In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of History

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date September 21, 1967.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine the effects of the Great Depression on the rural Cowichan Valley district of Vancouver Island. During the period under consideration the Cowichan area contained a small city which was surrounded by an area of expanding rural settlement, which was in turn encompassed by a vast, heavily timbered hinterland. As a result, it has been possible to view the consequences of the depression on a variety of types of people, and on two of the province's principal economic concerns, namely agriculture and lumbering.

The introductory section of the paper gives a brief review of the valley's economic, political and social background from 1850 to 1912. It is contained in the thesis in order to familiarize the reader with the Cowichan region and some of its traditional problems and biases. Chapter I, "The People: a Builder", is a chronological investigation of the political, social and economic developments which took place in the 1920's decade, and is in essence a preparatory chapter, giving pertinent background material to the actual study of the depression. It reveals the slow currents of change which took place in the years following World War I. Many of the problems experienced during the reconstruction period and throughout the post-war depression, particularly in the field of provincial politics, will be seen to fade in importance during the prosperous years toward the end of the decade, only to re-emerge even more forcefully during the thirties. This is
particularly true with regard to political disaffections expressed by the farmers of the community. This chapter also reveals the growing importance to the valley's economy of the local lumber industry. Before World War I agriculture was regarded as Cowichan's basic source of income, but by 1929 the forest industry was employing many hundreds of men and distributing thousands of dollars annually in the valley. The first chapter concludes with a review of circumstances in Cowichan as they stood in 1929. The citizens of the district could look back over a decade of ever-increasing prosperity, and look forward to the future with a sense of unbounded optimism.

From the quantities of raw material available in the local newspaper, church records, municipal minutes, local histories and government publications, the story of the Winter Years in Cowichan has been gathered. Three years of unemployment, deprivation and suffering, the likes of which had never before been experienced in the valley, were ushered in with the collapse of British Columbia's lumber industry early in 1930. Chapter two gives witness to the gradual deterioration of community life which took place between 1930 and 1934, in spite of the continued efforts of individuals, civic organizations, and the local municipal governments to meet the needs of the ever-increasing number of unemployed.

Chapter three relates the story of Cowichan's struggle to throw off the mantle of the Winter Years and to regain the prosperity which the community had enjoyed in 1929. The key to this recovery was discovered in 1934 with the establishment of new
world markets for British Columbia's lumber trade. Within a matter of weeks the problems of the depression seemed to belong to the past as the majority of the valley's population began to reap the benefits of the renewed harvest of forest products. It was during this period of recovery, however, that the most forceful reactions were registered in Cowichan against the preceding years of misery and suffering. The old-line political parties were accused of gross inadequacies as the traditionally Conservative Cowichan-Newcastle riding elected a new provincial representative whose platform was based solely on the tenets of the Oxford Group.

Unrest was also prevalent among many of the young men who were employed in the local logging camps. They felt that a certain degree of responsibility for the depression lay with the capitalistic "boss-loggers". The men were encouraged in these beliefs by the machinations of a group of militant Communists who had gained control of the province's lumbering and longshoremen's unions. For three consecutive years these men threatened Cowichan's economic recovery by taking the loggers and the longshoremen out on strike in an effort to disrupt production in British Columbia's primary industry. It was only with the settlement of the last of these labour problems in 1936, that the Cowichan area threw off the last vestiges of the depression.

The general conclusions reached in this study indicate that while the depression in Cowichan was relatively short-lived, and was not as severe as that experienced in other parts of the province, it did have some very decisive effects. Politically it resulted in a definite swing from right to left, as Cowichan went
into the depression a traditionally Conservative riding and emerged supporting the C.C.F. party. Economically, the depression saw the virtual collapse of Cowichan's agricultural economy, while the position of the lumber industry was greatly strengthened. Socially, the depression witnessed many changes. The effect of years of deprivation and uncertainty on the individual was traumatic. For the community as a whole the early 1930's had been a severe test, but in the long run they had resulted in a stronger sense of understanding and solidarity among the varied groups which were included in the valley's population.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I: The People: a Builder</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II: Hope: a Dream Out Of Time</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III: The People: a Builder Again</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Population Changes</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Marriage and Birth Rates</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: Divorce Rate</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D: Quantity of Fruits and Vegetables by Express</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E: Net Liquor Sales</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F: Provincial Elections, 1928 – 1937</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vii

LIST OF FIGURES OR ILLUSTRATIONS

Map of the Cowichan Valley  page 2a
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to acknowledge the kind assistance of Doctor Margaret Prang in the preparation of this thesis. I am also indebted to Mr. Will Dobson and the staff of the Cowichan Leader for their cooperation in giving me access to their files. To my wife, I express my thanks for her patience and understanding through what has been a long, hot, "working summer".
"The people learn, unlearn, learn, 
a builder, a wrecker, a builder again,..."

"'Precisely who and what is the people?'"

"Hope is a tattered flag and a dream out of time."

Hope is an echo, hope ties itself yonder, yonder."

"In the darkness with a great bundle of grief 
the people march.

In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars for 
keeps, the people march: 
'Where to? what next?'"

Carl Sandburg, The People, Yes, 
New York; Harcourt, Bruce, 1936.
The Cowichan Valley is located about thirty miles from the southern extremity of Vancouver Island. Running in a north-westerly direction, cutting diagonally across the Island, it is surrounded by rugged, mountainous terrain. These mountains form an almost impassable barrier toward the north and the south, and while they afford a good deal of natural protection from the adverse climatic conditions experienced elsewhere on the coast, they also effectively isolate the valley from the remainder of Vancouver Island.

In the native dialect the name "Cowichan" means "Land Warmed by the Sun". Indeed, the valley is said to have the most salubrious climate in all of Canada. Temperatures are moderate in winter, and rarely exceed ninety degrees farenheit in the summer. Moisture-laden winds sweep in through the low divides separating the north-west end of the valley from the Pacific Ocean. These winds release the greater part of their rains as they reach the coastal belt of mountains. The annual precipitation in the valley ranges from thirty inches in the south-east to seventy inches in the north-west. This moisture, coupled with the mild, even temperature caused by the Japan current, creates an environment which has produced one of the most important forest regions in the province. The towering Douglas-fir is the prevalent species, but the swampler areas in the valley are scattered with stands of cedar, hemlock, and balsam.
The well-watered valley is drained by two principal rivers. The Koksilah, which runs placidly through the low-lands in the southern portion of the valley, has its beginnings in the hills near Shawnigan Lake from where it flows north for several miles before turning east to empty into Cowichan Bay. The Cowichan River, the larger of the two, finds its source twenty-six miles from the sea in a large, inland lake, located at the north-west end of the valley. Spilling out of Cowichan Lake, the waters swirl and leap for several miles through deep gorges and canyons, racing past walls of rock and stands of timber, toward the low-lands of the valley proper. Coming out of the hills the waters slow, and then moodily blend with the warmer tributaries from Somenos and Quamichan lakes before moving out over the "flats" toward Cowichan Bay.

The first recorded visit of a white man to the Cowichan Valley took place in 1850, six years after the Hudson's Bay Company had established Fort Victoria, thirty-five miles to the south. However, another twelve years passed before the colonial government would permit public settlement of the area. The reason for this delay may be attributed to the presence of the Cowichan Indian nation in the valley. For it was one of the largest and most feared on the Pacific Coast. Brown-skinned and stocky, with a Mongolian cast to their features, the Cowichan included all of the independent bands of Indians - the Comiaken, the Somenos, the Quamichan, and so on - who dwelt in the valley. They did not war among themselves, and they joined together for common defence or aggression against enemy tribes or alien intruders.
They were a particularly war-like tribe, and it was common for them to venture as far afield as the Fraser River and along the shores of Puget Sound, raiding and killing and taking slaves. During the early years of his administration, James Douglas, Chief Factor for the Hudson's Bay Company at Victoria, calculated that the Cowichans could muster 1,400 warriors. Another estimate, made in 1858, suggested that there were 4,000 Cowichans living in the valley.\(^1\) It is no wonder then that Douglas made a point of discouraging European settlement of the area. Insofar as the Cowichan Valley was concerned, the possibility of upsetting the unstable natives gave the Hudson's Bay Company ample excuse for ignoring their promise to the British government to encourage settlement on Vancouver Island.

However, as the romance and high adventure of the British Columbia gold-rush faded, many of the disappointed miners, who had sought gold and failed, decided to remain in the colony and become the nucleus of permanent settlement. The Cowichan Valley was one of those areas which soon gained their interest. A government survey of the region had been completed in 1860, and it was known that there were "45,000 acres of ... superior agricultural lands" waiting to be occupied.\(^2\) In addition, the Indian threat was not nearly so great as it once had been. The natives


now lived in their valley in fear of the white men's ships with their powerful guns; the white man's trading practices were disrupting the natives' primitive economy, while his liquor and disease were decimating the tribes. And if the white man's priests had belittled Indian beliefs and mocked their ancient ceremonies, they had also tempered the primitive Indian nature with a religion of peace and brotherly love.

So it was that pressure was brought to bear on the government to open the Cowichan district to general settlement. And on August 19, 1862, **H.M.S. Hecate** dropped anchor in the sheltered waters of Cowichan Bay with one hundred settlers on board. This group represented the nucleus of pioneer settlement in the Cowichan district.

Pioneer life in the Cowichan Valley was not easy. The settlers, who were eager to begin farming, fought continually against the high odds of geography and poor transportation. For many of them it would be a life-long labour to see the valley of massive trees turned slowly and painfully into farm land.

