoint is

obviously biased; still, there does not appear to have been much interaction between the international and its Halifax local.

III Benefits Provided by the HLA

THe HLA's treasury served humanitarian functions. In 1908 the union established a death benefit fund, from which relatives of deceased members were awarded $50.00 whether the death had occurred as the result of natural causes or was accidental.[41] It is not recorded whether any restrictions based on the length of membership in the union were placed on the award; one can only speculate that it was left to the discretion of the union executive.[42] The sending of letters of condolence to the bereaved from the union was also a permanent part of the executives' function.[43] The union also ensured that any member who died penniless and without family was not obliged to have a pauper's funeral.

> A loyal member died in the Victoria General Hospital not long ago and relatives could not be found to claim the body; the union took complete charge of everything in connection with the funeral and the remark was passed by an outsider that, judging from the numbers who attended and the quality of undertaking the funeral looked as though some great public personage of note was being interred.[44]

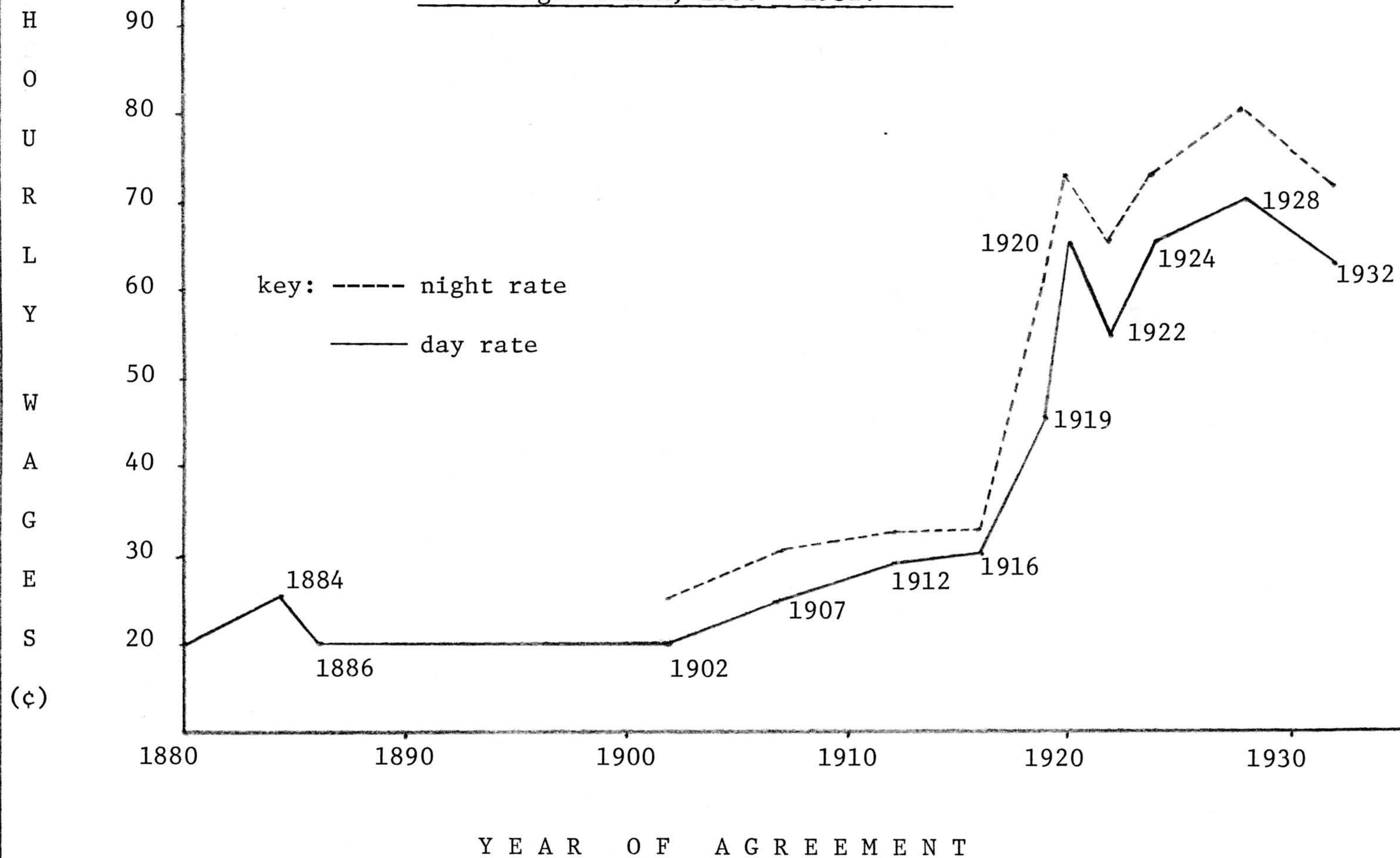
The HLA also provided for its less fortunate members. In 1909, for example, brothers James Foley and James Leonard, who had lost their Lockman Street homes in fires, were given $50.00 by the union to enable them to start replacing their basic belongings.[45] Dockers, with the help of the union's business agent,

were aided in the settlement of their compensation claims.

This benevolent side of the HLA did not affect a large percentage of union members. The truly vital function of the union for most of the dockers was its ability to represent successfully their interests in negotiations with the shipping companies. Agreements contracted between these two parties covered wages and working conditions. By studying wage settlements, seasonal shift hours, holidays, and pay differentials, it is possible to obtain an accurate impression of the relative strength of both parties and the increasing bargaining power of the union. The changes in the various terms of these agreements offer insight into the general state of shipping and of the provincial economy.

The following graph, 4-2, illustrates the wage schedules agreed upon by the HLA and "certain steamship companies doing business in the port of Halifax."[46] Wages had steadily increased from 1897, perhaps not keeping up with the cost of living, but at least demonstrating an overall, upward mobility. The rise was relatively gradual until 1916, from which date the hourly rate soared until 1921. It should be noted that after 1907 the HLA did not hold one general strike for increased wages or improved working conditions until the 1970s. This situation would seem to indicate rather harmonious working relations between labour and management, as well as skillful manoeuvering in the art of 'trade-offs'.

The first external influence to create the drastic reshaping of the wage schedule was, of course, the war which brought about labour scarcity and an escalating cost of living.



graph 4-2: Schedule of hourly wages for Halifax longshoremen, 1880 - 1932.

Definitely the most dramatic increase, however, was the 20¢ an hour boost which occurred between 1919 and 1920. The union's control of the docks, which at that point was complete, forced the shipping companies to acquiesce to its demands; any strike at that time would have prevented the port from benefiting in the post-war shipping boom.[47] The HLA may also have been indirectly aided by the great spirit of labour unrest which pervaded the country in 1919 and 1920. The union's demands might have been accepted by the shipping concerns out of fear that unless a substantial increase was granted, the same situation would occur in Halifax. For the same reason the dockers might have acquiesced to the reduction in the hourly rate in 1922 having witnessed the futility of the fight against such a decrease in Montreal and Vancouver.[48] The union did manage to limit the planned cut of 15¢ an hour to 10¢.[49] As well, the companies continued to recognize the union, which guaranteed at least a quasi-closed shop port. The 1920 rate was again secured in 1923, and wages rose until 1932 when they declined during the Great Depression.

Halifax longshoremen made respectable though slow progress in bettering their wages. For example, wage differentials for working unyielding or dangerous cargoes were only introduced in the third decade of the 20th century, but once obtained they were not forfeited. Perhaps more revealing about the progress made by the HLA are the changing seasonal limits and their starting-shift hours. Until 1909, the day shift at the docks began at 7:00 a.m. and finished at 6:00 p.m. In the 1909 agreement seasonal variations were introduced. The period from 1 November

until 1 April[50] was designated the winter season for payment purposes, and the day shift during this season started one hour later, still finishing, however, at 6:oo p.m. The later start allowed the men to begin when it was daylight, thereby reducing the number of potential accidents. Theoretically, if the same number of hours were worked per day during the winter season, the longshoremen were entitled to an extra hour at the night rate.

After the 1909 agreement the union and the shipping companies tended to trade off the length of the winter season with the amount of wage increases. In 1912 for example, the winter season was reduced by 15 days to 15 November to 31 March; however, salaries were increased.[51] For the dockers, the 1920 contract seems to have been the most advantageous of all until that of 1929; not only did hourly pay increase by over 44.4% from the previous agreement of 1919, but winter now officially arrived on 1 October and summer, 1 May. Thus for seven months of the year, the longshoremen had the potential benefit of an extra hour's work with overtime pay.[52] In the 1922 agreement, the fate of the winter season paralleled that of the wage situation; it was shortened by two months, returning to the condition of 1909.[53] In 1929, however, the union gained not only a wage increase but a reduction in the summer season from 1 April to 15 October.[54] The union seems to have won the battle of short shifts by 1929, because the 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. day shift was fixed for the whole year and the nine hour day finally came to the docks of Halifax. This agreement was also the first to allow that a docker had only to work a definite number of hours under normal circumstances.[55] Prior to 1929 it was generally accepted that

longshoremen had to put in as many hours as their walking boss deemed necessary.

There were other, more standard clauses in the different agreements signed between the longshoremen and the shipping companies of Halifax, such as waiting time and work on stranded or wrecked vessels. However, they closely mirrored the trends found in the readjustments of wages and the lengths of seasons. Until 1929 the union seemed more intent on maintaining existing agreements and boosting the hourly pay rates than in achieving major improvements in working conditions. This stance can perhaps be attributed to the precarious state of labour in Nova Scotia during the period and to a belief that it was more important to stabilize the position of the union and to secure control over all hiring.

The November 1927-November 1928 contract began a new policy of having clauses concerning the actual working conditions on the docks inserted in the official agreement. From that date, if a winchman could not be seen by the hatchtender, a docker had to be employed to give the signal to both men. A man holding a turn on a winch was not required to attend to the valve or lever and would only have to attend to one winch at a time.[56] The next agreement, that of 1929, was a major milestone in the history of the HLA. There were significant 'protection' clauses inserted to guarantee basic minimum levels of working conditions; for example, two men, instead of one, worked on the trucks handling full swing loads; a time keeper approved by the union had to be present whenever the dockers were engaged at work; and there were to be at least six men in every hold.[57]

The 1929 agreement marked the formal institutionalization of work rules developed over the years by the dockers in their struggles against speed-up and job erosion.[58] The formalization of these rules came at a time when mechanization had reduced the required number of men in longshoring, and so protected the jobs of men made superfluous by machines. The pre-eminent position of the HLA by 1929, when it represented almost half of all organized workers in Halifax, and its control of an activity on which the city's economy rested, allowed the union to maintain these rules throughout the depression and into the 1970s.[59] However, collective bargaining being as it is, the HLA's defence of these rules, although protecting its membership, restricted its bargaining room on other issues, since shipping agents would grant new concessions only if the older rules were abandoned.

