

The McMaster Programme has already introduced some new approaches to labour education in the Hamilton-Wentworth region. The certificate courses, now in their second year, were developed jointly with a committee representing the Hamilton and District Labour Council. In collaboration with the labour councils in Brantford and Oakville, the courses are now being extended to serve those communities. The certificate courses are open not only to union members but to anyone seeking a deeper understanding and knowledge of the labour movement, and of the social, economic and political conditions affecting labour.

Specially-designed seminars have been presented for the full-time officers and staff of the United Steelworkers of America and the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Similar staff development seminars are being planned for other unions. Also, initiatives are under way to develop continuing educational programmes for union staff specialists in labour education, occupational health, and other fields.

The development of a labour archives, essential to such a programme, has made a good start with the involvement and support of unions and the community. The historical records of the United Steelworkers, Local 1005, Service Employees' Union Local 204, and the Hamilton and District Labour Council have already been acquired, and other collections are expected to be contributed soon. The archival collections of union records will provide a needed stimulus to research in Canadian labour history. McMaster's labour archives will be available not only to advanced scholars, but also to union members and others interested in the study of labour history.

## *Scottish Labour Records Project*

by IAN MACDOUGALL

The pending publication of a catalogue of labour records in Scotland marks the culmination of a systematic attempt during the past few years to trace surviving material and to encourage its preservation by deposit in public or university libraries.

The project was begun more than a decade ago by the Scottish Labour History Society, a scholarly society which enjoys considerable moral and financial support from labour organizations. The Society endeavoured to establish as precisely as it could records of trade unionism, co-operative organizations, friendly societies and labour political movements—whether Scots or otherwise—that survived in Scotland, and also those records of Scots working class movements preserved outside the country.

At that time few minutes, reports, journals, collections of correspondence, or other records of labour movements were preserved in public or university libraries in Scotland. The National Library of Scotland did not even possess the annual reports of the Scottish Trades Union Congress (founded in 1897) and so far as was known, the minutes of only three trade unions and trades councils were preserved in libraries. Lack of knowledge of what did survive, together with the ostensible inaccessibility of some of those that were known or believed to be in private hands, no doubt explained the then comparative paucity of scholarly studies of Scots labour history.

After a preliminary year of searching and listing by a handful of its more active members, the Scottish Labour History Society produced in 1965 a crude handlist of records with their locations. This was well received and from that point enough financial support was secured from the Scottish Trades Unions Congress (TUC) and other labour and co-operative organizations, the University of Strathclyde (which established a Research Fellowship), and the Social Science Research Council, to enable the project to be conducted much more systematically and on a full-time basis.

The problem of securing access to the offices of trade unions, co-operative societies and labour political organizations in order to check and list their records proved to be scarcely a problem at all once the Scottish TUC, the Co-operative Union (Scottish Section), and the Scottish Council of the Labour Party had urged their affiliated organizations to support the project. Moreover, the addition to the Scottish Labour History Society's letterhead of the names of some sixty personal patrons of the project, including general secretaries of unions, local councillors, leading co-operators, Members of Parliament, and well-known academics no doubt encouraged local branch or constituency officials to permit the listing of their records.

Circularization of the five thousand or so labour, co-operative and trade union organizations in Scotland was carried out twice between 1963 and 1969. In some cases applications to check records were made tirelessly until permission was granted. Exhibitions of working class history were held on several occasions both to publicize the project and if possible to draw in surviving local records. One such exhibition, for example, was held at the 1966 Scottish Trades Union Congress, attended by hundreds of delegates from all over the country. After the records in local offices were listed, the organization concerned was invited to deposit them for permanent safe-keeping in a suitable public or university library. So far as possible it was arranged that records be deposited in the town or county or region to which they belonged, but in some cases depositors preferred a central repository such as the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, or, as

was the case with some co-operative societies, the strong-room in Glasgow of the then Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, now amalgamated with the English Society.

The initial expectation that organizations would be reluctant to part with their records proved unfounded. They were shown the advantage of depositing records no longer needed for current administration but which were taking up valuable office space. Care was taken to propose that records only up to, say, 1939 or 1945 or 1950 be deposited, to allay fears that hostile persons or groups might examine the records for recent controversial features. In addition, it was arranged that the basis of deposit be not outright donation to the library but permanent loan. Therefore, ownership resided with the donating organization which could withdraw the records temporarily at any time for use in projects such as the compilation of an official history. Finally, it was provided that the library give a full receipt-list for all records deposited. The handful of depositing organizations insisting that any researcher who wished to see their records be referred first to them for permission were persuaded after a year or two that such precautions were unnecessary, permitting the repositories concerned to allow *bona fide* researchers full access.

On the basis of such arrangements, considerable deposits of labour records were made in public or university libraries in Scotland from about 1964 onward. By the early 1970s about three hundred organizations and fifty private individuals had been persuaded to deposit material in approximately forty libraries. By far the most extensive deposits were made in four libraries, chosen because they were located in one of the four main cities of Scotland: the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, the Mitchell Public Reference Library in Glasgow, Dundee Public Library, and Aberdeen University Library. The National Library received in those years more than one hundred separate deposits of manuscript material alone.

Most records deposited were generally of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but some were older. Trade union records deposited included those of the Glasgow Typographical Society which ran (not without some gaps) from 1817 onward and those of the Edinburgh Journeymen Bookbinders which ran without any gaps from 1822 to 1950. A reasonably extensive and representative deposit of co-operative records, including those of the earliest co-operative store in Britain, at Fenwick in Ayrshire, dating from 1761 to 1873, was also secured. Labour political records appeared not to have survived so extensively but among those deposited, either in original form or on microfilm, were the minutes of the Scottish Workers' Representative Committee, 1900-07.

A good deal of material was also deposited by private persons who had been active in working class movements or were relatives of activists. Mrs.

Mabel M. Leatham Aiken of Charleswood, Winnipeg, for example, presented to the Library of Aberdeen University a considerable collection of letters and papers of her father, James Leatham, active in labour movements in Scotland between about 1890 and the 1939-45 War.

It is believed that the bulk of surviving labour records in Scotland have now been traced and most of them deposited in libraries. Unfortunately it was not generally possible to persuade the organizations to adopt a policy of regular deposits of records at intervals of five or ten years in perpetuity, but the Scottish Trades Union Congress did agree to adopt such a procedure for its own minutes and other records.

All the records traced and listed during the past decade or so, together with relevant printed materials already held by public or university libraries in Scotland, will therefore compose the forthcoming catalogue of labour records surviving in Scotland and of Scots records surviving outside Scotland.

✓ *a note to archives, libraries and historical societies*

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