The critical factor in the community's early development was that of transportation. The agricultural potential of the valley was recognized from the first, but the primary reason for the slowness in exploitation of this potential rested on the government's failure to provide a regular and inexpensive means of transportation into the district. Indeed, for twenty-five years following the first influx of settlers into Cowichan in 1862, both the social and economic development of the area were severely handicapped by this lack of means of transportation and
communication.

The settlers in Cowichan were elated when, in 1871, they heard the terms of confederation with Canada. For one thing, the adoption of responsible government in British Columbia would mean that at last they would be able to elect their own representative to the provincial legislature; but more important, the proposed transcontinental railway was to run through the valley. No longer would they be isolated from Victoria and Nanaimo; no longer would they have to rely on the monthly steamer service as the only means of travel in and out of the valley; for now they would be connected not only to the rest of Vancouver Island, but to the whole of Canada! Here was a hitherto undreamt of opportunity for the farmers of the area. There was only one drawback to the plan, and while it appeared to be a small price to pay in 1871, it was to cause a complete cessation of growth in the Cowichan Valley for the next twelve years.

A grant to the Federal Government to help finance construction of the railway put a reserve on all unsettled lands for twenty miles on either side of the proposed line. This "give away" clamped a reserve on all of the available lands in the Cowichan Valley and until the railway was completed in 1886, no new settlers were able to purchase property in the district.

The Municipality of North Cowichan was incorporated on June 18, 1873. This second oldest rural municipality in British Columbia was formed in the belief that the settlers could handle their own affairs, particularly the task of road construction and maintenance, "far better than someone sitting in an office
in Victoria". This assumption was proven to be correct, and within a few years the roads in the valley were described as some of the best in the province. This local progress did not, however, alleviate the problem of winning a means of land communication with the rest of the Island. The government remained obdurate. A road through the mountains would not be necessary once the railway was completed. But the railway was nowhere in sight, and the Cowichan Valley was paying a heavy price for the delay. All signs of progress in the young community had disappeared as soon as the land restriction had come into effect.

However, in 1883, William Smithe, Cowichan's Member of the Legislative Assembly, became premier of the Province of British Columbia, and he quickly cleared the way for construction of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway. His "peace party" pushed through the Settlement Act of 1883, and the Walkem faction, which had previously blocked any effective movements to get the railway construction started, was discredited. "Smithe ... was competent and brought to his position the essential qualities of prudence and sound experience which were needed to guide the legislature back onto the right path."3

In the Cowichan district the removal of the restriction on the railway belt was as important as the construction of the line itself. For four years, commencing from December, 1883, the entire grant, with the exception of mineral lands, was opened for

---

settlement at the rate of one dollar per acre. It was during this four year period that Cowichan began to receive a large number of English remittance men and retired English military and civil officials who would within a few years of their arrival completely alter the social structure of the district.

The completion of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway was the turning point in the Cowichan district's early development. Gone was the uncertain reliance on the monthly steamer service, as daily trains began to run to and from Victoria and Nanaimo. No longer were the steamer ports of Cowichan Bay and Maple Bay the focal points of the community. Overnight the centre of gravity shifted toward the heartland of the valley, toward the railroad. Prior to 1886, agriculture had been the only successfully established economy in the valley, but with the completion of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo, a new era of opportunity was opened up. Small villages soon sprang up around the several railway stations in the region. Cobble Hill, Koksilah, Duncan, Somenos, and Chemainus all had stations with regular agents. However, it was Duncan's Station on its original Alderlea townsite which soon grew into something more than the usual station community. Its location made it the logical centre for the whole district, and from a small beginning Duncan grew steadily to become what might be called the "county town".

The railway saved not only Cowichan, but the whole of Vancouver Island from the "utter backwardness" of the economic

4. Audain, James, From Coalmine to Castle, Pageant Press, New York, 1955, p.80
depression into which it had been slipping, and made possible the development of the Island's rich mineral, agricultural, and lumbering potentials. The stimulated population growth which began during the last decade of the nineteenth century soon created an enlarged home market for agricultural produce, and for the first time Cowichan's farmers found it possible to compete with American agricultural importations.

Logging, the only other industry which had been attempted in the pre-railway era, had suffered from many of the same problems as agriculture. The lack of a cheap and readily available means of transportation had made the cost of production almost prohibitive, while the need of a continuing, large, stable market had discouraged investment in the industry. With the completion of the railway, however, a new interest in lumbering was stimulated. The Canadian Pacific Railway opened the way to the vast market on the Canadian Prairies, while the Panama Canal simultaneously made the American seaboard and Eastern Canadian markets available.

With buoyant optimism and unbounded confidence the people of Cowichan rallied to exploit the new opportunities for progress. Rapidly the last vestiges of the earlier pioneer period were erased. A mining boom in the Mount Sicker region during the opening years of the twentieth century gave rise to still more prosperous times and an ever increasing population. Simultaneously, the advent of the automobile augmented the expansion of rural settlement in the valley, and enhanced the position of Duncan as community centre.
By 1912, Duncan had a population of 1,500 and was taking on all the signs of a thriving, young city. An ever increasing number of businesses supplied the needs of the "upper-class" British, as well as those of the farmer-settlers, the miners, and the ever increasing number of loggers who came to town each pay-day with their pockets full of cash. On March 4, 1912, the City of Duncan received its letters patent and the new council, headed by Mayor Kenneth Duncan, began to remedy those hardships which the town had experienced under the larger rural, North Cowichan municipality.

Expansion continued over the next two years and was only slowed with the outbreak of the First World War.

The prosperous, fun-filled days came to an end for Cowichan in August, 1914. This valley, so far removed from the battle lines, was, perhaps closer in spirit to the conflict than any other part of Canada. Rapidly the young, and not-so-very-young men joined the Services, and before the war was over Cowichan claimed the highest percentage of enlistments of any community in the country.

5.

Chapter I

THE PEOPLE: A BUILDER

On the evening of November 11, 1918, an elderly Cowichan resident penned the following words in his diary:

Peace declared. Heard guns, whistles and bells going about 2 o'clock this morning. Great celebration in Duncan today ... The Prohibitionists ought to be hung. Influenza epidemic no matter.

For the first time in four years the people of Cowichan were aware of peace. With a sense of pardonable pride in their magnificent war effort the citizens of the area declared the day a public holiday. Far into the next night the celebrations continued as the streets, alight with the glare of blazing torches, echoed with the explosion of fireworks and the laughter of happy, relieved people. At the height of the festivities, a mock-trial was held on the steps of city hall, and Judge Maitland-Dougall, whose two sons had died in the trenches of Europe, pronounced to six hundred cheering citizens that the Kaiser should be hanged by the neck and burned at the stake.2.

It is no wonder that feelings ran so high in Cowichan, for as early as December, 1915, The Cowichan Leader had reported that "Practically all of our men have gone (to the war) ..." In the final reckoning, 1,066 soldiers, sailors and nurses served and of those, 157 former residents gave up their lives. The


burden of sorrow had been heavy to bear.

However the war was now over and there were many pressing problems to be dealt with at home. Already hundreds of the veterans were returning and they must be fitted into peace-time occupations. The entire community was being ravaged by a fierce attack of Asiatic influenza; schools were forced to close, church services were cancelled and public meetings of any sort were strictly forbidden by the local health officer. And then, just two weeks after the Armistice, the Cowichan area received notice of yet another kind of war fatality. Major W. H. Hayward, who had held the Cowichan seat in the Provincial Legislature for the past eleven years, had resigned so that he might join a commission in Ottawa being organized to care for returning veterans. This necessitated a bye-election as soon as possible if Cowichan was to have leadership in its post-war reconstruction.

During his years as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, Major Hayward, a Conservative, had been a consistent supporter of Sir Richard McBride. He had maintained his seat through four provincial elections, the last of which had been held in 1916, while he was serving overseas. In 1912 he had been appointed chairman of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, and for two sessions he had been Deputy Speaker of the House. Now, with his retirement following so hard upon the conclusion of the war, an appeal was made in Cowichan "for the people to be worthy of themselves, to bury this hateful and destructive party feeling
and endeavour to secure the best man possible for the most responsible position in their gift."3. The Cowichan Provincial Unionist League was formed in an effort to have the local Liberal and Conservative representatives avoid past fights by joining together to select one local candidate.

On January 9, 1920, The Leader published a list of those needs which should be met if the Cowichan area was to successfully come through the reconstruction period. The most important general need was for the absolute elimination of patronage, for only then could an independent candidate be successful. As a means toward this end, it was felt that a committee should be formed, representative of all parties and interests in Cowichan, to advise the member. In addition, there should henceforth be fair distribution of provincial government service business between all business firms in the district.

To assist the farmers of Cowichan it was suggested that there be a reduction of taxes in unorganized districts; a reduction of rates on provincial government farm loans; a district representative devoting full time to farmers; initiation of a permanent seed-growing industry in the valley; formation of a farmers' union in every section, and amalgamation of such locals into a district union; and institution of machinery to direct, standardize and market the whole produce of the district.

Increased provision for local land settlement should be made by acquiring logged-off lands, unused Indian reserves, and other suitable properties in the valley, for settlement by desirable

3. The Cowichan Leader, December 5, 1918, p.4.
ex-soldiers and British immigrants. Adequate grants for road construction and maintenance and for a new provincial court house in Duncan were among the other proposals put forward. For the improvement of educational facilities, it was felt that a system of school consolidation was desirable so that rural scholars might enjoy equal advantages with those in the larger centres.

Two candidates came forward to contest the vacant Cowichan seat. Major E. B. Edwards, a "returned soldiers" candidate was the nominee of the Cowichan branch of the Great War Veterans' Association. His opponent, Pte. Kenneth F. Duncan, was nominated by the Cowichan Liberal Association and the Cowichan Union League.

