



# *The Early History of Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada*

**T**he following is an attempt at putting something on paper concerning the organization we belong to, the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada..

*Through installments over time, hopefully, I will be able to compile a record of the formation of this union and its early years.*

*The information is gleaned from our National Leaflet and, in no small part, listening to conversations over the many years. Ultimately, it is my opinion of how events unfolded. While many stood up at the scale, only a few made the bell ring.*

*This is, essentially, a BC story but, like a lot of the BCites, it begins elsewhere.*

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **LET'S START FROM THE BEGINNING**

The drive to unionize the pulp and paper mills of Canada was forged by two American unions: in pulp, the International Pulp Sulphite Workers Union (the International), and in paper, the United Papermakers International Union (the UPIU). Each held jurisdiction rights in their respective areas, granted and guarded by the AFL-CIO. They were, one may say, the only game in town.

By the late 1950s, virtually all pulp and paper mills in North America were certified by one and, often, both of these unions. Many pulp mills were also paper mills, thus the dual certification.

These unions, of course, were American through and through. Their overview of Canada was in keeping with the American business overview. Branch plant mentality ruled the day.

A bit of digression is necessary to better understand the events of the late '50s.

The first digression is a jump back 200 years to the beginnings of the industrial revolution, especially in England, and, to a lesser degree, in Europe. The inventions, discoveries and events evolving led quickly to a broad-base capitalistic system. Having no fetters or bounds, the power was completely in the hands of the bosses. Abuse, of course, was rampant. Governments of the day were mostly unwilling and generally powerless to act, often in the hands of the abusers themselves.

In the face of this, two other events occurred about 150 years ago, again, principally in England, then spreading to Europe and elsewhere England had influence.

Unions rose from the ranks of the craftsmen (tradesmen). Craft unions began as vehicles offering protection to those similarly skilled workers. For example, all stonemasons banded together, establishing a craft guild or union by another name. They established a criterion for their craft and insisted that anyone calling themselves master craftsmen meet these criteria. They also established a system of tenure or apprenticeship whereby the young and so inclined entered the trade and became qualified.

The second event was the socialist call to arms: the “communist manifesto” in 1848 by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, two exiled free thinkers from Germany living in England. While socialism as a system was not unknown in 1848, the manifesto became the bible. “Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains” became the rally cry.

These two events had nothing to do with one another for some long time. In fact, unions were somewhat elitist, private clubs almost, guarding their domain against all comers. In the late 1800s, when Marx set up something called the International Workingman’s Association, headquartered in London, England, trade unions generally ignored its existence. Socialism, however, did not ignore the existence of trade unions.

North America’s first brush with union socialism was in 1886 in Chicago. There, at the infamous Hay Market riot, which began as a strike for the eight-hour day, six strikers were shot to death by police, putting large brakes on union expansion, especially socially-inclined unions.

Opportunists arise always. Not the least of these was Samuel Gompers, an English expatriate and now a factory worker in New York. Gompers founded the American Federation of Labor (AFL). You have seen that name before, in 1898. It divorced itself from political activity, accepted capitalism as a way of life, and began its march towards a national federation wrapped in the American dream.

It’s important to understand that American unions eventually followed the AFL lead. They remained mainstream American.

In the rest of the world where unions existed, Europe and English colonies, socialism steadily gained ground. Socialists understood that unions were a proper vehicle to further advance their views. Generally, their views were the betterment of the common man, a notion that found much favour among downtrodden people, especially in the 1930s. Canada witnessed a decided move towards socialistic intent.

Canada then, as now, was largely branch-plant USA. The American owners welcomed their American unions when they came a-calling. Better if unions were going to exist that they be mainstream American types. Much better than who knows what might occur if socialist doctrine ruled the day. Canada, still a very conservative country, followed the American lead. Now we are back where we were in the late 1960s with those two AFL unions.

While the unions were American, and while their stated philosophy was anti-socialist, head offices in New York state had little control over day-to-day events in a back water like Prince Rupert or Castlegar, BC. These two areas, along with Woodfibre and, to a degree, the Vancouver/New Westminster sector, were the hot beds of ferment against the American unions in the late 1950s, early '60s.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **AFL-CIO THREATENS SUSPENSION**

It's time now to introduce a founding father of our union, the PPWC. His name is Orville Braaten. While Orville is not the only founding father and, as time evolved, due to circumstance, perhaps not the most important one, Orville was the first to question the direction of the International Pulp Sulphite Union. He was the first to demand alternatives, the first to talk of Canadian ideals.

Orville was a prairie-born true Canadian. He came from the same roots that Tommy Douglas and his Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) party came from. Certainly, the working man and his problems were high priority for Orville.

Orville was a member of Local 433 in Vancouver, known as the converter local. A larger portion of Local 433 was a predecessor to the present PPWC Local 5. Its make-up was similar. Orville was the full-time business agent for Local 433. He also was a member of the Western Pulp and Paper Council. The council was a regional affiliate of pulp and paper mills in BC. Canada was divided into three councils: Eastern (Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces), Central (Ontario and Manitoba), and Western (BC only, as Alberta and Saskatchewan didn't have any mills).

The Western Council published a monthly newspaper called the *Western Pulp and Paper Worker*. Orville was the editor of that paper. Its first edition was January 1956.

The first stirrings of malcontent appear in mid 1956. As stated before, Alberta and Saskatchewan were without mills, but that was about to change. A mill in Hinton, Alberta, and another in northern Saskatchewan were in the offing. The Western Council believed both these mills would fall under their stewardship. In the initial discussions, it appeared as though that notion would carry the day. However, at the International Union convention in Milwaukee in May '56, resolutions brought forth by the Western Council to establish that fact failed badly.

In an editorial, titled "Where is Western Canada," Orville blasts the International executive, advising them an error of great magnitude has been made. Clearly, he says, Alberta and Saskatchewan are in Western Canada. He calls on them to be big enough to own up and rectify the mistake.

In mid '56 word spread of a possible merger between the International and the International Woodworkers of America (IWA). While the IWA was also an international union claiming membership across North America, its roots and strengths were in the Pacific Northwest. For that matter, BC was often the heart of the IWA. A merger of this nature much interested the pulp and paper locals in BC.

No information, however, was forthcoming from International headquarters: no invitation to participate or anything else to make the BC locals feel they belonged. Orville made his position well known in the pages of his newspaper: "If merger between our International and any other union is to happen, then all our locals must be kept informed right from the start." The fact a merger fact-finding meeting was held in Chicago in July '56 only added to the displeasure as, again, International locals were not informed.

A jurisdictional dispute arose in mid '57 that further irked BC pulp and paper workers, particularly Local 433, the converting local, and especially Orville, its business agent. The whole issue of where converting locals belonged was being discussed under the auspices of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) in Ottawa. Four unions were lined up to organize box and bag plants in Canada. The biggest box and bag plant local, by far, was Local 433, Vancouver. It, of course, was an International local. In spite of this, when discussions ended in Ottawa, it was very obvious that the International was about to relinquish what, in the opinion of Local 433, was a constitutional right. Orville argued that only the International convention, held every three years, had the power to change the constitution.

The International president and the many vice-presidents differed with that opinion and cut loose Local 433's CLC-chartered rights.

This, of course, meant further expansion of Local 433 would not occur. Since organizers with no ability to organize are mostly unhappy people, Orville, as Local 433's business agent, was quite vocal in his condemnation of this action. The mentioned episodes may well be considered mild in nature 45 years later; however, in the middle '50s, Orville was breaking with tradition.

Clearly, Orville was not acting alone. As an executive member of the Western Pulp and Paper Council (the Council), he shared views with George Pembleton, Council president, Angus Macphee, Council vice-president, and Bob McCormick, Council member, good socialists all and dedicated to the union movement. Later, these names, especially Macphee, will become very prevalent, but in 1957-58, Orville led the way.

Although the above unrest, as exemplified by Orville, is worthy of note and express where BC pulp and paper unions were going in the mid '50s, one event that began in the US overshadows everything else.

This event, initiated by the US Senate, was a probe into labour racketeering. Three US senators were conducting the inquiry, namely, Senators McClellan, Mandt and, not the least, Joseph McCarthy. McCarthy, of course, is famous for having ferreted out the communist threat, real or perceived, in America.

The affiliate AFL-CIO sided with the probing senators to the extent that they (the AFL-CIO) announced they would suspend any union officer or his union who availed himself of the US's Fifth Amendment.

Essentially, the Fifth Amendment offers protection in investigations of this nature by stating no person shall be compelled to bear witness against himself. Pleading the Fifth enables due process to occur. By their actions, the AFL-CIO was denying due process to their own members. Again, an example of how in deep they were with all things American or all things business bent.

Writing in April of '57, Orville says, "The executive of the AFL-CIO should have their heads examined. They are supporting these politicians who are notoriously unsuccessful in clearing up their own domain...The present AFL-CIO leadership doesn't have the guts to remove the racketeer from office, but they threaten anyone who will not turn his back on civil liberties." Joseph McCarthy, especially, is singled out for scorn.

No one, least of all Orville, believed the senators were entirely legit. Hidden agenda was on everyone's mind. That agenda, of course, was double-barreled: more Joe McCarthy purge of perceived undesirables coupled with an attack on union power.

In the opinion of BC pulp and paper workers, the union can best weed out the unwanted. They do not need help from their sworn enemies.

The Senate Committee, however, continued its probe. Chief among its targets was none other than the Teamsters. Teamsters leader Dave Beck was subjected to heavy flack from the committee. Everyone knew the Teamsters were guilty of perhaps just about everything and, thus, were the easy scapegoats for the committee, whose real motives were to dampen union activity by introducing right-to-work laws, by introducing open-shop laws and, generally, impeding unions at every turn.

The AFL assured that Beck would be suspended if he took the Fifth, not for being a racketeer, mind you, but for pleading a civil right guaranteed by the American Constitution.

This probe led to the realization that all was not well in union land. That knowledge results in the formation of the Rank and File Movement for Democratic Action (RFMDA). Within this ad hoc movement (committee) were the seeds that, in time, would lead to the end of the International Pulp Sulphite Union.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT DEMANDS REFORM**

The Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada (PPWC) came into being in January 1963. Events leading up to that date have been depicted in the two prior chapters. This issue will continue in the same vein.

The word “International” used here means the union called the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers. This was the union all pulp and paper workers in BC and most of North America belonged to prior to 1963. For example, Local 8 of the PPWC was Local 695 of the International.

Why 494 became 3, 708 became 4, or 842 became 1 is an intriguing story. Many are the contributing factors. As mentioned, the Rank and File Movement for Democratic Action (RFMDA) set the standards and began the political ferment that revealed some of the answers to the above questions.

The RFMDA began as the active unionist’s answer to the US Congressional inquiry into union corruption. Any true trade unionist of the late 1950s or early ‘60s in North America was caught up in advancing socialism. The ideals, as expressed, allegedly or otherwise, by the USSR and, closer to home, by Cuba, were what many unionists, especially Canadians, were about. Little red books abounded.

Socialism, of course, is very idealistic. Macphee, Braaten, McCormick, Big Al Smith from Woodfibre, and Gordie Carlson from Crofton were all idealistic men.

Men born into an emerging world, a world that seemed to give the hope of new social order, where workers would take their rightful place and claim the type of life their toil was capable of providing.

Macphee and McCormick, among others, went to Cuba to see first hand socialism in action. The euphoria in the early 1960s in Cuba was very compelling: Batista's regime had been ousted; the American masters had been sent packing; Cuba belonged to Cubans. What's more, in theory at least, it belonged to every one of them. It was easy to sing the praises of such a place, and so they did when they returned to Canada. Canada, however, was an enigma, for sure. Blessed beyond most others, our home and native land, but in business, largely a branch plant for American interests. Cuba belonged to the Cubans, theoretically. Canada belonged to the Americans, theoretically.

Still worse than business belonging to the Americans, the very Canadian unions that Macphee and Braaten and their working brothers belonged to were also very much under the control of American international unions. The name "International" is somewhat a misnomer, as only the US and Canada claimed membership.

The word "International" was, thus, a conspiracy word for socialists. Firstly, international socialism was the ultimate dream. Didn't their chests swell with pride as they sang the very song, "The Internationale," the socialist anthem?

The International they belonged to, however, was ultimately led by George Meany, the AFL-CIO president, he who condemned socialists as being against the American way. He who sided with the aforementioned congressional inquiry, the Joe McCarthy inspired inquiry. The Joe McCarthy who had just recently red-baited them, essentially destroyed the careers and, in some cases, the lives of many substantial intellectual and progressive men and women in the US. The scars remain to this day. Many of us were proud to see Nick Nolte refuse to stand or acknowledge Ilia Kazan at the Academy Awards presentations. Kazan collaborated with McCarthy and fingered his co-workers in the arts.

Coupled with the ideological differences, as expressed by Braaten and Macphee, versus George Meany, who, incidentally, was supported by his Canadian counterpart Claude Jodoin, Canadian Labour Congress president, another factor emerged.

Canadiana was blossoming all over the country. A growing sense of nationhood prompted many Canadians, pulp and paper workers among them, to strive for control of their affairs. A new political party (New Democratic Party) founded in 1961 held promise for the future.

The Avro Arrow, the fastest and most advanced fighter jet the world had ever seen, was built right here in Canada. The fact it never flew was of no importance.

The Toronto Maple Leafs had just won a Stanley Cup. Some things were right in our world.

Braaten, especially, voiced the need for Canadian autonomy, if not in an acceptable International structure, then damn the consequences. "We will have our own union."

The RFMDA, with its demand for reform, not surprisingly was embraced by the leadership of many West Coast locals.

The RFMDA was founded in April of 1961 at Denver, Colorado. While it had as its chairman R. H. Chatham from West Monroe, Louisiana, the remaining leadership were West Coast American and Canadian. Canada was represented by Macphee, Braaten, and Murray Mowatt from Local 76, Powell River. The movement established a position paper and, though this paper made their demands known, they called for secret-ballot elections of all International officers.

In the International, several areas or "regions" existed. Each region had a vice-president, who was responsible for goings-on in his region. In the past, vice-presidents were elected by convention at large. This created a situation where voters from Louisiana, for example, voted on the vice-president responsible for BC. This was believed to be counter-productive. The RFMDA demanded vice-presidents be elected by their regions. This manner of elections would enable a Region to elect the vice-president they wanted. It would also better enable a region to rid itself of an undesirable.

The RFMDA further demanded a more democratic and militant union, more regional autonomy with Canadian regions forming their own autonomous council within the International.

The movement then stepped into a circumstance that was happening at that moment. Two New York area International representatives had just been fired by the International Union. These same two had blown the whistle on one vice-president, Tonelli, from the New York Region. Tonelli was accused of bribetaking, dealings with the mob, and other union-demeaning activities. The two representatives, Brothers Connolly and Hayes, were subsequently fired by the International executive. Hard on the heels of these firings, the International research director, Bro. Brooks was also fired when he dared to resist the former firings.

The RFMDA demanded a complete reinstatement of the three and, further, they demanded an impartial inquiry be set up to look into all aspects of the events. The plot was thickening, and Castlegar is much of that.

## CHAPTER 4



## BC BROTHERS ASK POINTED QUESTIONS

In the last chapter, we saw the Rank and File Movement for Democratic Action (RFMDA) forming in 1961. Among the demands of the RFMDA's position paper was the reinstatement of the fired representatives: Connolly, Hayes, and Brooks.

Writing in support of the above demand, Angus Macphee says:

*The International Executive Board meeting in Glen Falls, New York, voted 9-4 to uphold the firing of Bro. Brooks and refused to discuss Connolly and Hayes.*

*The fact that Connolly [sic] ran for a Vice-President's position along with his challenge to Tonelli and the fact that Heyes [sic] supported him are clearly factors in the firings. Our Union is crippled with the malignancy of business unionism. The Glen Falls meeting clearly reveals this.*

*As to Bro. Brooks, he was hired to advise and direct. This he did, at times in opposition to elected or appointed representatives. For this he has been called disloyal. That he has not been heard is the crime of disloyalty laid by the same men of Glen Falls.*

Glen Falls, New York, was the location of the International's head office.

Angus was speaking for the vast majority of active International Unionists in BC. Writing with equal clarity and conviction was Orville Braaten.

In mid 1961 Orville asked some intriguing questions. For example, why did the International buy the certification of a converting local in Chicago? Local 415, Chicago, a local within the Printing Specialties Union at the time, was paid \$25,000 to join the International. It became Local 415 of the International even though a Local 415 already existed. Where did the \$25,000 go? In short order, they left the International and joined somebody else. More so, why was a certain Anthony Barbaccia from Local 679 in New York City paid \$100 per week by Tonelli to stay away from Local 679? What hold did he have on Tonelli?

These various activities prompted the BC brothers to ask pointed questions. These activities also enhanced the attraction of the RFMDA.

In the midst of all this, a seemingly insignificant event occurred in mid '61. Local 795 of the United Paper Makers and Paper Workers Union (UPPU) affiliated to the Western Pulp and Paper Council. The workers from Castlegar were becoming dissatisfied. Led by, among others, Bro. Evan Moore, they wanted action on several levels.

One particular contentious issue was seniority. A new seniority list, exhibited by the company and agreed to by UPPU International representatives (note: not the International Pulp Sulphite), was amazing indeed. Any union activists calling for change—there were several—found themselves at the bottom of the seniority lists. Hot on the heels of joining the Western Pulp and Paper Council came a de-certification petition, calling for the expulsion of UPPU Local 795. About 70 per cent of the workers supported de-certification.

Castlegar's struggle towards Canadian unionism and local autonomy was on its way. We'll catch up to it later.

Meanwhile, back on the coast, the RFMDA had evolved as a strong challenge to the power base of the men from Glen Falls. Its demand for democratic action, new voting systems and the like spelled doom to Tonelli and his cohorts. So, they (Tonelli and crew) resorted to what they knew best: more lies and deceit. They published (anonymously, of course) a 12-page bulletin called "Truth." It was sent to all International members and, essentially, challenged the RFMDA, *the Western Pulp and Paper Worker* (predecessor to our *Leaflet*), and anyone who asked for the reinstatement of Connolly, Hayes and Brooks.

Put clearly, it red-baited (accused of being communism) all of the above and held a special place for Angus Macphee, whom it called a liar and a man about to plot the dissolution of democracy in Canada.

Macphee, Braaten, and McCormick were quick in their critique. All called attention to the falseness of unsigned and unsponsored articles. Angus, especially, was quite eloquent:

*To a serious adherent of the trade-union cause, the 12-page publication is a tragic thing. It embodies all that is rotten and reactionary in current literature. From its flag-emblazoned masthead to its promise of more to come, its writing dwells in the journalistic mire of the typical 'Confidential'. Its insinuating slanders are a fearful reminder of the McCarthy press. It could be the work of the Klan, American Firsters, or the Pinkertons. It is boss writing of the most insidious kind. Its appeal can only be to the ignorant or misled.*

*'Truth' does not mention that Burke, whom it eulogizes, opposed all three discharges. It made no mention of Tonelli paying off Barbaccia at \$100 per week. It falsely states that the 'New York Post,' which first exposed the above bribe, retracted.*

*It offers no defence against the charges made by Connolly and Hayes. It does not support an impartial investigation of these charges. It does not discuss the program of the RFMDA on its merits. It offers no program.*

*It represents the intellectual and moral poverty of business unionism. It parades this poverty in all its bigotry, ignorance and corruption. This is the dishonesty of the 'American Way' in capsule form and close to home. This is not the Teamsters union but the Pulp Sulphite.*

While it wasn't unusual in 1961 for Angus and Orville to go into the bear pit and battle with anyone, new voices emerged as more locals reported. Gordon Wickham, Local 695 (8), soundly condemned the "Truth" article and, more so, Reg. Ginn, Local 494 (3). Reg., who knew Angus, in fact worked in Prince Rupert prior to Woodfibre, pointed out, that, sure, Angus is a dedicated socialist and true unionist. It is those who fear the Anguses of the world who have need to red-bait. They have something to hide. He ends his piece by a Jean Dixon like prediction: "A majority of our members would like to see the International in our name supplanted by National. Much more of this abusive, stomach-souring trash could greatly swell those ranks."

In every adventure, there are those who participate and those who dissent. The RFMDA and the move to Canadiana was no different than any other such adventure.

Notably in dissent was Reno Biasutti, Local 76. Reno supported the International in all its endeavours. Coming back from a European trip, he stopped in New York City and went to the International offices in Fort Edward. There he met with Tonelli and others. Upon returning home, Reno was very clear in his beliefs. He had personally asked Tonelli if there was something afoul. Tonelli had answered him that nothing was, and that was good enough for Reno.

Two others of note who were emerging in Ocean Falls, replacing Pemberton and McCormick, were Peter Marshall and Bill Smalley. Both preached caution and maintaining an international approach. McCormick perceived himself a communist, as he also perceived others to be. He, in the end, supported international unionism. Nationalism smacked of fascism to him. His last words of note were the disappointment he felt in the move to Canadian autonomy. One Big Union was his goal.

Fred Wood, Local 742, Campbell River, also preached caution and stood on side with Biasutti and Marshall.

So, in early 1962, there was division in the International, as professed by the RFMDA; division within the Western Pulp and Paper Council, as professed by the Macphee/Braaten versus Biasutti/Wood ideologies; and Castlegar had jumped ranks.

The chaos in Castlegar arose over how union certification occurred in the first place. While the mill was being built, construction crews were approached by the UPPU. People staying on after opening, which was sometimes the case, were signed up to the UPPU.

The International Pulp Sulphite Union didn't move on the Castlegar workers until the mill was up and running. They expected automatic certification. It was a pulp mill. They were astonished to find a certification in place. Dissatisfaction soon grew to the boil-over stage. UPPU Local 795, Castlegar, was de-certified and became International Pulp Sulphite Local 842.

It's important to note this was not a raid. Raiding was frowned upon big time. The workers in Castlegar had affected this all by themselves. The International's only compliance had been the granting of a charter applied for. Castlegar was now solidly in the ranks of the Western Pulp and Paper Council and solidly in the ranks of the RFMDA.

Local 842 entered negotiations in late March of '62. Committee members were Haviland, Besso, McFadgean, and Sorge.

Trouble was in the air, especially in the form of the AFL-CIO. On appeal from the UPPU to the affiliate body (AFL), it determined that Local 842 was indeed the result of a raid. Under the no-raid agreement, it could not exist. In effect, UPPU Local 795 was reinstated. Again, Orville, in his paper, admonished the AFL for the ruling, saying it disregards Canadians and, more so, the workers in Castlegar, who have voted en masse to leave the UPPU.

In the meantime, Local 842 had negotiated a first contract, which the members had accepted. The term of the contract is interesting. It spanned a 7½-month time frame. The contract had also clarified and successfully dealt with issues at odds with the UPPU attempt at contract resolutions.