IV The Executive: Composition and Attitudes

An examination of the union executive of the HLA during the 30 year period reveals it to have been quite static and given to nepotism. It perhaps assigned the union an aura of passivity and conservatism. The union executive generally comprised: a president and business manager, positions usually held by the same individual; a vice president; a recording secretary; an assistant recording secretary; a financial secretary; a treasurer; a marshal; and a guard. There were also auditing committees of three members, a Board of Trustees of three men, and an Executive Committee generally composed of four members. Responsibility for directing the affairs of the HLA appears to have resided with the

first seven listed positions. All were elected offices and all except the business manager received no pay. The men who sat on these committees were part-time executives and full-time longshoremen or stevedores who had worked their way up through the ranks of the union to the hierarchy.

The composition of the HLA's executive changed little over the period. From 1908 until 1930, there were but three presidents. John T. Joy, who assumed that office, as well as that of business manager, in 1908 from James Martin (chairman of the 1907 strike committee), did not relinquish it until 1917 when he became the labour representative on the Workmen's Compensation Board. Michael D. Coolen, recording secretary during Joy's terms of office, assumed the post after Joy's retirement and held it until his death in 1929. Arthur M. Sullivan, who had been recording secretary, succeeded Coolen. Michael McGrath, was the union's treasurer in 1908; in 1930 the Evening Mail reported that: "one of the popular choices of the meeting was the re-election of Michael McGrath, veteran of some 70 years of age to the secretaryship of the association [treasurer] a position which he has held for the past 22 years."[60] The union executive was often a family affair as well. While Michael Coolen was holding the post of recording secretary and president, his brother, William C. Coolen, was a marshall, vice president and representative delegate to the TLC. Other prominent executive families were the Flynns (Daniel and Henry), the Powers (John, Henry, and Nicholas), and the Campbells (William and John J.). Nepotism was evident in providing union membership, and in selecting executives and fraternal delegates to the TLC, the ILA,

and the Trades and Labour Congress. This oligarchic structure seems to have been typical of most early 20th century unions; quite possibly this structure was an attempt to ensure a more stable union base after the rapidly changing fates of 19th century unions and their leaders. Not all union men were happy about this state of affairs, but they were evidently in a minority position because no drastic changes were made in the composition of the HLA. In 1911 the Evening Mail received a letter written by a disgruntled longshoreman, "for a number of your readers who are employed on the waterfront in the north end:"

> There are several lines of steamers making Halifax their port of call this present season, which leads many of our citizens to believe that our longshoremen have plenty of work and for the information of these citizens, I have been asked to explain why there are so many applying for relief from the poor association, especially in the south end.
>
> We have 2 lines of steamers - the Plant and Red Cross, which employ from 40 to 50 men, all members of the Longshoremen's Union. Now the highest average of any of these men for the past 2 months has not been quite $3/week, which would hardly be accepted for a week's board not mentioning to attempt to support a family.
>
> The question is often asked, why not look for work on other lines? This is easily answered. There are the Pickford and Black and Furness lines. For work on any boat consigned to the above, you must not only be a member of the H.L.A., but must also be a member of another association [probably referring to the inner circle of the H.L.A. executive] which is connected with each of these lines, and from which the managing executive of the H.L.A. is chosen. There are a number of men who cannot see their way clear at the present to pay their arrears in the H.L.A. and expect to be deprived of the small amounts to be earned on the other lines. With this expectation they have about decided to ask

> the steamship agents in the south end, to accept their services in the handling of the freight without any agreement, as has been made with the H.L.Association, yearly.[61]

Such complaints were rare, however, and there is no record of a secessionist movement within the union. This oligarchic structure may have been an outgrowth of the close family and work ties of longshoring, and was probably accepted as such by most dockers. It has as well been pointed out that "dockworkers seem to respond to powerful personalities in their midst who articulate their grievances,"[62] and the HLA's executive had its complement of such personalities.

John T. Joy obviously would have fitted that description. A baker and member of the bakers' union, Joy left that trade because it was too unstable and went to the security of longshoring in the late 1890s.[63] By 1902 he was part of the executive committee of the longshoremen's union and in 1908 was president and business manager of the reorganized HLA. Joy was a member of the Nova Scotia Social and Reform Council, a member of the Halifax County Anti-Tuberculosis League, vice-president for the Nova Scotia delegation to the Trades and Labor Congress, member of the St. Mary's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society, and he had as well been connected with labour reforms in the city of Halifax since 1887.[64] In 1909 he was nominated to contest the next provincial election, held in 1911, and he was the first labour man in Nova Scotia to attempt to win a seat as a candidate of the Direct Labour Representative Party.[65] Joy was also primarily responsible for the passage of the Workmen's Compensation Act and he then sat on its board as the labour representative

while at the same time remaining honorary president of the HLA. Joy also acted in various executive capacities for the TLC and for the ILA.[66] He is reputed to have been instrumental in re-uniting the Saint John locals with the International in 1915.[67] The Eastern Labor News called John T. Joy "the foremost labor man in the Maritime Provinces"[68] and it is doubtful if many would have contested the title. There were other men as well, such as Peter Garnier, who was active in the HLA from the 1910s until the 1940s. He held various posts in the TLC and the Trades and Labor Congress, the ILA and was the local organizer of the AFL at one point.[69] With men who were so obviously skilled leaders, it would not be unusual that the bulk of the union men, who were probably quite poorly educated and unskilled in communicative abilities (and insecure in that knowledge), kept re-electing these leaders and following their policies.

Longshoremen have often espoused radical causes. One study of dockers has found them to be generally liberal or leftist in their political views," and suggests that their "estrangement from the wider community and from their employers contributes to their readiness to fight the 'big money boys' and all forms of exploitation."[70] J. S. Woodsworth's description of Vancouver longshoremen tends to support this thesis:

> These hundred men who stand on the street, who have had such varied experiences, have one thing in common. They are radicals in their thinking. Possibly this is so because "they have nothing to lose but their chains." Possibly it is because they have been able to shake off the bonds of conventional thinking and conventional morality. ... They have learned their individual helplessness. They

> dream of the day when the common people will rise in their united might to smash the system which is responsible for the conditions under which they must live and work.[71]

But the lives of Halifax longshoremen appear not to have been troubled by such dreams. Indeed, the ILA itself, "during the period of initial expansion, ... was anti-radical to the point of being radical."[72] In 1918, about the time that Woodsworth was writing of radical workers in the West Coast District of the ILA, the Atlantic Coast District passed the following resolution at its annual convention: "that the principles of the International Longshoremen's Association are opposed to any form of lawlessness for the purpose of improving industrial conditions."[73] Three years later, Joseph Ryan, president of the same division of the ILA, reiterated this view:

> The conditions under which we work are not ideal, but they are fairly good and generally speaking all we wish to do at present is to maintain these conditions.[74]

Halifax workers, as represented by the actions of the TLC, seemed to be more in tune with the pronouncements of the ILA than with those of Miller and Woodsworth. Halifax may have been the exception, the anti-militant, conservative centre; its unions met in the city's Temperance Hall while those in Saint John convened their meetings in the Socialist Hall.[75] The Citizen reported that the trade unionists in Halifax were "rather conservative in respect to political action" and devoted "their time and attention to building up their local unions and securing better economic and working conditions."[76]

The Halifax unions and the TLC, as a body, were opposed to the idea of the One Big Union and the proposition it represented. They claimed that

> Many of the labour organizations of Halifax have international affiliations, and money and effort have been expanded in securing shorter hours and higher wages, and these unions do not consider it wise or expedient to throw overboard the benefits they now have and substitute therefore a scheme conceived in the brain of men who have looked at but one phase of the question, and who bespeak for the O.B.U. a panacea for all the troubles that affect the working class.[77]

The longshoremen and most of the other trade unions financially supported the Halifax Labour Party, formed in December 1919 (and incidently against communism). When the election was finally held, however, the dominantly working class wards, numbers 4, 5, and 6 did not vote for the labour candidates, in spite of the fact that men such as Peter Garnier and J. T. McGrath were elected officers of the party.[78]

The HLA was the dominant union in the TLC, by virtue of its manpower, its example, and the leadership it provided. Whatever position the TLC took presumably mirrored the attitudes of the executive of the HLA. Although men such as Joy and Garnier were politically active and influential within the union and among the working class of the city, they must have performed in that arena as individuals who happened to be longshoremen and not with the official sanction of the union or the ability to force its members to follow their actions. The union itself was a model of moderation. During strikes, it emphasized sober and

orderly conduct,[79] gentlemanly behaviour which seems rather out of keeping with the modern images of wild fiends storming over the docks, smashing every man and machine which stood in their way.

The dockers of Halifax did not seem even to participate in the traditional dockers' action of boycotting all vessels diverted from a port where the longshoremen were on strike. S. M. Jamieson, in Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-1966, reported that during the violent and bitter Montreal waterfront strike of 1903, longshoremen at Quebec, Halifax, Saint John, Baltimore, Portland and New York City announced a common policy of refusing to handle freight loaded by non-union men in Montreal or diverted from the city to these ports.[80] The Montreal papers did indeed report such action, but the Halifax Morning Chronicle stated that although there was sympathy among the Halifax dockers with the Montrealers, they would still proceed to work all vessels which came into port.[81] It is often hard to know which newspaper story to believe, but in this instance the Halifax paper does seem most likely to be the accurate one. This lack of active support may have been the result of the weak state of unionization in Halifax at this point, but there does not appear to have been any such sympathetic action in the following years. According to John Fisher, the general attitude of the longshoremen was sympathetic, but money had an even stronger claim on their actions. As a result of the shipping season being so short in Halifax, the dockers could not afford to refuse any work, and this conduct was often carried out in spite of direct orders to the contrary

from the ILA.[82]

The longshoremen seem to have extended only expressions of sympathy to other unions, unless of course, a strike could be potentially damaging to their own position. During the shipyard strike in the summer of 1920, the dockers' association donated substantial sums of money to the strikers to aid them in their fight.[83] It would appear that the Halifax longshoremen did not offer any form of help to the Cape Breton coal miners during their struggles in the 1920s, but then that could perhaps be attributed as much to the general depressed state of the province and the slow recovery of the port as to a conscious abstention. Then again, striking miners were often found on the Halifax docks competing for jobs and so perhaps it was a cognizant, premeditated silence.