From the first it was evident that Duncan, even though he was not yet returned from overseas, had a decided advantage over the outsider, Major Edwards. At thirty-seven years of age, Duncan was well-known in the community. His father, William C. Duncan, was one of Cowichan's earliest pioneer settlers and the founder of the City of Duncan. Kenneth had served the local farmers as an officer in the Cowichan Agricultural Society, the City as its first mayor in 1912, and the whole area as president of the local Board of Trade. Being a returned soldier himself, he was familiar with the needs of the veterans as well as being fully conversant with the conditions and requirements of the district as a whole. Running as an "independent soldier", Duncan edged out Edwards by 76 votes.  

Meanwhile, the problem of finding employment for the large numbers of returned soldiers was being solved in large part by the demands for labour from the rapidly developing lumber industry in the valley. In 1919 the orders for lumber were so heavy that the need could not be met. General expansion in the industry had made the past year the most outstanding in the history of Vancouver Island's lumber industry. One reason for this unprecedented prosperity was an order placed with the Association of Timber Exporters of British Columbia by the British Timber Controller for 70,000,000 feet of timber and ties for the British Railways. Large orders were also being received from the Canadian Prairies, Eastern Canada and American markets. Local demand was also showing decided improvement due to large building operations and to the increased requirements of the Victoria shipyards.

Several local mills were rapidly increasing their size, bringing in more modern equipment and opening new plants to try to meet the increased demand. The Shawnigan Lake Lumber Company, whose old plant had been destroyed by fire six months before, established an entirely new plant with a capacity which was increased by fifty percent. The 100,000 feet a day Genoa Bay Mill was one of the most active on the Island as it sought to keep up with orders from Eastern Canada, Britain, and South Africa. While the huge Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing Company's mill at Chemainus was setting a pace that no mill in the province

could match; using the latest machinery, they were busily turn-
ing out timbers up to 110 feet in length. In addition to these
larger mills, with their associated logging operations, there
were at least thirty other firms offering attractive employment
opportunities to the returning men.

Unfortunately, some of the Cowichan mills began to experi-
ence some difficulty in securing an adequate supply of logs dur-
ing the summer of 1919, as friction with labour in the logging
camps began to impede output. The troubles were confined for
the most part to logging camps isolated in the wilderness around
Cowiehan Lake, several of which were closed down at various times
owing to strikes. A large part of the problem stemmed from the
revitalization of the Socialist Party in British Columbia follow-
ing the war. But more particularly, the trouble stemmed from a
group of radicals who had formed the Lumber Workers' Industrial
Union, and who encouraged the loggers to strike for higher wages
and better living conditions.

Agriculture, Cowichan's only other major source of income,
had a very rewarding year immediately following the war, as a
record turnover of $272,863 was recorded by the Cowichan Co-
operative Creamery; the 198 shareholders receiving a full six
percent dividend on their share capital. During the year,
114,392 pounds of butter were manufactured at an average selling
price of 66.1¢ per pound, while 62,779 dozen eggs had brought an
average return of 60.6¢ per dozen.6. Other features of the ag-
gricultural year had been the formation of a Poultryman's Union

and the continued development of selective seed-growing in the district.

While the absorption of Cowichan's own returned soldiers was progressing very smoothly, 1919 also saw the arrival of well over one hundred new families in the district. These people were being settled under the auspices of the federally sponsored Soldier's Settlement Board. They were given a sum of money, a few acres of land, and it was expected that they would establish themselves in some branch of agriculture. The local Women's Institute was very active in its efforts to assist these new arrivals, as they sought to improve the conditions of rural life so that settlement might be permanent and prosperous in the farming community.

Another interesting post-war development took place early in 1920, as Cowichan's leading clergy and laymen formed a forerunner to the church union movement of 1925, called the Forward Movement. They stressed that the Movement would not only draw the community's churches closer together, but that it would make a contribution toward reconstruction greater than that of any other agency.

The Movement, which was national in scope, was made up of Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians, working in strict union. They felt that the next ten years would determine the future of the world. War had created a situation "out of which would come nothing which could not stand the test of fire", and whether this should be for

better or worse depended on the spiritual contribution of the Church of Christ.

The church's answer to this world challenge was summed up in the Forward Movement. In it Canadians should try to create a new church for a new day. "The old standards are not sufficient. We cannot hold the country for Christ unless there be greater development." 8. "God was more in our thought during the years of war. Of what avail our community services and prayers during the maelstrom if now there be no community thanks." 9. The community gave thanks to the value of $11,203.85 when the Forward Movement made an appeal for funds in Cowichan, but little more was heard of the Movement once the initial crusade and fund drive were completed.

Meanwhile, the farmers in the Cowichan area were becoming more vocal in their dissatisfaction with the weaknesses of the provincial economy. They resented the general failure of either the Liberal or Conservative party to make government serve the public interest. It appeared to them that the provincial government was only interested in serving party interest. Their annoyance with this situation had given rise to the appeal for only non-partisan candidates in the bye-election which followed the war. And now, as the post-war agricultural slump began to close in, the farmers' complaints were registered in ever increasing volume, until, in February, 1920, they decided to take action. One hundred of the valley's farmers joined together to organize

for political purposes. They planned to form a district branch of the United Farmers of British Columbia, an organization which had originally appeared in the province in 1917. "It made an appeal to those farmers who favoured political organization along class lines and who were willing to follow the leadership of prairie agrarians." The local leaders of the movement, J. Y. Copeman, E. W. Neel and W. Waldon, pointed out to those farmers who were hesitant in joining the U.F.B.C., that if they thought that the Cowichan Creamery was sufficient to look after the farmer's interests, they were gravely mistaken. "The union is going to redeem the country." 11.

In a fiery editorial, Hugh Savage, the editor of the independent Cowichan Leader, took to task those farmers who were not doing their bit by joining the union. He urged that now was the time to elect representatives from the several local farmers' unions in the valley and to form a district union. If such a step were taken, then all the farmers in Cowichan could speak with one voice. He concluded:

I say to you brother farmers, let us wipe the slate of party politics. The man or women to be admired today is the independent voter, not tied to any political party. 12.

The small locals soon took Savage's advice, forming a district association of the U.F.B.C., with J. Y. Copeman as president and

12. Loc. cit.
E. W. Neel as vice-president of the new body.  

The returned soldiers were still another group in the Cowichan district who were dissatisfied with the party system in British Columbia. As a result, they too decided to take some form of political action. In 1920, forty veterans broke away from the local branch of the Great War Veterans' Association and set up a branch of the Grand Army of United Veterans. This organization was declared to be neither Bolshevick, red nor socialist, but was interested only in trying to get veterans to stand together to obtain their rights.

J. L. Miller, provincial organizer for the G.A.U.V., argued that the G.W.V.A. had reached the end of its effectiveness because the members of the latter organization were not willing to take political action. He stressed that the prime objective of the G.A.U.V. was the re-establishment of every returned man. The first plank of his group's platform dealt with the payment by the federal government of $2,000 to every man who had gone to France, $1,500 to men who had been in England, and $1,000 to men who had served in Canada. It was proposed to raise the $340,000,000 required either by confiscation of war profits, or by compelling the Canadian Pacific Railway to pay taxes on land given by the Dominion, or by indemnities from Germany.

Other planks covered almost every conceivable subject from pensions payable to dependents to the abolition of money qualifications for municipal candidates. Proportional representation;

15. Ibid., September 23, 1920, p.2.
Bars to Asiatic immigration; election to the senate; initiation, referendum, and recall; taxes on unimproved land values; publication of ownership of daily newspapers; reform of the banking system; and advocacy of public ownership of forests, mines and oil wells were all contained in the agenda.

In October, 1920, a rather different platform was drawn up in Duncan by the directors of the United Farmers of British Columbia. This platform, which was to be placed before the association's annual convention in February, 1921, contained the following seven planks:

1. The influencing of legislation in the furtherance of cooperation and cooperative trading for the benefit of the whole community.

2. The appointment of a permanent road board for the maintenance of existing roads and for the development of further requirements.

3. Compulsory development of natural water powers where undeveloped, according to local requirements.


5. The establishment of a rural credits system.

6. Reform of the system of civil service with adequacy of pay and pension with a view to increased efficiency.

7. Re-afforestation of logged off lands unfit for agricultural purposes.

K. F. Duncan, Cowichan's Member of the Legislative Assembly, addressed the directors of the U.F.B.C., urging them to become an independent political force in the province. Their organization now had 140 locals operating in British Columbia, with a total membership of over 4,500 members. The farmers of

British Columbia might represent only fifteen percent of the population, but they had an influence far beyond their circle. If a private member had behind him a strong farmers' organization he would get results. However, the U.F.B.C. decided that they were not yet well enough organized to take part in the provincial election which Premier John Oliver had called for December 1, 1920.

As a result, the election in Cowichan was fought out between K. F. Duncan, who was still running as an Independent, and G. A. Cheeke, the Conservative candidate. In his final campaign speech, Duncan pointed out to the farmers of the area that whereas in 1917/18 $19,800 and in 1918/19 $21,600 had been spent on Cowichan roads, during the past two years the amounts spent had been $47,800 and $42,000 respectively.17. This was a telling point in a district where many men augmented their incomes with seasonal roadwork. Another point in Duncan's favour was his acceptance during the preceding session of a "non-partisan committee" made up of representative from all parts of the riding whose task it was to advise the sitting member on local problems and opinions.

On December 1, Cowichan "lived up to its reputation" by restoring K. F. Duncan to his seat in the provincial capital. He received a total of 1,053 votes to Cheeke's 940.18.