The AFL order to the workers in Castlegar was the final insult. They were never going back to the UPPU. If they couldn't be International Local 842, then they would be Local 1 of the Canadian Pulp and Paperworkers Union. In June of 1962, that is what they became and forever after changed the face of unionism in the province.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **A STORY ABOUT THE PPWC**

The June union of those members of Local 1, Castlegar, of the Canadian Pulp and Paperworkers, bore its baby, the PPWC, in January of 1963.

While it's true that Braaten and Macphee were the prime shakers in the move to a Canadian union, both were still caught in the throes of an International relationship. Castlegar became the first Canadian union in pulp and paper. The workers there were the first to bargain their own contract, free of any International influence. Those workers were also the first to reject CLC affiliation. When they left the International, the CLC affiliation went by the wayside.

Prompted by the likes of Biasutti, Local 76, the local leadership decided to apply for membership. After much deliberation, the CLC concurred and presented the proper documents for approval by the Local 1 membership. In a show of determination and, certainly, clarity, Local 1's membership refused the application.

Writing about this episode, John Wales, corresponding secretary of Local 1, says, "This is a clear indication that we do not wish to continue to partake directly or indirectly in the ill-mannered rift presently displayed by the International."

Displayed in the January 1963 edition of the *Western Pulp and Paper Worker* is the Local 1 executive, with C. S. Haviland, president.

The nine months from conception to birth are certainly intriguing in our history. Going back to June 1962, fallout from the recent CLC convention stole the headlines. The convention, held in Vancouver, brought to the fore the divisions in Canadian labour. The before-mentioned Castlegar UPPU/International mess was debated, and the Carpenters/IWA issue was debated. The latter event was unfolding in Newfoundland, where the Carpenters International local was attempting to certify loggers. The IWA believed this to be their arena. Also debated was the Mine Mill/United Steelworkers of America dispute. Mine Mill was a newly-formed Canadian union holding certifications in Thompson, Manitoba, and Sudbury, Ontario. The Steelworkers were raiding them. Mine Mill had applied to the CLC (unlike Castlegar, they were affiliated) for remedy. No remedy had come.

Orville Braaten had supported Mine Mill in several articles in the past. He was singled out for special attack from the United Steelworkers at this convention. The attack came from a CLC vice-president, who also happened to be a Steelworkers director. William Mahoney had the privilege of having a head-table seat and microphone from which to launch his bombardment. Orville came away feeling vilified and unfulfilled. He was guilty of supporting Canadian unions and, as a speaker from the floor, he didn't get his chance to respond to the accusations.

Gordon Wickham, writing from Nanaimo, called for more positive action at conventions. He found that nothing happened to enhance the Canadian labour movement. The convention was essentially deemed a failure and of little importance to anyone.

Conventions come and conventions go. If Vancouver offered little by way of interest, another convention delivered in spades. In September of '62, over 30 del-

legates from BC packed their bags for the International convention in Detroit. Many decided to stay in Windsor, Ontario, and commute daily. Among these were Macphee and Braaten.

When Macphee and Braaten showed up at US Customs, crossing the bridge between Windsor and Detroit, they were denied entry into the US. Both were questioned extensively, Angus for six hours. Questions varied but, generally, revolved around Cuba and the Communist Party. It is interesting to note that US Customs had a list of all BC convention delegates. Only Angus and Orville were refused entry, although a few others were detained for a time. Most commentaries on the denied-entry affair are very condemning of US policy. Most are also aware that, only through collusion between US Customs and the International Union, this could have occurred.

Big Al Smith, Woodfibre, perhaps says it best: "If I have never seen a machine in action, I have seen it now. From the Chairman on down, most were parts of a machine determined to maintain the status quo in spite of the wishes of the rank and file. By guile they maintain their positions." He spoke further of being denied access to the floor mikes when the voting for area representative's issue was advanced. He says McCormick stood for 3½ hours and was not recognized by the chair. In closing, he offers this last view of his first and last convention: "As I left the convention hall I felt dirty, depressed and a bit dazed. I crossed back into Canada and took a bath."

Gordie Wickham, Local 695 (8), says, "Our demands for area representation ran smack into the iron wall defence put in place by the leadership of the International. Undoubtedly, the time has come for all sincere union members to take a long, hard look at the status quo."

Ray Koob, Local 433 (5), championed Canadian unionism with a challenge to all to have the fortitude to stand on their own two feet, the strength of character to become independent on a local and national level.

Reno Biasutti, Local 76, however, did not agree with the previous assessments. Rather, he said, Braaten, McCormick, Smith, et al., were, in fact, a machine dedicated to the disservice of the International Union.

Nationalism, like politics, makes strange bedfellows. That time-worn sentence brings us to Bill Cox. Cox was a member of International Local 833, certified at BC Pulp and Paper's Crofton mill. More than a member, he was the president of that local in 1962. While he shared none of the political convictions of McCormick, a self-confessed communist, or Macphee, certainly a socialist and the number 1 "red"-bait target, Cox was still dissatisfied with much that he had seen in the International.

He was one of the 30 some BC unionists who traveled to Detroit for the '62 convention. Upon returning home, he made a decision that was, albeit, down stream from Castlegar, to play a large part in the PPWC. He gathered around him four others he believed he needed in pursuit of his aims. The four—Pat O'Brien, Gord Carlson, Jack McDougall, and Frank Jameson—along with Cox became known as the Original 5. Cox then proceeded to enlighten the Crofton workers on the need for change.

The Detroit convention Cox attended was a huge turning point for him. His prior dissatisfaction turned to complete contempt. When, in his words, Canadian speakers at that convention were cut off (their microphones were shut down) if they talked anything other than pro-International Union, this was enough for him. Cox began a very personal and intense project. He was going to bring the Canadian union to Crofton. Events, as they unfurled, gave the Crofton Original 5 the impetus to move ahead. The events, of course, involved others as well evolving in this fashion.

In November of 1962, the BC Federation of Labour (BC Fed) convention was held in Victoria at the Empress Hotel. Ray Koob, who attended on behalf of Local 433 (5), remembers the delegates being in attic rooms complete with rafters and cobwebs. Ray says the locals then, as now, didn't have a lot of money, so they sort of shared accommodations in a dorm set-up above the more expensive rooms at the Empress. Gord Carlson doesn't remember the rafters, but he does remember being awed by the Empress and not having a lot of money.

Anyway, during the BC Fed convention, the International locals represented met daily to discuss the plight of their unions. The failure of any RFMDA-backed resolutions, the US entry denial to Macphee and Braaten, and the added complete lack of democracy at the Detroit convention highlighted the discussions. Several agreements were reached during these after-hours discussions. Among these were:

- A draft constitution would be developed in short order.
- Orville Braaten, guided by the acknowledged union lawyer, Isaac Shulman, would prepare the draft.
- A further meeting would be held on December 1 and 2, 1962, at the Ritz Hotel in Vancouver. This meeting would conclude discussions on the constitution.
- A founding convention would be held on January 12 and 13, 1963, again at the Ritz.

The December meeting occurred as planned. Representatives from 8 of 11 International locals attended. While details are sketchy, Bill Smalley, Local 312, Ocean Falls, in a report to his membership, said:

*A draft constitution was drawn up by Bro. Braaten and Isaac Shulman. The draft is a guide only, subject to many expected amendments. Our two-day meeting was spent on the constitution, and we feel we have come out with a very democratic and workable organization.*

*The union, proposed in the constitution, is set up similar to the IWA, a three-level structure: local unions, regional units, and the national union. Regional units will not be necessary for the time being. Their inclusion now, however, will make them easier to set up as necessary.*

*A regional convention will be held yearly with a national convention every other year. Until regions are in fact set up, national conventions will be yearly.*

*The national executive will be the president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and one executive elected by and from each chartered local.*

*The president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer will be elected by referendum ballot by the total membership. Nominations will be accepted at convention.*

*A provision for recall will be in place. Any national officer will be recalled by a petition of 25 per cent of the national membership along with 25 per cent of all chartered locals.*

*A verbatim report of all national executive committee meetings will be distributed to all locals. A special auditor, who is not an employee of the national union and who is a chartered accountant, will be hired to audit the books at least yearly. Copies of his report will be distributed to all locals.*

*These are the highlights of the new constitution. We will review it once more on January 12 and 13, again at the Ritz in Vancouver. There it will be ratified and officers will be elected on a temporary basis until the first regular convention, which will be held no later than January 1964.*

*Beyond that, observations of the discussion show that Crofton and Woodfibre will lead the move to the new union. Prince Rupert and Vancouver will follow. Support there is also good.*



*Castlegar will merge once the new union is established. Port Alice and Nanaimo may go either way while Powell, Alberni, Port Mellon and Elk Falls will not participate at this time.*

Ocean Falls, he points out, will make their own decision. He believes, meanwhile, that a truly decent and democratic trade union will be built from these foundations.

Bill Smalley was first vice-president of Local 312 at the time.

Another report from Peter Marshall, president of Local 312 at the time (soon to be International business representative), confirmed almost verbatim Smalley's report. However, Marshall spoke in opposition to the new union. He did not believe that it served the best interests of the membership.

The founding convention of January 12 and 13, as promised, happened.

## CHAPTER 6

### LOCAL 2 CERTIFIES ON JUNE 26, 1963

January 12 and 13, 1963, the birth of the PPWC. Without birth there is nothing, so, for us, these are the days of all days.

In Vancouver at the Ritz Hotel, the hotel of choice for trade unionists, the founding Locals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 met. There they adopted the new constitution and elected the first officers:

President	Bill Cox, Crofton
First Vice-President	Evan Moore, Castlegar
Secretary	Pat O'Brien, Crofton

It's of no small importance to note that both Angus Macphee and Orville Braaten were also nominated for president. Both declined. It was left to Bill Cox, in the formative years at least, to lead the fledging union. That he did.

As they left Vancouver, they urged one another to proceed with certain caution but, nonetheless, with haste. They knew the International would be mounting an opposition to the intended breakaway. In fact, the International vice-president for the area, Stubby Hansen, was in New York as they met in Vancouver. Certainly, he was getting his instructions on a concerted plan.

The National Union was now in place. The Pulp and Paperworkers of Canada existed. Through its newly-elected officers, it was empowered to issue charters, and its constitution was approved

The constitution itself had no peer. No other union constitution put the union's affairs in the hands of its members like this one did.

- Yearly elections with membership-wide voting and a National Executive Board (NEB) that met quarterly. The board was made up of the yearly-elected officers plus one yearly-elected member from each local. All had voice and vote at board level. Everything the union did went through the NEB.
- Along with that, a yearly convention with representation by membership from all locals, voting based on one man, one vote on all issues before the convention. The convention checked the past, revealed the present, and proposed the future.
- It also featured a no-hired-guns approach to unionism. There were to be no business agents or representatives hired full time. It was felt that the worker in the plant best knew what he wanted.

The other likely, more-compelling reason for ultimate democracy at all stages in this new union was a desire to move far away from what the International had become. Those who left Vancouver on January 13, 1963, believed they were moving back in time to what unions once were, controlled by and for the worker. Castlegar aside, the first shot was fired in Crofton. The Original 5, led by Bill Cox, planned their action.

Cox knew that whatever the members of Local 833 had by way of money in the bank or office furnishings had to be protected from seizure by the International. To prevent this, they formed the "Crofton Health and Welfare Society." The society was registered in Duncan on January 16, 1963. It had legal status, and membership was restricted to members of Local 833.

At the next general meeting of Local 833, the office equipment was sold to the Crofton Health and Welfare Society for \$200. At the same meeting, it was agreed that a vote for all members would be held within 10 days. The vote would pose the question: "Are you in favour of joining the Pulp and Paperworkers of Canada?" Leaving nothing to the haphazard, it was decided that ballots asking that question should be printed at a print shop.

When Cox and Carlson picked the printed ballots up, they were not amused to see "Are you in favour of joining the Pulp and Paperworkers of America?" The ballots were redone in record time and, as Gord Carlson puts it, the printer's error was an honest and conditioned one. Unionism in Canada was completely dominated by America.

The vote was a resounding 94.6 per cent "Yes."

The application for charter was made and granted on February 2, 1963. PPWC Local 2 was a reality.

Of course, the International wasn't going to take this sitting down.

Stubby Hansen contacted International President John Burke in New York. Burke responded on February 13, 1963. In a lengthy letter to all Local 2 executive members, he informed them they were relieved of their duties as members of Local 833. He further advised them that the local was in trusteeship. He named the appointed trustees, among them George Allen, Frank Burnett, Gerald Dixon, and Danny Roberts, all Local 833 members remaining loyal to the International.

As these registered letters were being delivered, Cox and Carlson were moving the office furniture to a new location rented in the name of the Crofton Health and Welfare Society. Cox and Carlson were also transferring whatever funds Local 833 members had in the Royal Bank in Crofton to the Royal Bank in Duncan and depositing it in the name of the Crofton Health and Welfare Society.

The International was not sitting idle while these occurrences were taking place. In addition to Burke's letters, there was a plan to install the new Local 833 trustees in a show of force.

The International vice-president for Canada, Henry Lorraine from Montreal, was to be the installing officer. When Cox got final word on the exact date (he also had a deep throat in the service of Local 833), he called a special membership meeting the night before, expecting and wanting a confrontation.

It was too good an opportunity to pass up. Lorraine, Hansen, and their entourage marched into Crofton Hall. There sat 250 Crofton mill workers, about 85 per cent of the membership. There sat Bill Cox, chairing the meeting.

Lorrain, a very well-spoken and presentable individual, moved to the head table. He informed Cox that he had been expelled, along with the rest of Local 833's executive. Since this was a Local 833 meeting he, Henry Lorraine, would act as chairman and get on with cleaning up the mess Crofton was in.

Cox let him finish and replied, "This is not a Local 833 meeting. This is a Crofton Health and Welfare Society meeting. This hall was rented by our society. I have the receipt right here in my hand. You can stay if you want, but I am chairing this meeting, and you will get your chance to talk after we carry out our business."

The International representatives had nowhere to go. After a short period of questions from the floor that had been pre-arranged by Cox and others, the International representatives left.

This meeting is viewed by most as a true turning point for Local 2. The momentum really took off. In short order, 85 per cent had signed Local 2 membership

cards, and certification was applied for. On June 26, 1963, Local 2 was certified as the union representing the 300 mill workers in Crofton, BC.

Local 2 kept the office equipment and the money (\$6,000) deposited in the Duncan bank.

A little insight during this five-month battle: Local 2 trustee and PPWC secretary-treasurer Pat O'Brien ran a small information sheet into the mill updating the members on current events. Frank Jameson designed the masthead and called it the *Leaflet*.

We still produce the *Leaflet* today.

## CHAPTER 7

### LOCAL 3 CERTIFIES ON JUNE 18, 1963

Woodfibre, BC: a pulp mill, a town site, the company houses clinging to the side of a Howe Sound mountain.

A coastal town site less than one hour away from Vancouver by road but, alas, there was no road. Woodfibre, between the villages of Squamish and Britannia Beach, was accessible only by boat. The workers were, to the large part, captive. "I owe my soul to the company store," from the song "16 Tons," rang true. The rents in the company-owned town site were high. The members of International Local 494 were agitating for a ferry, a road to Squamish and Britannia Beach, a way out of the isolation they were in. The company offered no resolve. They were pleased with the circumstances as they were. One day followed much like its predecessor.

Then, January 31, 1963, dawned like no other day in Woodfibre. The members of International Local 494 had voted 92 per cent in favour of joining a Canadian union at a prior membership meeting. On January 31, PPWC Local 3 came alive. A charter signed by National President W. H. Cox and National Secretary P. J. O'Brien was eagerly received by Al Smith, Bert Bigelow, Keith Hall, Reg Ginn, and Terry Smith, among others.

In the spirit of fellowship, the International Union was advised by the newly-formed local executive of the intent to de-certify.

International President John Burke replied. Contrary to his public statement at the November '62 Detroit convention (he said if any Canadian locals wish to de-certify let them go ahead), he now informed Local 3 that their move to certification would be opposed in every fashion. Gazing into his private crystal ball, he further informed Local 3 their venture was doomed to failure, against the natural

forces of evolution, said he. Fortunately for him and his dependents, he earned his living as a union president, not as a seer.

Burke's words were not prophetic. Neither he nor the International representatives from western Canada could squelch the move in Woodfibre.

International representative Stan Green was an ex-member of Local 494. He knew many Woodfibre workers. His influence was essentially nil in the squelch attempt.

On June 18, 1963, Local 3 received Labour Relations Board (LRB) certification and moved into immediate wage negotiations with Woodfibre owner Rayonier. In short order, led by Smith, Shervez and Bigelow, with Local 1's Evan Moore representing the National, Local 3 reached agreement.

- Number one bullet was a 4 per cent wage increase, with base rate going from \$2.10 to \$2.18.
- Number two bullet was a very new meal ticket arrangement. Past meal ticket arrangements were for four workers only. This newly bargained one included all day workers having a meal after one hour of overtime and a second meal after five hours.
- Bullet three provided for leaves of absence for local members elected to full-time union or government positions, with seniority accumulating while away, a very progressive move for a progressive union bent on no Papa Doc presidents.

With the contract in place on August 8, Local 3 leadership turned its attention to the Woodfibre issue itself: the town site, the high rents, the lack of a ferry and a road to freedom. The town site was doomed, and the Squamish ferry and road were on their way.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CERTIFICATION MARKS END OF AN ERA**

By mid-June 1963 the fledgling union started in Castlegar was gaining respectability while instilling fear in the hearts of International representatives and supporters. Hot on the heels of Crofton and Woodfibre, Local 708, Prince Rupert, members were de-certifying.

Local 708, Angus Macphee's home local, was also the home of several other union activists who either joined in the breakaway or served profile roles in the

PPWC later. Among those were: Reg Ginn, Fred Mullin, Al Smith, Len Shankel, all PPWC stalwarts; and Pat O'Neal, a PPWC nemesis.

While there is no desire to display O'Neal here, by his very notoriety he plays a part in our formation. He was the water to our fire, trying to extinguish us many times. Significantly, he is a common denominator among all early PPWC activists, reviled equally by all. Rumour has it that he was an Irish ex-patriot who jumped a British naval ship in the Prince Rupert area. O'Neal found work in the mines and around Prince Rupert, eventually hiring on at the Watson Island Pulp Mill. There he found something to his liking: the trade union movement and, especially, the political aspects featured in the old International.

O'Neal was a born politician, described by Eric Bodin, Local 8, as a man who swallowed the Blarney stone. O'Neal was smooth. He quickly moved up the union ranks, leaving Local 708 behind. We will meet him again.

Meanwhile, Local 708 was disintegrating. Angus Macphee, the favourite son, had rung its bell in May 1963, when he resigned from the Western Pulp and Paper Council. The council was, after all, a West Coast extension of the International Union. Angus had to resign because he belonged to a de-certified local. Though he was president of the Western Council at the time, his allegiance was with the new PPWC Local 4.

In truth, it's hard not to argue that, above all, Angus Macphee was and remains the central figure of this union.

His early writings are timely and, what's more, they bring the message clearly to the people. The message, simply stated, says that unions must exist for the members, they must represent the views of the members, and their direction must come from the shop floor. No one did this earlier, better or longer than Macphee did.

Even Macphee, of course, did not act alone. Reg. Ginn, Si Miners, Bunn Fortune, and Frank Bennett, among others, heeded the trumpet's call.

Reg Ginn tells the story of International Union behaviour shortly before the breakaway in 1963. He remembers Local 708 was caught up in the firing of a member. Both sides were polarized, and no resolve seemed possible. The local executive repaired to their office for further deliberation, where they were met by Stubby Hansen, International Union vice-president and BC area representative. Much to Ginn's surprise, Hansen stood firmly on the company side. Clearly, they (Hansen and company) had contrived to better the local.

Fighting the company was bad enough. Having to face off against your own union did not enhance good feelings.

Events of this nature, however, were symptomatic of how affairs were conducted at that time by the International Union.

The certification of Local 4 marks the end of an era. It is the last comparatively easy certification achieved by the PPWC.

While the International tried to hang on, all activists supported the new union. The Labour Board granted certification in June, and Local 708 was gone.

## CHAPTER 9

### EVOLUTION OF LOCAL 5 BRINGS OPPOSITION TO PPWC

The summer of 1963 was the halcyon days as far as PPWC organizing was concerned. While fortitude and the desire to lead into uncharted waters were chief on the resume of the Macphees, Coxes, Smiths, Craigs, et al., the comparative ease and amazing success of their campaign was coming to an end.

As we saw, Local 1, Castlegar, arose from a classical domestic dispute: UPPU versus the International, with the new Castlegar local as the plum.

Castlegar workers, unable to choose whom they wanted, said, "We will have neither one." They became the Canadian Pulp Workers Union.

Again, as we have seen with Locals 2, 3, and 4, comparable minor opposition followed. The word "minor" must not be taken as derogatory nor does it lessen the events that occurred. Certainly, the iron was hot, and striking with it in early 1963 took many by surprise.

The evolution of Local 5 from Local 433 brings with it first evidence of a formulated and mounted opposition to the PPWC. Local 433, the converter local of the International Union, had 16 certifications. It was called the converter local because most of its members worked in plants that took various forms of product produced in the pulp and paper mills of BC and manufactured a finished product: bags, boxes, envelopes, etc.

With a membership of around 950, it had a full-time business agent, Orville Braaten. Braaten, as already shown, had certainly championed the cause of Canadian unionism, proudly following in his pages the triumphs of Locals 1, 2, 3, and 4.

His own Local 433, however, was a different breed of cat. The many different plants gave rise to various opinions, often the political strip of the plant activists. While most union activists at plant-floor level in BC were certainly socialists, not

all were. Some who were motivated by promises of future self-enhancement, by fear of change, or by general apathy refuted the new Canadian union.

While Braaten knew where he wanted to be, his burden of decision was not decreased. His job depended on a solid majority of Local 433 in Local 5. He had abandoned his plant position when he became business agent. He had no job to go back to. He hesitated, unsure of one particular group of votes. That group, the Crown Zellerbach (CZ) plant in Richmond, he believed was pivotal to Local 5's success. For some reason, the vote for the new local at CZ was tagged with a 60 per cent acceptance level.

The International Union had two staunch supporters in Local 433, one who was later awarded a staff representative position. They mounted a determined opposition to the Canadian union.

The vote at CZ did not achieve the 60 per cent requirement. Close, but not enough. The drive at CZ was called off. Local 5's existence, however, was not denied.

The employees at Martin Paper Co.—about 100 workers—took matters into their own hands. Led by Ray Koob, and in spite of the previously mentioned adversity, they became Local 5.

Koob's name appears on our original declaration made at January, 1963's founding convention. He was bringing Local 5 to the lower mainland with or without CZ support, with or without Braaten.