Radicalism or militancy within unions seems to result from either a very secure organization which, having attained all the basic necessities for a decent existence, is striving for comfort, or a loosely organized group which has nothing to lose. The HLA during this period did not fit either of these categories, and it remained rather removed from any act which could jeopardize its rather tenuous position. Any form of radicalism would have alienated it from the shipping management and would have made it more difficult for the dockers to secure the tangible goals they were seeking.

There is one external factor which could perhaps account for the apparent moderation of the HLA, and that concerns the role of the Roman Catholic Church. Halifax's Roman Catholic clerics were

generally a very conservative group who did not approve of strikes or any other form of social unrest. Although it is undocumented, these church representatives were purported to have exerted tremendous influence on the HLA's executive.[84] As the longshoremen were basically an Irish Catholic group of workers, it would not have been uncommon or even difficult for the Church to impose its social standards on the union through its entrenched leaders.[85] The Quebec clerics had achieved that position, and so perhaps did the Halifax religious hierarchy.

V Conclusion

The longshoremen of Halifax did not have an auspicious début in the 20th century labour movement. The groundwork for a durable union and an influential group of workers, however, had been laid as early as 1884 and from that date a positive evolution occurred.[86] During and after the 1907 strike, the dockers were molded into a cohesive force which gradually grew into the most powerful and effective union in the city. It was a strong union "because of its membership and because of its concentration upon local problems."[87] The ILA did not exert much influence or pressure on the shaping of the policies of its locals. After 1907, the HLA did not suffer any prolonged setbacks in its attempts to become a truly representative union of the waterfront, except during the 1922-23 era when all unions in Halifax suffered. Equally important, after 1907 the HLA never again lost its union charter, unlike the other waterfront associations - - the coal heavers, the fish handlers, and the shipyard workers - - who

seemed to alternate between states of disarray and superb unionization. These later organizations apparently had not escaped from the 19th century form of immediate short term co-operation and formation.[88]

By 1930, the HLA had built a base sufficiently solid to capitalize on its control of a crucial transportation point for the city and the country. The size of the union's membership, the wages obtained, and the improving working conditions are all indicative of this advancement. The Halifax Harbour Commission noted:

> A square deal for Labor - satisfactory working conditions and fair wages for honest work - must always be an important objective in administration of the port of Halifax. ...
> Labor can contribute largely towards building up the Port of Halifax as a sound basis by giving co-operation in this work.[89]

Conversely, it also could negate the work of the commission if it so desired, paralyzing the economic foundations on which it was based.

The HLA was not a militant nor radical union by any means, but then the depressed state of casual employment in the province prevented it from manoeuvering freely, because it had to protect its union members from the encroachments of non-unionized, unskilled labour. The very nature of dock work, its irregularity and seasonality, meant that it was extremely hard for a union to be established, and it was not until Halifax had achieved its position as the second Canadian-Atlantic port, that unionization was possible. Perhaps the fact that the HLA lasted in its early 20th century form, while the stronger organizations at Montreal

and Vancouver encountered tremendous pressure from their respective shipping federations and eventually failed as independently run unions, is a tribute to the evolutionary, though not revolutionary, path which the HLA chose to follow.

Chapter Four

1. TL, February 1914.

2. McKay, "The Working Class of Metropolitan Halifax, 1850 - 1889," pp.183-84.

3. This knowledge would have been gained first hand because quite a few Halifax longshoremen annually went to work in such cities as Quebec during the summer months. Interviews: John Fisher, John J. Campbell.

4. As is the case of most union histories, especially those concerned with semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and with unions which are predominantly parochial in operation, there are many ambiguities surrounding this actual development process. To further complicate the investigative research, the executive of the HLA, local 269, would not open their records. They did compromise to some extent though and did the research themselves on specific questions which they deemed suitable for outsiders to ask. Others, such as the matter of racial segregation,were left unanswered. Therefore the following history is not offered as being the true, documented history of the HLA, it is merely the best piecing of the past which could be done by this researcher with a collection of sometimes conflicting and all the time vague sources of information.

5. McKay, "The Working Class of Metropolitan Halifax, 1850 - 1889," p. 187.

6. Ibid., pp. 186-96.

7. Souvenir Booklet (Halifax: Trades and Labor Council, 1908), n.p.

8. AR, 6 April 1889, as cited in McKay, "The Working Class of Metropolitan Halifax, 1850 - 1889," p.198.

9. The HLA records are purported to indicate that the union in 1884 also had been called the Port Workers' Union of Halifax. However as McKay has done extensive newspaper research on this period, it would seem that the union was popularly regarded as the Halifax Labourers' Union. Interviews: David Quinn, Gordon Raftus.

10. MC, 10 February 1900.

11. LG, 1901-02, p.429.

12. The port of Saint John, for example, had several different locals which represented the interests of the men who worked the diverse cargoes such as deals, grain, and coal, all of which required unique skills.
    TL, November 1911, December 1912.

13. This is entirely a matter of speculation based on what would appear to be the only reason for the existence of two locals applying to the ILA. White dominated longshoremen's unions have a history of organizing black waterfront workers for this reason (See Wells and Stodders, "Short History of the New Orleans Dockworkers," Radical America, 1976, pp.43-69). There was also a coal handlers association in Halifax which went out in sympathy with the longshoremen during the strike of 1902.

14. These two names appear to be interchangeable and because the latter one is the title which has remained with the union, it is the one which will be used from this point in the paper.

15. Souvenir Booklet, n.p.

16. An interesting sidelight to this episode was the fact that in 1910 the Coal Handlers Branch of the Independent Federation of Labour joined (rejoined perhaps) the ILA, a full three years before the HLA did. This would seem to indicate that the coal handlers were better organized at this juncture than the dockers.

17. LG, November 1911, p.523.

18. ELN, 15 February 1913.

19. Interview: John J. Campbell; TL, August 1913.
    There is again some cause for doubt. While the first ILA charter was issued in 1902 and the third in 1913, it is uncertain as to when, or indeed if, a second one was ever issued, unless local 274 received it. Also, The Longshoreman, official organ for the ILA, first listed the Halifax local as 842 (August 1913), but then reverted to using the old number, 269 (October 1913). This could have been the result of an initial assignment of a new local number in 1913, and then in an attempt to keep the records of the international as uncomplicated as possible, a reassignment was made.

20. ELN, 12 September 1911.

21. EM, 4 January 1911.

22. Ibid., 8 January 1912.

23. The data in table 4-1 come from the following sources: a) *HH*, 2 April 1902; b) *LG*, 1906-07, p.1418; c) *EM*, 6 January 1909; d) Province of Nova Scotia. *Report of the Commission on Hours of Labour*, p.91; *EM*, 1 January 1910; e) LG, 1912-13, p.885; f) *Daily Echo* (Halifax), 23 January 1914; g) *Ibid.*; h) *LG*, 1916, p. 1235; i) *EM*, 7 January 1920; j) *TC*, 20 December 1929; k) *TC*, 25 April 1930.

24. *Daily Echo*, 23 January 1914.

25. Interviews: John Fisher, David Quinn, John J. Campbell.

26. Interview: John J. Campbell.

27. *TL*, September 1913 - August 1915, incl.

28. Interviews: John J. Campbell, John Fisher.

29. Interviews: David Quinn, Gordon Raftus, John Fisher.

30. Interviews: David Quinn, Gordon Raftus.

31. *EM*, 2 February 1911; Interviews: David Quinn, Gordon Raftus.

32. *MC*, 11 June 1907.

33. *EM*, 6 January 1909.

34. *ELN*, 2 February 1909.

35. *EM*, 6 January 1930.

36. Interviews: David Quinn, Gordon Raftus.

37. *EM*, 10 January 1910, 4 January 1911, 8 January 1912.

38. *TL*, August 1913.

39. *MC*, 3 April 1902.

40. Interview: John Fisher.

41. *EM*, 4 January 1911, 8 January 1912.

42. Interview: John J. Campbell.

43. *EM*, 8 January 1912.

44. *ELN*, 30 October 1909.

45. EM, 8 January 1912.

There is no further mention of benevolent funds in the HLA after World War I, yet there must have been a continuence of these union-membership advantages at least until the introduction of government replacement programmes, or the union's ones, such as the pension plan which was introduced by the HLA in 1952.

46. KMLA, Pickford and Black papers, wage agreements.

47. What is even more revealing concerning the relatively awkward position the shipping companies found themselves in was the fact that the coal handlers' union struck twice and both times managed to have their wages increased, from 30¢ and 35¢ to 33¢ and 38¢ in 1915 and again in 1920 from 65¢ and 70¢ to 70¢ and 85¢. It is obvious that at that juncture in the port's life, coal bunkering held priority over longshoring.
PAC, DL, "Strikes and Lockouts in Water Transportation 1901 - 1930, " RG 27, Accession 70/157, Box. 147502.

48. Ibid.

49. TC, 6 January 1922.

50. KMLA, Pickford and Black papers; wage agreement, 1909.

51. Sometime between 1912 and 1920 the summer deadline had been extended to 1 May, most likely during the war when blackout conditions prevailed in Halifax and therefore the port officials had to ensure that this condition was extended to the docks as well.

52. KMLA, Pickford and Black papers; wage agreement, 1920.

53. Ibid., wage agreement, 1922.

54. Ibid., wage agreement, 1927-28.

55. Ibid., wage agreement, 1929-30.

56. Ibid., wage agreement, 1927-28.

57. Ibid., wage agreement, 1929-30; TC, 20 December 1929.

58. Pritchett, "Technology and the Longshoremen," p. 8.

59. TC, 20 December 1929.

60. EM, 6 January 1930.

61. Ibid., 2 February 1911.

62. R.C. Miller, "The Dockworker Subculture and Some Problems

in Cross-Cultural and Cross-Time Generalizations," Comapartive Studies in Society and History (1969), p. 310.