During this same election another item of considerable controversy was settled by means of a province wide plebiscite. For some time public criticism had been increasing in Cowichan over

what had come to be regarded by many as the iniquitous Prohibition Act. For the past four years the community had been living what was described as one large and deplorable lie. In an effort to wipe out the prohibition measure, the "moderates" organized the Cowichan Liberty League, its object being to secure as large a majority as possible in favour of government control of liquor sales. The League held meetings throughout the valley, urging the moderates to wake-up. England had not stood for the referendum. The people of British Columbia had to thank the United States - "the home of freakdom and hysteria" - for it. Prohibition was a failure! On December 1, the effectiveness of the Liberty League's efforts were indicated as the "iniquitous, fanatical and despotic" Prohibition Act was defeated in Cowichan, 1,599 to 598. The principle of government control of liquor sales was well received throughout the province, and in the following year the Liquor Control Board was set up in Victoria.

By the end of 1920 the Cowichan Leader was able to report that the district, with an ever increasing population, was steadily forging ahead. Until recent weeks local business had been very good. Lumber development had demonstrated phenomenal growth at the outset of the year with a dozen new plants commencing operations. Unfortunately the farmers had experienced an unsatisfactory season due to increasing costs, diminishing profits, and unseasonably hot, dry weather. Another serious outbreak of the influenza during the early months of the year had also contributed

to their difficulties.

At the annual meeting of the Board of Trade, in May, 1921, the tone of the president’s report was not optimistic. It was conceded that the district was facing the "troubled seas of business readjustment". A serious post-war depression was beginning to affect the whole district. Particularly hard-hit were the many farmers in the valley. It was felt to be inevitable that the obstacles to the profitable development of Cowichan’s immense timber resources would be overcome, but the farmers had many adverse factors to consider. Once again the report stressed that the day of agricultural individualism belonged to the past. Cooperation was the only present means of solution —indeed the only preventative of failure.

With the threat of large numbers of men being unemployed during the winter, the Cowichan Leader, in an editorial entitled "Find Men Work", returned to a theme which stemmed from the earliest days of settlement in the valley, that of the Oriental menace. The strong feeling against the Chinese may be traced back to the early gold-rush years in British Columbia and to the difficult depression which followed them. Now, with the post-war depression setting in, the pattern was repeating itself. The Asiatics, who made up nearly 15% of the population in Cowichan, were labouring on the land and in the mills for wages which would not support the white population. With opportunities for employment becoming more scarce, feelings of racial antagonism to-

ward the Chinese became widespread among the population. The Leader supported this bitter issue with editorials like that which follows:

It has always struck us that a way might be found - and should be found - to employ thousands of able bodied men of British stock in the lumber camps instead of the aliens who now comprise so large a proportion of our loggers and lumberjacks. 22.

Within weeks many members of the Duncan Board of Trade and of the Duncan branch of the Retail Merchant's Association were enrolling themselves in a local branch of the Asiatic Exclusion League, the aims of which were summarized as follows:

1. To work for a White Canada.
2. To eradicate the Oriental menace by every means in our power.
3. To educate the people of this country to the terrible effect of allowing Orientals a foothold in Canada. 23.

The League, whose membership numbered 2,300 in Vancouver and 1,300 in Victoria, hoped to win the support of 150,000, or 75% of the provincial electorate before pressing their proposals at Ottawa.

Fortunately, the post-war depression was showing definite signs of weakening by the end of 1921. Many new homes were evident in the district, while the real-estate business was enjoying a good deal of renewed activity. In the City of Duncan, it was reported that business premises were at a premium. The Cowichan Creamery Association's membership had increased to 255, as

22. The Cowichan Leader, August 18, 1921, p.4.
23. Ibid., August 25, 1921, p.4.
more farmers realized that to survive they must join the cooperative; while increased business had necessitated the construction of a new office and warehouse complex for the Creamery.\(^{24}\). In addition, a branch of the British Columbia Berry Growers Association had been established to assist those who were entering this new field of agricultural endeavour.

Hearty praise was offered to Duncan's mayor, W. Pitt, as he announced his retirement in January, 1922, following three years of administration. He left office with a record not yet surpassed in the city's brief history. Because of the general post-war slump, his years in office could not be called spectacular, but he had succeeded in bringing the city out of a financial rut and into a position which was the envy of most other city municipalities.

During 1921, the mill rate for the City of Duncan stood at twenty-nine. Out of thirty-two other city municipalities in the province, there was only one that was lower, that being Port Moody, which had a mill rate of twenty-five. The average for the thirty-three cities worked out to be 40.03 mills. The average tax per head for the thirty-three cities was $38.67. The City of Duncan levied taxes totalling $22,719.22, which when divided among the population of 1,200 showed an average tax per person of $18.93.\(^{25}\).

\(^{24}\) The Cowichan Leader, December 22, 1921, p.1. During 1921 the Creamery had manufactured 161,401 pounds of butter as compared with 121,281 pounds in 1920, while 250,090 dozen eggs had been handled, representing an increase of 111,651 dozen over 1920.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., August 24, 1922, p.1.
Mayor Pitt's policy had simply been to restore the city's finances to a sound condition before incurring further obligations. His aim had been successfully achieved and now the entire personnel of the city council was seeking re-election, asking for an opportunity to build and go forward on the safe foundation that they had laboriously won.

Further evidence of the slowly improving economic condition in the Cowichan area was revealed in 1922, as the municipal tax assessments in both the City of Duncan and the Municipality of North Cowichan were reduced. The report of the Board of Trade in August of the same year showed, however, that circumstances were still a long way from being perfect. A continued business slump in the city was said to be caused not so much on account of the general depression, as by the competition of the large Victoria department stores. This competition bore heavily on the local merchants who were forced to give credit while the outsiders got cash.

The lumber industry was forging ahead however, as export figures stood higher than they had for some years. The large Chemainus mill had cut a total of some 42,000,000 feet for the year, while the figure for the Genoa Bay mill stood at 25,000,000 feet. Prospects for 1923 looked very good.

This increase in lumber output was in part attributable to the completion of the new Canadian National Railway line from southern Vancouver Island through the western portion of the Cowichan Valley to Lake Cowichan. For the new line had opened up

immense areas of timber which had hitherto been inaccessible. Throughout the construction period of the new line the Duncan Board of Trade had urged the Canadian National Railway authorities to build a branch line from the existing new line to Cowichan Bay, on the valley's east coast. Their argument was based on solid business facts. The rail haul from Cowichan Lake to Cowichan Bay would only be twenty-three miles, once the eight mile spur was completed. The bay, which was free of teredos, offered excellent booming-ground facilities, and the water haul to Vancouver was only fifty-five miles. On the existing Canadian National line the rail haul from Cowichan Lake to Victoria was seventy-five miles. However, the Canadian National authorities claimed that they could not see their way clear to make the necessary expenditure for the eight mile spur and the matter was set aside.

Early in 1922, private interests in the valley took up the proposed spur-line scheme themselves. H. W. Bevan, E. F. Miller, and J. Mutter joined together to form the Cowichan Bay Railway Company. This local initiative must have convinced those in Ottawa of the merit of the scheme however, for before the construction of the line was completed a year later, the Canadian National interests were back in control of the project.

By 1922, it appeared that the Cowichan area was well on the way to recovery from the depression, but the farmers in the valley were still having a difficult time of it. The previous winter had been extremely cold and this unusually severe weather had been followed by a spring and summer of hot, dry conditions. As a result, there had been a very poor crop of small fruits, while most
grasses and grains had been burned in the fields. By the end of the season, it was estimated that the majority of the valley's farmers would require two good years to compensate for the losses sustained during the previous twelve months.

This critical situation brought to the fore once again that latent discontent with which the farmers of the area viewed the political and economic condition of the province. It is not surprising either, to find that many of them were eager to lend their support to a new party which sprang up in British Columbia in 1923. Headed by General A. D. McRae, a millionaire from Vancouver, the Provincial Party, as it was called, pledged itself to concentrate on provincial needs and to disavow any connection with the federal parties. The main features of the party manifesto and platform concerned the financial situation in British Columbia.

"In the course of the year, the 'Put Oliver out and don't let Bowser in' movement gathered into its folds remnants of the U.F.B.C. and the Soldiers' Party, critics of the party system, and disaffected Liberals and Conservatives". 27.

Late in 1923 an event took place in Victoria which soon had the whole population of the Cowichan area up in arms against the Oliver government. In a surprise move during the presentation of the Redistribution Bill, the premier announced that the government intended to split the Cowichan riding down the middle. The area south of the Cowichan River would be joined with Esquimalt while the area north of the river would be amalgamated with the

Socialist, Newcastle riding.

Cowichan's member, K. F. Duncan, accused the government of having succumbed to the protests from Victoria businessmen against the proposed reduction of that city's representation from four to three members. He reminded the premier that the original intention of the government had been to retain Cowichan, a copy of the original plan being in the Cowichan member's possession despite the efforts of the government to have all such copies destroyed. Duncan continued:

I want to make the strongest protest against what is nothing more or less than a public scandal.

There has been a tendency to sneer against Englishmen. I am a Canadian but it is unjustifiable to say Englishmen are not good settlers. In no district of the Empire did you find a more ready response to the call of war; hardly a district left behind in the field more of its men. When conscription came there was hardly a man left in Cowichan to be conscripted. ... Is it any wonder that they (the people of Cowichan) want to preserve the identity of their district. ... Liberalism in my district, if this is carried through, will be wiped out for a generation.

29.

Samuel Guthrie, the Labour representative from the Newcastle riding, protested that his constituency was being robbed of its seat because it had been returning Labour members for the past twenty years. He went on to point out that there was absolutely no community of interest between the two ridings. It would be impossible for any member to represent satisfactorily two such divergent interests as mining and agriculture. The impassioned pleading was of no avail however. Guthrie and Duncan were

supported by the Conservatives and the bona fide Independents, in the House on the question of the division, but they lost the vote 22 to 19.