Local 5 was soon enhanced by three other converter plants joining, bringing the October 1963 membership to over 250 members. Koob became Local 5's first president. With continued growth, Local 5 achieved the necessary members to hire its first business agent. Orville Braaten became just that. With renewed vigour, he continued his pursuit of Canadian unionism.

Orville took no chances of being left behind. As the Local 5 finances were not in order, he obtained a bank loan to tide him and his family over until the local had everything up to snuff. Vacations and weekends were usually centred on a trip to prospective new members, where he deemed that fishing might also be good. His wife and family usually accompanied him. While some fishing may have been done, lots of time was spent on union organizing and any picket-line visitations that may have been in need of firming up. It was not unusual for Orville to pass on a bit of cash so the picketers could perhaps have a beer or two.

Orville certainly grew no moss. Business agent, newspaper editor, organizer, he still found time to run in a Canadian general election on the CCF ticket and then provincially on the new NDP ticket. NDP had evolved from the old CCF. While he was not victorious he held his ground. In the early 1960s, socialism on a national



scale was most unpopular. The very acronym “CCF” conjured up all forms of extreme socialistic notions in the minds of the mostly middle-of-the-road Canadians, to say nothing of the right-wing Joe-McCarthy types. No, Orville didn’t win, but he perused his beliefs. When offered a job in a labour relations position with MacMillan Bloedel, he declined, telling his wife he could not even entertain the notion as it stood against everything he had fought for over the years.

## CHAPTER 10

### STRANGE BED FELLOWS FROM 1964 TO 1966

In 1963, for the PPWC commencement, there were 2,000 members and 5 locals. For the activists in the organization, a year of being badgered, red-baited and, eventually, expelled (Angus Macphee and Orville Braaten resigned) from anything International. The expulsion or ferreting is culminated in an all-out attack by none other than Reno Biasutti, who said one had to but ask the International officers if they were guilty of unsavoury acts. Reno had, of course, asked Tonelli, that question, you may remember. Tonelli said, “of course not.” In Biasutti’s mind, who were we to doubt those words?

Biasutti calls Macphee, Braaten, Ginn, and others traitors. He says they are attempting to serve two masters, the International and the PPWC.

Al Smith answers this best by saying, “Reno, we only wish to serve one master, our membership.”

While the exchange left Biasutti looking the worst for the wear, his political career did not suffer. Within a month of his attack missive, he became the newest International BC representative, charged with the duties of the newly-developed job evaluation committee: a new system whereby the unions forgave their rights to strike over or arbitrate industry rates. Instead, the boss and Biasutti would sit, warm and fuzzy, and agree on what the rates would be. Oh, well, some sing, some dance, while others just nod their heads.

The year 1964 was a slow one until August, when PPWC Local 5 workers struck the CIL plant on Annacis Island. The first strike by PPWC members, that’s August 23, a Sunday, at 5:00 p.m. at shift change, folks. The company, Canadian Industries Limited (CIL), was considered a piranha in the film and bag industry in Canada. CIL had several branch plants in Canada, mostly back east. The contract in place was inherited from the International Local 433. Local 5 was determined to bring BC standards to the plant. Reg Ginn, writing in September 1964, says, “Policy for this company is set in the east by 19-century oracle. The company makes no bones about its anti-labour status. It considers union shop and dues check off....The strike lasted six weeks and was considered a success. Many contract language issues were dealt with.”

The International, meanwhile, trudged on. Biasutti had, by now, no doubt increased all production rates in his union by a dramatic amount. In spite of this, however, a fire still simmered.

It simmered in Campbell River, Port Mellon, Nanimo, and it simmered in Prince George. Writing in late 1964 from Port Mellon, Ray McKay says, "Our International has got to make drastic changes in our constitution as it is today, and they must do it now or this union will slowly fall to pieces."

During the same time frame, from Nanaimo, Gordon Wickham calls for unity in the forest industry unions, a BC approach to bargaining across all companies.

In the face of this, subterfuge was alive and well in BC union activities. New mills were the order of the day in 1965-66. At Northwood in Prince George, the company hired seven workers to prepare the new mill for operations. Most, if not all, of these were bound for supervision rank when the mill opened. The International signed up these seven. Anyone else coming to work later automatically became an International member.

One might ask, why couldn't the PPWC do the same thing? Why not, indeed. Well, only because we were not notified those seven hires had occurred. Only the union of choice was given that advantage.

In essentially the same way, Prince George Pulp and Paper Mill and the Kamloops mill were also certified to the International.

Kamloops provides an interesting insight a little beyond the two Prince George mills. In Kamloops, it seems a mixed bag of workers was hired: some International supporters, some PPWC supporters, and some undecided. When the automatic certification to the International became questionable, the Labour Relations Board of the day found an easy way out. The International supporters, they said, started a week earlier than the others; thus, the certification was theirs. While this was pure hogwash, the LRB so ruled.

Still, there was activity. The PPWC was not stymied. It had merely been interrupted. The International, now quite aware of trouble in the ranks, pulled out all the stops. They doubled their staff in BC.

Appointed were: Bill Smalley, from Campbell River, whom you have already met, "a man who might have been," gone now to full-time staff at the whim of International leadership; Fred Carley, from Port Mellon; and George Clan, from Campbell River. Carley was to keep the lid on Port Mellon, where insurrection bubbled. Clan's defined area was Harmac. Strangely, however, it seems Harmac workers so solidly supported the PPWC that no one of merit could be found there who

supported the International. Smalley, of course, would be asked to stay the course in Campbell River.

The fourth person appointed, Peter Marshall, was a grand disappointment to Macphee and, to a degree, Braaten. Both viewed him as a man of great abilities and principles. They, in fact, had tried to hire him as a full-time PPWC organizer.

A final plea to the above four, appearing in the 1966 *Leaflet*, was the following:

“We ask these brothers to join us in building a democratic Canadian union. Help us build a better Canada. Don’t sell your soul for a mess of pottage and ours with it.”

As bothersome as the above appointments were, as sell-out as we may perceive them to be, 1966 was not without its emerging PPWC stalwarts. The following four men were very integral for our union in its adolescence:

Jim Sloan	Local 1
Fred Mullin	Local 2
Stan Shewaga	Local 8
Len Shankel	Local 9

They were probably around in unions prior to 1965-66, but they all used 1965-66 as their blast-off time.

Anyone attempting a history version mentions names at his own peril. The sin of omission is cardinal in the minds of those omitted. With that in mind, I mention no other names today. The future could be another thing.

## CHAPTER 11

### “DIPPING INTO THE COOKIE JAR”

March 1966. The simmerings mentioned priorly were heating up. A meeting held in Gibsons Legion Hall attracted most of the Port Mellon workers. Featured on the same stage were the upstart PPWC activists Angus Macphee, Orville Braaten, Reg Ginn, and Bill Cox, squared off against International vice-president Stan Green, assisted by the BC Federation of Labour leader Pat O’Neal, the same O’Neal we met before, from Prince Rupert.

Macphee led the debate for the PPWC, while Green and O’Neal spoke for the International. Green and O’Neal held that only through reform from within could the pulp and paper workers of BC better their lot.

Macphee replied that for 15 long years, he and others had tried to reform the International. In 1963, all hope had been abandoned. After all that time, circumstances were worse: the International was sinking deeper into disrepute. Discontent was not limited to BC. Some 25,000 western US pulp and paper workers had fled the International. They became the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers. Macphee was quick to point out that the International was coming apart in the US as well.

The International, in an attempt to quash the new US association, applied through the American courts. They (the International) demanded the courts order all assets of the new locals be turned over to the International. The courts, in fact, ruled “no way.” Rather, they placed the assets firmly in the hands of the new union. Statements taken at random from the award are interesting.

From US Circuit Judge R. E. Jones: “An examination of the character and activities of the Pulp Workers President Tonelli leaves little doubt, in an impartial mind, why several thousand West Coast rank-and-file union members refuse to be affiliated with an International organization headed and controlled by such an individual.”

From US Circuit Judge Albert R. Musick: “...to reach the conclusion that Tonelli had not been ‘dipping into the cookie jar’ so to speak, it would be necessary to find that he must have indeed been a miserly man, which is hardly consistent with his mode of living, or that he was a magician with a money tree in his back yard.”

So, while Macphee and the others met in Gibsons, PPWC activists were stirring the pot elsewhere. In Campbell River, PPWC Local 7 was springing to life; in Nanaimo, PPWC Local 8 rallied; in Prince George, PPWC Local 9 was establishing.

Then, on May 9, 1966, an announcement that shook the International: Nanaimo goes Canadian, Elk Falls follows suit. In three days, under the guidance of Gordon Wickham and Stan Shewaga, over 600 workers in the 900-employee Nanaimo mill had gone Canadian. Local 8 was on. Campbell River (Elk Falls) was hot on its heels, a solid majority being signed up there as well. To make the grand even grander came word that Local 9 had achieved a Canadian majority as well. All three applications were now in the hands of the Labour Board. This meant that the fledgling union had essentially doubled its membership.

The International was not amused. In quick head-office discussions, they opened the coffers for rear-guard action in BC. Pat O’Neal was lured away from his BC Fed job and became chief International organizer, reporting directly to Tonelli. This, in itself, was newsworthy, as O’Neal’s credibility was in some question by certain PPWCers.

Frank Jameson, Local 2, said of O'Neal's hiring, "Pat says his heart was always in the pulp industry. I wonder how much long green they had to stack to bring the rest of Pat along to where his heart already was."

Orville Braaten likened the event to a gathering of eagles. One being an American eagle (Tonelli) says, "Come, come, you Canadian eagles who want to eat from the American dish. Come, come, there's lots of money for beer and other expenses, come." A few Canadian eagles that want to feather their nests with a few fast bucks and have no pride took up this nefarious cause; however, the vast majority of the Canadian eagles built their own Canadian nest, new and clean, to live in.

Gordon Wickham, from Local 8, Nanaimo, likened the International's cash flow to a windfall for the BC economy. Employing several people who spread the wealth around and the frequent visits by New Yorkers to the province aided tourism.

Tonelli, hearing word of a special Local 8 meeting, arranged to be in Nanaimo for that evening. The big school gym was full to overflow, Gordon Wickham was in the chair, and in walked Tonelli and company, intent on taking over the meeting. Wickham pointed out this was a Local 8 meeting, and if he wanted to attend, he could ask permission and then leave. If, in debate, his presence was acceptable, he would be advised. After a polite debate, the New Yorkers were allowed in and offered an opportunity to speak. Tonelli's beginning left a little to be desired. "You boys from Heymac here in Port Alberni" did not enhance him with the crowd. All went downhill from there for the International men, and they soon left.

As Nanaimo had elected a Canadian union executive, so had Campbell River and Prince George. In Prince George, the name Len Shankel is among the list.

In mid 1966, the PPWC stands on the threshold of sweeping the International from all mills in BC. Two thousand members already established, some 2,100 more with certifications pending in three new locals, one other local (Local 6 in Port Mellon) looking very good, the remaining mills in a wait-and-see mode, things looked good, indeed. A banner year on Canada's 100th birthday, 1967, loomed.

## CHAPTER 12

### O'NEAL SEES "REDS" BEHIND EVERY TREE

It's mid 1966. We see the PPWC poised to become one union in pulp and paper in BC. If Campbell River, Nanaimo, Prince George, and Port Mellon go, then the balance of power is firmly in the hands of the PPWC. The remaining International certifications will not be able to resist the demands of their members. But, then, with the stroke of an absolutely unbelievable pen, the provincial Labour Board

declares the PPWC is not a “union under the meaning of the Act.” Never mind that they have five certifications in the province. Put aside the reality they have bargained several collective agreements already. Instead, believe that somebody somewhere got to somebody else somewhere else.

A digression here for a moment: those of us who have grown into adulthood and are now in the golden (or is that iron pyrite?) years, or close to, in BC know that the Victoria government has always been pretty much of the “Banana Republic” variety. Gunboat diplomacy, or a reasonable facsimile of this approach, has been the virtue rather than the vice in most events witnessed in this province, especially in labour, over the many years. The wing-nut conspiracy has been entrenched in this province for a long time.

So back to the matter at hand: votes are denied at Nanaimo, Campbell River, and Prince George. At Port Mellon, the membership is split down the middle, so no application is made at this time. Had it been, the finding would not have varied with the findings for the other three. The Board offers little by way of rationalization for its action. Presumably, irrational actions have no rationale. It is clear, however, that Pat O’Neal, member extraordinaire of the International Union, presented a much-revised vision of the past. He used the “red,” as in “commie,” thing to his advantage. He made issue of the fact PPWC officers had entered the workplace to sign up new members without the permission of the companies. He talked of late-night phone calls to wives of mill workers featuring heavy breathing or sexual innuendo. He pulled all the stops. While he was reviled in the eyes of most PPWC activists, they all admit he was very good at what he did. This didn’t make him better, just more formidable.

In any case, the LRB ruling denying the vote was based on a technicality, worse yet, an undisclosed technicality, making acceptance of the ruling impossible for any trade unionist. Pat O’Neal sang its praises, saying the decision spoke for itself: clearly, the PPWC had met its demise, the good old boys in the International had won, the upstart was on the ropes, soon to go through them into oblivion. What O’Neal didn’t count on was the determination of the new PPWC members, their wives and, in some cases, even the communities they lived in.

While Angus Macphee and Orville Braaten kept up the pressure by writing of the wrongs at every opportunity, the rank and file in all three locations took to the streets in protest. They wrote letters to local newspapers, protested in Victoria, and set up a protest tent in front of the Labour Board offices in Vancouver. Anne Royal, wife of a Harmac welder, set up a residence in front of Board offices, featuring a coffin containing the body of the trade unionist denied the right to a union of his choice. Writing from Nanaimo, Gordie Wickham advises the rest of the world that Harmac is in the hands of a Canadian union, PPWC Local 8. Of the 870 or so employees at the plant, some 850 are Local 8 members, paying dues to Local 8 on the honour system. That’s willingly bringing your \$5 or whatever it

was to the union hall or to a recognized union activist in Local 8's ranks, getting your receipt, and refusing to pay the International or recognize it in any way.

In Prince George, PPWC Local 9 is doing similar to Local 8: keeping the faith, increasing its membership, and remaining steadfast in its belief that the LRB will rule soon and, what's more, its ruling will reflect the principle of democracy (majority rule) our country is founded on. Port Mellon, after a hard-fought battle, does determine that PPWC Local 6 is, in fact, the winner, and an application for certification is made there.

Campbell River awaits the Board's decision.

Meanwhile, O'Neal, along with his following, tours the province, discrediting the PPWC where he can, saying he knows the LRB delay is proper, suggesting that it may take years to conclude, in fact, it may never conclude. In an especially costly approach, O'Neal has established an open-line radio talk show that he parades around the province, as well. He hosts the show, of course, and answers questions relative to the state of events as he sees them. His big push is to destroy the PPWC and bolster the International, his most common theme being the desperate need we have for international unions in order to combat the International companies. Only in the halls of the mighty with the mighty warriors within the International can we hope to survive.

In late 1966, with Canada's 100th birthday still looming, things have changed a bit. The desire to be Canadian has remained as strong or is stronger, and the resolve is similar. The ability through the LRB certification is, however, in some doubt.

A further explanation on how certifications are changed helps explain the process here. In an attempt to induce labour peace, the BC Labour Board has determined that certifications can only be changed during certain time frames of the contract year. In 1966, those time frames were the 11th and 12th month (yearly) of the contract's longevity.

Once the LRB declared Locals 7, 8, and 9 non-eligible in 1966, they delayed re-application until 1967. This, of course, gave the International lots of time to wreak lots of havoc in the ranks of the new Canadian union. Charges and counter charges continued. However, it seemed apparent the International held more sway than the new Canadian union. They held all the funds. For example, in Nanaimo, \$40,000 held in a bank account belonging to the workers at Harmac was deemed the property of International Local 695, no matter only a small percentage remained in Local 695. There, Local 8 held the day but not the money.

The government of the day (Social Credit), while claiming neutrality, belied this by acting in favour of the International in all matters of importance. Big labour in

the province and in the country supported the International Union. One could say the International had everything except the members in their control.

## CHAPTER 13

### CANADIANIZATION KEEPS ROLLING

Tactics varied from mill to mill, depending on the amount of hostility that had developed between the parties. At Harmac, for example, old friendships fell by the wayside as union allegiances formed. The International, bolstered by the belief of eventual victory, remained vocal. Pictures of Ken Warde, Local 695 president, removing a typewriter from upstart Local 8's office remind us of the day-to-day events of the times.

On another memorable day, the photo of none other than Larry Foglietta carrying a picket sign proclaiming, "Local 8 in bed with management," graced the daily rag. Foglietta claims a *Guinness Book of Records* kind of fame, saying he is the only one-man picket line that ever shut a pulp mill down in BC. Incidentally, the mill did not shut. His sign was largely ignored by Local 8 members and their International counterparts. No one else had the convictions he had, so his one day stands as the greatest thing that almost happened. Later, while riding to Damascus, he saw a different light. Local 8 became the rally point for Foglietta and the others who were at odds in the beginning.

The island members of the new union pulled all the stops. A motorcade beginning in Gold River, picking up momentum as it passed through Campbell River, then Nanaimo and, finally, Duncan had members from all PPWC locals on the island. Local 2 was the only certified one; the other three were aspiring at the time. They marched through the streets of downtown Victoria, causing disruption, to be sure, ending on the legislature lawn, where they demanded to be heard. The reasons for being were clearly spelled out. Do politicians ever hear protests of this kind? It's hard to say. But if sufficient numbers are out, a smart politician will pay some heed. Certainly, they heard clearly Gordie Wickham's parting words: "We will be PPWC forever no matter what the LRB says."

The issue at Local 8 is important because it marked a pull into a long siding for the PPWC. Local 8 was derailed for a year, as were Locals 6, 7 and 9. While Locals 8 and 9 came through in flying colours, attempts at Locals 6 and 7 failed, changing the complexion of the union's future.

A mill had been established in Gold River. The Tahsis Co. held vast logging rights in the area and determined a pulp mill was a very viable enterprise, indeed. The International Woodworkers of America (IWA), with sawmills and loggers in the area, applied in late 1966 for certification. Their application was based on varying their present Local 1-85 certification of sawmillers and loggers to include



the pulp mill. The IWA hoped to obtain a voluntary recognition of what they believed was their territorial rights. They did not have any workers at the Gold River pulp mill signed up. This was their first attempt to sign up a pulp mill. One can accept the fact they wanted pulp mills in their union. Or, perhaps, one can believe they were in the business of trying to stop the PPWC at all costs, offering themselves as an alternative to the International Union that appeared to be losing the battle with the PPWC at the time.

For some unknown reason, the IWA re-applied on April 14, 1967, for essentially the same certification. Also appearing in April was a joint application from the IWA and the International Pulp Sulphite, another new innovation attempting to quell the PPWC.

While all this was happening, the Canadian union was not in party mode, making light of their time. In fact, they had a decent majority signed up in Gold River and had made their own application on January 19, 1967. Art Smith, a member who had seen the Canadian union in action in Prince Rupert and knew something about its democratic approach to unionism, was a strong supporter. He had also worked for four years in Port Alberni and had seen first hand how power at the top looked. He, along with the majority in Gold River, signed Canadian. Knowing this, the International filed a further application that included all office workers in the mill. Another new tact as office workers were not generally union members and certainly not members so forced into a union.

The LRB deliberated at length. Its findings cleared the air somewhat. It rejected both IWA applications on the basis of no membership sign-up. It also rejected the joint application, as there was no legal entity of that type anywhere. It did, however, accept the PPWC application and the International's all-employees application. Further, it ruled that office workers were, in fact, included in the upcoming proposed vote.

The vote was held. Local 11 emerged victorious, by a comfortable margin. The International's ploy of including the office and technical workers didn't work. Local 11 was certified in May of 1967, containing office and technical workers. It was a one-of-a-kind local continuing to represent staff and hourly paid down through the years.

Back in Nanaimo, Wickham, Stan Shewaga, et al., were facing the wiles of Pat O'Neal in his fight to win to hell with principles mode. There would be no rest at Harmac.

The International filed an injunction to have all PPWC supporters fired for refusing to pay dues to Local 695. They claimed by not paying dues they ceased to be members of the chartered local. The company sat on the edge of an abyss. No less than 823 of their workers fit this description, while well under 100 were still paying dues to Local 695. Firing this number would likely cause severe disruption

in the work place, to say the least. Local 8, through their lawyer, Mary Southin, appealed the injunction, claiming that non-payment of dues did not necessarily make one a non-member, only not a member in good standing. Perhaps a stall tactic, but one that, nevertheless, kept the wolf from the door. Harmac was, at the time, in small hiring mode. Eight new hires were brought into the plant. The International, as expected, insisted they sign cards with them. Seven of the eight refused. They were all staunch Local 8ers. Local 695 immediately demanded their termination. Local 8, stalling for time, again resisted the new injunction. However, in court down the road a bit, they did agree to pay the back dues and instructed the new hires to sit tight for a while, until May 1967 came around. This date represented the new raiding time.

They did exactly that. One of them is Local 8 president, Gerry Tellier. Looks like he kept the faith through the years.

In May of 1967, Local 8 applied for certification through the LRB. The Board, finally, came to its senses. Certification was issued without a vote on July 1, 1967, a very fitting date. Local 8 rocked Vancouver Island. Wickham, Shewaga and company played hosts to PPWC brothers and sisters from all over BC.

## **CHAPTER 14**

### **INTERNATIONAL LOSES IN PRINCE GEORGE**

In August of 1967, a re-application was made for Local 9, Prince George, and Local 12, Island Paper. The jump from 9 to 12 was necessitated by the belief Kamloops would come into the PPWC fold as Local 10. We already know Local 11 was Gold River.

The Labour Relations Board ruled that a vote would be held at Island Paper. However, it rejected the Prince George application, again. This time, they took a different tact. Instead of saying the PPWC is not a union, as determined by the Labour Act, they said, among other things, the PPWC failed to prove that the International was not a union under the Act. They gave no indication of how this may be doable or, for that matter, gave proof that it was necessary. They certainly knew the vast majority in Prince George were Local 9 members. They also knew that any vote would usher the PPWC into Prince George. That made no difference. What counted was some way of keeping the International in power.

The International local in Prince George at the time was Local 612. While the meetings were called under the auspices of Local 612, they really were Local 9 meetings. As in Local 8, the leadership was committed to the PPWC.

To these unionists the first refusal by the LRB had been difficult enough to accept. This second refusal made no sense at all. At a Local 612 general meeting,

a motion passed that proposed to show the LRB and the Labour Minister, Leslie Peterson, exactly where the allegiance of the membership really was. They proposed to hold a vote, duly advertised and scrutinized by both sides, along with Prince George media personnel as observers to further insure all was proper. The vote was held. The PPWC won 91 per cent of the vote.

The International, through its spokesman Peter Marshall, said the vote had no validity. He said International supporters boycotted it. He said lots of things, including the fact that the local was heading towards receivership.