63. TC, 11 July 1919.

64. ELN, 11 December 1909.

65. TC, 11 July 1909.

66. TL, August 1913.

67. Interviews: David Quinn, John J. Campbell, Gordon Raftus.

68. ELN, 11 December 1909.

69. TC, 17 June 1921.

70. Miller, "The Dockworker Subculture," p. 310.

71. Woodsworth, On the Waterfront, p.15.

72. Maud Russell, Man Along the Shore. The I.L.A. and its History (New York, 1966), p.70.

73. LG, August 1918, pp.619-23.

74. TC, 10 June 1921.

75. ELN, 17 May 1913.

76. TC, 31 December 1926.

77. Ibid., 25 July 1919.

78. Labour Annual (Halifax, 1920), p.45.
The longshoremen donated $100.00 to the Halifax Labor Party to help it with its municipal campaign.
TC, 11 July 1919; 4 June, 27 July 1920; 22 June 1923.

79. PAC, DL, "Strike Files; Halifax longshoremen, 1902, 1907," RG 27, v.321.

80. S.M. Jamieson, Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900 - 1966 (Ottawa, 1968), p.83.

81. MC, 8 May 1903.

82. Interview: John Fisher.
This was not an altogether uncommon practice among longshore unions. The Vancouver dockers had passed a resolution of sympathy with the Russian Revolutionists, but as they could make a substantial amount of money loading bombs bound for

Siberia, they refused to quit work. They said that if they did, either the Seattle local of the ILA or the soldiers would get the job and money, so they (the Vancouver dockers) might as well profit as the others.
Woodsworth, On the Waterfront, p.24.

83. TC, 9 July 1920.

84. Interviews: J. Nolan Reilly, David Frank.

85. Interviews: John Fisher, John J. Campbell, David Quinn, Gordon Raftus.

86. McKay, "The Working Class of Metropolitan Halifax, 1850 - 1889," pp. 199-200.

87. Province of Nova Scotia. Report of the Commission on Hours of Labour, p. 129.

88. Eugene Forsey, "The Canadian Labour Movement," Canadian Historical Association, booklet 27, (1974), pp.18-19.

89. Third Annual Labor Journal of Halifax District Trades and Labor Council (Halifax, 1930), p.90.

Chapter Five

Strikes

Throughout history, transportation has been the most important determining factor in the Canadian economy. As a result of the large geographical area and the diverse and difficult terrain over which products had to travel, profits suffered significantly if there was a delay in the movement of commodities. Strikes at ports, which were pivotal trade points, had perhaps the greatest potential for paralyzing the national economy and, consequently, for incurring the harshest treatment from the federal government and the shipping employers. The combination of this potential power of longshoring with the very nature of the occupation caused the strike to become a common occurrence on the waterfront:

> The strike for this isolated mass is a kind of colonial revolt against far-removed authority, an outlet for accumulated tensions, and a substitute for occupational and social mobility. There is no doubt that longshoring is among the occupations sharing internationally the highest strike incidences.[1]

Between the years 1901 and 1930, 117 strikes and lockouts involving on-shore workers in the national water transportation industry were reported to the federal department of labour.[2] These work stoppages involved 32,109 workers and resulted in a total loss of 381,049 man days. Although the number of strikes

and walkouts in water transportation practically equalled the number which occurred in steam railways, there were 10,000 fewer workers involved and 865,000 fewer working days lost in the railways. The average strike length (workdays/workers) along the waterfront was 11.8 days, but more than half of all strikes were of five days duration or less.[3] The brevity of the strikes suggests that both sides placed importance on the rapid settlement of industrial disputes; in a seasonal trade neither side could afford the loss in profits or wages which would result from a long strike. The following table, 5-1, gives a breakdown of these strikes and lockouts in the Canadian water transportation industry during this period.

Table 5-1 Strikes and Lockouts in National Water Transportation, 1901-1930.

	Disputes		Workers involved	
Year	Number	% of all industrial disputes	Number	% of all industrial disputes
1901	6	6.1	425	1.8
1902	7	5.6	2,570	20.2
1903	5	2.9	2,548	6.6
1904	1	1.0	23	0.2
1905	5	5.2	1,227	9.8
1906	3	2.0	179	0.7
1907	11	5.9	3,721	10.9
1908	3	4.0	340	1.3
1909	6	6.7	1,455	8.0
1910	2	2.0	185	0.8
1911	4	4.0	1,990	6.8
1912	7	3.3	1,190	2.3
1913	5	3.3	725	1.8
1914	-	-	-	-
1915	4	6.3	1,140	10.0
1916	-	-	-	-
1917	5	3.1	1,820	3.6
1918	8	3.5	3,246	4.1
1919	2	0.6	484	0.3

Year	Number	% of all industrial disputes	Number	% of all industrial disputes
1920	10	3.1	2,223	3.7
1921	4	2.4	447	1.6
1922	2	1.9	3,119	7.1
1923	5	5.8	2,126	6.2
1924	-	-	-	-
1925	4	4.6	125	0.4
1926	4	5.2	515	2.2
1927	1	1.4	125	0.6
1928	1	1.0	13	0.1
1929	1	1.1	100	0.8
1930	1	1.5	48	0.3
Total:	117		32,109	

[4]

Seventy-eight per cent of these strikes were initiated by longshoremen and the remaining 22 per cent were occasioned by such groups as lightermen, scowmen, oilers, and firemen. Eighty-four (71.75%) of the strikes and lockouts were ignited by disputes over wages, 75 resulted from demands for higher wages, and nine were in protest over wage reductions. The relative bargaining strength of strikers and management are shown by the following figures: 43 strikes involving 8,292 workers, were settled in favour of the employers; 34 strikes involving 6,470 workers, were settled in favour of the workers; nine strikes involving 1,372 workers, had an indefinite result; and 31 strikes involving 15,975 workers, were settled through a compromise solution. The compromise settlements involved an average of 515 men, while those resulting in victory or defeat for the men had only an average of 190 and 193 respectively. Therefore, it would seem that although a compromise was obviously not the most satisfactory result for either party, it served both by re-opening the port.[5]

I Canadian Labour Legislation

By the turn of the 20th century the federal government had jurisdiction over most matters relating to transportation. In order to control the behaviour of workers within this sector of the economy and to influence the settlement of any labour dispute, it started to pass

> ... legislation which was decidedly anti-union. Canadian law clearly put a higher priority on property rights than on personal rights, or the rights of employers to carry on their activities without government interference than on the rights of workers and unions to fight to protect themselves.[6]

The Dominion Conciliation Act, the first of the two major pieces of federal labour legislation in the 1900s, received royal assent on 18 July 1900. The act was designed to aid "in the prevention and settlement of trade disputes and the publication of statistical industrial information" and to create a department of labour.[7] It provided for the establishment of a board to settle disputes between employers and workers through conciliation or arbitration, providing both parties agreed in writing to the board's appointment. This clause enabled the deputy minister of labour to keep in constant contact with the proceedings of all labour negotiations through written reports; further, he could appoint the chairman of the conciliation board if the parties involved could not agree. Initially the Canadian labour movement viewed the act with favour for it seemed at last to give labour a chance to attain respectable wages without lengthy and costly work stoppages. The act also guaranteed a public inquiry if the commiss-

ioners deemed it provident. The department of labour arose under the office of the postmaster general, and a new information guide to national labour conditions, the Labour Gazette, was provided. However, the act did not end the inferior position of labour in negotiations with management; it only couched the rules of the game in bureaucratic terminology and reams of official documents.[8]

The Industrial Disputes Investigation Act (IDIA) of 1907, drafted by William Lyon Mackenzie King, was the second notable piece of labour legislation. A major departure from traditional legislation, the act prohibited strikes in public utilities, the mining industry, and railways until the submission of a report from the conciliation board. It has been described as a "decidedly coercive, anti-labour piece of legislation; mediation was offered in the stead of the right to strike."[9] The IDIA or Lemieux Act, which received royal assent on 23 March 1907, had grown out of the Conciliation Act of 1900 and the Railway Labour Disputes Act of 1903, both of which had been incorporated in the Conciliation and Labour Act of 1906.

Most trade unionists supported the Lemieux Act, again because it seemed to offer the hope of preventing or at least postponing long, expensive and always frustrating strikes. The Canadian labour movement quickly discovered that the main intent of King's legislation was to control labour and unions and to preserve industrial peace in a period of economic boom. The IDIA

> ... put many restrictions on the rights of labour but none on management, which could still freely continue its union-breaking activities. In particular, the I.D.I.A. which

> remained on the statute books for the next two decades - until it was found to be unconstitutional - was a most devious piece of anti labour legislation. It provided for a lengthy "cooling-off" period in strike and lock-out situations to allow governments to investigate the conflict. Invariably this period was used by management to import strike breakers, so that many strikes were broken before they had even begun.[10]

The insidious nature of this legislation could perhaps also explain the short duration of most strikes which occurred in the water transportation industry. Why it did not similarly affect the railways may be attributable to differences in the unionization process of both groups.

II Longshore Strikes in Halifax

During the first 30 years of the 20th century, Halifax was not a 'hot-bed' of labour agitation. In fact, if the longshoremen were at all representative of the labour movement in the city during this period, the city enjoyed relatively peaceful labour/management relations. Between 1900 and 1930 there were only two general strikes staged by the longshoremen, in 1902 and 1907, and two one-vessel walkouts, in 1907 and 1930, which merited minimal coverage in the Labour Gazette and the city newspapers. There was also one near-strike in 1912, averted under the terms of the Lemieux Act.[11] Perhaps the longshoremen of Halifax shared the belief held by T. V. O'Connor, president of the ILA, who stated in an address given in 1912:

> Strikes are ugly things. Their occurence [sic] is a great blot upon our civilization, a vivid reminder to us that even now, with our

> centuries of experience for a guide, we are still, with all our boasted advance, far from a sane solution of this immense problem of capital and labour.
>
> Strikes are, as a general rule, visitations of gloom whose shadow rests upon a community long after both sides have buried the hatchet and work has been resumed.[12]

A The general waterfront strike of 1902

The last major strike of the longshoremen of Halifax before that of 1902 occurred in 1884, when the men successfully demanded a 5¢ an hour increase, to 25¢ an hour, and double time on Sundays. The victory was short-lived; by 1886 the wage schedule had returned to the pre-strike level. The ensuing 18 years were a period of union reorganization and consolidation, and wage stagnation. It was not until 1902 that the longshoremen of Halifax again felt strong enough to demand higher wages and better working conditions from the shipping agents. They based their demands on the increased cost of living and the substantially higher wages paid to longshoremen in other Atlantic ports.[13] A committee, composed of William Campbell, president of ILA local 269, John M. Power, vice-president, R. F. Clancy, secretary, and executive members Patrick Baldwin, John T. Joy, and Thomas Lannon, was established in February 1902 to negotiate with the steamship agents and local owners. On 1 March they submitted a list of demands to these shipping representatives, indicating that unless the following conditions became a part of dock life there would be a general strike of longshoremen at midnight 1 April 1902: none but union men be employed when available; the day scale of wages be 25¢ an hour; the day begin at 7:00 a.m.