With all of Cowichan in an uproar over the injustice of the Redistribution Act, it did not take much persuasion to arouse interest in the provincial election of 1924. The incumbent, K. F. Duncan, abandoned his stand as an Independent and joined the forces of the Provincial Party. The Cowichan District Association of the Provincial Party was formed in February, 1924, with an initial 200 pledges. When General McRae, leader of the new party, addressed the Cowichan electorate in the month of May, the Duncan Opera House was filled to overflowing with an enthusiastic audience. Kenneth Duncan's chances of re-election under the new party banner looked very good.

Nomination day brought forward a full slate of candidates in the enlarged Cowichan-Newcastle riding. C. F. Davie was nominated as the Conservative standard bearer. This new candidate was the son of the Hon. Alexander E. B. Davie, Q.C., a former premier and attorney-general of the province, and a nephew of the Hon. Theodore Davie, also a past premier and attorney-general of British Columbia. Born in Victoria, Davie had studied law in the office of the attorney-general before moving to Duncan in 1919 to establish his own private law practice.

Samuel Guthrie, the incumbent from the Newcastle riding, was running again on the Labour ticket. A comparatively young man, Guthrie had come to Ladysmith from Scotland in 1911 to work in

the mines. The strike of 1912 gave him scope for actual and vigorous dissemination of his views on social economy and he attributed his election to the legislature to the respect of his constituents earned in the strike, and more especially to the fact that he was among those who were sentenced to one and a half years on a charge of unlawful assembly. In the 1920 election Guthrie had been elected over a variety of candidates including the socialist leader, J. H. Hawthornthwaite, with whose actions Guthrie's fellow workmen had become dissatisfied.

The Liberal party's candidate for the 1924 election was W. W. Walkem, a prominent Ladysmith businessman, who was serving his third term as mayor of that village. Like Davie, whose family name was well-known in provincial politics, the Liberal candidate's uncle, G. A. Walkem, was a past premier and attorney-general of British Columbia.

When the votes were tallied on June 20, it was found that C. F. Davie, the Conservative, had topped the polls with a total vote of 1,152 and a plurality of 115 votes. His nearest opponent was Guthrie with 1,037, while Duncan and Walkem followed with 779 and 673 respectively. The voters of Cowichan had apparently not been ready to follow Kenneth Duncan into the Provincial Party, which, "by prostituting the farmers' movement ... had ended its political chances. ..." Instead, having discarded their post-war non-partisan stand, the electorate had returned Cowichan to its traditional Conservative allegiance.

A referendum on the question of selling beer by the glass


had received a majority of 1,968 votes to 1,269 in the riding. However the proposal was defeated in most other ridings in the province, so that the government decided not to implement the measure. Beer parlours were still a thing of the future.

The failing condition of the lumber market was the basic cause for a sustained slump in business activity in the Cowichan district during 1924. The loss by fire of the large Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing Co. mill in Chemainus during the previous November had made for a considerable amount of unemployment in the valley, as more than five hundred men lost their jobs.

C. F. Davie's maiden speech in the Legislature emphasized the seriousness of the district's economic condition.

Two of the basic industries of my constituency, namely, timber and agriculture, are at a very low ebb, and while I hope I am not peurile enough to lay the whole blame for this depression at the door of the government, I blame them severely for whatever hand they have had in conducing to our present condition. ... This constituency has been most grossly discriminated against by the present Liberal government.... We have ... been most studiously neglected. ... Our main highways are in a most disgracefully dilapidated condition.

Davie went on to point out that during the years 1919 to 1923, the sum of $8,000,000 had been borrowed for capital expenditure upon the roads of the province. Out of those moneys the Liberal constituency of Kamloops had received $366,701.93. The constituency of the minister of public works (Hon. Dr. Sutherland) had received $586,915.43; and the premier's former riding of Delta had secured the lion's share of over one million

33. The Cowichan Leader, November 27, 1924, p.6.
dollars!

What, Mr. Speaker, from this fund did Cowichan Newcastle receive? "All ye who have tears prepare to shed them now!" Cowichan received exactly $15,089.06 and poor old Newcastle got the pittance of $5,000.

... And now we are told that, to spite us for not returning a Liberal member, we are to lose the government agency at Duncan. ... Sir, in order to allay any false hopes which may find lodgment in the breasts of the honourable members opposite, I doubt if Cowichan will ever return a Liberal to this House.34.

Another extended period of hot, dry weather during the summer of 1924, was largely responsible for the severity of the depression during that year. The Cowichan Creamery reported a severe drop in sales over 1923, as cream shipments failed due to a lack of suitable pasture. In an effort to relieve the hard-pressed farmers, the Municipality of North Cowichan saw its way clear to reduce the tax rate by two mills. This reduction also gave some measure of relief to property holding loggers, who had lost a good deal of working time due to a prolonged forest closure.

The eight hour working day, which came into effect under provincial statute in the forest industry in January, 1925, caused considerable concern among local mill operators. The new law seriously curtailed the capacity of those mills which could not afford to begin running two shifts a day. The Mayo Lumber Company's mill, located eight miles west of Duncan, had been one of the largest producers in the valley in 1924, with a total cut of 20,000,000 feet of lumber, while the 175 men who were employed in the mill and the logging operations had received a yearly wage

34. The Cowichan Leader, November 27, 1924, p.6.
totalling over $175,000. However the company now felt that the market demand for timber was not sufficient to begin a second shift. 35.

The Hillcrest Lumber Company, located five miles outside of Duncan, was rapidly completing an entire reconstruction of its plant in March, 1925. This renovation was a move to overcome the situation created by the eight hour day legislation. Modern methods and equipment would increase the plant's cutting capacity to 100,000 feet a day despite the reduction in working hours.

The proposed eight hour legislation had caused the V.L. & M. Company to hesitate in rebuilding its large plant in Chemainus following its loss by fire in November, 1923. T. J. Humbird, president of the company, had felt that this "freak legislation" would lead to the ruination of British Columbia's lumber industry. 36. However, a month after the bill was passed, the V.L. & M. announced reconstruction plans which would make the plant the most modern on the continent. In October, 1925, the new plant commenced operations, supplying employment to more than 500 men, and giving a considerable boost to the Cowichan area's economic recovery.

Throughout the post-war period both Cowichan's federal and provincial government members had made a constant plea for government assistance to both farmers and lumbermen in the form of a protective tariff which would restrict the outflow of raw materials and the inflow of consumer goods. They were particularly

interested in halting the ever increasing shipments of logs from the Cowichan area to mills in the State of Washington, where they were converted into lumber; and the large importation of farm produce into the province at prices which the British Columbia farmers could not hope to match. C. H. Dickie, a native of the Cowichan Valley, and Conservative Member of Parliament for the Nanaimo riding, had stressed the importance of such a tariff measure many times. "Give our manufacturers a chance by providing an adequate tariff and keeping the competition out of Canada." 37.

In spite of the increasing American competition, the local forest industry in Cowichan had completely shaken off the post-war slump by the middle of 1926. All companies were operating full time and production was steadily increasing. A continuous stream of logs poured daily along the E. & N. Railway to Crofton and down the new C.N.R. spur line to Cowichan Bay. In the month of March, the Cowichan Bay Booming Association handled eight and a half million feet of logs, while McDonald and Murphy, the largest shipper to Crofton, sent out seven and a half million feet. 38.

In July, 1926, the now rapidly expanding City of Duncan rid itself of direct municipal control of both the local waterworks and power systems as the Duncan Utilities Ltd., a subsidiary of the International Utilities Corp. of New York, was given a twenty year franchise following a municipal referendum on the question. The referendum had received almost unanimous support as 205 of

38. Ibid., April 8, 1926, p.1.
214 voters gave their assent to the move which removed what had become two economic "millstones" around the neck of city council.

The Cowichan Agricultural Society's annual Fall Fair in 1926 reflected the growing prosperity of the district as gate returns increased more than 25% over past years. The most prominent attraction was undoubtedly the first official visit to Cowichan of the Hon. Robert Randolph Bruce, Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, but many other features, including the increasingly popular loggers' sports helped to make the two-day show a great success.

The year also saw a general reawakening in the local construction business as city hall issued a total of forty-four building permits to a gross value of $81,290 as compared with thirty-seven permits and a value of $49,433 in 1925. Construction included a new Bank of Montreal, enlargement of the provincial government building, seven new stores and eleven private residences. In addition, the B. C. Telephone Company spent $10,000 in the district during the year as they erected a modern new office building and switchboard complex. By October, 1926, they were servicing over 1,200 homes and businesses in the district with telephones.

The compulsory minimum wage of forty cents an hour in the lumber industry, effective November 1, 1926, was looked forward to with serious misgiving by most of the logging operators in the

41. Ibid., October 14, 1926, p.1.
valley. The legislation had been designed in an effort to help overcome the problem of the ever increasing number of Asiatics who were being employed in the forest industries. The government felt that if an employer must pay the forty cent minimum, then he would release the low-paid Asiatics and replace them with what were considered to be the superior white labourers. However in Cowichan it soon became apparent that the new law would cause little immediate change in the personnel of staffs. It simply was not reasonable to replace the more experienced Oriental workmen with completely inexperienced white labour. Local mill owners had found that white labour, particularly the youthful variety, were inexperienced and inclined to "decidedly floating tendencies". In the large Chemainus plant only one white man was affected by the salary increase while ninety-nine percent of the benefit went to the Orientals. 42.