PPWC supporters rallied. Writing from Prince George, Local 8's Vic Aquino, on union leave as an organizer at the time, told of a strong and determined group with a lot of community support. He mentioned a petition, powered by the Local 9 women's auxiliary, that recorded some 5,000 names demanding Local 9 recognition. This petition was to be presented to Minister Peterson.

The International made its move. Mr. Tonneli, acting through his informants in Prince George, ordered eight Local 612 members expelled from the union. These eight were believed to be the hard-core PPWCers. The hope was that, once expelled, the company would be told to fire them. Ironically, didn't O'Neal take the opposite position at Harmac? He challenged the union-shop rule there in an attempt to have his handful of die-hards retain International member rights. It shows again that whatever they believed it took was what the International used. The expulsion worked. The eight PPWC officers were called individually into the general manager's office, where they were told, "We management have no choice. If you continue to follow the path you're on now, you will be fired." The path, of course, was refusing to pay International dues. The individuals mulled their response. Five said they were standing their ground. They were PPWC members and would continue to be so. The five were:

Len Shankel	President
George Smith	First Vice-President
Mickey Finnigan	Corresponding Secretary
Noel Nobel	Trustee
George Richardson	Shop Steward

There was no attempt made to strike the mill, as most workers had a firm belief in the PPWC. They were convinced reason would prevail, that Local 9 would soon rule.

Appeals of the expulsion were filed, to no avail. A court challenge to the expulsions was mounted. The challenge, essentially, sought to have the contract between International Local 612 and Prince George Pulp and Paper found wanting. The contract was signed by an International vice-president, not by any membership officer. Thus, the question of representation was raised, as in a union's duty to represent the membership. The hearing concluded on February 22, with the

honorable judge reserving his judgement. He reserved it, all right. He needed salt and sugar to preserve it, as the decision didn't come down until June 3, three and a half months later. The PPWC lost that round, as well. Perhaps that was expected.

In the meantime, however, the International, through Pat O'Neal, had acted again. On March 29, 1968, the five named above were called into the company's industrial relations office. There they were informed they were being fired. A letter signed by the Local 612 president, the Local 612 secretary, and Pat O'Neal demanded they be so treated. The company complied. The five then set up an information picket line at the mill gates. As much as the International hoped the members of Local 9 would wildcat, they did not. Cooler heads continued to prevail.

The International, in an attempted show of force, elected a new executive, with Randy Dennie as president.

At Dennie's first called meeting, heavies such as Karl Stelp and Reno Biasutti showed up to help the new president. Their participation was immediately challenged by the floor, as visitors had to be okayed by the membership to attend meetings. After much arguing, a vote was taken with about a 100 to 3 determination that the guests should leave. In the face of such opposition, Dennie had no choice. Reno and Karl, cap in hand, left the stage and the meeting.

At Dennie's second called meeting, none other than O'Neal showed up. Trailing behind him was a variety of presidents from other International locals, brought to Prince George to show the flag. Reacting to questions from the floor, O'Neal promised the fun and games were over. If more people wanted to get fired, they could just come forward. He said he could and would get them all, if necessary. Showing his grasp of the affair in Vietnam, he promised a "scorched-earth policy" if he couldn't hold the local.

To boos and catcalls, the International representatives and executive left. They called for supporters to follow them out. The faithful three from the prior vote arose and walked out with them.

Len Shankel continued as president of the uncertified but clearly representative Local 9. He provided the PPWC at large with monthly updates in the *Leaflet*. He also continued to walk his information picket line in front of Prince George Pulp. He and his four terminated brothers kept the vigil and the faith. Their daily bread was being covered by Local 9, with assistance from the other PPWC locals.

Finally, the opportunity to apply for certification came round again. Local 9 applied, and "well, Virginia, there may be a Santa Claus" because the vote was granted.

Local 9 won 344 to 129. Local 9 partied.

Losing no time, Angus Macphee contacted Prince George Pulp management, telling them there was a new power in Prince George now and reinstatement of the five fired brothers was to take effect immediately. Angus further extended the dedication of the PPWC in respect to the fired five. He informed the Industrial Relations (IR) manager of Prince George Pulp that if they were not reinstated, the issue would not go away. Rather, it would become the focal point in upcoming contract renewal talks.

Mickey Finnigan remembers a meeting being called with the IR manager and the mill manager in attendance. The mill manager, according to Mickey, was an okay guy in many respects. He was, however, an Englishman sent out to the colonies to work; thus, he had many preconceived notions about many things.

As the meeting begins, the IR guy tells Mr. Manager that a request for reinstatement has been received. The response is: "No way. We fired them, and that is it."

Mr. IR then says, "Well, it's more than a request. It's a demand. If we don't comply, they will put the issue on the bargaining table for the upcoming contract renewal."

The manager says, "They can't do that. We fired them," to which the IR man replies, "oh, yes, they can."

The manager then opines: "So what if they do. They can't strike the plant over the issue."

Again, Mr. IR says, "Yes, they can. What's more, they plan to strike the whole industry, not just our plant and, believe me, they are just the boys that will do it."

The manager then concedes: "Okay, we will take them back as new hires then."

"No", says Mr. IR, "they demand full reinstatement with no loss of any kind. If not, we're back at the bargaining table,"

Len, Mickey, and the brothers return to work. Local 9 rules the day.

Yes, folks, it's kinda like a fairy tale, where the end would be "and they all lived happily ever after." Perhaps that's somewhat true, as down through the years Len Shankel has been a dominant PPWC leader, defender and mentor to many. That is sort of a happy fact, if, of course, it's okay for supposedly tough union executive types to entertain such happy notions.

## CHAPTER 15

### BUGS, BUGS, EVERYWHERE BUGS

While the events around Locals 6, 7, 8, and 9 were unfolding – and much of that remains untold – another situation of drama, intrigue, and high adventure was occurring on a parallel plane, at once removed but very much the meat of the matter for the PPWC.

The fourth convention of the PPWC was scheduled for November 7-12, 1966, at the Ritz Hotel in Vancouver, BC. Members began gathering there on November 4, Friday evening, to plan the convention protocol.

Lloyd Craig from Local 1, Castlegar, was the president of the PPWC National. In fact, Lloyd had been president since the first convention, replacing Bill Cox, the pro-tem president. Lloyd and Angus Macphee shared a room—Room 207—at the Ritz. The union had also booked Room 206, using it as a conference room for the weekend. On Friday night, Angus stayed up late. No doubt he and the boys waxed long into the a.m., fixing the evils of the world, making it a better place for the little man. Lloyd, feeling somewhat less than well, had retired early. Upon returning to the room, Angus noted that Lloyd was sleeping peacefully and proceeded to retire himself. Waking in the morning, Angus found Lloyd's body on the floor. Lloyd had apparently got up to have a cigarette and suffered a fatal heart attack.

After the turmoil expired, the convention representatives returned to business as hand. A decision to make Room 207 a conference room was reached, and the room was reshaped to accommodate this. A portable wardrobe had been added to the room to accommodate Angus and Lloyd. It had to be moved. Murray Johnston from Local 8, Nanaimo, and Jim Sloan, Local 1, Castlegar, rose to the task. A small object fell from the top of the wardrobe. Upon inspection, it was believed to be some form of light meter. No one gave any thought to listening devices. Further everyone was somewhat upset with the passing of Lloyd Craig.

No more attention was paid to the find until a hotel telephone switchboard operator—the Ritz still had a 24-hour-per-day manned, old-fashioned switchboard—who struck up a friendship with a PPWC representative; told him of several strange phone calls she had witnessed the night before and through the day on Saturday. The calls were placed from Room 309, directly above Room 207, and were made to an unlisted number in the Vancouver area. The calls were frequent enough to catch her attention. She listened and heard a play-by-play report on the PPWC activities as they unfolded. The calls were being made to one Mr. Pat O'Neal.

"It's not a light meter. It's a listening device. It's a BUG." Everything fell into place.

The PPWC representatives quickly called Ace Investigations, and, sure enough, they discovered two more bugs: one in Room 206; another in the convention room adjacent to Room 206.

The Vancouver city police were notified, along with the Department of Transport (DOT). It seems Murray Johnston, who had been in the Canadian Forces, had connections with both these groups and took over as "Bugs Inspector General." In any case, the DOT and the city police did make an appearance.

In the meantime, however, the private detectives involved in the bugging became aware something was up. Two of them made an escape.

Local 8's Eric Bodin remembers himself; Bunn Fortune from Local 4; Sal Miners, also from Local 4; and Jim Sloan, the short but mighty Scot, from Local 1 being the self-appointed guards of Room 309. They were determined to watch the room and keep anyone from coming out. They had already established that at least two guys were, in fact, inside. Well, they watched and watched, but nothing happened. In time, the lust for beer overcame their desire to catch the culprits, and one by one they ventured down to the Ritz beer parlour.

Two private detectives quickly made their getaway. However, they did not take their bugging equipment with them. What's more, they left a subordinate in the room to guard it. Their reckoning at the time was that the pulp workers only had suspicions about them; furthermore, bugging wasn't necessarily a crime. So they had little to fear, except Big Eric and Big Bunn. Now that they were away, only the hired gun in the room was in jeopardy.

The police came. They moved on Room 309. The bugging equipment was seized, and the rest of the story began to unfold.

When you first met Pat O'Neal, he was emerging as a new voice from Local 4. You were promised that "you will hear more from Pat in the future." O'Neal, it appears, had contacted the RCMP security and intelligence division, where he spoke to a Cpl. Harold Reed. What he told Reed is not exactly clear, as both refused to come clean. Did he just raise the issue of opposed unions in a bitter fight, or did he raise the "red thing"? Did he trot out the "commie" skeletons that he proposed were in Angus and Orville's closets? Perhaps he believed they actually took them with them to meetings, thus the bug on the wardrobe.

Anyway, Cpl. Reed agreed, it seems, to help him out. He contacted a former RCMP officer who had quit the force to start his own detective service, a certain Bud Graham of Graham Investigation Services. Reed apparently knew him and was bringing work to a former associate.

Graham claims Reed explained what had to be done and, in some veiled manner, suggested their work was being done under the auspices of the federal police force. Graham claims he took the case for this reason only. His forte was, generally, divorce matters, so he was quite proud to have been singled out for such a task.

Certainly, O'Neal expected to hear something of value in his life-and-death struggle with the pulp union. What did Reed, of national security, expect to hear? Perhaps "we will be erecting Lenin's statue in Pigeon Park next year." Needless to say, O'Neal and Reed both denied any involvement in any way. The hope was that the incident and the PPWC would both go away.

However, Murray Johnston calling the DOT brought another feature to the party. It seems it was, in fact, illegal to operate a transmitter under 400 megacycles in Canada. Graham's bugs were thus. He was subject to arrest.

Graham again maintained his beliefs: RCMP work. In fact, he now claimed that Reed had notified him personally that the gig was up. Reed had been notified along the police chain in some fashion. Graham was told by Reed to hightail it with the goods. However, the warning came too late. When he called Room 309, the city police were already there. His boy had already spilled the beans, at least the beans he knew about.

Through the demands being made by PPWC convention delegates, especially Angus, as leader—he was first vice-president at the time—and Murray Johnston, publicity soon reached the seats of the mighty. None other than Mr. Jack Webster, CKNW's famed commentator, interviewed Graham on his talk show. Among other things, Graham said that, yes, O'Neal had met with him and, in fact, paid him \$250 by way of a union cheque. He also stated that he had worked in the security division of the RCMP, same as Reed, during his time with the force. The world was closing in on two deniers.

Not to be outdone, W.A.C. "Wacky" Bennett, BC premier, upon hearing the facts declared a royal commission was the manner in which this sordid affair would be cleared up. He appointed retired BC court judge R. A. Sargent to head the inquiry.

According to Bodin, Sargent was quite old and likely had Alzheimer's disease. He often fell asleep during proceedings. Upon being awakened by his council he would spout off some irrelevant information that was sort of "Keystone Coppish" stuff. In these hands fell the complaints of the PPWC.

Again from Victoria came word that this inquiry would not be limited to the actual bugging incident. Rather, it would cover every episode involving these two unions from their first confrontation. Nothing would remain secret, and the guilty would



fess up or suffer the consequences. How prophetic those words became as we follow the commission 's work.

The commission's work, as it turned out, was laced with denial after denial. Cpl. Reed denied any involvement in any way. In fact, it later became clear that not only Reed met with Graham but another officer as well: Cpl. Ouelette. To better shore up the RCMP's case, Supt. Atherton, BC top cop, issued a stern denial of any police involvement. He either lied or didn't bother looking into the truth. O'Neal, of course, denied everything. Then he admitted to parts only, saying he knew nothing of bugs. Finally, when the weight of the truth fell on his shoulders, he admitted to all.

The best testimony comes from Graham's partner and Graham's helper: the men in Room 309 guarding the equipment when the police came. Richard Griffin, the partner, testified he saw Cpls. Reed and Ouelette arrive at Graham's office. He told the inquiry he was asked to vacate the office and the conversation was held in private between both officers and Graham. Griffin was able to identify both officers in the crowd at the hearings. He didn't know what was said at the meeting. However, he further testified that he was part of the meeting with Pat O'Neal. O'Neal, he said, clearly spoke of the communist threat in BC, spoke of two certain communists, Braaten and Macphee, and their hold on certain others. He spoke of the need to ferret out this element that was infiltrating the BC union movement. Graham seemed keen to this and spoke in the essence of national security, assuring Griffin that an RCMP tie-in was certainly part of the scheme.

Howard McAnish, the helper, supplied the second round of best testimony. He told the court that Graham had clearly identified the communist threat as a national security issue. That was why the rooms were being bugged. The names Braaten and Macphee were well mentioned in discussions McAnish had with his boss, Graham. "I was told they were 'reds'," he said.

### The sham of privacy rights

At the onset to the commission hearing, W.A.C. Bennett assured the populace that the realm was secure: "We intend to protect the rights of privacy in this province." Bennett went on to assure us all that Commissioner Sargent would give no quarter in his pursuit of this basic democratic right.

The commission, it would seem, was struck to deal with the hi-jinks of the private detectives, the RCMP, and O'Neal, as a member of the International Union.

The first sign of trouble came when discussions began concerning the matter of the tapes themselves. From the onset of these discussions, Sargent wanted to play them publicly with not only the opposition in the room but the press as well. John Laxton, representing the PPWC, gave a long and passionate argument against this, claiming that publicly revealing the tapes would create the very issue

that was before the inquiry. The accused, in fact, would win their day while standing accused. He also told Sargent about Bennett's promise. Sargent replied, "When you're my age, you don't pay attention to what newspapers or politicians say." Even the lawyers representing the opposition were concerned about playing the tapes in an open forum. Sargent paid no heed. It was his commission. He would do as he chose, and he chose to open the court on tape-playing day, and that was that.

PPWC representatives were the first to testify, with Murray Johnston going first. The first question in cross-examine, of course, was concerning what in fact had been discussed during the lead-up to convention. Murray had been advised by Laxton that answers to this type of questioning should be vague, at best, as the tapes would reveal all that was said anyhow. Sargent was not impressed. He opined that Murray's testimony was a cover-up.

To clear the air, Laxton offered to Sargent that he had instructed his clients to be wary. If they could not remember exactly what was said, the best thing was to say, "I can't remember." The tapes couldn't lie, so there was no point in speculating what had been said. It seemed like a prudent thing to do. The commissioner immediately took Laxton to private chambers, where he read some form of riot act to him. It remained to draw the conclusion that Mr. Sargent already had a pretty good opinion of what he wanted from this inquiry.

The commission adjourned over Christmas, re-opening in mid January.

In the meanwhile, many unionists from around the province and several IWA officers, including Syd Thompson from the Vancouver local and Weldon Jubenville from Duncan, called for O'Neal to resign. Several BC Fed officers also lashed out at O'Neal, saying they wanted nothing to do with one who stooped so low.

Upon re-opening, Commissioner Sargent was faced with a new challenge. On behalf of the PPWC, Angus Macphee challenged Sargent's authority to conduct such a hearing. His appointment under the *Public Inquiries Act* did not give him such scope as he commanded. Best put, perhaps, by Mary Southin, also representing the PPWC, saying, "This commission on invasion of privacy has turned into a probe of the very party whose privacy was invaded."

Upon hearing the challenge, Chief Justice Wilson, BC Supreme Court, ruled that, indeed, the commission had run way over its mandate. He ordered the commission invalid.

His ruling came too late to save PPWC president Orville Braaten, however. Orville, the last to testify on the last day prior to Wilson's findings, refused to answer questions related to long-ago matters. He took the position that he would answer questions only in keeping with the outlay of the challenge Macphee had put before Wilson. When he was asked specific questions relating to events he alleged-

ly took part in years before, he refused to answer. Sargent ruled he must answer. Orville said he wouldn't. Sargent found him in contempt of court, and off to Oakalla jail went Orville.

Remember Bodin's observations concerning the commissioner? It seems he was pretty bang on.

The province further appealed the Wilson decision. More "commie", "red" stuff was unearthed by O'Neal and company. In Victoria, old "Wacky" Bennett declared the work of the commission would go on in some fashion. New terms of reference were established. Orville languished in Oakalla jail. BC was much safer, all agreed.

Sargent was approached to have Orville released. No dice. So Mary Southin, again, applied to the Supreme Court of BC for his release. This was received favourably, of course, and Orville was ordered out of jail. Strange place we have lived in here, for sure.

Ms. Southin left the hearing at this time. She refused to have anything to do with such stupidity.

The commission was re-opened. However, the mandate had been changed considerably. With no ability to jail the other PPWC pesky people, Sargent soon tired of the game and, assumedly, packed his pillow and sheets into the courtroom. It did drag on, but nothing concrete was deemed to have resulted from the commission itself. Perhaps the furor raised and the attention it received Canada-wide helped to establish wiretapping rules and right to privacy rules down the Peace a ways.

## CHAPTER 16

### "BUDAPEST STAN" BECOMES PRESIDENT

The story of the PPWC is full of deflections and side roads, full of waiting, anticipation, and full of individuals who often threaten to take command of the story. In some ways, they are or appear to be bigger than the organization they are in the process of creating.

- Macphee and Braaten, of course, are legendary.
- Castlegar's Lloyd Craig and all his cohorts who led the charge.
- Len Shankel and his brothers, who stood for five months in the cold and snow of Prince George.

- Ray Koob, who pressed on with Local 5, unwilling to wait for things to go from bad to worst as they did. Ray's input will be felt later in this story, when Locals 14 and 16 become realities.
- Gordie Wickham, who led the 1,000-strong Harmac local to the PPWC.
- Bill Cox and Frank Jameson in Crofton, who took the initiative and became Local 2.
- Big Al Smith and Terry Smith in Woodfibre, who not only brought Local 3 to life but, in the case of Terry, still stand in defence of the organization.

There are others long gone and some yet to be met. One individual stands out at this time, however. His name is Stan Shewaga. Stan was active in the International at Harmac. Along with Wickham, he held the belief that reform was a possibility. Thus, Local 8 remained Local 695 until 1966, when Stan and Gordie embraced PPWC ideology.

Stan was one, along with several others, who was instrumental in the initial drive to organize most of the post-Local 8 locals. Local 9 is one example. He and Angus Macphee stopped in Prince George one evening on their way back to Vancouver. Sitting in a local pub, Angus recognized Len Shankel sitting close by. Len had worked with Angus in Prince Rupert. Both had been active in Local 4. Angus invited Len over and introductions were made. Len was working on construction then. The pulp mill was in the process of being built. In his words, he had no intent of even working in the mill after startup, let alone become a union activist again. At first, Len didn't want to join the pair, as he knew that if he did, he would be right back into unionism. In spite of his private intentions, join them he did. The fight for Local 9 began in earnest.

In the midst of all this—with O'Neal's "reds," Angus and Orville; with Local 9's vote hanging in the balance; Local 15 in the loop, almost—O'Neal uncovered still another opportunity to spin his vision of the world.

Stan received an invitation from the World Federation of Trade Unions in May of 1967. The invitation, also offered to three other BC pulp and paper workers, was to attend a conference in Budapest, Hungary. While the conference was held under the auspices of the world body, having it in Hungary conjured up all kinds of "commie" bogeymen for O'Neal, not that he really needed them. As expected, he couldn't wait to reveal to the world the budding communist, Stan Shewaga.

Well, as is often the case, "too much" is exactly that. The voters at Prince George rejected the International, and Local 9 became a reality. Two years later, "Budapest Stan," as he was tagged, became the National president of the PPWC. Was O'Neal unwittingly a campaign manager? After the formative years with Angus

and Orville, Stan, in the opinion of most activists, is considered the primary defender of the faith through the 1970s and '80s.

## CHAPTER 17

### PPWC GAINS ONE MORE VICTORY

It is mid 1968. Northern BC is rumbled long into the night. Local 9 has commenced partying.

Local 15 is about to do likewise. In mid August, a PPWC charter was granted to the workers of the Skookumchuck pulp mill as Local 15.

Organizers were led by Doug Sallis from Local 1 and ably aided by Gordie Wickham, National first vice-president, and Local 1's Russ Leamy. The International sent in their heavies. Sallis claims O'Neal got one look at big "Hoss" Leamy and immediately called for Biasutti and all the other heavyweights he could muster, including Andy Lapa. Lapa later became a stalwart in Kamloops, playing a big roll in the affairs of Local 10. In Skookumchuck, however, he was a child of a lesser god.

A complete slate of officers, led by President Ken Arsenault, was elected. Meetings were held every Monday night in the Cranbrook Legion, where all aspects of working in the new mill were discussed, including the lack of proper housing.

Fred Mullin, designated PPWC National organizer, rented a travel trailer, which was then parked on the mill road. Access to PPWC information was, thus, quite easy. The trailer, manned by Doug Sallis, became the place to stop and talk in the area.

To further the cause of the Canadian union, a debate was staged, featuring Doug Sallis, Gord Wickham, and Local 9 Vice-President George Smith speaking for the PPWC. In opposition, for the International, spoke Pat O'Neal, Ray Haynes, BC Fed leader, and Norm Paxton, an International representative from Ontario. The debate was moderated by the president of the Cranbrook IWA local. Several members from Local 1, Castlegar, and Local 9, Prince George, attended. In spite of the firepower produced by the International, the debate, in the opinion of the vast majority, was clearly won by the workers on the stage not the business unionists.

Interest in stopping at Sallis' trailer continued. The signup went reasonably smoothly. By September, an application was filed, and the Board-ordered vote in early October resulted in a clean win for the PPWC.

Three months later Local 15 members were on strike. The company, apparently viewing Local 15 as a bunch of upstarts, essentially refused to bargain satisfactorily on any items in any way. A major item was the reinstatement of a fired union brother. Other items were: establishing rates in a new mill, travel allowance, trades classification, and seniority issues.