and end at 6:00 p.m.; the night scale of wages be 30¢ an hour; the night begin at 7:00 p.m. and end at 7:00 a.m.; 50¢ an hour be paid from 7:00 p.m. Saturday until 7:00 a.m. Monday; work on stranded or wrecked vessels be paid at 25¢ an hour, all time to count from the time the men leave the wharf until they return, board included; when men were ordered out to work between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. all time should count until ordered home, at a rate of 30¢ per hour; meal hours be 7:00-8:00 a.m., 12:00-1:00 p.m., 6:00-7:00 p.m., 12:00-1:00 a.m.; all meal hours and all succeeding hours until sent home be double time; 21 July (Natal Day), Thanksgiving day, Christmas Day, and Labour Day be recognized as holidays; double time be paid from 7:00 p.m. of the eve of a holiday, until 7:00 a.am. after a holiday.[14] "But ... [the committee] never received any official intimation that ... [its] ... demands had been considered. No conference was asked ... [and it was] ... ignored."[15]

The HLA must have been reasonably certain that its demands would not be met without a struggle, especially if it contemplated its rather uninspiring history of unsuccessful strikes and union disintegration. On 14 March the longshoremen called a public meeting at St. Patrick's Hall to obtain popular sympathy for their cause among the working class. The hall was "filled to overflowing" and "the greatest enthusiasm prevailed." Those present included M. Cochran, president of the labor council and chairman of the meeting, Reverend Frank Eddy, Alderman Crosby, F. W. Smith, correspondent for the Labour Gazette, A. M. Hoare of the Retail Clerks' Association, and journalists. Cochran explained that the meeting was called in the interest of

perfecting the organization of the longshoremen's union. There were the usual statements declaring fraternal loyalty, extolling the value of unions, and decrying the wastefulness of strikes. F. Grant, who spoke on behalf of the longshoremen, "thanked the different speakers for the assistance rendered and hoped that by the next meeting he would be able to report an amicable adjustment of the scale."[16] On 29 March, the appointed committee was granted permission by the union to go to the shipping agents to wait for an answer to their demands. They did see the steamship agents, but although well received, they did not get a definite reply.[17]

There was to be no amicable settlement. Instead, on 1 April, the last day before the strike deadline, Furness, Withy and Company fired its permanent employees, union men who had been working on the Dalton Hall, and hired two gangs of non-union longshoremen. That evening the dockers again met to hear the report of the committee's interview with the agents and to take a strike vote. They "were a unit on the strike question when the ballot was cast, it was unanimous in favour of going out."[18] This meeting was well attended and after it was over 70 men joined the union. At midnight, the unionized longshoremen, roughly 700 strong, struck. Those men who had been working at the time when the vote was being cast were informed of the decision by a union delegation. They quit their jobs promptly at the stroke of twelve, leaving a number of vessels partially loaded or discharged.[19] The groundswell of union support continued. A large number of the non-union men hired by Furness, Withy and Company were reported to have joined the union that

evening. William Campbell declared on the evening of 2 April:

> The strike is on, and the longshoremen's association of Halifax numbering 700 men, demanding a better rate of wages, are on one side, while the steamship owners and agents are on the other. At midnight the last stroke of work will be done by the association at the present rate of pay.
>
> It is not a matter for arbitration either. It is a matter of accede to our just demands or see work stop. We have right on our side, and I think we will win.
>
> The whole harbour front will be tied up tomorrow.[20]

The shipping interests were convinced that they could not afford to pay the demanded schedule without injuring the trade of the port. Mr. Hall of Furness, Withy and Company stated that the wage had been 20¢ per hour as long as he could remember and that there had been no increase in traffic to Halifax during that period. This claim, however, contradicts the information found in the extant shipping records, which indicate a noticeable growth in port activity for the period 1880-1902. He also suggested that the men were being led by demagogues, or perhaps by sincere but ignorant men without a proper sense of responsibility to the longshoremen or the community.[21] And H. L. Chipman, manager of the Plant Line, in a part of his response to Mr. Campbell and to the public in general, stated:

> In the meantime we may have to handle less freight. It would pay us to do so rather than grant the advance demanded, and if there is no other remedy we can import men. If the strike should continue we intend to do this and fitting up accommodations for them on the wharf.[22]

Both parties were determined not to give in, and 2 April 1902 dawned as the first day of the dockers' strike. The steamship agents and owners did not hesitate for even one day; strike-breakers were brought to the docks. The process of gathering strike-breakers started slowly, but gradually the numbers increased. The first to be hired were the non-unionized black labourers from Africville; then ships' crews, enticed with extra pay, were involved. There were also, of course, the non-unionized dockers. Finally scab labour came from the Eastern Passage men. They brought their farm produce into town, left it with their wives and neighbours to sell, and then went down to the docks to earn some extra money, first working at loading sugar and then at the ICR terminus.[23] In spite of such tactics on the part of the shipping agents, who were alleged to be paying the scabs wages that the union had been refused, the union promised to use "no harsh or dishonourable means to bring about a settlement of the trouble." Although the dockers made no attempt to interfere with the men at work, they were very vigilant in their efforts to recruit members for the union. The union appointed a committee for each steamship wharf, whose duties were to ensure the members of the union did not waver from their obligation and return to work. The ever visible presence of these committees was also a reminder to non-unionized dockers that it might be beneficial to change their status. For example,on 3 April at the Deep Water Terminus, the two walking delegates, Charles McDonald and William Howard, managed to persuade 23 men to enrol in the union.[24]

The strike continued. The union men remained adamant that

they would not lower their wage demands and in spite of the fact that vessel turnover was much slower than usual, the steamship companies were not affected seriously enough to compromise. Both groups were confident. The shippers, however, were taking no chances and had begun to strengthen their reserve of strike-breakers. Pickford and Black telegraphed its agents in Bermuda, advising them to send labourers to Halifax on the return voyage of The Dahome.[25] There were also rumours that men were coming down from Newfoundland, and on 7 April one of the four steamship firms sent a telegraph to Sydney asking that 150 Italian labourers be sent to work their vessels. These companies obviously felt that the only way they could get and keep strike-breakers lay in bringing them from afar, thereby ensuring they had no cultural or ethnic ties with the strikers.

The union remained united and unwavering.

> Among the union men there was no sign of disorder and their quiet and orderly conduct has won them friends. Almost every hour adds to their ranks and their membership, which was in the vicinity of 600 when the strike commenced, has increased to upwards of 1,000.[26]

On the evening of 3 April, a mass meeting of the TLC was held with delegates from 21 different unions, representing around 3,000 workers, present. The longshoremen outlined their case, stating that "the great uncertainty of the work and the fact that ... [their pay] did not exceed $6.00 per week ... made it imperative that they should seek to better their condition." The council unanimously supported the dockers, whom they complimented for their orderly and honourable conduct. The longshore-

men obviously had widespread support from the other unions in the city, and they received encouraging reports from outside the city as well. Their delegate to Saint John reported to the meeting that the locals there would most probably not work on any vessel which had been loaded by non-union men in Halifax or diverted from the port. A representative from the Saint John longshoremen would arrive on 7 or 8 April to act in an advisory capacity. The longshoremen decided to ask Mr. W. L. M. King, deputy minister of labour "to come to Halifax and assist the men in trouble."[27] They naively believed that the Conciliation Act had been devised to help labour gain an equitable settlement.

On the fifth day of the strike, the longshoremen received more support from the workers of the city. The coal handlers went out on that day, and on 9 April the fish handlers also went on a sympathy strike, to be followed the next day by the coopers.[28] When The Halifax arrived in port its crew, ordered to discharge her, refused. The men from Stewiacke and Sheet Harbour who had been brought in by the shipping companies also refused to work as strike-breakers once the situation had been explained to them by the union representatives. They stated that they had been led to believe that only the Furness, Withy dockers were on strike and that it was simply a matter of extra labourers being needed to help finish the end of season rush for the rest of the shipping companies. They then returned home at the union's expense, receiving honorary union memberships from the HLA[29] and a harmonious farewell:

> The demonstration yesterday afternoon by the longshoremen was a novel one. About

> 600 men and the Hibernian Fife and Drum Band accompanied the deal handlers from Stewiake to the train, on their way home. As the Stewiake men boarded the train, the strikers cheered them heartily.[30]

In the face of such solidarity the resolution of the small shipping agents, who were often not much removed from the men they paid, buckled. On 9 April the stevedores Charles Duggan of Richmond and John Bell at Deep Water bolted from the ranks of the shipping companies and offered their men, who subsequently returned to the piers, 25¢ an hour for day work.[31] Deputy Mayor MacIlrith called a joint meeting of the executive of the longshoremen's union, the steamship agents, and the West India merchants to attempt a settlement. The steamship agents offered an immediate wage scale of 20¢ an hour for the day and 25¢ an hour for the night shift on the condition that the men return to work while the other demands were negotiated. The longshoremen offered to agree provided the following demands were conceded: none but union men be employed when available; day scale to be 25¢ an hour; day shift to be from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; the night scale to be 30¢ an hour, with double time for Sundays and holidays. The agents refused and no settlement was reached.[32]

On 9 April William Lyon Mackenzie King arrived in Halifax and 48 hours of almost continual meetings, conferences, and compromises followed. On the evening of 11 April the negotiated terms, agreed upon by the steamship agents, were presented to the longshoremen. King himself addressed the dockers and explained the proposed conditions of settlement. The contract was then unanimously accepted by the nearly 1,000 longshoremen who attended

the meeting. The union was not recognized, but the agreement did prevent discrimination against union men for their part in the strike or membership in the HLA. Except for the wage schedule, most of the major issues were granted. The new wage scale was 20¢ an hour a day and 25¢ an hour at night, with double time on Sundays and the four recognized holidays: Natal Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and Labour Day. The shippers requested a new clause: 30 days notice in writing to be given by either party before any change could be made in the terms of the agreement or any strike or lockout be declared.[33] The longshoremen, the coal workers, the fish handlers, and the coopers, returned to work on 12 April.