This situation quickly aroused the latent hatred of aliens which was so often in evidence in Cowichan. C. F. Davie, speaking before the Legislative Assembly, clearly expressed the feelings of his constituents as he proposed legislation far more direct than the Minimum Wage Act. He stressed that the province's main industries were gradually being handed over to the Oriental while the white population was being elbowed out of employment and out of the country. He went on to describe the Minimum Wage Act as an absolute failure. The minimum was far too low for white workers and a boon to the Asiatics.

The threat was real. The Chinese had increased by 69.4

42. The Cowichan Leader, January 20, 1927, p.1.
percent over the past twenty-four years, while the Japanese popu-
lation had increased during the same period by the frightening
total of 323.21 percent.

And why should our children be compelled to sit beside
children of the yellow race, whose traditions are not
our traditions; whose conduct and manners are not ours;
and whose presence we would not for a moment tolerate
as playmates for our children when at home?

To this Davie, at least, did not propose to submit. The time
for action was now. His proposals were as follows:

1. Restrict employment of Asiatics (not now engaged)
to what might be termed menial labour in basic
industries of lumbering and mining.

2. Prevent Asiatic races from further right to own
or lease land.

3. Do not admit any further Orientals into public
schools.

The strong feelings voiced by Davie gradually diminished
however as the boom in the lumber industry continued to develop.
The majority of lumbering concerns in the valley continued to
work throughout the winter of 1926/27 with little or no loss of
time, while the industry as a whole began to enjoy a light but
steady upward trend in prices.

Gradually a sense of renewed prosperity was felt in the Cow-
ichan area. In 1927, both the Municipality of North Cowichan and
the City of Duncan were able to lower their tax assessments,
thanks to the increasing returns being experienced from liquor
and gasoline sales. Local businesses were also recording record

43. The Cowichan Leader, January 20, 1927, p.1.
44. Loc. cit.
45. The Cowichan Leader, April 21, 1927, p.1.
sales as the expanding lumber industry not only absorbed all the local labourers, but drew large numbers of newcomers to the district as well.

During the month of July, 1927, the Cowichan area, and more particularly, the City of Duncan, took on a very festive appearance in preparation to celebrate Canada’s Golden Jubilee of Confederation. On July 1 weekend, with flags flying, bands playing, and thousands of feet of brightly coloured bunting waving, the people of Cowichan joined with all of the citizens of Canada and "for once rejoiced together as one people in one land." 46.

Edward W. Beatty, President of the Canadian Pacific Railway, declared that in 1927, "Canada has hit her stride", and to the people of Cowichan it definitely appeared that he was correct. C. H. Dickie, M.P., urged the young men of the area to seize the opportunities that awaited them. He felt sure that the next ten years would be Canada's, and he looked forward to the future with great optimism. 47.

By 1928 even the farmers of the area were beginning to feel the effects of the ever increasing prosperity. Reporting on their previous year's business, the Cowichan Creamery revealed an increase in turnover of $76,635, that sum being a full 23.7 percent greater than that of 1926. A trading balance of $10,744 was to be distributed among the Association's members, making a total of $79,464 distributed in surpluses from 1920 to 1927 inclusive. 48. These bonuses were in addition to the six percent

47. Ibid., January 5, 1928, p.1.
paid annually on invested capital.

In retrospect, the decade which followed the Great War was one of slowly increasing prosperity and good times in the Cowichan Valley. By the close of the twenties the area was in the midst of the greatest boom which it had yet experienced. The population, which in 1921 had numbered 3,842, increased by 23.5 percent in the Municipality of North Cowichan and by 56.4 percent in the City of Duncan, to total 5,134 in 1931.49.

The distinctive thing about the area's population was the unusually large proportion who were of British descent. It was large enough, in fact, to give Duncan and the surrounding countryside a sense of being in a class all of their own.

A reporter from the bustling metropolis of Vancouver, visiting the Cowichan Valley during the late 1920's, was amazed by the attitude of many of the people he met. They seemed entirely unmoved by the appeal that human existence must be lived at high speed and hectic pressure to get the real values out of it. To the casual observer "it was bewitching to contemplate".

"Well?", my host queried, his eyebrows tilting whimsically, "How does Duncan strike you?"

Quietly, but with no doubt in my mind about the idea, I said, "It's a little bit of England beyond the seas."

"My boy," he replied, "you've said it. That's just what it is, a little bit of England, and that's exactly what we want it to be. I doubt if it could have

been done anywhere else in the world but right here."  

This "Little England" impression was certainly not an unusual response among visitors to the valley. For in Cowichan the cultured English accent was the rule rather than the exception. In the Municipality of North Cowichan 75.2 percent of the population were either British themselves or of British descent; while in Duncan 79.1 percent were of similar ancestry.  

The valley contained more retired colonels, majors, and captains than might have been found in another area ten times its size. These exiles, who found Victoria too metropolitan, had become "gentlemen farmers" in "Canada's Little Bit of England in the Far West." Clinging to their sense of caste, these gentry, who were of independent means but not rich enough to return to England "in the style their positions demanded", set up their own Old Country rural society in the valley. Many of them took up the pursuit of one of the several types of mixed farming for which the area was well-suited. Silver-fox ranching, the growing of selected seeds for the English market, dairying, the growing of small fruits, or the management of poultry or dairy farms were all considered to be occupations which came within the sphere of the gentleman's calling. 

By the end of the twenties, neat hedged meadows, vegetable 

gardens, and small herds of cattle, chicken runs, tennis courts, and formal villas all helped to remove the last traces of the rugged countryside which the pioneer settler had known, and to convert it into the softer scenes of rural England.

With the continued arrival of these transplanted patriots and servants of the British Isles, who lived off their pensions and the returns from their farms, business in Cowichan prospered, new institutions flourished and social gatherings increased. The climate, landscape and blood sports of the valley offered them a life that they could not afford elsewhere. The aristocratic English accents were passed on to Canadian children and grandchildren, while the military tradition took men back to the regular army in England.

The average "long-stocking" family lived at the end of a long, winding, muddy lane in the Duncan, Cobble Hill, Quamichan Lake or Maple Bay districts. The rambling villa was generally situated picturesquely among clumps of oak trees, gorse bushes and bluebells. The many chimneyed structures were a study of divided nostalgia. On three sides they were fussy with gables, leaded window-panes and turrets of the typical English home. But on the sunny side most had the sort of long verandahs found in the outposts of what their owners still called "The Empah".

These naval and military men, pensioned Indian civil servants, and British remittance men were gentlemen all, sportsmen to the core, maintaining civilization in the wilderness and, as the Englishman does everywhere, organizing society, entering public service, and labouring in charitable enterprises with a stern
sense of obligation. It is small wonder then that visitors left the Cowichan Valley, with its gentle rural atmosphere, and its small, friendly, "English" city, with the impression that the area was in a class all its own. It had a charm and a lure which grew out of itself, and one, moreover, which did not readily admit of imitation.

But what many of the area's casual visitors failed to recognize was the dual personality of the region. For if Cowichan was in one aspect the epitome of the English country village, it was also the heart of British Columbia's logging and lumbering industry. As a result the personalities in Duncan were surprisingly varied for such a small town. There were those who passed their time at hunting, fishing, cricket, tennis, and social gatherings, or by reminiscing about the frontier days in Northern India or Egypt; while an entirely different group were equally as proud of their prowess with an axe or saw, and told of felling the tall timber which blanketed Cowichan's hinterland.

It is true that the English were responsible for a great many changes in Cowichan's social and economic life, as they established their private schools, their specialized farms, and their country, cricket and yachting clubs, but their distinctiveness should not be permitted to completely overshadow the other social groups in the valley. By the end of the twenties, Duncan was a multi-industry community. It was a city which, though containing important agricultural and forestry operations, had developed a widely diversified economic base through the growth of other industrial and service functions. The development of the city had
progressed to the point where it was difficult to pinpoint characteristics which could be said to be exclusively the result of either the forest industry or agriculture.

Descendants of the original pioneer stock had, by this time, either become the valley's most successful farmers, or were firmly established as Duncan's leading businessmen. Still others had joined with the new and younger group of immigrants, many of European and Scandinavian background, who were drawn to the area during the twenties by the rapidly developing lumber industry. In many cases, the workers, whether they were employed as loggers or in conversion plants, commuted to work from homes in middle class residential districts, and in the contribution they made to the economy and life-style of the region were virtually indistinguishable from the farmers, the businessmen, and the other tradesmen.

It is unfortunate that no breakdown of Cowichan's population by principal origins is available for the 1921 census. However, it may safely be assumed that most of the 370 people of European descent in the two municipalities in 1931, had arrived during the previous decade. Of this number, by far the largest nationally represented groups were the Scandinavians and the French, numbering 112 and 89 respectively. These young men and women, and many more like them who were scattered throughout the unorganized portions of the valley, had, in large part, been drawn to British Columbia from their parents' farms in the Canadian Prairies. For, on the prairies, the extension of large-scale farming and the introduction of tractors and combine reapers had drastic-

ally cut the customary demand for harvest labour. For the most part, these people were young, with their futures before them. They added an air of mixed responsibility and roisterishness to the Cowichan area, and while their effect upon the life-style of the community may not have been as readily evident as was that of the British, they most certainly were not without their influence.

One very important change that took place during the twenties decade was the gradual replacement of agriculture by lumbering as the community's primary industry. There were a great many people in the valley who were reluctant to admit it, but by 1929, the forest industry was far and away Cowichan's greatest producer of wealth. In the district were several of the largest lumber mill and logging concerns in the province; and, in addition, there were dozens of smaller operations - the whole constituting an industry which dispersed millions of dollars annually in wages, materials and supplies.

The developing forest industry had a definite impact on settlement patterns in the valley. Camps were set up in remote areas around Cowichan Lake. These unincorporated settlements of temporary or portable buildings, owned entirely by the operator, and inhabited principally or exclusively by male employees, were characterized by a complete absence of owner operators, non-company personnel and local government.