Five weeks later the strike was settled. On February 21, 1969, the workers voted in favour of the new offer. Local 15 made no concessions. The fired brother was back at work. The members knew why they had voted in favour of PPWC certification. They themselves were the power in their negotiations. There were no business agents telling them how to be and no regional vice-president cutting any deals.

The ink barely dry on the new contract, O'Neal and company tried again. They imported International staffers from all over, brought them to Cranbrook, Kimberley and Skookumchuck. The Canadian union answered with their best: Mullin, Wickham, Jameson, several Local 1 activists and, perhaps most inspirational of all, Orville Braaten, PPWC National president.

On June 10, 1969, Local 15's hall in Cranbrook was filled to overflow. Many addressed the gathering, none better than Orville. In a long and passionate speech, he implored the workers there to keep the faith. In Local 15, they had a true, democratic, membership-controlled union, a one-of-a-kind union. Jameson, Local 2, was very impressed by the speech. He declared it the best ever by a man known as an orator.

A few hours later Orville was gone, a massive heart attack taking him in the night. The PPWC, in particular, with the labour movement, in general, mourned the loss. At 51, he died relatively young. One may say, with his work unfinished. However, the work of unionism never ends. Battles do, but the war drags on. Orville Braaten passed on putting his last hours into the defining role of his life.

## **CHAPTER 18**

### **REVEREND IS OFFICIAL WATCHDOG AT VOTE**

Fred Mullin succeeded Orville as president. Fred continued Orville's fight in Cranbrook. When the second vote came, Local 15 emerged the victor by an even greater margin than the year before.

While Local 15 is the highest number local as far as pulp mills go, it was not the last pulp mill to become certified to the PPWC. Local 10, Kamloops, holds that distinction. The PPWC and the International dueled for several more years in Kamloops before final victory was reached. Meanwhile, the International was active on many fronts relative to re-establishing their certification in lost locals.

In Gold River, a campaign was begun just after certification in May of 1967. The campaign's hope was the complete discrediting of Local 11. Letters appeared monthly in *the Western Pulp and Paper Worker* (the International's and, mostly, O'Neal's monthly paper. Orville Braaten, you may remember, had started this paper in another lifetime. The International continued it, and O'Neal, as soon as he could, grabbed it for himself.)

The letters generally spoke of incompetence on the part of Local 11, made vague charges of dubious deeds, and attempted to wreak havoc with Local 11's executive and membership. Much of the material was written by O'Neal himself, usually unsigned or credited to a nameless staff writer. The situation became intolerable. Fred Mullin, National president, and Local 11 President Lee Selzler decided the time had come for a tough decision. They advised the International to put up or shut up. The system they devised was to hold a new vote for certification. The vote was held with scrutineers from both sides. The local Anglican reverend was the official watchdog. The vote was held on April 25, 1968. The outcome was 179 for PPWC and 95 for International. O'Neal's dirty tricks were not working.

Lee Selzler, it should be noted, is Karen Cooling's dad. They arrived in Gold River when she was but a wee one. Karen went on to much union activity in her own right. She was very active in Local 11 and later served as secretary-treasurer, the full-time officer with the affiliate Confederation of Canadian Unions.

The Council of Canadian Unions (CCU) sprung to life in mid 1968, the brainchild of Kent Rowley, a founding member of the Canadian Textile Workers Union, a breakaway Canadian union. The CCU certainly was a natural, as the new Canadian unions springing up all over the country could not affiliate with the CLC, nor did they want to.

Rowley's first venture in PPWC affairs occurred when he attended the sixth annual convention in 1968 in Prince Rupert. Rowley was the keynote speaker. Among other things, he spoke of Revenue Canada estimates revealing over 50 million Canadian dollars, union dues dollars, crossing the line south every year. He told the delegates that Canada was the only country in the world with a trade union movement controlled from without. His best pitch likely was, "Here we are, railing at the gates about Canadian buy-back of our plants and industries while we allow the very workers in these plants to be controlled by the American counterparts of the big business interests that own the plants."

Everyone was impressed. Writing from Nanaimo, Gordie Wickham, in a piece titled "From coast to coast," called for a proper addressing of the issue of Canadian affiliation. In short order, Locals 3, 4, 8, and 11 were in the CCU. Over the next few years, almost all PPWC locals joined, as did many of the breakaway Canadian unions.

At its zenith, the CCU claimed over 50,000 members across Canada. The name was changed to better express the ideals of the organization. The change was to the “Confederation of Canadian Unions,” still CCU but expressing, in the minds of the changers, a better model.

## CHAPTER 19

### LRB GIVES NO HELP TO ORGANIZING EFFORTS

A recap here is of some benefit to the reader. It's mid 1968. The PPWC consists of Locals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, and 16. The missing Locals 6, 7, 10, and 12 are Port Mellon, Campbell River, Kamloops, and Island Paper, respectively.

Local 6, Port Mellon, did not apply in 1966 when Locals 7, 8, and 9 did. They had indecision as to enough support to apply at that time. They did have a majority sign up, but the percentage was small. In July of '66, the decision was made to apply. The LRB ruled that the PPWC did not have the majority needed; thus, the vote was not held.

The battle for the minds of the workers did not end with the turn down, however. In 1971, a desire to be PPWC still lived in many International members. Again, application before the Board was made. A vote was ordered. The PPWC lost by two votes. Writing about it, Reg Ginn laments on the closeness of the vote but goes on to say democracy won the day. He does point out, however, the “litany of lies” perpetuated by the International certainly hurt his cause, along with the fact that the International local had a substantial amount of money in various bank accounts. Using the Local 8 example—the \$40,000—it was obvious whatever money the local had would be returned to the International. For all those reasons, Local 6, Port Mellon, was not to be.

Local 7, Campbell River, suffered the same fate as Locals 8 and 9. The Board found that the PPWC was not a union under the meaning of the *Act*, whatever that meant. Time slipped away. The year 1968 came and went with no further word from Local 7.

Then, on June 30, 1969, Local 7 came off life support and applied for certification, again. Gordie Wickham, Vic Aquino and Reg. Young, Local 8ers, spent two months conducting a door-to-door campaign in Campbell River. The local membership showed a top of 800. When they had 434 signed up, the decision to apply was made. By now, to no one's surprise, the LRB ruled insufficient numbers. It claimed a membership far exceeding 800. Local 7 applied under the LRB clause that had allowed re-votes to occur in Skookumchuck and Gold River. The clause, paraphrased here, stated that if the Board is in doubt as to whether or not a trade union applying has sufficient membership, it will order a representative vote. It looked good on paper, but the Board turned it down anyway, to be sure



no plumbs would be given to the PPWC. The International would receive the benefit of the doubt every time.

Time marches on. In February 1971, application is made for Local 7, again. Claiming no less than 60 per cent membership, there is, however, a spoiler in the works. A decision, perhaps of expedience, is made. The cards from the past sign-up are re-entered, not without being verified, mind you, but, nonetheless, re-entered. There have been 12 new hires in the period since the last application was made. The membership has not varied much, taking terminations into consideration. Well, all that makes sense to the layman doesn't cut it with the Labour Relations Board. Again, the application is turned down. The Board cites the numbers not proven, again. An appeal does not succeed. Local 7 hangs in the balance.

The question that comes to mind easily is: was a mistake made here? Taking Y2K into consideration, sure, in the eyes of the law, last year's cards are like one-night romances: cold and dead in the water. However, and there is a however here, the law in 1970 did not forbid pre-signed cards. The PPWC was in deep at the time: several organizing drives on, IWA and International raiding happening, to say nothing of a new and somewhat convoluted set of negotiations happening. Monday-morning quarterbacks always angle the ball so it tips just over the defender's head into the waiting hands of the split end. In the real world, it isn't quite that way. It's said the LRB received new material from the International showing impropriety with the PPWC application. There is much said about this adventure in the annals of PPWC folklore. However, those sayings are but sleeping dogs to this writer and will remain asleep. Bottom line is: Local 7 in Campbell River did not happen.

Local 10, Kamloops, is another matter. A long, protracted war occurred there, with the forces of good and evil battling long into the desert night. Len Snow's warriors versus the rattlesnakes took awhile, but it bore fruit. More to come later.

Local 12, Island Paper Mills in Vancouver, was UPIU (United Papermakers International Union). The drive here stalled, with no papermakers in the PPWC, Local 12 deemed to be the first one. In the end, the numbers for a vote did not materialize. Thus, application was not filed. A further Local 12 application was made for the supervision staff at the Tahsis, Gold River pulp mill. The LRB met in a formal hearing on the issue. The decision reached was in favour of the PPWC application, in principle. However, the sign-up did not achieve the required number, again. Local 12 failed a second time.

## CHAPTER 20

### THE JOURNEY TO ALBERTA

With Locals 9 and 15 part of the flock, the PPWC made its first sojourn outside BC. Ray Koob, Local 5 president, was aiding in the formation of a new Canadian union in the mechanical trades: the Canadian Association of industrial, Mechanical and Allied Workers (CAIMAW). While pursuing this noble ambition, Ray met with someone who had Calgary connections; more so, those connections were in the converting industry. Ray heard of poor working conditions, poor wages, and a general need for upgrading in that industry in Calgary.

On his vacation in the summer of 1968, Ray decided to visit Calgary. He met his contact and was given a tour of the plant. He decided what he had been told was indeed correct, so he called a meeting for all plant employees. Of the 32 employees, 32 showed up, and all 32 signed PPWC membership cards.

Ray hurried back to Vancouver, where he conferred with Orville, then National president. Orville opined that 32 people 800 miles away would be impossible to service and were not big enough to live on their own. Ray, unbowed, said, "Okay. I have another week's vacation coming to me. I'll go back to Calgary." He did.

Soon Local 14, Calgary, was in full bloom, featuring about 100-plus workers in Calgary and 50 more in Edmonton.

Trouble in the manner of grand nemesis Pat O'Neal lurked. O'Neal, it seems, had lots of connections, including the management of the MacMillan Bloedel plant in Calgary. Two days before the Labour Board ordered a vote, a letter to all plant employees was distributed through the plant. The letter advised workers they should not vote PPWC; rather, they should join the International. They were further advised that O'Neal was in town and was planing a special meeting for said workers for two days after the vote.

The vote was held. The PPWC won 58 to 11. No one knows if the 11 went to O'Neal's meeting. Everyone knows the 58 did not.

Early in 1969, some 60 employees of Domtar's corrugated box division voted to join Local 14. By now, Ray had convinced Orville that Alberta was ripe for the PPWC.

Negotiations for the MacMillan plants were already in progress. Certainly, an attempt was made to bridge some of gap between wages in Alberta and BC's coastal wages. Negotiations broke down, and conciliation under a Board-appointed officer was entered into. The conciliation action dragged on. When the outcome was finally tabled, the recommendations were far below anything that Local 14 was prepared to accept. The local had no choice. A special meeting concluded that strike action was the only option. Strike they did.

Meanwhile, the MacMillan Bloedel Edmonton workers had evolved into their own local: Local 16. They continued working, as talks there had not stalemated yet.

Domtar employees, meanwhile, were commencing bargaining, so the stage was set for showdown in Alberta.

The two months after the commencement of the Calgary strike were busy times for the PPWC National officers and organizers. Once again, as promised, our road then to now is strewn with many disquieting events.

Leaving the Alberta story for a moment to touch on another happening of much magnitude to our union brings us back to BC. This was Orville's passing, as already mentioned. The impact on any organization would have been enormous. On a new, dynamic one, it was even more so.

Time, of course, waits for no man. The events in Alberta needed addressing, the situation in Local 15 was not successfully over yet, and the PPWC held an election. Into the fray jumped Fred Mullin. Fred was not an unknown. He had worked in Prince Rupert with Angus, where so many PPWC activists and supporters stem from. He had also shown his mettle in Gold River, helping establish Local 11, and in Prince George with Local 9. To him, as new president, fell the task of shouldering the Alberta crisis as it, in time, became.

In Calgary, MacMillan Bloedel (MB) began dismantling the plant and moving the parts to Regina. There, an M&B plant certified to the International was working flat out doing as much of the work of the struck Alberta plant as it could. Negotiations broke off in Edmonton. Local 16 voted to strike. The strike began. Now, all M&B converter plants in Alberta were closed.

The ability of the Regina plant to do the work of both Alberta plants soon proved impossible, so MB (remember that great benevolent company many of us in this province worked for) scabbed the plant. Under the watchful eye of Edmonton's finest, the scabs crossed the picket line.

In an attempt to come to grips with reason, Fred Mullin wrote to the Alberta Labour Council. In his letter, Fred pointed out that this was a legal strike brought on by a legal union. Would the council put its weight behind the strike, against the scabs and against the scoundrel, MB. Sadly, the answer was "no."

The great house of labour, the CLC, would not carry out its committed purpose, its reason for being: protecting the worker against the evils of big business. Rather, it said a union such as the PPWC, shoddy at best, was bringing on its own demise. CLC unions were the only real unions; thus, they would not help the upstarts.

Perhaps Fred was not surprised as, likely, nobody else was either. However, it showed once and for all how low that type of organization will stoop.

By now, Domtar Calgary was on the bricks. All the PPWC certifications in Alberta were on strike. Koob, Mullin and Wickham kept up their presence. Several others lent moral support by visiting the picket line. All the PPWC locals in BC sent money. Several donated one hour's pay per week to the strikers' kitty. Local 5 loaded a truck with groceries and drove to Calgary with the goods. The strikers were holding firm.

Then O'Neal fell to the lowest of the low. He and his union, the International Pulp Sulphite, that we broke away from began a scab sign-up campaign. Correct, you read that right. The International, with the obvious assistance of MB, began a sign-up of the newly-hired scabs, first in the Edmonton plant and then in the Calgary plant. In April of 1969, the International applied for certification of their scab union in both locations through the Alberta Labour Relations Board.

There was a bit of hesitation but little doubt as to where this was going. Sure enough, in June the Board ruled the International certified. The scabs certified, and that was the end of it. It isn't hard to understand why there is still so much distaste in the mouths of several PPWCers of the day towards certain Internationalists.

## CHAPTER 21

### INTERNATIONAL CONTINUES VENDETTA

What follows is, to a degree, speculation. However, from reading both sides of the story and admitting to a certain bias, a viewer of the events between 1965 and 1969 in BC relative to the conflict between the PPWC and the International may well see this. It was a conflict of desperate men (International) on one side versus a group of idealists (PPWC) on the other. The idealists had the hearts of the workers, while the desperate men had the great motivator, "fear," as their trusted weapon. At the height of the cold war, the desperate guys trotted out the "reds are coming." O'Neal did not miss one opportunity in his "red" baiting. Even Anne Royal was a "red" in his mind.

When the voice of the International Union, the *Western Pulp and Paper Worker*, didn't live up to his expectations, the editor was removed. O'Neal himself was the replacement. The paper then became an "encyclopedia of lies," as Orville put it. Every issue had the "'Commie' of the month" feature. Every issue had a challenge against statements made by Orville or Angus, the chief "commies."

Blatant untruths were voiced. For example, Local 1, Castlegar, is behind IWA picket lines (secondary picketing). The local members, of course, refuse to cross picket lines and are, thus, laid off. The IWA picketers are collecting strike pay. Local 1 members are on their own. Applications to the Unemployment Insurance Commission (UIC) are turned down. In the eyes of the UIC the work is there; Lo-

cal 1 is making a judgment call, too bad, etc. Calls go out from Orville to all locals and other unions asking for assistance. Local unions respond. Assessments are passed at local meetings, and members begin supporting Local 1. In doing so, the IWA strike. O'Neal, in his oracle, tells everyone that Local 1 members are receiving UI benefits, an absolute lie. However, damage is done. People believe what they read sometimes. To the greater glory of Local 1, they hang tough. The IWA finally settle, and things go back to normal. What is normal in Castlegar may not be what is normal elsewhere, but hey.

LRB decisions and lack of creditability in those decisions continued to plague the PPWC through the balance of 1969 into the early 1970s.

As first vice-president, Gordie Wickham was responsible for organizing. Upon hearing of a new sawmill starting up in Houston, BC, he checked it out. To his undeniable joy, he was told by the workers that the place was non-union. With the help of Local 9's Norm Garreau, the workforce in the mill was signed up 100 per cent.

When entered, the application met a roadblock in the shape of an IWA certification already in place. The local had been allotted to the Prince George IWA local. The sign-up had occurred in Prince George at the company head office. The workers in the plant hadn't even been told they belonged to a union. As they had not seen their first pay cheque yet, they were totally in the dark and welcomed the PPWC with a relish

The knowledge of a pre-certification, never ratified, and a contract, never voted on, really shook Gordie. His contempt for the Board and the IWA is clearly reflected in his writings.

What the PPWC learned from this is that new plants would always elude them. Thus, the only way the organization could grow was through the raiding process. There was no other choice. The gloves were off, and a concerted raiding campaign began.

## **CHAPTER 22**

### **OLD FRIEND HELPS PPWC RULE IN MACKENZIE**

The raiding begins in Mackenzie. The IWA-certified BC Forest Products sawmill is designated Local 18, with Local 17 being put aside for Houston. Mackenzie comes with a dash of PPWC flavour and nostalgia.

You met Big Al Smith from Woodfibre awhile back. Well, Big Al's union had a profound influence on the surrounding community. A new town called Squamish came to be. A new road to Vancouver emerged from the wild north shore of

Howe Sound. A ferry service to the mill from the Squamish side was commissioned. While Big Al toiled for these improvements, the mill-site isolation of Woodfibre that he loved was lost, so Big Al moved on to the Mackenzie area of BC. To the Hart highway turnoff, to be exact. There he opened a restaurant and gas station. In that position, he came to know several BCFP sawmill workers, heard about their dissatisfaction with the IWA, and was pleased to tell them about another union that put the worker in the picture.

Soon the phone rang in Vancouver, where PPWC first vice-president Gordie Wickham answered. Led by Gordie and assisted by Norm Garreau from Local 9 and Nick Gardiner from Local 4, among others, the members of the BCFP sawmill became Local 18 of the PPWC in June of 1970. Barry Zolinski became the local's first elected president.

A picture in a past *Leaflet* shows Fred Mullin and Velma Koob looking for Mackenzie on a BC map. Neither one of them is tall enough to reach the spot near the top where the new little town is.

The little town grew too big for Big Al, however. Soon he ran a trap line about 60 miles in the bush north of the new town. His culinary skills included bear fat biscuits and beaver tail stew.

Raiding continues on Vancouver Island, Gordie's stomping grounds. The big MB Chemainus sawmill is a hot bed of discontent with the IWA. Members approached Local 8. Local 8 is only too willing to oblige.

Eric Bodin, whom you met as a survivor of the bugging episode, wrote *Leaflet* articles as "Bugs Jumper Junior." An explanation is needed here. Pat O'Neal was deemed to be an Irish expatriate who had jumped ship off the BC coast near Prince Rupert. He was involved in the bugging incident in a big way, as you are aware. He was, thus, christened "Bugs Jumper." Eric was a Norwegian expatriate who had come to Canada by ship, as well. While he sailed up the St. Lawrence with his landed immigrant status papers in hand, being a Viking, the notion of ship jumping likely appealed to him. He also was involved in the bugging incident. Given that O'Neal was "Bugs Jumper," then Eric, in his mind, would be "Bugs Jumper Jr."

Eric pointed out that IWA members from all over the island were coming to the Local 8 hall. Turning them away was not likely to happen. Chemainus was applied for in the spring of 1970. Over 70 per cent sign-up was in the hands of the PPWC organizers, led by Wickham and Vic Aquino. Trouble, as usual, loomed on the horizon.

The BC legislature was in the process of introducing a new labour-related bill. Bill 22, among other things, declared that the raiding period for the balance of 1970 was suspended. Raiding now could only occur in the seventh and eighth month

of the collective agreement. The Chemainus agreement's seventh and eighth month would not occur until January and February of 1970.

Bills of this nature usually had a transition period in which those caught in the middle could avail themselves of the opportunity to live under the old rules for a stated period of time. Labour Minister Leslie Peterson was approached. He showed little interest and even less inclination to change the bill. Nothing happened. Chemainus was put on hold.

As one may expect, delays give the opposition, which in this case was the IWA and MB, time to mount a counterattack. Again, the devil, "fear," drives us all to places we wouldn't normally go. When 1971 rolled around, the Local 8 spearhead couldn't recoup the numbers they had eight months before.

How did the boss instill fear? Well, for example, at Belkins Paper in Vancouver a PPWC supporter was suspended three days for wearing a PPWC logo on his cap. That's pretty scary. Take into account money loss, as in Local 8 and as threatened in Port Mellon. Remember the Local 9 firings. One has to believe anyone who came into the PPWC after 1968 had to be dedicated, tough and likely had a gleam in their eyes that defied definition. But come they did, Local 18 the first one, others to follow.

## CHAPTER 23

### IWA THWARTS WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY

An example of the tactics used by the IWA is best shown in Houston, after the initial shock of voluntary recognition, as Wickham found in the IWA application for the Buckley Valley sawmill in that town. A voluntary recognition is essentially folding a proposed bargaining unit into an existing one without the benefit of ratification by the future membership of the proposed unit. In effect, it is a condition of employment cooked up between the boss, the LRB, and the benefiting union. In this case, the IWA was granted certification because they held certification in other Buckley Valley holdings. In the eyes of the company and the LRB, they were the union of choice.

Gordie and friends motored to Houston. Raiding was the order of the day. Bodin, aka "Bugs Jumper Jr.," tried to establish a case for "liberating." However, "a rose by any other name would still smell as sweet."

So it was raiding. In Houston, a view of the IWA democratic process was displayed for all to see. Writing in the March 1971 *Leaflet*, PPWC President Stan Shewaga offers the following insight.

Gordie and friends arrive in Houston, where they call a meeting of the mill workers. The purpose, of course, is to check the waters and find out if support for a sign-up is still there. The IWA has by now heard of the planned meeting. Two IWA representatives sit in the lobby of the hotel where the meeting is being held. As they, with meticulous care, study their newspapers upside down, they record the names of those entering the meeting room.

Next morning at the mill gates a group of IWA representatives—five or six—are handing out leaflets. The leaflets are geared to admonish those who may even think about a change in unions. Regional representative Big Jack Munro says he and his union are getting mighty impatient with the PPWC tactics. A by-stander would have to predict hurts and anguish for PPWC organizers in the face of such information. The entering workers who appeared at the meeting the night before are also warned of job loss if they switch.

Two days later, the entire floor of the hotel the two PPWC guys are staying in is occupied by IWA representatives, 14 in all. They are wearing their colours and bringing a feeling of foreboding to the whole town.

An IWA meeting is called. The chairman calls the meeting to order then promptly resigns. His last act is to appoint the plant secretary as the new chairman. The new chairman's first act is to appoint the former plant chair as the new secretary. Pretty fancy footwork. Never mind elections and democracy, we know what is best for our members. It's not over yet. After the footwork, Munro takes over the chair himself and proceeds to steer the meeting in a predetermined direction.