Both sides, according to the <u>Morning Chronicle</u>, were "satisfied with the result."[34] However, according to the <u>Acadian Recorder</u>, "Since the meeting at Deep Water this morning, a number of the men have expressed themselves as still unsatisfied and they intimated that they would not work with non-union men."[35] But since the union officers were relatively content with the agreement this dissatisfaction was soon forgotten. There was a minor disruption on 12 April over a misunderstanding by some of the men at one pier concerning the terms of agreement. The matter was soon clarified by the union officials and work resumed.[36] The hero of the day was none other than King. As George Troop of Black Brothers wrote to Mulock, postmaster general:

> Your Deputy, Mr. King has quite captured our representative men, Merchants Ship Agents, Owners & the Longshoremen, and other union bodies in sympathy with the strikers ... His

> judicious action in obtaining the confidence of the conflicting parties, and then acting as intermediary, brought about a settlement that before his arrival had the appearance of serious consequences ... He cannot fail to be of the greatest service in reconciling the differences so frequently coming to the surface between Capital and Labour.[37]

The union also appeared enamoured with Mr. King. "The longshoremen proposed a motion extending a vote of thanks to the department. It was carried unanimously with the greatest enthusiasm."[38]

Throughout the ten days of the strike the union was in a very solid position. They had the sympathy of the working class in Halifax. Not only did the other three major waterfront unions strike in sympathy but the dockers' cause generated considerable support outside the waterfront community. Jere McAuliffe, a noted musician of Halifax, offered to put on a performance at the Academy of Music in aid of the strikers, though whether it was held is unknown.[39] The longshoremen did not lack incentive either. To improve their financial condition during the strike, the dockers planned a two-night athletic tournament in the North End Rink (the New Exhibition Rink) which had been loaned to them, free of charge, by the manager, Mr. Muliane. A number of members from the athletic clubs offered to hold a major tug-of-war involving prominent athletes who had also offered their services.[40] There were rumours that one of the main attractions was to be a tug-of-war between longshoremen from the ports of Halifax and Saint John, but it does not appear to have taken place. However, arrangements were made for the tug-of-war, athletic tournaments and boxing at the North End Rink. The tournament was held sometime

between 7 and 21 April.[41] Unfortunately there was not to be a financial happy ending to this part of the 1902 strike saga. An account of the strike and tournament published a year later in the Halifax Herald reported:

> The Longshoremen's Union have been anxiously waiting for those who looked after the financial end of the tournament, held for the benefit of the Union during the time of the strike, to hand in receipts, but according to a member of the executive, the association has not received one cent. Those who looked after the money end of the affair, with one exception were not members of the organization. This man is no longer a member of the union. The member of the executive committee interviewed by The Mail, stated that the receipts for both evenings of the tournaments were large, that many tickets had been sold, and many persons had given their services because the tournament was a complimentary benefit tendered to the Longshoremen's Union. The Longshoremen received no benefit from it.[42]

In spite of the loss of the tournament's receipts the union was probably in as secure a position financially as it was morally; it was able, after all, to pay return expenses of the Stewiake and Sheet Harbour men. No record of financial assistance to the dockers by other unions was found, but it seems unlikely that the moral support the dockers received was unaccompanied by any material aid. Even if the dockers received no money from other unions, they were capable of surviving a strike of such short duration. They had just ended the winter season, their most profitable period of labour, and storekeepers in the tightly knit neighbourhoods of the dockers would have extended some credit to the strikers.

The dockers' strike had seen benefit performances,

tournaments, free use of the Exhibition Rink, and prizes donated by companies one would have assumed on the side of the shippers.[43] Compared to the union's past failures, the strike itself was a victory. The HLA did not gain all its wage demands and was still below the rate gained in 1884. However, the wage schedules and most of the other working conditions remained intact until the next strike. The dockers also had certain working conditions officially acknowledged and approved in writing by the federal government. Considering the large body of casual labourers, it was a victory to have withstood the fear of being replaced permanently and to have remained a relatively solid unit throughout the strike. The settlement was the first to be longlasting in the history of the Halifax longshoremen, and it was achieved within the restrictive, pro-capital guide-lines of the Conciliation Act of 1900.

B The general waterfront strike of 1907

After the success of 1902 the HLA gave up its charters with the ILA and the federal government[44] and, as was shown, entered a dormant period. The quiescence of a union which had won such an important victory is difficult to explain, but it is possible that the longshoremen, true to the understanding of unionism they had developed in the 19th century, no longer saw the need for a formal union structure. The informal organization provided by neighbourhoods, the system of ganging, and the religio-ethnic ties, probably suited their day-to-day needs. The fact that the next strike was waged without the benefit of

a formal union tends to support this hypothesis.

In May 1907 the HLA struck for improved working conditions and increased wages. On 20 May, the longshoremen who worked for the seven major steamship companies, sent a signed circular asking these companies to raise the day rate (20¢ an hour) and the night rate (25¢ an hour) by 5¢ an hour, with double time on Sundays. "There was an agreement among all the men that they would, to the best of their ability, endeavour to secure this increase." The dockers felt that their work was harder than that of an ordinary day labourer and that they did "not get as much as the man working on the streets, and while some dockers might earn $50 a month, the majority do not earn $20. The Halifax Herald reported:

> In view of the increase in the necessities of life they claim they are compelled to seek an advance in wages, as the amount which they at present receive is insufficient to enable them to live decently.[45]

Although the longshoremen had the sympathy of the lumber handlers at Richmond, they did not enjoy supportive strikes from any of the other waterfront workers as they had in 1902,[46] and lacked the many more tangible indications of city-wide, union solidarity. On 22 May a meeting of the longshoremen at the Sons of Temperance Hall delegated a committee to meet with the employers, if necessary, to explain and defend their wage demands. James Martin was elected chairman, Michael Coolen, secretary and John T. Joy, F. Hubley, J. Whalen, and T. Griffin members of the executive. At this meeting the different speakers urged upon the

men moderation and in the event of a strike, proper conduct.[47] It was decided that the dockers would strike at midnight 26 May unless the increases were granted.[48] The department of labour had been advised by 24 May of the pending strike, and it had made efforts to bring the dockers under the Lemieux Act.[49] At a meeting on 26 May, the dockers were asked to submit to the conditions of this act. Mr. DuBuriel, fair-wage officer for the department, read to them a telegraph from John Mansfield, president of the Montreal longshoremen's union, "urging the men to accept arbitration as they [the Montreal longshoremen] have done, as this would have a good effect on their behalf."[50] The Halifax longshoremen declined, arguing that since they had no federal charter and no union, they were to be considered a collection of individuals who had decided jointly to ask for a wage increase. If the increase was refused, they would quit their jobs as was the right of all private citizens. By disavowing the existence of any form of organization or affiliation, the Halifax dockers decided that they were not subject to the terms of the IDIA.

At midnight, 26 May, 600 longshoremen and waterfront workers quit their jobs and appointed pickets to watch the proceedings at every pier. The port was tied up and the crews of the ships berthed at Halifax were recruited to load and discharge their vessels. There was no trouble between the strikers and the strike-breakers and general order was maintained. Another meeting, held on 27 May, saw "a large attendance, [with] considerable enthusiasm and a free discussion." The longshoremen were offered an increase of 2 1/2¢ by the representatives of the shipping companies, but this overture was rejected. DuBuriel, meanwhile,

was busy acting in an intermediary capacity and was still trying to have the longshoremen accept the conciliation board.[51] Two days later the steamship companies petitioned the department of labour, asking it to invoke the Lemieux Act and naming James Hall as their representative. Under the act's terms, it was to be invoked within five days of the receipt of the shippers' application and the government was to appoint an arbitrator for the men, regardless of whether or not the longshoremen voluntarily agreed to the provisions. This petition and its implication was explained to the dockers at a meeting held that evening and the offer of a 2 1/2¢ increase was renewed. The increase and the conditions of the IDIA were again rejected, and the longshoremen moved to remain out until their demands were met. There appear to have been some doubts, however, for the Morning Chronicle reported, "it ... [was] ... understood that the meeting was not quite unanimous for the continuation of the strike."[52]

The waterfront was reported to have been quiet during the strike, perhaps because they were very few strike-breakers. This condition could have been attributable as much to the numerical strength of the strikers as to union or worker solidarity among the non-dockers in the city.

> Everything is very quiet along the waterfront. The men gather about the head of the steamship wharves and see what is going on. There was a little stir on Water Street near the head of the Plant Wharf yesterday morning about 7 o'clock. Ten colored men from Africville or one of the colored settlements hove in sight and headed for the Plant Wharf evidently bent on business. But the placqut [sic] of longshoremen on Water Street, evidently had information from out posts and the colored

> men were led to see the force of argument and sorrowfully turned their backs on the Plant Wharf. It turned out that the darkies were bound for the wharf under arrangement to go to work discharging the steamer Halifax.[53]

The shipping companies and agents meanwhile tried to alleviate their problems by combining all the in-port crews and working the vessels one at a time. According to a Plant Line official, they were also contemplating the precaution of carrying larger crews in future.[54] The movement of these vessels was not as fast as usual, however, and pressure for a settlement was applied by the owners on their Halifax agents. On 31 May, A. G. Jones and Company granted the 5¢ an hour increase to its men and signed a year contract with the dockers' committee. The other companies offered 25¢ an hour for both the day and night rates but the men, after discussing the matter, decided to hold out for the original demands.

The shipping companies continued to weaken.[55] By 2 June the Plant Line had acquiesced to the wage demands of the dockers, and the following day, G. S. Campbell Company did as well. By this time the shippers were apparently now at a disadvantage because they needed the longshoremen more than the longshoremen, publicly at least, admitted to needing them.

> A large number of men who belong to the companies who refuse to give the increase have secured work outside, and in some cases are said to be making more money than if they were at their own work, but would be willing to go back if they got the increase asked.[56]

On 4 June, the last two shipping companies, Furness, Withy and

Pickford and Black, signed the agreement. The strike was settled and the longshoremen had gained all they asked without succumbing to government pressure; they had achieved their goal within the time limit as outlined in the Lemieux Act.