These characteristics were also common to company towns like that established by the Industrial Timber Mills at Youbou. Towns of this type were based on large sawmills drawing upon timber
whose locational peculiarities made it impractical to transport logs to established conversion sites or urban areas. At the Youbou site, situated in the centre of Vancouver Island on Cowichan Lake, the dependence upon rail transportation to get wood from tree to market made it practical to reduce product-bulk by sawmilling at or near the cutting site before shipping.

However, it is significant that in the Cowichan area even small towns like Youbou possessed road links to the "outside world" and, in particular, to other nearby communities. All but the most isolated camps had road connections via the Cowichan Valley to the village of Lake Cowichan and south to the City of Duncan. In all of these cases a considerable number of workers had chosen to live outside of the company town or camp, and to commute each day to work by car or "crummy". This constant touch with the "outside" was to be of significant importance in later years, when labour agitators attempted to halt production in the Cowichan Lake area.

The village of Chemainus, located in the north-east end of the Municipality of North Cowichan, was not a company town, although most of its inhabitants were employed in the mill of the Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing Company, which was located there. The mill, as has already been noted, was the largest and most complete on the coast, electrically operated, and when running to capacity turned out 300,000 feet of lumber daily.54. Two logging camps were operated by the company in the Cowichan Lake area, employing about 190 men. The logs were brought out of the

woods on the company's own railroad and then by the E. & N. Railway to the mill. Chemainus was also the principal shipping port for finished lumber from the Cowichan area throughout the 1920's and early 1930's.

Of the other large mills in the area, that nearest to Duncan was the plant of the Hillcrest Lumber Company Ltd. It had by 1929 been operating in the district for many years, all the while steadily increasing its size and its equipment. In 1928, it was the third in production for the Island. This large output, totally 45,000,000 feet, was secured through steady operation of the plant throughout the year. Two hundred and twenty-five men were employed in the mill, while an additional one hundred men worked in the woods, where two high lead sides kept the mill supplied with logs.

A little further to the west of Duncan, in the Sahtlam area, was the Mayo Lumber Company Ltd. This plant was owned and operated by a group of enterprising East Indians. For the most part Orientals, who made up fifteen percent of the total population in Cowichan in 1931, were employed in the woods and mill operations. Shipments for the Mayo Company totalled 39,000,000 feet in 1928. Principal markets for both the Hillcrest and Mayo mills were found in the Prairie Provinces, Eastern Canada, and the United States.

The Shawnigan Lake Lumber Company Ltd., located in the southern part of the valley, had a good producing mill which in 1928 manufactured 20,000,000 feet, despite three months of shutdown. Their monthly output averaged 2,200,000 feet with a single shift. Some 115 men were employed for milling and another 75 in
The Canadian Puget Sound Lumber Company, which had a large mill at Victoria, drew their logs from camps in the Cowichan Lake district where they employed 275 men. Other operations in the valley included: H. R. MacMillan Export Company Ltd., employing 80 men; the P. M. Singer Lumber Company, which operated fifteen tie mills in the area; the Kimsol Lumber Company, employing 25 men in the mill and bush; the Malson Lumber Company, employing 20 men; Evans Brothers at Somenos, employing about 30 men; the Eureka Lumber Company, employing 40 men in the bush and mill; the M.B.Y. Lumber Company, employing 40 men; and the G.E. Wellburn Lumber Company which employed 15 men. The McDonald-Murphy Lumber Company was engaged in a large logging operation at Cowichan Lake where they employed 200 men at their very modern camp. Operating two sides, they had a monthly output of approximately 6,000,000 feet of logs.

Several other small concerns were operating in the valley, but by far the most outstanding development of 1929, was the construction of a new mill by the Industrial Timber Mills Ltd., at Youbou. Their new plant was designed to compete with the most modern in Canada. Electrically operated, it could cut logs which, because of their size, had previously been shipped out of the area. With this new mill in operation the biggest proportion of logs cut in the Cowichan Lake area could be manufactured right in the valley at either Youbou or Chemainus.
A general feeling of well-being was in the air in Cowichan in 1929. Everyone was confident of an assured and prosperous future. Progress had never been more apparent as returns for logging and lumbering showed a large increase in the cut. The port of Chemainus had handled 59,995,000 feet of finished lumber and expected to rank seventh in tonnage in British Columbia; while the Cowichan Bay Booming Association had handled over 125,000,000 feet of logs during the season, thereby establishing an all-time record. The goal of the British Columbia lumber industry had been largely achieved in the winning of her struggle for a cargo trade independent of American control. Lumbermen could point to a reasonably healthy home market, which consumed 210,000,000 feet of local lumber; Eastern Canada and the Prairies used another 830,000,000 feet; 580,000,000 were shipped by water to California and the Eastern Seaboard; and another 400,000,000 feet were distributed between the United Kingdom, Australia, and other overseas markets.

The political atmosphere in Cowichan had been cleared the year before with the return of the incumbent, C. F. Davie, to the provincial legislature where he had been appointed Speaker of the House for the new Conservative government. Davie had taken 2,360 votes out of a total of 4,057 cast. His nearest opponent, Sam Guthrie, the Labour candidate from Ladysmith, had tallied


1,607 votes. Now that the Conservatives were in power, the people of Cowichan looked to Davie to fulfill his pledge to restore the district to its identity as a separate constituency.

The merchants of the City of Duncan had never experienced a more profitable year than 1929. Building permits in the area reached a record value of $92,650, \(^{58}\) and net sales at the local liquor store totalled $180,678.30, the highest ever recorded. \(^{59}\) Indeed, the whole of British Columbia was breaking all previous records for economic endeavour. The employment index had risen to 111.5; record heights were being achieved not only in lumbering, but also in the value of manufactured, agricultural, and fish products. \(^{60}\) The whole province was experiencing its greatest boom.

Then, late in 1929, the completely unexpected took place. The stock market collapsed, and in so doing served as a trumpet blast heralding a decade of such misery for vast numbers of people that by comparison all previous depressions were rendered insignificant.

---


The people of Cowichan were certainly not alone in failing to anticipate the depression which brought the prosperity of the 1920's to an end. With all of Canada, they were caught completely unaware. The "Winter Years" hit them quickly and severely, as the boom of 1929 suddenly upended to become the bust of 1930. Within a few months the prosperous lumber industry suffered sharp reverses as a severe business depression set in in Canada and the United States and, indeed, throughout the world. The building trade, which had been absorbing millions of feet of lumber each year, was suddenly paralysed, and as a sequel to its collapse, the lumber industry became completely disorganized. The consumption of lumber on the American continent tumbled to the lowest point since 1869. Within two years the production of lumber was to decrease by 75 percent. By 1932, which was to be the cruellest year of the depression in the Cowichan Valley, lumber production would have fallen to the lowest point since 1859.¹

An additional blow to the industry came in the decision of the twenty leading timber importers of the United Kingdom to combine for the first time to purchase the entire exportable timber supply of the Soviet Union for 1929.² This agreement, which involved payment to Russia of $50,000,000 and was one of the

largest transactions made with the Soviet Union since the revolution of 1917, posed a serious threat to British Columbia's lumber trade with Great Britain.

Throughout Australia, New Zealand, and South East Asia the depression prevailed, and orders from these regions dwindled to a fraction of their former volume. In addition, the Canadian Prairies was suffering from a serious curtailment of wheat sales which rendered their purchases of lumber almost negligible.

By December, 1929, the booming grounds at Crofton and Cowichan Bay were crowded with an accumulation of logs for which there was little satisfactory demand. The operators, who had closed their camps for the annual Christmas-New Year's break, were reluctant to terminate the holidays because of the lack of orders, although it was the opinion among the majority of Island lumbermen that the turn of the year would witness a general improvement in the tone of the market.

The men eventually returned to work late in January, but conditions were certainly not improving. Neither were they likely to get any better if the Federal Government carried through its proposed tariff increases. This first move on the part of the Canadian government to fend off the depression aroused a good deal of indignation among Cowichan's farmers and lumbermen.

It is folly to put one's trust in tariffs. "Cut the costs before you raise the bars" should be the slogan of all Canadians who hope to thrive by export markets.

Neither were the local businessmen pleased when they heard rumours

---

of proposed American tariff increases which would certainly have adverse effects on all Canadian business, particularly the lumber trade. The editor of the Leader warned:

What Washington does is of especial importance to this district, for it is proposed to tax lumber $1.50 a thousand and ... it is probably safe to say that half of Cowichan's lumber produce goes to the U.S.A.

Since early last summer the sledding has been increasingly difficult in the lumber industry and, should this U.S. tariff become effective, our operators will receive a stiff jolt. And their fortunes are to some extent the fortunes of a great many people here. 4

The proposed American tariff did become effective, however, and the result was a further deepening of the depression in the lumber industry.

During the second week in May, 1930, the Hillcrest Lumber Company, which had been one of the heaviest producers on Vancouver Island in 1929, was forced to close down its operations. The equipment was brought in from the woods and the crews were disbanded. About 325 men were thrown out of work in this initial closure. Most of Hillcrest's exports had been to the United States and Eastern Canada, but these markets were failing rapidly and there were no new ones to be found. As one lumberman explained: "What business is offering is below the cost of production, so that it is difficult to carry on and keep out of the sheriff's hands." 5

All of the other important mills in the Cowichan district were continuing to operate for the present. These included the Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing Co., at Chemainus; the Mayo

4. The Cowichan Leader, March 27, 1930, p.4.
Lumber Co. at Sahtlam; the Industrial Sawmills, at Youbou; and the Evans Bros. mill near Duncan. However, in many cases the operators were simply reluctant to close down owing to the great amount of capital which must be left idle, and the burden of overhead costs. They carried on in the hope that conditions would soon show some improvement.