Better yet, two Vancouver Island IWA representatives were actually hired by the company and began work in the mill while other employees were in layoff mode. Nice work, if you can get it.

Needless to say, Houston never happened either: not because of Munro, but because the LRB upheld the fishy certification and took no action against the methods used by Munro and company.

## **CHAPTER 24**

### **ACCREDITATION TURNS BARGAINING TABLE**

Again a diversion is necessary. Apart from the raiding, apart from the assistance in creating new Canadian unions, witness CAIMAW and CASAW, other events occupied the minds of the officers of the PPWC.

Perhaps the single most important item a union brings its members is the ability to bargain a contract. It seems evident that with no contract language carrying forth whatever a union's victories might be through a picket line would be short



lived and require redoing every time the issue arose. The year 1970 was looming as the year of unknowns for the pulp and paper unions in BC. A variety of labour-related bills, including Bill 22 mentioned in the Chemainus affair, had reinvented collective bargaining.

Something called accreditation was ruled into law. Pushed by the big forest companies such as MB and BCFP, accreditation provided a new system of bargaining whereby companies banded together and bargained as an entity through the newly-established Pulp and Paper Industrial Relations Bureau. The main thrust of this Bureau and accrediting to it gave control of negotiations to the big companies. Smaller companies had little choice but to accredit, as some voice was better than none. What this meant to unions, in the opinions voiced at the time (PPWC opinions), was an inability to come to terms with issues affecting local unions. A secondary fear was the aforementioned power of the big companies.

In that light, the PPWC National Union, with all its certifications accredited, faced the quandary of first-time joint negotiations.

One need not be a genius to predict that the unions certainly would not be bargaining together. Bad blood was but a minor description of relations between the three.

So off to the table Shewaga and group go, not cap in hand, rather armed with a search light to better point out to the Bureau what their contract demands were. May 25, 1970, was the first day, and July 20, 1970, was the last day.

A strike was called and entered into on July 24, 1970.

No offers of any kind had been made. Shewaga knew that the stall was on. The IWA was in mediation. Something would likely come from that. Until that issue was resolved, nothing of any value would occur at the PPWC/Bureau table.

Realizing the control over negotiations this gave the forest companies, the PPWC determined strike was the only option. This they did on July 24, 1970. PPWC mills in Crofton, Harmac, Prince Rupert, Prince George, Castlegar, and Skookumchuck were picketed. The locals all enjoyed large votes in favour.

The International, while making small talk about a pending strike, in fact did the opposite. They settled for a three-year contract, a piggy-back as to rates on the IWA settlement, and little else except the promise from the Bureau that the PPWC strikers would get no more.

After much consideration, the PPWC ended their strike after eight weeks. They accepted the three years. They accepted their pay package. But they got more, says Local 2's Jameson. He points out the new seniority clauses bargained in 1970 by the PPWC. He says they bargained the right to refuse unsafe work, the

right to take vacations on a tour basis if you are a tour worker, overtime payment for work on cancelled original days off, and more.

The action alone enabled the PPWC to stand proud and push O'Neal, the International negotiator, further into the quagmire of his own making. It also showed the obvious: that splintered, we were more at the mercy of the companies than united. Unity, however, is an elusive dream at best, full of skeletons, old wounds and opposing views, a concept embraced by all but bedded by none.

Life goes on. The PPWC went back to the business of organizing. The years of the new pulp contract, 1970-73 will likely go on record as being among the finest three years in the organizing history of this union.

## CHAPTER 25

### INTERNATIONAL CHEATS ALCAN WORKERS

In an attempt to put a modicum of order in the telling, the reversal victories will be looked at first.

In Mackenzie, first the IWA mounted a raiding campaign. Again, with the help of Garreau and others, the local fought off the raid. Victory, still sweet in the mouths of the victors, faced another challenge, this time from none other than the International. O'Neal and company were going to put it to the PPWC upstarts. It looked like the IWA and the International had banded together, as is sometimes done in various enterprises, the banding stating, if you fight me, you will also have to fight him. The boys and girls at Mackenzie didn't give this one moment's thought. They just sent the International packing, too.

In Gold River, for three successive years the International set up camp and claimed a majority sign-up. The votes taken never suggested anything of the sort was even close. They, however, remained a pain in the neck and elsewhere.

In various other locals, letters of invitation to merge were received from the International. So, while the new union prospered, it also had to fight continuous rear-guard action.

Organizing continued to command the time and efforts of the National Union and a variety of organizers, such as the first vice-president deemed necessary.

The big fish in 1971 was the Alcan aluminum plant in Kitimat, where some 2,000 workers wanted out of the International Steelworkers Union (Steel). It seems Steel served no other purpose than taking the money and running. Out of each \$10.00 paid in union dues Steel took \$6.50, leaving the local union with but \$3.50

to run the affairs of the local. Neglect, by way of poor service from the Steel business representatives, was also a major issue.

Workers there approached the PPWC in late 1970. They viewed the Canadian union's constitution as the cornerstone for their aspirations. The PPWC listened, promised to discuss the request at NEB level. (The NEB, you may recall, is the quarterly business meeting of the PPWC, where one member from each chartered local attends a two-day meeting at the Vancouver National office. There they conduct the business of the union, making decisions such as a response to the Kitimat request.)

The NEB did, in fact, accept the opportunity to expand its roots out of the forest sector. In early 1971, with Stan Shewaga and Jim Sloan in the traces, the move on Steel in Kitimat began.

Local 20 was the designation given Kitimat. By early April 1971 the sign-up was in full swing. With over 2,000 members the task of the sign-up was formidable. The Canadian union pulled all the stops. As many organizers as could be mustered rained down on Kitimat. Steel was not amused. Heavies packing heat were soon evident in town and around the mill site.

Gerry Tellier from Local 8, an impressionable young man at the time, provides the following insight.

It seems the two rally-round guys in Kitimat were Anton Badior and Klaus Herre. They, more than anyone else, carried the torch for the PPWC. Tellier says that every move these two made was tailed by Steel representatives or maybe Steel hoods. Being stalked by an unknown opponent is not a desired status in the minds of most. Herre and Badior were not impressed either.

One particular afternoon, Tellier, the above noted two, and other PPWC organizers were in a car bound for a meeting of some importance when they noticed the tail. One of the two Kitimat boys reached into his briefcase, pulled out a German Luger, and calmly said, "If they don't back off, I am going to shoot them." Tellier remembers that only the gun holder was calm. Pandemonium ruled. The driver decided the only way out was to lose the tail. This he did, fortunately. Tellier could see himself in striped clothes, somewhere on a chain gang, going "ugh" between the 18-pound hammer blows.

Confrontations were the rule of the day.

Along with Badior and Herre, eight others were charged under the Steel constitution. The charge was somewhat similar to the charges against Len Shankel, et al., in Prince George. The end result, if carried through to conclusion, would mean termination of the ten. The charges, although never dropped, were left in a limbo position. Badior and Herre actually traveled to Steel head office in Wash-

ington, DC, to plead their case. They were not victorious. Rather they were told that a panel of Steel vice-presidents would review the charges and rule. As the events unfolded, the ruling never occurred.

In July of 1971, application for certification of Local 20 was tendered to the LRB. With easily 60 per cent solid, the Board of the day turned down the application. The reason given was: "The Canadian Union falsely represented its sign-up." No vote ordered. No opportunity to plead the ruling. In the absence of clarity, the PPWC had arguments aplenty: the warnings, the drummed-up charges against the ten members, and a new tactic. Steel had a number of subversives signing PPWC cards using fake names. This muddied the waters. When a report of this nature reached the LRB, they had all they needed to deny the application, as, of course, they did. Local 20 was never to be.

The vindication at Kitimat for the PPWC comes by way of the following: within six months, the workers at Kitimat had, virtually to a man (read "woman" also), dumped the Steelworkers and formed their own union, a union designed essentially on the PPWC model, called the Canadian Aluminum, Smelter and Allied Workers Union (CASAW). CASAW became a progressive Canadian union in its own right, growing to represent workers in other areas, Yellowknife being most notable.

The Kitimat experience brought division to the PPWC. The very decision to apply for certification as Local 20 was the subject of much debate, again. It's hard to separate the camps, although it's clear one group wanted to expand the union into other industries while the second group wished to remain pure forest industry related. There are pros and cons for both.

To begin with, in 1970, when the decision was made, the mind set among activists was surely one of "we are the union of destiny." Anyone who cared had the right to believe in PPWC ultimate victory. While this notion was a plus for both camps, it gave more comfort to the con side of the expand argument. One union in wood spread across the land bearing the acronym "PPWC" were not idle and foolish thoughts? Not at all.

The con side established its credentials in the full belief of the preceding. Further, they called for the creation of new Canadian unions in their supposed base of expertise and offered assistance in their formation.

The pro side saw it differently. They believed that bringing the PPWC to all workers was not such a bad idea. To those who said, "we don't know anything about smelters," the answer, in Norm Garreau's words, was: "Bullshit. We know about people. It's the people in the plant that count."

The sides were very polarized, with some influential names on either side. Perhaps the Fairmont Hot Springs convention saw the PPWC in a bit of distress within itself for the first time.

The convention debated the issue to a standstill, showing much emotion and strong beliefs. Some PPWC delegates were disturbed by the proceedings. A challenge, apparently, had been made to none less than Angus. The challenge issue was not pursued, nor was it palatable to the majority. Nonetheless, some viewed it as destructive. The odd part is that guests from Kitimat had been invited to the convention. They came away completely impressed by an organization that allowed debate of this nature to occur, an organization that had no sacred cows, an organization where the shop floor worker held the power and at convention could bring the chickens home to roost if any had flown the coop.

Down the road a ways it became apparent that our ability to organize the forest sector had diminished almost totally, and new units were, indeed, from without the comfort zone. However, that is judging with the privilege of seeing the future, nothing more than a revisionist notion. It's a hard call either way perhaps best left to the land of dreams, as it makes no difference anymore.

An action taken by the PPWC early on in the Kitimat adventure was a lawsuit against both the Steelworkers International Union and the International Pulp Sulphite. The latter was very active in Kitimat in support of Steel. Anything they could do to stem the advancement of the PPWC was right up their alley.

Signs appeared in Kitimat, claiming "The PPWC is a Communist Front organization." The issue was settled in court. The finding was one of guilty for the two Internationals and an award of \$2,500 in damages to the PPWC.

In closing the Kitimat story, a letter of gratitude is reprinted here verbatim:

*It is of course with the greatest pleasure that once again I would like to thank all of you who have stood like a rock by the Side of the Alcan Workers in their long and sometimes seemingly hopeless battle to get independence from "Canada's largest union" or so they claim. Fortunately, we all know quantity cannot be a measuring-stick for Quality...*

*The outcome of the vote was of course no surprise to me. If anything, I still believe we would have won with an even greater majority had the 1977 organizing drive succeeded in obtaining a vote. As most of you probably know, I was not privileged to be in Kitimat to help celebrate this great victory, since I am now residing in Castlegar. It is somewhat erroneous that none of the other participants, namely Stan Shewaga,*

*Jimmy Sloan, or Norm Garreau, involved in the first meetings in connection with the Kitimat breakaway were able to be present. The only sad note I personally have seems to be the repetition of the old story; that Victory has many Fathers...this is the feeling one gets when reading the Vancouver papers after the outcome of the vote. There are people now taking credit for leading the Alcan workers that certainly were not around when they were most needed. In my opinion the fullest credit for the final outcome of the Kitimat situation belongs to the present and last year's executive of the P.P.W.C., along with the whole membership, that made the generous assistance possible to liberate the Alcan workers and add one more group to the growing number of truly Canadian Unionists.*

*To all of you I would like to convey my heartfelt thanks once again.*

*And I am sure, if such were possible, that a long line of people from Kitimat would gratefully shake your hands.*

*Fraternally,  
Tony Badior*

## **CHAPTER 26**

### **LABOUR BOARD CAN'T MAKE UP ITS MIND**

While the failure in Kitimat cut many PPWC activists to the quick, it did not deter their determination in the organizing arena.

Local 17 had already been allotted to the National Box Division of MacMillan Bloedel. A sign-up headed by Gerry Tellier and Vic Aquino from Local 8, helped in a big way by Local 5 members, got the numbers: according to Tellier, at least 70 per cent. A decision was then made to apply.

Upon applying, Tellier was somewhat amazed with the LRB reply. Unable to obtain anything near a majority in its sign-up attempt, the International Union had struck a deal with the incumbent union, the Printing Specialties Union, and an unnamed third union that had also been sniffing in the plant. With 70 per cent, the PPWC felt quite secure. Considering a three-way application would be an unwieldy venture, at best, the LRB, in all its supposed desire to protect the worker, could never rule in that venue. Well, hard to believe but wrong again, the Board claimed that, combined, the three unions had more membership than the PPWC did. It seems it actually added the three unions' sign-up cards together.

No matter that accounted for 150 per cent of the workers. The combined numbers were greater than the Canadian union's 70 per cent, so ruled the Board. The appeal, of course, fell as well. Local 17 remained only a hope.

As with Local 12, a second Local 17 was applied for. The workers at Brunette Machine Works in Prince George made application in December of 1969. The International Association of Machinists held the certification. The LRB refused the application as an inappropriate unit. The IAM was certified to two other Brunette machine shops in BC. The Board held that all employees of that company were in a blanket certification; thus, it was all or none. A second Local 17 was unsuccessful.

In an attempt, no doubt, to show grand determination, an application for a third Local 17 was made, this time for the 250-plus employees of Pinette and Therrien sawmills in Williams Lake, BC. A first application was made in March of 1975. A Board-ordered vote occurred in April of that year. The PPWC did not obtain the needed majority.

A second application was made in February of 1977. This time all the stops were pulled, including public debates with IWA staffers. The company then stepped into the fray and fired a PPWC plant activist. This turned the tide, as fear of job loss is a grand motivator. The IWA emerged victorious, again. Seventeen is not a PPWC-friendly number.

Local 19, Fort Langley, arises from the ashes. An IWA certification with much dissatisfaction eagerly waits its turn to be denied before the LRB. Alexander Pope, an English writer and poet, said many years ago, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." These words best explain the continued optimism of not only PPWC organizers but also of those workers wishing to free the shackles only evident by the activity in the early '70s.

Meanwhile, in Quesnel, the Cariboo Pulp and Paper Company was building a new pulp mill. The mill was slated to come into production in early 1973. Reg Ginn went to Quesnel, where he met with the hoped-for new members of Local 21 of the Canadian union. A sign-up was commenced immediately. Within two weeks Reg and his able assistant, Dennis Barnes from Local 15, had a majority signed up. In short order, certification was applied for.

Reg and everyone else were somewhat taken aback by the LRB reply. First, a contract was already in place; a memorandum had just recently been signed. Second, something called a "Special Duration Clause" had been granted by the LRB to the International Union. This clause claimed the agreement dated back to March of 1972. Not only did it give the certification to the International, it also changed the raiding time from January/February to November/December of '72. The Board, presumably with glee, ruled the application out of time.

Reg had an eight-month waiting period on his hands, which meant ample time for the International to reinvent itself in Quesnel. The part that really smelled, dead skunk in the middle of the road like, was the fact that, in March of '72, there were no pulp workers there; the mill was in building stage. Once again, as in Kamloops, the Board had allowed a certification with no ratification by the members. Furthermore, it had ignored the memorandum of agreement as the lead document, giving preference to the special clause. Legal opinion claimed that this was a grave error. The Board ruled, grave error be damned, that is how it is. Local 21 was not to be.

In Mackenzie, another new pulp mill, British Columbia Forest Products (BCFP) was open for business. An attempt had been made for first certification with the International the ultimate victors. Now, however, the members there were quite disenchanted with the International. Reg was approached. He and Dennis Barnes moved on to Mackenzie, where they proceeded to sign a clear majority and applied again. Shades of déjà vu. The gremlin struck again. No less than a "Special Duration Clause" existed in Mackenzie as well, this time changing the certification's timeframe. This time it was the exact opposite of Mackenzie/Quesnel. The new raid dates were April to June, which was precisely the time of the PPWC application.

To further clarify the matter, in Quesnel, a memorandum of agreement had been voted on by at least some members and signed. The memorandum proposed certain dates as beginning and ending the contract. Generally, the memorandum is accepted as the document on record, as it is the agreed-upon document between both parties and the voted-on document by the membership. In Quesnel, the "Special Duration Clause" took precedence over the memorandum, thus scuttling the PPWC plans.

In Mackenzie, the memorandum also agreed to and voted on determined certain dates being the beginning and end of the contract. The "Special Duration Clause" varied these dates, as in Quesnel. However, this time the varied dates coincided with the PPWC application as to proper times to raid. While believing the memorandum was the proper document, that belief didn't carry much weight in Quesnel, so Reg. figured, "If that is the law in Quesnel, then it should be the law in Mackenzie as well. Let's apply." Apply they did.

As strange as this must appear, the Board reversed its Quesnel decision. The application for Local 22, Mackenzie, was deemed out of time. Local 22 quietly slipped below the waters of Williston Lake, where it remains today.

## CHAPTER 27

### NO COOKIES ARE HANDED TO PPWC



January of 1973 dawned with much promise for PPWC organizers. Five applications had already been filed, and two more were pending. Two locals, 23 and 24, were in Port Alberni: two IWA-certified sawmills, Somass Division of MacMillan Bloedel and another major MB sawmill, Alberni Division.

The LRB ordered a representative in both locations. The vote was held. The IWA emerged victorious in both cases.

Reg Ginn says the IWA did their homework well. They had a large contingent of reps in the Port Alberni area. Their prime duty was to deliver the vote. They did.

They also had a good bargaining chip. The IWA had just negotiated a pension plan. While still in its infancy, the plan was in place. The PPWC had yet to do the same. To many workers, especially those over forty, a pension plan is an appealing part of one's pay package. This and other things, like seniority issues, within the local (IWA 1-85) convinced the majority to remain with the union they had.

The granting of the vote for both applications, while pleasing, took the majority of activists by surprise. With all the delays and setbacks they had viewed in the pulp mills, they expected more of the same. An observation at the time may conclude that the International had a better grip on the LRB than the IWA did. Actually, the IWA, in its own right, could boast of its "commie" supporters and rebel caucus. Likely the Board of the time was less interested in the affairs in the woods than in the affairs in the mills. At the end it didn't matter. Locals 23 and 24 were not to be.

Meanwhile, the International Pulp Sulphite across the line wasn't sitting still. In fact, in name at least, it had disappeared from sight. The United Pulp and Paper Union (UPPU), of Castlegar fame, had merged with the pulp union, and now both unions were known by the name United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU). The resident powers of both unions believed they could hide behind a new identity, or perhaps they just wanted the name gone, as no less than 25,000 members had left to form two new unions: the PPWC, and its counterpart, the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers in the western US. All former International locals were now UPIU. The same leadership prevailed. Tonelli was still the head honcho, and all his deputies were firmly in place. Truth of the matter, however, this was the beginning of the end for International unions in pulp and paper in this country. The UPIU lasted but two years. We will see its demise in short order.

On Vancouver Island, the loss of Locals 23 and 24 did not deter the desire to organize further. Local 8's glorious pork choppers, as they were now billed, continued to spread the PPWC doctrine. The organizers, Tellier and Shewaga, signed up a majority in four coastal sawmills: the CIPA and Mayo sawmills in Nanaimo, along with the Ladysmith Forest Products and Saltair Lumber mills in Ladysmith.

All these units were designated as part of Local 8 rather than stand-alone certifications.

The Ladysmith Forest Products mill was considered the best bet by the organizers, so they applied for a vote in this mill first. The hope was that a decisive vote in Ladysmith would favourably affect the outcome of the other three. The LRB said, "no." It knew what the PPWC was up to, and in no way was it going to be a ploy in the union battles happening. The vote was held in unison. The PPWC was successful in all four.

The IWA, as is common enough, refused to go away silently. No doubt any other union would do the same. They kept a presence in the four mills and, as soon as they could, reapplied for the lost certifications.

On a particular dark and gloomy, typical, Vancouver Island night, Shewaga and Tellier were invited by Don Robertson, the Ladysmith plant chairman and foremost PPWC supporter, to speak to the graveyard shift crew. It seems they were the problematic group if, in fact, one existed. The two Local 8 organizers showed up at the stroke of midnight to find none other than Jack Munro and a handful of followers. A verbal battle ensued. Jack was good, but Tellier says Shewaga won hands down. The PPWC won the vote in a like fashion. It seems once Shewaga found his soapbox there were few better.

Upon reapplying, the IWA put to the LRB essentially the same request the Canadian union had made the previous year. The IWA believed their best chance was the CIPA mill in Nanaimo, and they wanted the vote there first. This time the Board ruled "yes." The PPWC lost by four votes.

Charged up, the IWA now demanded votes in the other plants. Mayo voted PPWC all the way. In Ladysmith, the IWA lacked the sign-up numbers, so the vote didn't happen. In Saltair, the IWA was successful.

It's hard to say if the Board ruling and the subsequent early vote at CIPA affected the outcome. It can be said, however, that the IWA was favoured by the Board, and their request was honoured. Again, an observation may conclude that, while the PPWC was at least granted votes upon applying for certain IWA certifications, they were still at the short end of the stick when it came to any cookies being handed out.

## CHAPTER 28

### STIRRING THE CAULDRON OF DISCONTENT

While organizing was the major focus for many in 1973, the PPWC National president was wrapped up in negotiations. The three-year contract was up. A determination by the union wage caucus set the tone. "Beware the knife in the back" was the message with 1970 in mind. Stan Shewaga, caucus chairman, was well aware of the events that made 1970 a less than gratifying year, most of all, the PPWC strike, with the International settling seven weeks into the strike for an inferior contract while not raising one iota of fight themselves.

An attempt made to sit at a common table led nowhere. O'Neal wanted everything his way, including seeing the PPWC sit on the sidelines while he bargained the contract, then a no-questions-asked acceptance by the Canadian union. The PPWC leadership, to a man, rejected this.

President Fred Mullin, writing in the *Leaflet*, pointed out the many shortcomings Buggy O'Neal had, the many sleazy deals he had agreed to, and the inferior contract of 1970. He asked O'Neal to hear the call of the membership. With inflation a reality, with company profits at an all-time high, the workers needed and could expect a hefty wage increase, a sound pension plan, and a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) clause as the foundations of a new contract.

O'Neal didn't listen. With a 95-per-cent strike vote, he again forged a deal. The wage increases of 8½ per cent over two years no doubt look good in some timeframes; however, in 1973, expectations were well above this figure. Beyond that, the pension plan issue was abandoned, nor was there a COLA clause in sight. The PPWC was again left at the altar, the bride eloping with the minister, it would seem.