The longshoremen won a double victory, in the pay raise and in the renewal of the feeling of the need for union solidarity. The Morning Chronicle eulogized the strike and the strikers as follows:

> The longshoremen's strike and opposition were fairly conducted on both sides and the conduct of the men since it began has done them credit in the eyes of their employers and the public generally. The manner in which the negotiations were conducted demonstrated to the longshoremen that they have in their own ranks men just as capable of taking charge of their interests as any labor man they could get from outside and even more so.[58]

The whole city seemed proud of its honest, fair-minded workers. It was obvious, however, that they were not universally trusted. A letter found in the Pickford and Black papers demonstrates that some of the shipping agents engaged in labour espionage and, probably, were willing to sabotage efforts at unionization. As the letter was signed by A'4, Pickford and Black must have at least three agents:

> Report of operative A-4,
> re threatened strike.
>
> Halifax, N.S., May 18, 1907.
>
> L. J. Ehlers, Esq.,
> Sup't. Canadian Detective Bureau Ltd.,
> Halifax, N.S.
>
> Dear Sir:
>
> This evening I went to the Furness, Pickford &

Black and Cunard Piers. There were groups of men in twos and threes standing about talking of the demands of the Longshoremen.

I went into Horton's Commercial Hotel saloon nearly opposite the Furness Pier. There were several longshoremen standing at the bar. Two of them in particular, one of whom was called Tom said, "When we make a demand, we must stand together, and if we do we will get what we ask for". The other man replied, "you are right Tom". They then left the saloon and I had no chance of speaking with them.

I got into conversation with the watchman at Pickford & Black's Pier, whose name is Mitchell. He said that his sympathies were with the Longshoremen and that they should have formed a Union before they made any demands. If they would organize they could get whatever they would demand. He (Mitchell) had advised them on several occasions to form a Union and told them that he would become a member and do whatever he could to place it on a sound footing.

I intimated to Mitchell that I personally knew all about the details of forming a Union and conducting a strike, as I had practical experience as an old member of the Marine Engineers Organization (England) which had the largest strike ever conducted by a Union, which came out successfully for the men. Mitchell said that he knew all of the leading spirits of the Longshoremen, and would if he saw them around, introduce them to me, as he knew that they were in need of advise how to go about a union or strike. I promised to come around and see him again. Mitchell said as I was leaving, that the examples of Montreal & St. John's longshoremen ought to be an example to the Halifax men.

I posed as a friend to the men trying to improve their conditions and obtain advance on wages.

Yours truly,

A'4

59

In spite of such nefarious dealings, the union with this victory, was able to reestablish itself, and during the next 30 years it grew into one of the most powerful unions in Halifax. The fact that this was the last general waterfront strike by the HLA until the 1970s indicates that the principles which were behind con-

ciliation and arbitration evidently won some converts either voluntarily or by threat of legal sanctions.

C The strike of August 1907

At noon, 26 August 1907, the longshoremen who were employed by Pickford and Black quit their jobs because they did not want to work with a non-union man. Sixty men who had been discharging cargo from the steamer *Kathinka* asked the company to dismiss David Young for refusing to join the union. They claimed he enjoyed all the advantages for which they had fought and that it was only fair he become a member. Young had received union wages since that strike on the understanding that he become a member of the HLA, which he still had refused to do. "The men claim that when the recent agreement was made it was distinctly understood that non-union men were not to be employed, while on the other hand the company claimed the agreement was only about pay rates."[60]

The strike lasted only one day. The reason may have been the fact that the *Kathinka* had just arrived from the West Indies and was loaded with fruits and other perishable commodities. The unionized longshoremen returned to work the next day, but David Young did not. However, in his report to King, Michael Coolen, secretary of the HLA, stated that Young did in fact join the association thereby ending the strike.[61] As Young had supported and participated in the May strike, this report would seem accurate. It is unlikely that a union would have allowed a non-affiliated man to return to work so soon after a major labour

victory because it would have been interpreted as an indication of union weakness.

D The near-strike of October 1912

In October 1912 the HLA was on the verge of calling another general strike. Wages had not risen since 1907, and the cost of living was again eclipsing the buying power of the longshoremen's earnings. The dockers felt a 5¢ an hour increase in both the day and night wage schedules was more than justified. The longshoremen's union was bound by the terms of the Lemieux Act, however, and the men had to submit to the establishment of a board of conciliation. This board met from 23 September until 10 October in an effort to reach a satisfactory settlement of the major issue, a new pay scale. The board comprised Judge Wallace, Alderman MacKenzie, and A. M. Hoare.[62]

The board held full public hearings and private discussions and negotiations.[63] J. T. DeWolfe and W. S. Davidson presented the arguments for the steamship companies, and John T. Joy, president, and Michael Coolen, secretary, negotiated for the HLA.[64] The dockers wanted the new wage schedule to be 30¢ an hour and 35¢ an hour for the day and night shifts respectively while the agents offered 28¢ and 33¢. A compromise was finally reached based on the board's decision; 28¢ an hour for day work and 35¢ an hour for night time. Although the board, in its decision, appears to have chosen a middle-of-the-road settlement with one set of rates from each group, it should be noted that most longshore work was performed during the day shifts and thus

fewer men benefited from the 5¢ an hour increase. The conciliation board rejected the steamship agents' demand for a classification of dock jobs establishing wage differentials according to the skills employed. This system would have saved money for the shipping companies at the expense of the general longshoremen who would then not have been able to profit from the overall wage gain.

As in all matters of arbitration involving seasonal and irregular workers, the board of conciliation encountered many problems they would not have, had the negotiations been conducted for a year-round, relatively stable form of employment. They wrote:

> The Board wish to state that they found the question of the rate of pay submitted for investigation a very difficult one. In other classes of employment where men are engaged regularly it may not be difficult to advise some mode of wage determination which would be reasonably fair, but the Board felt that the peculiar nature of the work of the longshoremen and the special conditions prevailing at the port of Halifax made this question of the rate of pay a very difficult one to decide justly to all concerned. ... A stevedore must possess not only the physical endurance and strength of a workman belonging to the other classes (of worker) referred to, but must also have certain skills which an ordinary workman is not supposed to possess. Again owing to the heavy and wearing, and sometimes hazardous nature of the labor of stevedores, there is apt to come earlier in life a physical disability and, in some cases, an impairment of efficiency through the misfortune, rather than the fault of this class of workman.[65]

There were also, of course, demands from the longshoremen for improved or at least defined working conditions. They seem, however, to have taken a decidedly secondary position to the

wage scales and were rarely mentioned. As there was no disturbance reported resulting from any apparent rejection of these wage scales by the steamship companies, it can be assumed that most of them were agreeable, because little more was involved than a few minor changes in the existing pay format.[66]

E The strike of April 1930

The final labour disturbance that merited any press coverage during this period occurred in April 1930. The 1902 and May 1907 strikes and the 1912 scare had been primarily concerned with wage schedule; this time, the motivation was connected with working conditions and union rights. On 10 April approximately 50 men who had been discharging deals from the Canadian National steamer, the Planter, 'knocked off' work at noon in a dispute over the minimum number of men to be used in the ship's hold. The union claimed that there had been a violation of the 1929-30 agreement, which had set six as the minimum number of men to be employed. The CN supervisor had permitted only four men in the hold, claiming that there was only enough room and work for that number.[67] Immediately upon receiving word of the walkout, the local agent for the steamer, H. L. Mather and Company, applied to the federal labour department for the appointment of a board of conciliation.[68] After the union learned that a board was to be established, the striking dockers returned to work on 14 April and continued at their jobs until their dinner break. Upon their return, the president of local 269, A. M. Sullivan, ordered the men to quit work until the board had been constituted offic-

ially. Later that evening "it was officially stated that the Minister of Labour had set up a Board of Conciliation and that the stevedores would return to working pending the outcome."[69] This time the return was sanctioned by the HLA since the number of men in the hold was to remain at six until an official decision had been reached.

After a conference, the longshoremen's union selected J. A. Walker, a local barrister, as its representative, and the steamship company appointed W. C. MacDonald as its negotiator. When the two parties could not agree upon a chairman, the department of labour appointed the Reverend Dr. Clarence MacKinnon, one of the editors of the Citizen, and proceedings began.[70] After numerous meetings and conferences, the board recommended "that, except in the case of coastal or grain steamers, six be the accepted minimum number of men to be employed in the hold at any one time, and except in special circumstances there shall be no variation from this rule." If the holds were too small or there was a shortage of men, a smaller number could be employed but only after permission had been granted by the business agent of the HLA.[71] The strike was settled by 21 April in the dockers' favour.

III Conclusion

During the period 1900 to 1930, there seems to have existed a fair degree of harmony and willingness to compromise between the longshoremen of Halifax and the steamship owners and agents. The small number of strikes was probably a function of one of the standard clauses in all the 20th century wage agreements:

that all minor disputes between labour and management should first be discussed between the business agent of the union and the appropriate representative of the shipping companies. Neither party was strong enough to dominate the other; any show of force would most likely have resulted in extremely long, expensive, and violent confrontations. As well, the principles which sparked the early walkouts were, by and large, wage and working conditions which had already been obtained or surpassed in the other major eastern Atlantic ports, and shipping agents could hardly have been surprised then by their appearance in Halifax, nor too willing to conduct a protracted disagreement over conditions which were inevitable. As the economy of the port of Halifax was generally secure, the shipping agents could not really justify any cry of poverty. If other work stoppages occurred at the Halifax docks, they probably lasted for only a few hours, for they were not reported to either the department of labour or the local newspapers. The all-prevailing theme of harmony between employee and employer as cited by both sides suggests that if there were other stoppages, there was no epidemic of them.

In this respect the situation along the waterfront of Halifax was abnormal for a major Canadian port. In the cities of Montreal, Saint John and Vancouver working relations between the longshoremen and management were far from friendly. Strikes and walkouts occurred with alarming regularity as did the use of the local police to quell the disturbances. The dockers of these centres used the strike as an effective tactic in shutting down the port. That the HLA did not act in a similar manner can be attributed to the unique *mélange* of personalities and circum-

stances that accompanied the development of the port of Halifax and its longshoremen.

Chapter Five

1. Miller, "The Dockworker Subculture," p.309.

2. Walkouts, lockouts and work stoppages which had a life-span of only a few hours were rarely reported to the federal government and therefore this total of 117 represents those disruptions which had a major impact on harmonious labour relations.

3. The average length of a strike in the steam railways was 29.59 days.

4. PAC, DL, "Strikes and Lockouts in National Water Transportation, 1901 - 1930," undated manuscript, RG 27, accession 70/157, box 147502.