Mullin and Shewaga were not amused. Reg Ginn, in a *Leaflet* piece, called for O'Neal's demise. Shewaga, in a statement to a mixed group, left no doubt in anyone's mind how pulp workers felt. O'Neal, in an attempt to save face, launched a slander suit against Shewaga. Ten years down the road from separation there was still no love lost between the parties.

While the PPWC caucus continued to meet with the Pulp Bureau, some locals rose to voice displeasure. Strike action occurred in Locals 1, 4 and 8. The UPIU Local 592 in Port Alberni also staged a wildcat.

The Port Alberni walkout is noted because their union, under the influence of Pat O'Neal, had already accepted the contract. The walkout lasted several days. In an attempt to settle the situation, O'Neal sent his top lieutenant to Port Alberni. Art Gruntman, O'Neal's soon-to-be successor, arrived in the Vancouver Island city, where he attended the scheduled general meeting of Local 592. His address to the gathering was less than welcome. Gruntman was, literally, booed off the stage.

At Local 1, the strike began in early August. The general theme of dissatisfaction with the International-negotiated contract was a factor; however, several local issues were also dominant. Writing in the *Leaflet*, Local 1 President Len Embree tells of the serious gas problems witnessed in Castlegar. The workers want the issue addressed now, he says, as "It's hard to grieve the issue when you're on a stretcher heading out of the mill." Wage adjustments were also a major item.

The strike lasted 73 day. Again writing in the *Leaflet*, Local 1's Rudy Martini tells of the safety issues being addressed to some satisfaction, the rate adjustments have reasonably been looked into and agreed upon and, all in all, the strike was a success. Rudy also voices his major disapproval of the UPIU-brokered contract saying, "Sold down the river is a fitting claim."

The Local 4 strike, also over safety issues and rates, lasted 20 days. A mediator's recommendations were accepted by the membership, ending the strike.

In Nanaimo, Local 8 was out for 1½ months. The issues at Harmac generally revolved around steam plant manning and rates of pay for steam plant personnel. A picket line manned by PPWC Caucus Chairman Stan Shewaga, Local 8 President Bud Hehr, Vice President Bruce Tunstall, and five others appeared at the mill gates on August 30. The company then fired all who manned the picket line. With the firings, the membership immediately voted to strike until the eight brothers were reinstated. The initial few days of the strike were, in fact, illegal, which is to say, wildcat. In short order, however, the local was in legal position.

The strike continued until October 9, 1973, when MacMillan Bloedel, the plant owner, finally relented and reinstated the fired eight. One might remember the question posed by the Prince George pulp manager earlier as to the ability of striking over firings. Certainly, Shewaga and company in Nanaimo did exactly that and succeeded.

While these actions were decidedly of a local and independent nature, they still stirred the cauldron of discontent so apparent within the BC pulp and paper sector.

## CHAPTER 29

### NORTH CENTRAL PLYWOOD WORKERS ARE UNAFRAID OF BULL

The circumstances around the PPWC sphere of influence remained quite consistent in the mid 1970s. Counter raids by the IWA and the International or its replacement, the UPIU, continued. Local 5, especially, was subject to a continual attack. Raids or rumours of raids were numerous. Any MacMillan Bloedel plant seemed determined to rid itself of the PPWC, if the rantings of the American un-

ions were to be believed. Applications were made. However, when the vote day came, the PPWC emerge the victor.

Prince George, home to Local 9, is also home to a company called North Central Plywood (NCP). NCP came into being in the late 1960s. The company ownership, a consortium of independent loggers from the Prince George area, is quite anti-union. It was successful in fighting off the IWA, installing, instead, a company-dominated association. In early '71, the association approached the PPWC. The company was made aware of this and responded by adding a little sweetness to its wage offer. The association was content and saw this as a new lever they could use. Sure enough, the following year, along came an association request for PPWC information relative to joining. Again, the boss got proper wind of this and made some cosmetic changes. Once more satisfied, the group toiled on.

However, enter one Dan Vowels. Dan became the association chair in late '72. When the call came in '73, Fred Mullin and Jim Sloan were pretty skeptical. Here we go again was the mood of the day. Fred and Jim hinted that, perhaps, the time had come for bigger things at NCP. To their surprise and approval, Dan Vowels said he was on side. An organizing drive began in late '73, with Jim Sloan at the helm. Soon, new First Vice-President Reg Ginn replaced Jim and continued the drive. Many oddities were noted, such as, not everyone was in the association. It seems little groups existed outside the cover group. Labour relations were non-existent. The logger bull-of-the-woods mentality prevailed. On one visit, Fred remembers walking by the mill manager's office, a man he had never met before. As Fred passed the door, a loud voice called, "Hey, Mullin, come here." Fred kept on walking. Again the call was made. This time Fred turned and said, "Are you talking to me? If you are, then perhaps introductions may be in order. I am Fred Mullin, PPWC president. Who may you be?" Couth was not an endearing grace of NCP management at the time. The campaign continued, however, and was successful. Local 25 was chartered in late 1973.

North Central Plywood Local 25's new president, Dan Vowels, attended the 11th convention, representing the new local.

Having the certification, the work was far from over in Local 25. A first contract had to be bargained. Fred and Reg set their minds to the task. To the best of their ability, they followed the pulp contract and broke some new ground for the Local 25 members. A new dental plan was chosen over a possible pension plan. Most workers in the plant were young and believed they needed teeth now; retirement was a long ways away. A new health and welfare plan was also bargained, along with the standard wage increases expected. The contract was ratified, and life continued undistinguished for a spell.

Soon, however, the bull-of-the-woods attitude returned to the management team. Although the contract said this or that, they disregarded it. In short order, it became quite impossible to exist as a union representative in the plant. Fred re-

members, one after the other, all the executive of Local 25 resigning. By early spring of '74, Good Friday, Fred claims only one member of the executive was still in place. By the following Tuesday, he had packed it in. A call was made from Vancouver to Prince George. By late Tuesday night the plant was struck. By Friday the union was informed they would be in court early the following week. Again, a phone call was made from Vancouver. The call, this time, instructed the members of Local 25 to put in writing the improper activities they had been subjected to. Fred and the secretary of the local witnessed these statements. They were then placed in the hands of one Gary Culhane, a lawyer representing Local 25.

The day in court arrived. Culhane presented the sworn statements as evidence of ill doings. The company immediately objected, saying these are not acceptable in a court of law; they are not notarized. Culhane, to his credit, shot back, "That's no problem. We will get them notarized." However, this will take time, as the workers are all over the place now. In the meanwhile, the mill would have to stay down. A series of "nos" erupted. The statements were accepted as hard and fast legal documents. An order was issued by the LRB. The workers were to return to work, and the boss was to respect the contract.

In a final show of solidarity, all the members of Local 25 gathered in central Prince George. There they proceeded to form a motorcade, which wound its way to the NCP plant, lights on like a funeral procession. Their arrival at the plant was notable and somewhat exciting for the workers. First, the plant had been scabbed while they were out. Their return in the fashion that they did resulted in scabs running away all over the place. Along with this, out came the management team to meet the union group. Management now was cordial and interested in the affairs of its workplace. One could say management was in receipt of a valuable lesson, while the members of Local 25 saw first hand the power of unity.

The executive of the local was re-established. With proper respect, conditions soon began improving. In short order, Dave Pritchard became president, leading the local to a new stability. Closely behind, Ernie Dougan, a Local 9 millwright, moved to NCP. Having a foundation in the PPWC, Ernie soon became president. He served the local both at home and away at National Executive Board level for many years. Dave Pritchard remained a staunch supporter of Local 25 as well as the National Union. Dave's early desire to write the history of this organization led to his doing several interviews with PPWC originals. These interviews are the basis of some of the material found in this story.

## **CHAPTER 30**

### **PPWC GIVEN "SNOWBALL'S" CHANCE**

Some fifteen locals ago, the Weyerhaeuser Pulp mill in Kamloops was given the designation Local 10 of the PPWC. There, with trickery, the International had scooped the certification. The battle, for sure, was lost but not the war. Emerging as the PPWC white knight, Len Snow had been agitating for some time. When the time was right, Snow invited First Vice-President Reg Ginn to Kamloops. Over the years, Snow and his co-horts had converted some influential people, Andy Lapa for one. You met Andy before, as he attended in Skookumchuck on behalf of the International Union. His becoming a PPWC activist was an important step in the establishment of Local 10. Another Len ably assisted Reg, Dircks this time, from Local 4. The incumbent PPWC second vice-president took to the organizing trail like a duck to water.

Working together, the sign-up went well, indeed. Snow tells of a faithful meeting called by the International for all Kamloops workers. O'Neal and all the ranking UPIU reps, vice presidents, what have you were there. Snow is in attendance. He studies the assembled crowd. He realizes that more than half are PPWC supporters. Len Dircks, meanwhile, is waiting outside. The plan is: if the traffic will bear it, a motion to allow Dircks, attendance will be made. Snow moves the motion. The International local president rules it out of order. A hue and cry erupts in the hall. The chair is challenged. The chair loses. Dircks is in. As he enters the room, O'Neal invites him to come sit on the stage with the International group. Dircks says, "No, I'll sit down on the floor with the rest of the workers." After the standing ovation, O'Neal and his pals know they are in trouble. They have just witnessed a very special moment in the life of PPWC Local 10.

The LRB ordered the vote for April 23, 1974. By nightfall Local 10 was finally in the PPWC.

The Kamloops story is long, and one must admire the dedication of those who kept the faith there. Writing about the certification, Reg says, while he could go on at length about the improprieties of the UPIU, "tonight is a time for rejoicing."

It is important, however, to see this victory in Kamloops in its true light. The fight was long; the opponent, at times, was formidable; and, most important, by 1974 the International Pulp Sulphite had disappeared, and its replacement, the UPIU, was in the process of disappearing as well.

The plan was to launch a new Canadian union in pulp and paper at a planned June convention. The new union promised the moon but, in doing so, made it clear that only members of the new union would be eligible to receive it. Any PPWCers who wanted to attend the convention and become part of the proceedings had only to denounce the old Canadian union and they would be welcomed. As Reg put it, "What with all the promises nothing of substance has turned up. The members in Kamloops showed they were unwilling to settle for a reprint of the same old book, even if it does have a maple leaf on it. They are not looking for a change of name; they are looking for a change of heart."

Local 10 voters didn't buy the wait till you see us next summer boast. Perhaps they shared President Fred Mullin's opinion when he said, "It is well known that Pat O'Neal was appointed by Joe Tonelli to destroy our organization. Since 1966 he has been singing the virtues of the Pulp Sulphite Union and, lately, the UPIU. Over night he suddenly changes and becomes the white knight of Canadian unionism, declaring to all that Canadians need their own union, must be in control of their own affairs." Fred summarizes his report by asking the question that begs to be asked: "Why, with an independent Canadian union already in place, one that already has the constitution being called for in place, do we need the formation of a second Canadian union? Join the PPWC." Fred smells a rat. His betting is the new union will have a rehash constitution not very different from what they have in the UPIU. June 1974 is fast approaching.

## CHAPTER 31

### "SINCERE, UNITED AND DEMOCRATIC"

Ralph Jones, a Local 15 activist and PPWC mainstay, attending a caucus meeting in Vancouver in and around the time when all this was shaking down, gives this observation. He recalls when he was serving his apprenticeship in some other location with another union how powerful the union officials were. In the work place, the ranking union official was the master shop steward. Ralph remembers they called him "God." One particular day a dispute arose between some journeymen electricians and a young trades helper. It seems the tradesmen began, in a joking fashion, to try to put something over on the youth. He resisted, and soon a war of words was in full bloom. Things got reasonably hot. In Ralph's opinion, the young helper was innocent, just defending himself. God, personified as the chief shop steward, was called, the issue put to him by the outspoken tradesmen, saw no quarter given to the helper. Next day he was gone from the job, moved to a dust pile somewhere to bide his time. This union official had power, and he used it to lord over the workers.

Fast forward to the abovementioned caucus meeting. Fred Mullin is president. The meeting is exploring the possibilities of a joint caucus with the UPIU. O'Neal is there as well. Mullin and O'Neal are seated at the head table. An order comes from the floor to Fred. "Let's go, Fred. Phone Lanskail. Tell him...." Lanskail is chairman of the Pulp Bureau, the negotiating arm of the companies.

Fred says, "Call yourself. I am just an observer here."

"No way, man. You're our president. Get on with it, old cock."

Fred mumbles on but does his duty. Ralph observes, "Who would want to be president of this group? Shewaga, Hehr, Doyle, Macphee, Shankel, Martini?"



Rough, scruffy, hairy chests, patched jeans, 'Queen's English', one necktie, decisive, sincere, united, democratic." A union that Ralph was already enamoured with and would come to love.

Meanwhile, the saga known as the International to UPIU to CPU was continuing to unfold. As you have seen, the loss of 4,000 members in BC plus the potential for several thousand more spurred the move to the UPIU. This, however, was not enough. The Canadian union offered a democracy unparalleled. It also had absolutely no American ties. The UPIU venture was short lived. It became very apparent that the Canadian sector had to shed its American yoke.

The negotiations in 1970 and '73 were both deemed failures. Both, as we have seen, were bargained by the International, one with the PPWC on strike, the other with the PPWC still at the table with three of its locals on strike. International locals in Port Alberni, Ocean Falls, and Port Mellon were showing displeasure with the deal cooked up between the International and the companies behind the PPWC's back. An alliance, led by Local 8's Bud Hehr teamed with International Local 592's John Vezina, was going somewhere that the UPIU did not like.

The Kamloops victory after five long years of struggle gave little comfort to the UPIU. It was clear that established UPIU locals could shift allegiance in '74 as well as '63. The movement was not a flash-in-the-pan thing. It had continuity.

News of a pending vote in Ocean Falls sent the UPIU into overdrive.

A date was set for a Canadian Paperworkers Union (CPU) founding convention, June 3-7, in the centre of the universe: Toronto. There the Canadian sector of the UPIU met in their founding convention. Fred Mullin, under direction from the PPWC executive, attended the convention. He was accompanied by Tom Hawthorn of Local 9.

They were ushered into a convention hall to meet with Henri Lorraine, the acknowledged new leader of the soon-to-be-formed union. Fred immediately found this less than acceptable as, here the new union wasn't even an entity yet, but it had a leader. So much for democracy. In another swipe at democracy, the offices of convention chair and secretary were appointed by Mr. Lorraine. The infamous Pat O'Neal emerged as chairman, while a Mr. Buchanan, an eastern vice president, was appointed secretary.

During the course of the week, a constitution was hammered out. In pre-convention opinions Fred, thinking out loud, had asked, "Will the new proposed union truly be democratic? Can Lorraine, O'Neal, Buchanan, et al., change a lifetime of procedure and really bring reform to their union?" Whether Fred was pleased with the outcome or not may well be debatable. His doubts were, however, confirmed. The spectre of trusteeship remained, proxy voting remained, convention elections remained, appointment of reps remained. In essence, a top-

down union quite similar to the UPIU remained. Chief feature it had cut its ties with American unions. Dues money would now stay in Canada.

Fred tells of a few asides that occurred at the convention that are, in some ways, odd. First, a Ken Warde from Nanaimo, BC, was present. He was president of Nanaimo International Local 695 in 1967 when Local 8 replaced it. Seven years after it ceased to exist and several years after he left the industry, Mr. Warde and Local 695 were recognized at the founding convention, seated with voice and vote, capable of moving motions that would become part of the new union. Fred found this a bit different.

He also held his nose a bit when Tonelli addressed the assembly. He spoke of the long, proud history of the organization and how the Canadian contingent was always an equal partner and how proud he himself had been to lead the organization. In closing, he advised the delegates that the UPIU would not be taking away any local funds or chattels. However, there was over \$1 million in the Canadian head office earmarked for future transfer. This, he said, would still occur. Tonelli's notion of equality, in Fred's opinion, only went so far.

## **CHAPTER 32**

### **LRB STACKS VOTE AGAINST PPWC**

The birth of the CPU reaped immediate benefits in the raiding area for the new union in Quesnel and Port Alberni. Although a strong base of PPWC supporters existed, the support was based on varied principles generally founded on Canadian entity. The new union, CPU, while it still held many old tenets, was at least Canadian. Most saw this as a major move in the right direction. Most believed the PPWC would soon cease to be, its dreams now having been realized by the CPU. The two above locals decided to stay put, believing, why move away from something we are no doubt going to get right back into.

In Ocean Falls, the PPWC applied for and was granted a vote in June 1974. The application was filed for the members of UPIU Local 312, the pulp local. A separate papermakers local also existed at Ocean Falls. Apart from that, the only hotel in town, the Martin Inn, was certified to Local 312 but was bound by a separate agreement. Upon receiving the PPWC application, the LRB ordered a hearing of all interested parties.

The PPWC was represented by Gary Culhane and the UPIU by John Baigent. Both were rising stars in the field of labour law in BC.

The Board, in its wisdom, ruled the new certification include both UPIU locals, the Martin Inn group, and part of the office staff, who were non-union. The PPWC lost the overall vote. The pulp local alone was a winner for the PPWC. The other

three groups rejected the PPWC almost in total, which was not really surprising, as the raid had been confined within the ranks of the pulp local only.

Strange, also, is the fact that, upon winning the vote, everything remained the same at Ocean Falls. Local 312 continued to exist, the Martin Inn stayed under separate agreement. The Papermaker Local 1128 continued as it had been, and the non-union office workers added to the mix remained non-union.

It is pretty clear that the Board, once again, stepped in to help its friends. A feature the LRB had then, as now, is a labour representative on any ruling panel. These reps were all from the various international unions operating in the province at the time. The PPWC found few, if any, pals among this gang. Local 26 as Ocean Falls did not happen either.

While the last several pages have highlighted the losses suffered by the PPWC in the organizing area, one must also accept why they occurred. Even a fifty-fifty split would find the Canadian union with at least five more locals and 1,500 or more members. As suggested earlier, after the success of Locals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, the companies, the provincial government, the government-led LRB, and the international unions all embarked on a stop-the-new-union campaign. The coalition, loose as it may have been, found a way in almost all cases to quell the movement towards representative unionism in this province. Through a series of rejections, delays and outright hostile decisions, the above quartet managed to keep the PPWC organizing activity to a minimum. When LRB activity was sufficient, then that's all it took. However, when the resolve of the workers in question was beyond the power of the Board, then other factors appeared: firings, nonsensical joint appeals, and all matters of improprieties. The focus of those improprieties and the end result were almost always the same: the strangulation of the PPWC.

## **CHAPTER 33**

### **TWENTY BC PULP MILLS GO ON STRIKE**

In the midst of rejection and turmoil, with battle lines all over, compromises were being suggested. At 1974 year's end, the PPWC convention held in the Vancouver Fishermen's Hall featured Pat O'Neal as a guest speaker. O'Neal's general push was one of joint action, with the CPU expertise leading the show. While he himself was rejected, the ideal of togetherness was still a pervading theme. In mid '73 you met Bud Hehr from Local 8, Nanaimo, and John Vezina from CPU Local 592, Port Alberni. They were pushing a joint approach, with equal status for both unions. They were also hinting a grand displeasure with Pat O'Neal.

Both unions, from a rank-and-file approach at least, had seen the dilemma of separate negotiations with separate agendas, how that hand had played out, and

how O'Neal had used the less-than-united approach to cut deals with the representative companies through the Pulp Bureau. Then something happened that perhaps was ordained by a kind God somewhere: O'Neal moved on. His replacement, Art Gruntman, at least came to the party without the stigma that Bugsy O'Neal carried. Hehr and Vezina pursued their contention of joint bargaining. Their voices were heard, supported really, by the PPWC leadership: Ginn, Shewaga, et al.

A liaison committee was struck by the PPWC. Its members—Angus Macphee (Local 4), Rudy Martini (Local 1), Mel Schmidt (Local 2), Jay Gower (Local 10), and Bruce Tunstall (Local 8)—carried the responsibility of securing and maintaining the rapport and unity necessary for the involved unions to deal effectively with the employer group. Upon hearing of this, the other union in wood, the IWA, contacted the two pulp unions. Liaison between all three groups began, where a conditional arena of cooperation was reached. This must be acknowledged for what it was: the first time both pulp unions sat together in any real sense and, certainly, the first time the solid wood group joined in. The contracts all had a different end date, so delay tactics were practiced by both the PPWC and the IWA, allowing all three groups the opportunity to meet the boss at the same time. It was a new, novel idea to be sure, however, an idea not without its detractors.

Problem 1: the federal Liberal government's wage and price controls legislation. This new act of parliament, mostly wage control to be sure, fit in well with company plans. Problem 2: the IWA under Jack Munro was less than forthcoming. While they continued the charade of a combined approach, it became apparent that behind the scenes activity was happening. Before the strike deadline of July 16, 1975, the IWA had flown the collective coop to bargain inferiority between themselves.

"So be it," said pulp. The strike goes on. On it did. On the morning of July 16, 1975, 20 BC pulp and paper mills were shut down by strike action. While 1957 had seen an industry down, an action of this nature had not occurred before. First, the number of mills had doubled since '57. Second, the action involved two philosophically divergent unions in sometimes bitter competition to represent the very members they were now jointly negotiating for.

O'Neal's demise certainly served as a catalyst. The emergence of Gruntman, who was willing to share the spotlight, helped as well. The PPWC, for their part, buried many hatchets. Few, indeed, were the PPWC activists who believed the new CPU embodied the union requirements they had in mind. As Angus Macphee put it: "You have to fight for the type of constitution the PPWC has. It isn't given to you." Nonetheless, sit together they did, and strike together they did.

The strike ended in early October when the provincial government enacted a special labour bill ordering the striking unions back to work. There is no precise back-to-work day, as many locals had issues to deal with at home and refused to

return on that basis for a few days at least. Negotiations continued with government-provided assistance. Final settlement was not reached until mid 1976.

Perhaps the highlight of the bargain reached was the commencement of a new pension plan. The plan, despite its many foibles, was a large step in the direction towards retirement with at least a degree of dignity. Two important features enshrined within were the credits for past service coupled with present pensioners receiving any gained increases. The latter was a special feature not attained by the IWA, who bolted the triad, as shown before, reaching a quick, strikeless deal on their own.

## CHAPTER 34

### PPWC MEASURES SUCCESS DIFFERENTLY

Back on the organizing trail, Local 27 in Terrace, BC, was emerging. First Vice-President Stan Shewaga, with assistance from Len Snow, was raiding IWA Local 1-70 for the right to represent the 250-plus workers at the CanCel Terrace sawmill. A sometimes-bitter campaign with threats of violence and several slashed tires delivered the majority sign-up to the PPWC. The application for certification was filed with the Labour Board. The vote, however, was delayed.

The IWA used every tactic available to them through the Board, while their reps and the company cajoled and threatened the workers. When the vote was finally held, indecision prevailed. The IWA won the vote.

Gold River Local 11 showed its mettle, rebuffing several International raid attempts. They then looked outward. The nearest fair game was the Gold River Chalet, the only game in town as far as hotels go. It was organized by the International Hotel Workers Union. However, much dissatisfaction existed, especially in the servicing area. Local 11 introduced the PPWC principles to the hotel workers.

In short order, Local 11 came to represent some 50 workers in that industry. It didn't come easy, though. The boss clearly did not want the PPWC certified in his hotel. Vince Doyle, a past president of Local 11, tells of a severe beating put on a male employee of the hotel. The manager's son held the employee while the boss himself applied the fists. The female workers were all warned of imminent firings if they changed unions. Women wearing PPWC buttons or such were ordered to remove the same. Refusal brought a quick hand that ripped the alleged offensive material from its chosen parking spot. In spite of the tactics or because of them, the PPWC won the vote, held on February 24, 1976, hands down.

The new certification marked a decided shift in the organizing arena for the PPWC. This was the first time an other-than-wood certification had been applied

for by the PPWC. Local 5 converting locals were not necessarily wood industries, but they all were connected in some way. The Chalet, of course, was in the hospitality industry.

Local 28, the charter number granted to the Pinette and Therrien (P&T) saw mill in Williams Lake, BC, was again the centre of much activity in 1976. Shewaga and Snow were very busy with a group that was determined to become PPWC. As in Houston a few years before, the IWA flooded the area with business agents and, to the extent that they could, carried on a campaign of terror. The proof seemed to be in the pudding, however, as Shewaga had over 70 signed up by early '77. The IWA then reverted to a finer practice. They acknowledged that service, perhaps, was lacking, as the area was served by the Quesnel group. They proposed the formation of a new IWA local in Williams Lake, thus providing first-rate representation to the P&T employees. This appeared to placate the majority of P&T employees as, when the vote finally came in April of '77, the IWA won in a very close vote.

Success is not always measured by wins. Upholding the greater whole is also of prime importance. The PPWC has always believed the cause of unionism comes first. When approached by the shop floor workers in any type of employment, union or not, the PPWC will listen. In a unionized work setting, if the Canadian union becomes the prod needed to motivate better representation of the workers by their certified union, then so be that. True, the PPWC has raided other unions and been successful in many cases in the past. Just as often, perhaps, the raid has not achieved new members for the PPWC. However, what it has done is alerted the other union of a particular problem.

More and more unions are moving towards the PPWC model of unionism. This model, called a variety of names but essentially bottom-up unionism, is not achieved with ease. It requires a solid in-plant core centred around a strong shop steward group that brings the union to work every day.

Most unions that exist in the province of BC and in Canada as a whole feature business unionism with full-time, permanent business representatives. These reps have no real affinity for the affairs of the particular plant or workplace they are representing. Thus, they represent the central union itself. Their allegiance is with the central. Their determination is to settle disputes with the least possible collateral damage and lowest cost. Thus, we often hear of the man with the black bag appearing at the boss' door, coming to an agreement, and leaving without even talking to the workers certified there.

Success, then, in the eyes of the PPWC is based on the concept that the worker is entitled to the union of his/her choice. A lost vote means the workers chose the other organization but remained union, something less than desired but something of value nonetheless.

## CHAPTER 35

### LOCAL 5 FACES CPU THREATS

In the beginning, you saw the importance of the certification at Martin Paper Co. There, Ray Koob delivered the 100-plus workers virtually 100 per cent into Local 5 of the PPWC. Martin Paper was the significant factor in Local 5's emergence.

Thirteen years down the road Martin Paper had been changed somewhat. It had, in that time, changed hands first to the Powell River Co., then to Bloedel Powell River and, finally, Macmillan Bloedel and Powell River Co. In 1976, the box plant, as it was commonly known, appeared headed in new directions.

Ray, along with Bill Staples, among others, decided that in order to best represent the members within the box, a new local was needed, a local at the box itself. Local 16 remained an enigma to Ray. As the Edmonton local in the early 1970s, its memory was bittersweet. Local 16 became the new PPWC certified local at the box plant. The first president was Bill Staples, with Ray Koob as the NEB rep and plant committee chair.

Local 5, already a diverse and difficult local, difficult by way of servicing, lost a sizable portion of its membership, to say nothing about its loss of several activists, Koob and Staples to name but two. Sharon Lambert emerged as the new president of Local 5 and immediately was faced with trouble brewing, trouble with a familiar face.

The CPU, the recently-reconstructed UPIU/International, was raiding Local 5. CPU Local 433 business agent Gideon Diekman, in a show of force, had recently been successful in raiding away a Local 5 certification at Pioneer Envelopes. With this notch on his gun belt, Diekman drew his line in the sand. He vowed that he would pick off Local 5 certifications one at a time until all who had left Local 433 years before were all back in the CPU ranks, joint caucus be damned.

The caucus begun in 1973 by the pulp and paper wage committee reps continued in '75 and was sitting in session, planning the '77 wage agenda, as Diekman spoke.

Sharon believed it rather odd that we could be friends in one venue while we were at war in another. In a *Leaflet* article, Sharon accused Diekman of shoddy tactics, one example being his assertion that some contracts bargained by Local 5 were, in fact, illegal, and he (Diekman) could reopen and renegotiate corrections. This, of course, would benefit the members in question. Sharon assured this was not true but also pointed out that people believe what they hear, especially from one in a leadership role.

Not everyone agreed that the raid was, in fact, such. One writer pointed out that our structure provided the opportunity to belong to the union of your choice. Local 5, in his opinion, had to look inward.

Whatever else happened, and this is just speculation, the raiding calls tapered off. Perhaps the CPU hierarchy, seeing the potential dismantling of the joint wage caucus, sent the word out. Although Sharon's letter may have not been well received by all, it seemed to work, nonetheless. Diekman, for a spell, at least, ceased pursuing Local 5's certifications.

An indication of the Local 5 workload, as reported by Frank Jennings in late '77, tells of bargaining 20 new wage agreements in 15 months, work in anyone's opinion.

By early '78, a number of changes had occurred within Local 5. To quote Local 5's new business agent, Greg Hall, "Local 5 is back on track." Greg should know, as he was the one most responsible for bargaining all those agreements. Greg was also pleased to welcome Howard Sullivan as the new president of the local. "Sully," says Greg, "brings much experience back to the fold."

The joint caucus stayed together. The 1977 agreement was bargained by a combined group. Under federally-imposed wage controls, the '77 negotiations were less than spectacular.

## **CHAPTER 36**

### **PPWC GROWS OUT OF THE FORESTS**

Essentially, this story is about tracking the locals through their formation and the circumstances surrounding that time.

Local 6, the Port Mellon designation of long ago, came back to life in September 1978. The workers at the Gold River Chalet decided they wanted separation from Local 11. Upon joining the PPWC, this had been offered. At the time, they felt the need of assistance as the pulp local might provide. Now, however, the time had come to stand alone. Local 6, thus, was welcomed into the PPWC.

Local 7 resurfaced in 1978 as well. Local 7, designated to Campbell River in an earlier time, failed to materialize, thus setting the stage for a new sawmill local in Nanaimo. In 1973, when Local 8, led by Tellier and Shewaga, raided three IWA sawmill locals, they set up a unit called the sawmill group. While the mills were part of Local 8, they had their own general meetings and their own executive. They functioned, essentially, as an equal group within a group. The understanding was always there that if any or all decided to form their own local they certain-



ly could. By 1978, the Mayo sawmill workers decided they would function better as their own local. A vote upheld the decision, and Local 7 became a reality.

Locals 1 through Local 25 have been accounted for. Again, a bit of diversion is important at this time before turning to the last two PPWC locals.

Except for Local 6, which was a hotel, bar, restaurant local in Gold River, all other PPWC locals were, essentially, tied to the forest industry in some way. Local 6, while not a primary industry local, still found its labour totally dependent on the Gold River pulp mill and the surrounding lumber industry.

The PPWC leadership viewed Local 5 with a different eye. Most units certified were in some way connected to wood or the secondary manufacturing of wood products. Any that were not were welcomed to the fold as an aid to Local 5 and its drive to become the prominent local in converters in lower mainland BC.

As far back as '68, when Local 8 certified the Blue Bird sawmill in Ladysmith, the battle over pure pulp and paper versus sawmills and such was being waged. Blue Bird was an IWA certification. Raiding the IWA was not what some PPWC executives wanted to do.

Writing at the time, Orville Braaten clearly voiced his disapproval. He was opposed to raiding what he considered somewhat friendly folks, along with his desire to keep the union from being watered down with various and sundry certifications. One can speculate, but it looks like Angus Macphee, to a degree, supported this in his writings. That could be an incorrect assumption, but some of his writing seems to support Orville in some way. As to where Mullin, Cox, Ginn, and others were on the issue, one can only guess. Shewaga and Wickham clearly were on side with raiding and expanding the union to any industrial work site, as they were the ones conducting the raids.

The issue, again, further raised its head in Kitimat, when a run at the Alcan smelter occurred. Clearly, Shewaga and his supporters, such as Garreau from Local 9, wanted to form Alcan Local 22. As clearly, others, led by Macphee and Ginn, wanted to see the birth of a new Canadian union in smelters, thus the birth of the Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers (CASAW).

## **CHAPTER 37**

### **“SCOURGE OF THE EARTH” JOINS PPWC**

The last two PPWC locals, 26 and 29, are completely different. Both are colleges. One was CUPE, and one was AUCE. Both are public workers, as opposed to all other PPWC members being private industry workers.

The move to the PPWC by both these locals is similar in nature to the formation of the PPWC in 1963.

As unions formed in the public sector of the province, a union called the Association of University and College employees (AUCE) was dominant. AUCE became certified at Selkirk College early in its existence.

The arrival of a new Canadian union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), opened as a new day in public sector unionism. CUPE, boasting a democratic constitution, an adherence to membership wishes and, of course, the Canadiana thing brought a campaign of raiding to the province. Every AUCE local was systematically raided and captured. In little time AUCE disappeared. CUPE held the day.

CUPE Local 1341 was certified at Selkirk College in Castlegar. In due time, Rosemont, a vocational college in Nelson, was added to the Castlegar College, this done under the direction of the provincial NDP government. Meanwhile, again in Nelson, a Catholic university called Notre Dame University was closing, its assets being transferred to a new educational outlet called David Thompson University Centre (DTUC). This unit, also under government decree, became part of Selkirk CUPE Local 1341. Folding all these organizations in to one took some doing, especially since Selkirk was CUPE, DTUC was AUCE, and Rosemont was BCGEU. The BC Government Employees' Union was another new union in public works that arose out of BC rank and file unionism.

The ensuing few years, mid to late '70s, brought much discord to the assembled group. One of the stickier items was province-wide bargaining, an imposition, again, of the provincial government. The members of CUPE Local 1341 were convinced that local items would never again be addressed. The power of bargaining already in the hands of the CUPE staff reps would become irreversibly more so. Truth was that, while CUPE had a reasonably democratic constitution, at least for their locals, the issue of staff reps and the power they wielded was kept in a vacuum.

The members of CUPE Local 1341 agitated. They struck, they rebelled and, in time, they won. Province-wide bargaining was abandoned.

In the meantime, however, they were looked upon as the scourge of the earth. Mickey Kinikan remembers being in Vancouver at meetings with other CUPE locals. The others would not talk to them or even sit at the same table with them. Mickey felt not overly bad about this because he felt he could say whatever he wanted to. There was no reason to fear hurting anyone's feelings.

In time, a fellow Local 1341 executive member called Roger Cristofoli discovered that Castlegar was home to another Canadian union, the PPWC. He learned that

native son and staunch PPWC activist Jim Sloan was a leader at the National level in Vancouver.

On their next CUPE paid trip to the coast, Cristofoli set up a meeting with Jim. The PPWC was leery, to say the least. Jim left the meeting with this promise: if his fellow activists supported the certification of colleges, he would be there to help it happen.

Within a week Jim was back with an answer: go for it. He passed out cards and receipt books for the collected \$5. The National issued charter no. 26 to the new, aspiring group. The sign-up took about two months, as another fellow member Rod Retzlaff remembers. Rod became active in the drive to certify Local 26, and his activity continues today.

CUPE quickly placed Local 1341 in receivership. Their staff reps came and confiscated the files and office equipment. Twenty thousand dollars in the bank also went with CUPE. Mickey and Rod believe this move helped them somewhat as several members were quite upset by this action.

The vote was held. Local 26 won by a close but comfortable majority: 55 to 44. Local 26 took its place among the other PPWC locals.

Perhaps what most impressed Mickey and Rod was the local autonomy issue where the local made its own decisions on everything. No fancy men in three-piece suits and lots of rings coming to the local to bargain your agreement while you waited in the halls.

Coupled with that, the NEB was impressive, as nothing was hidden in this union. If there was something you didn't like, every three months you could clear the air with all involved at a table where you had equal say with 1,000 to 1,200 member locals. They were impressed. Sure, sometimes they didn't win the day with their debate, for example, a number of pilot projects they seemed to want. Clearly, the PPWC was a shop floor union. However, Local 26 soon discovered that pilot projects were another name for bureaucratic waste of time, pork chopper things that netted no gain (pork chopper is a derogatory term used in connection with full-time, union-paid union activists).

Mickey Kinakin summed up the PPWC as follows:

*Well, we began the sign-up, and we had a lot of explaining to do, mostly like what are we doing in a pulp local. It was hard for people to understand. The reason, of course, is because of the constitution and what it says about the rights of workers, the whole structure.*

*Later, during my NEB days, it's funny how this silly, stupid argument kept coming up in the PPWC: we are not growing; our struc-*

*ture isn't getting us anything. Well, there is nothing wrong with being a small, independent union that respects the rights of workers. There is nothing wrong with not signing up thousands of people every year. What's important is the fact that you have been true to the principles of the people who formed your organization. That's what's important. And, you know, for those of us who have seen the strangulation of a control staff, boy oh boy, do you ever appreciate being a member of the PPWC. The PPWC has never sent anyone out there to negotiate behind your back.*

*While the PPWC may lack some of the support things the business unions have, it's those very support things that can begin to run your local. Once you're out of step, God help you. You then discover that the staff reps have much more in common with the personnel manager than they do with the custodian and the clerk.*

As aforementioned, Local 25's Dave Pritchard conducted interviews throughout the PPWC, seeking historical data. Mickey Kinakin and Rod Retzlaff were interviewed by Dave. The above material is from the interview. There is a small interchange between Dave and Mickey that warrants repeating here, as it is a very defining aspect of this union. They are discussing local autonomy.

Dave: "Autonomy is a wonderful thing. It's a beautiful concept. It's something to be cherished and enjoyed, but at the same time it imposes a tremendous amount of responsibility on those enjoying it."

Mickey: "Oh, certainly, it's a debate we have over and over again. But along with the scariness of autonomy, it's really walking on the ramparts of human existence, actually, because you make your own choice. You may make the wrong choice. That is okay. What is wrong is when you don't have the right to make the choice in the first place."

On October 8, 1981, Local 26 became the first public employee local certified to the PPWC.

## **CHAPTER 38**

### **PENSIONS PROTECT IWA CERTIFICATIONS**

On the heels of success in Castlegar with Local 26 came news that Local 27 charter had been assigned to the Cariboo Pulp mill in Quesnel. This was an existing CPU certification, so raid was the order of the day. With about 350 employees, Local 27 would become a very viable local. Ross McDonald, National first vice-president, claimed all was well in early '82.

Along with Cariboo Pulp, the Pacific Forest Products sawmill in Ladysmith (Saltair) was also applied for. Saltair was also an existing certification (IWA). The vote, as ordered by the LRB, was held in both places. Although close, the PPWC lost.

In Quesnel, the raiding union pulled all the stops. No less than six organizers were on site. Some who were in a position of lead at the time have gone on to other adventures in other fields of endeavour. However, Bob Henderson and Harvey Budarick were active at the time in PPWC affairs.

Proper invites were also sent out to Local 27 hopefuls. Two members attended the 1982 convention in Prince Rupert. The Local 27 hockey team was invited and played in the annual PPWC hockey tournament in Prince George. Locals attending from south of Quesnel and travelling by bus were asked to show the flag as they passed through the town. Buses had large PPWC banners attached to their sides as they not only drove through but also toured the mill site. Nonetheless, a loss is a loss, this one likely helped along by indecision in the industry. Many layoffs were occurring at the time.

In Ladysmith, for the first time the pension issue became a fatal factor to the PPWC attempts at raiding IWA sawmills in FIR/IWA pension plan. While the pulp union had an equal or better pension plan, the issue of portability, actually the lack of it, arose. Years accumulated in either plan were not transferable to the other. Thus, with eight-year vesting at the time, no one was willing to give up all those years. The pension plan thus negotiated became the IWA's protection plan, as in hard to raid, down through the years.

## **CHAPTER 39**

### **AUTONOMY WINS THE DAY AT CNC**

Local 29, with its workplace the College of New Caledonia, chartered on May 16, 1982, and certified on July 8, 1982, is the last charter issued and certified by the PPWC. Other bargaining units have joined the PPWC since then. They, however, became members of existing certifications.

Local 29 evolved from AUCE Local 5, which in turn had evolved from the BC Government Employees' Association, forerunner to the BCGEU. Dissatisfaction with AUCE was rampant. The PPWC, with two locals in the area, was approached. The NEB, with Local 26 already under their belt, found it quite easy to say, "go for it".

Wilf Comeau, a Local 29 stalwart, places Lauma Avens and Wilf Bellmond at the helm. To these, the name Dianne Kauffman can be added, as she, along with Bellmond, attended the June '82 NEB as a guest from Local 29 prior to certifica-

tion. Wilf Comeau says the BCGEU tried in '82 as well, but they were rejected. Their constitution was viewed as just more of the same.

With help from Local 9's Len Shankel, supported by First Vice-President Ross McDonald and Second Vice-President Jim Sloan, Local 29 was certified by the LRB on July 8, 1982. Wilfred Bellmond was the first president.

In 1984 Michael Sutherland became president. He also was active on the initial sign-up. Michael just happens to be president of Local 29 today, November 16, 2001.

While other locals were given charters by the PPWC, none made it through the rigours of certification, notably Local 30 and Local 32.

Local 30 was issued to the workers of the British Columbia Forest Products Hammond sawmill. After a lengthy sign-up campaign, one that showed promise, the vote again reflected the dilemma the PPWC faced in respect to the new pension plan in the organizing arena. Local 30 slipped away. A willing group of potential PPWC members couldn't stare down years of pension credits.

Local 32 was granted as charter number to the civic employees in Kamloops. They were then members of CUPE Local 900. Apparently, early CUPE was much committed to local autonomy: locals ran their own affairs. Local 900 Kamloops, for example, had a very healthy bank account, a fact they were quite proud of. Some time in late '81 CUPE National restructured. They created or empowered a large body of staff reps. The locals were divvied up. Local autonomy fell by the wayside. Those accustomed to ruling their own turf were introduced to business unionism. Local 900 Kamloops objected. Local 32 was offered. CUPE National placed the local in receivership, seized the local's assets, and appointed a new executive. In the face of all this, Local 32 fell by the wayside as well.

## **CHAPTER 40**

### **RETIREMENT MARKS THE END OF AN ERA**

A significant event occurred in 1982 with the retirement of Angus Macphee. Angus, along with Orville Braaten, was certainly the early political arm of the PPWC. While Koob, Smith, Cox, and Craig, along with Angus, represented the original five locals, Angus more than anyone expressed the early ideology of the PPWC. His retirement, thus, was seen as a passing of some importance to this union in particular and to Canadian unionism in general. In respect of Angus' retirement, the 20th PPWC convention was held in Prince Rupert, where he presided for the final time as chairman.

The following is by Peter Evans, Local 3 activist, in praise of Angus. It is reprinted here from the minutes of the 20th convention.

*M/S/C P. Evans, R. McDonald*

*Motion to incorporate the following letter by Peter Evans into the minutes of the 20th Annual Convention.*

*Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that beget us!*

*Angus Macphee is one of the founding fathers of the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada.*

*The Detroit Convention was the turning point when the corrupt International Pulp Sulphite Union finally sewered itself into the Detroit River and eventually over the International Falls. So much for geographic certifications. I have suffered through many famines at National Executive Board Meetings and Conventions with Angus Macphee in the chair, denied a vote – that is, to adjourn for lunch.*

*One of Angus' saving graces is that after I have, eventually, escaped to eat my meagre dinner, I can rely on Angus to be hungry and ready for supper later on, albeit one or two in the morning. I guess what I am saying is that, unlike some of my Brothers and Sisters present here, Angus Macphee is never out to lunch. He is always there when you need him. He has sacrificed everything for our organization. He is a man for all raiding seasons! Having taken a few pictures in my time, I have to state that Angus is one of the longest exposures my camera has ever taken. Seriously now – many hours of debate and negotiations could have been avoided time and time again by Wage Caucuses, Management, Convention and my own reticence to speak, if we had listened to what Angus said. For the records will invariably show that Angus already had the solution spelled out.*

*Angus' vision is not hindsight. He tells us to look forward and outward! To Get Involved.*

*Peter Evans.*

Angus retired a few months later. Jim Sloan replaced him as president. In many respects, this marked an end to the early history of the PPWC and, in every respect, it marks the end of this story, except for one last comment or two.

## CHAPTER 41

## VELMA KEEPS IT TOGETHER AT THE OFFICE

No story of the PPWC can ever be told without highlighting Velma Koob. Velma defines the PPWC in many respects: total commitment, innovative, secure in her ability, and dedicated.

Velma was the first employee of this National Union. She began as virtually office everything in 1964. She remembers Lloyd Craig being president, but Lloyd seldom came to Vancouver. He worked in Castlegar. The secretary-treasurer, Mitch Chernoff, also worked and lived in Castlegar. Mostly, communication came via the mails. Mitch would do all his work at home in long hand, and Velma would carry out the final piecing together.

She remembers the first office as shoebox size with two desks, two chairs, one typewriter, and lots of cardboard boxes for files. She tells of Angus as the only full-timer. He was first vice-president charged with organizing and very busy sometimes with five organizing drives going on at once. One of the more complicated duties she had was tracking down Angus' personal belongings—coat, watch, briefcase, etc.—that he habitually left in some hotel room in Prince Rupert or Prince George or Kamloops or Cranbrook.

Another duty she recalls was buying a kettle and making tea for the officers or members who dropped in from time to time. She also acted as liaison between Angus and Orville, who feuded and went on “I am not talking to him” snits from time to time. Velma would deliver notes to each from the other, or she would pass on more urgent messages, such as, “Tell him I’m on my way to the Island.”

Velma was the office stalwart who made sure the business of the union was done. She was also the den mother who made sure her guys buttoned up their overcoats and wore their Billy boots on rainy days. After all is said and done, Velma ranks as important as anyone else in the organization and, thus, all is said and done.

Jim White