5. _Ibid._

6. Irving Abella, "The Canadian Labour Movement, 1902 - 1960," _Canadian Historical Association_, booklet 28, (1975), pp.5-6.

7. Michael S. Cross, _The Workingman in the Nineteenth Century_ (Toronto, 1974), p.285.

8. _LG_, September 1900, p.40.

9. Charles Lipton, _Trade Union Movement in Canada, 1827 - 1957_ (Toronto, 1967), pp.114-17.

10. Abella, "The Canadian Labour Movement, 1902 - 1960," p.6.

11. The other major group of waterfront workers, the coal heavers, although less steadily organized, had a parallel strike history. They struck in 1915 and 1920, reaping war-time benefits, and again in 1928 when 13 men went out over a dispute concerning the hiring of a non-union man. The coal handlers did go out in sympathy with the longshoremen in 1902, an action which was not duplicated during their strikes by the dockers.

12. _TL_, August 1912.

13. _HH_, 3 April 1902.

14. _Ibid._, 2 April 1902.

15. _Ibid._, 3 April 1902.

16. _EM_, 15 March 1902.

17. MC, 1 April 1902.

18. Ibid., 2 April 1902.

19. Ibid.

20. HH, 2 April 1902.

21. Ibid., 3 April 1902.

22. MC, 3 April 1902.

23. Ibid., 11 April 1902.

24. Ibid., 3 April 1902.

25. Ibid., 5 April 1902.

26. AR, 5 April 1902.

27. MC, 7 April 1902.

28. HH, 8 April 1902.

29. AR, 7 April 1902.

30. Ibid., 8 April 1902.

31. Ibid., 9 April 1902.

32. Ibid., 8 April 1902.

33. HH, 12 April 1902.

34. MC, 12 April 1902.

35. AR, 12 April 1902.

36. HH, 14 April 1902.

37. PAC, W.L.M. King papers, George J. Troop to Mulock, 18 April 1902, MG 26 J1, c1903, p.2808.

38. LG, May 1902, p.669.

39. AR, 5 April 1902.

40. Ibid.

41. Although the Acadian Recorder reported on 7 April 1902 that a tournament was planned and in the 21 April issue of the Morning Chronicle a list of various winners was recorded, there was no mention of the actual dates of this event in

either paper.

42. HH, 18 April 1903.

43. There is no indication that local 269 received any material assistance from the ILA, although they were in communication with the headquarters.

44. HH, 23 May 1907.

45. Ibid., 20 May 1907.

46. Ibid.

47. MC, 23 May 1907.

48. HH, 25 May 1907.

49. MC, 24 May 1907.

50. HH, 27 May 1907.

51. MC, 28 May 1907.

52. Ibid., 30 May 1907.

53. MC, 29 May 1907.

54. Ibid.

55. HH, 31 May 1907.

56. Ibid., 3 June 1907.

57. Ibid., 5 June 1907.

58. MC, 5 June 1907.

59. KMLA, Pickford and Black papers, report of agent A-4 to L.J. Ehlers, 18 May 1907.

60. HH, 27 August 1907; MC, 27 August 1907.

61. PAC, DL, Michael Coolen to W.L.M. King, 5 September 1907, RG 27, v.295, no. 2889.

62. MC, 17 October 1912.

63. Ibid.

64. HH, 1 October 1912.

65. MC, 17 October 1912.

66. ELN, 19 October 1912; LG, 1911-12, pp.478-82.

67. LG, April 1930, p.406; PAC, DL, strike file: Halifax longshoremen, April 1930, RG 27, v.344, no. 17.

68. AR, 10 April 1930.

69. HH, 15 April 1930.

70. TC, 25 April 1930.

71. LG, June 1930, p.632.

Conclusion

During the period 1900 to 1930, the fate of the city of Halifax rested with its port. The industry and, to some extent, the commerce of the city existed in a most precarious state; eventually, Halifax lost its regional economic leadership and independence in these two areas. Montreal capitalists helped to create a new rôle for Nova Scotia, that of a satellite state or colony, whose main function was to produce raw materials or industrial goods which would complement the industrial needs of the St. Lawrence based financial empires. The port of Halifax, however, underwent a renewal of its previous supremacy in the Maritime provinces, and by the 20th century it was the most important eastern Canadian port after Montreal.

Halifax had gained this position primarily because it was the nation's winter alternative to Montreal; the city's commercial value as a transhipment centre for commodities consolidated this claim. During the first 30 years of the 20th century the overall amount of shipping business in Halifax increased. There were, however, innate weaknesses in the economy of the port. Lacking a supporting hinterland with a sizeable market, the port was unable to stimulate enough traffic on its own to become a year-round port; it remained an annual, seven-month phenomenon. Without such a base, it

was subject to external influences which artificially stimulated it beyond its normal growth rate and its ability to maintain its gains. The strengths and weaknesses of the port of Halifax became those of its longshoremen. The combination of an improving commodity transportation system and the growing dependency of the province on the health of the port placed the longshoremen in an unprecedented position of importance. The seasonality of the port, however, undermined the security of the permanent longshoremen. The large number of jobs during the peak period and the depressed state of the Nova Scotia economy resulted in a glutted pool of surplus labour which gravitated towards the waterfront.

Halifax was a multi-tiered society segregated along lines of class, race, and ethnicity with a minimal interchange between the tiers. The residential and occupational distinctiveness of the working class mirrored the inhabitants' preoccupation with status and ethnic identity. The longshoremen were predominantly Irish Catholics who lived in such areas of town as Irishtown, Kline Heights, and Richmond, while the majority of the coal handlers were black Baptists who made their homes in Africville, Preston, and along Albemarle Street. Rarely did any man cross these intangible barriers.

The wages which the longshoremen received during this period experienced an overall, upward trend, but they did not keep up with the increase in the cost of living. In the same way, although the home ownership rate remained high, the

general quality of the housing appears to have declined. These factors, combined with the increasing level of the accepted standard of living, meant that the standard of living for the dockers essentially decreased during this 30 year span. The roots of the longshoremen's incapacity to maintain a semblance of economic equilibrium can be found in the powerlessness of Halifax to compete or even participate in the continental economy, and not necessarily in any inadequacy on the part of the HLA to organize or bargain. The longshoremen were among the most fortunate of the casual labourers because shipping at least had remained relatively unaffected by the provincial depression which particularly hit Nova Scotia after World War I. Although jobs were by no means secure or abundant and there was an international shipping depression from 1921 to 1923, the mature, qualified stevedores enjoyed an above-average existence for labourers in Halifax. Their standard of living would appear to have been very low nevertheless.

Longshoring in Halifax as elsewhere was a physically demanding, mentally numbing occupation extremely subject to seasonality and irregularity. The work was frequently hazardous because it was performed under very primitive conditions. Technology had not made any great impact in the work patterns of the longshoremen since for the majority of waterfront jobs it was cheaper for the shipping companies to replace men than equipment. By the time that technology could have altered the

work pace in a significant manner, the HLA had obtained a position of power and was able to enforce the retention of traditional patterns.

The élite of the longshoremen - the stevedores, walking bosses, and the company gangs - were one level above the casual workers, for they were skilled in the art of the proper loading of vessels. The majority of the jobs, however, involved the monotonous movement of commodities to and from ships, and required only brute strength. Therefore the waterfront workers' sanctuary was highly vulnerable to invasion by the unemployed of other trades.

In order partially to compensate for the uncertainties of unemployment and to retain some control over the dockside allocation of jobs, the dockworkers evolved an extraordinary sense of occupational solidarity and a distrust and exclusion of all outsiders from the managerial level down. The dock-workers' community was especially close in Halifax because of the almost homogeneous ethnic and religious background of the longshoremen; the HLA grew out of this atmosphere of fraternal loyalties. The 19th century versions of the Halifax dockers' unions were groups gathered for short-term collective action. However, by the 20th century, and especially after May 1907, the longshoremen of Halifax had their own represen-tative union, agitating for reforms to both the wage schedule and working conditions. In spite of its charter with the ILA, local 269 was essentially parochial in its interests and

perspectives. The International did not believe in interfering in local issues, leaving its affiliated associations to operate as almost autonomous groups, except for the monthly collection of dues for the parent union.

The executive of the HLA kept union policy very conservative; survival of the organization was the primary aim. Improvements were gained gradually with minimal recourse to strikes and walkouts, and after 1907, the union did not suffer any prolonged set-backs. It remained aloof from the labour violence of the late 1910s and 1920s, unlike some Halifax trade unions and most dockers' associations in Canada. This method of survival, however, severely restricted demands for advanced improvements in working conditions on the part of the HLA's executive. Under the placid but steady leadership of men such as John T. Joy, Michael Coolen, and Arthur M. Sullivan, the HLA became 'the' waterfront union in Halifax.[1] By 1930 it was a solid organization and was able finally to capitalize on its potential for paralyzing the port and local economy. The union was able to implement self-help benefit plans and with the growth of membership, and in its own introverted, self-concerned way was able to maintain member loyalty and union strength after 1907.

An unofficial closed-shop policy had come to the port by 1910, indicating both a strong union and a shipping management aware of the dockers' latent power, and so the city did not experience another general waterfront strike after 1907 until

the 1970s. Harmony and conciliation seem to have been eagerly sought by both the longshoremen and the shippers; this state of acknowledged mutual appreciation must have been derived from the realization that neither group was strong enough to force the other successfully into a total acquiescence. The HLA seemed content to wait for wage increases to evolve naturally as a result of longshore disputes at other Canadian ports, thus avoiding the risk of losing a major strike. The shippers, meanwhile, were also quite happy to wait for this evolution and appeared to do little consciously to annoy the union.

Although the general pattern of strikes within the water transportation industry reflected the broader national movements of the economy, the external influence of world shipping conditions had greater impact on this industry, especially in the port of Halifax. The port and the HLA were isolated from many of the pressures experienced by the province of Nova Scotia and in a way seemed to have existed in an almost insular condition, unaffected by the efforts of the other longshoremen in Canada. Because of this isolation, there was no other Canadian port which underwent a parallel development at the same time; Halifax was unique.

Conclusion

1. This paper is strictly a study of longshoremen, the other four main labouring groups; the coal handlers, fish handlers, freight porters, and the ship yard workers were deliberately omitted except when their inclusion was needed to reinforce arguments made concerning the longshoremen. Any inclusion of more detailed references or comparisons would have necessitated much more research than the writer had done and therefore such additions could quite possibly have been erroneous. Time was the limiting factor.

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