In actual fact, the depression had hardly begun for the people of Cowichan, yet the area already had its "apostles of blue-ruin" spreading their message of woe. "According to one wag, they have everything closing up except the post office and the liquor vendor’s store."6

In an effort to combat this sort of pessimistic approach, Hugh Savage, editor of the Cowichan Leader, began an active campaign, encouraging both the unemployed and those with jobs to work together to overcome the difficult situation they were facing.

There is a great deal in attitude of mind. If everybody is wearing a long face, everybody is in for trouble. Let us recognize that if all the mills and camps in Cowichan close down we still have resources and business and that both are capable of improvement.7

Savage then went on to suggest ways in which unemployment might be staved off and combatted. Heads of families must look for work in new fields of endeavour and be willing to accept jobs which in more prosperous times they might not even consider. For those who owned land, it was still early enough in the year to put in a crop of potatoes and other vegetables as insurance for the coming winter. And for those who would like to get some

7. Loc. Cit.
slashing or clearing done, there was no better time than the present. "How can I create work" should be the thought uppermost in the minds of all residents.

Service clubs and businessmen's organizations also became active in the campaign to promote employment and relieve the increasing economic strain. Comrade J. D. Groves of the local branch of the Canadian Legion wished to see the veterans take the initiative in freely discussing the question of unemployment. For, in his words, the situation was reaching a serious stage. The whole country was getting "choc-o-block" with foreigners who had not served under the Canadian flag. He was firmly of the opinion that officials should be appointed by the government with the sole duty of moving back to their own countries all aliens who could legally be deported. At Grove's suggestion, a resolution was passed to the effect that the government should deport all idle aliens.²

Other members of the Legion had suggestions which were a little more constructive than that of Comrade Groves. R. Nugent was of the opinion that the easiest and simplest way out of the difficulty would be in a reduction of the land tax, as this would in all likelihood facilitate a back-to-the-land movement. To give further appeal to such a movement, he suggested that a tariff should be imposed on all foreign farm produce.³

Following a similar line of reasoning, the Cowichan Board of Trade began to give enthusiastic leadership to a "Home Products" movement.

---

³ Loc. cit.
campaign. A. H. Peterson, originator of the campaign, felt that far too much produce was being imported into the Cowichan area. It was estimated that more than 50% of the produce being consumed in the district was being imported by local retailers. In some cases, it was disclosed, Cowichan's own produce was being sold back to local merchants at prices considerably higher than they would have paid had they purchased it directly from local farmers. Peterson, voicing the opinion of many of the farmers and British settlers in the valley, felt sure that if the district had kept up its agricultural development, the depression would not have been felt to anything like its present degree. Instead, the people of the area had been content to ride on the crest of the lumber wave. As a result, in addition to the 500 acres of unsettled Soldier Settlement Board lands which were not producing, there were from 2,500 to 3,000 acres of private farm lands lying fallow in the valley. This disinterest on the part of the white community had allowed the Chinese and Japanese to gain control of the produce market.

To further their "Home Products" campaign, the Board of Trade was constructing a farmer's market on the local fair grounds. These stalls and booths would be available to the public for sale of all types of Cowichan produce. The following stipulation was made clear, however:

We do not expect farmers to sell at retail prices, but as near to wholesale as possible. We feel that they will be able to obtain a fair profit and will be able to sell their produce. 10.

C. F. Davie, the local M.L.A., extended congratulations on the progress of the "Home Products" campaign, but expressed the opinion that it was being started from the wrong end. He questioned if the movement had the cooperation of local merchants. He further emphasized that, in large part, the purchasing public were to blame for the situation in which the local farmers found themselves because they failed to purchase from local merchants, and through them, from the local farmers. He urged that the strong cooperation of the people of Duncan and the surrounding district would be needed so as to get the purchasing power behind the campaign.\footnote{11}

Meanwhile, conditions in the local forest industry were not improving. By August, several of the logging camps in the Cowichan Lake District had shut down owing to slack business and dry weather. A number of small tie-mills in the district had also been closed, thereby increasing the unemployment problem. Among the larger mills, only the Industrial Timber Mills at Youbou was continuing operations.\footnote{12}

The Cowichan Bay Booming Association reported that during the twelve month period ending June 30, 1930, they had shipped out 104,000,000 feet of logs, as compared with 140,000,000 feet during a similar period for the previous year.\footnote{13} But this record was considered to be satisfactory in view of the prevailing depression.

\footnote{11}{The Cowichan Leader, September 25, 1930, p.1.}
\footnote{12}{B. C. Lumberman, Vol. 14, August, 1930, p.24.}
\footnote{13}{Ibid., Vol. 14, September, 1930, p.20.}
It is not surprising that the steadily worsening economic condition and the ever decreasing amount of available employment began to give rise to feelings of racial discrimination. In particular, there was a renewal of that intense dislike of Orientals which was so often revealed in the Cowichan area. The following letter to the editor gives a typical example:

Sir: I am very much surprised to know, and it is to be regretted, that a number of farmers in the Cowichan District are going to hire Chinese to help harvest their potato crops, while there are lots of white men available who would be only too glad to get the work and who should be given preference.

One of the Many Unemployed.

It was not until the autumn of 1930 that the local municipal governments began to take some action to help these "many unemployed". Their reluctance to do so earlier resulted from the traditional Canadian view that relief was a burden which provincial governments must bear either directly or by imposing it on the shoulders of the municipalities, and it was quite evident that no financial provision had been made by the British Columbia government for any such contingency. The effect in 1930 was for the municipalities to hold back for fear of incurring heavy expenditures at a time when their revenues, based mainly on the taxation of real property, were already difficult to maintain. However, with the approach of winter, with the numbers of unemployed increasing daily, it was reluctantly admitted that something must be done.

On October 3, 1930, a special committee was appointed by the Municipality of North Cowichan council to bring forward a list of

work that could be undertaken by the municipality. The Committee was also asked to try and arrive at an approximate idea of the number of unemployed there might be expected.\textsuperscript{15}.

It was determined by this committee that emergency road work would be the most beneficial type of work to allot for relief. After this suggestion had been thoroughly discussed and adopted, a resolution was addressed to the Provincial Government, advising them that the total estimated cost of relief works for the municipality would be $7,500. It was later arranged that this cost would be shared by the three levels of government, with 25\% coming from each of the senior bodies and 50\% from the local municipality.

The regulations under which the local municipalities allotted relief were set out as follows: Employment would only be given in urgent cases. Order of application would be followed, but only to suit particular work in hand and distance of applicant from the work. Married men would be given priority. If three days work in one week had been allotted and performed, or if the applicant was unable to start work when offered it, further application would be necessary to replace a name on the list.\textsuperscript{16}

By the first week of November, 1930, special works had been commenced by the City of Duncan, the Municipality of North Cowichan, and the provincial government in the unorganized portions of the valley. The number of men applying was so large, however, that on November 13, Mayor H. P. Prevost, of Duncan, made the following

\textsuperscript{15} "Minutes of the Municipality of North Cowichan", M.S. Municipal Hall, City of Duncan, October 13, 1930.

\textsuperscript{16} The Cowichan Leader, November 6, 1930, p.1.
statement in the Leader:

There has been so much talk and so much published in regard to various schemes for providing work for the unemployed that there is a general impression that all any man has to do, when he is out of work, is to apply to the municipality in which he resides and work will be found for him.

It is, of course, obvious that no municipality can undertake such a task as this. The best that can be done is to assist to a limited extent by providing work where families are in actual want and almost destitute.

The amount of money placed at the disposal of the City of Duncan is very small and is intended solely for relief work.

Some have applied for relief work who have been working steadily all summer. Also many young, single men have registered. All of these are apparently under the impression that there is a large sum of money to be spent for the unemployed and that "they may just as well get their share of it."

The object of these remarks is to make it clear that the City of Duncan cannot possibly find employment for all those out of work; that the funds at their disposal are decidedly limited; that we have the winter still before us and that those with wives and children, who are in actual want and distress, must of necessity be given first consideration. 17.

Meanwhile, in an effort to relieve the strain which was being placed upon the cities in British Columbia by the large numbers of unemployed loggers who were seeking relief, a plan was advanced by the logging operators suggesting that 7,000 loggers could be housed and fed throughout the winter in the logging camps until such time as the industry, which normally employed about 11,000, could put them to work again. Single men out of work as a result of reduced logging operations could be returned to their camps to be given shelter and food there. Reduced fares to effect this purpose might be granted by the steamship companies, and funds

needed for food could be advanced by the government, to be re-
bated later by the men when their jobs were open to them again. 
Married men could continue to be handled in the municipal relief 
scheme. This proposal was endorsed by the City of Vancouver au-
thorities, with Mayor W. H. Malkin arguing that the government 
should assist in this attempt to "keep the men in the woods and 
out of the bread lines." 18. 

However, it would appear that the plan was never endorsed by the Provincial Government, and local 
municipalities were left to fare as well as they could.

While the unemployment situation was becoming increasingly 
serious, it was still not as bad as it might have been. Most of 
the larger camps and mills on Vancouver Island continued to op-
erate throughout 1930, although the aggregate production was down 
to about 25% of normal. 19. The demand for logs was such that fur-
ther output was not essential, but camp operators would just as 
soon not have their plants idle. In some cases local operators 
were actuated primarily by the desire to keep as many men as poss-
ible employed. Considering the proportions of the industry and 
the prevailing market conditions, the number of men out of work 
was regarded as small.

To ensure that the funds allotted by the provincial govern-
ment for relief purposes would be sufficient, Cowichan's local 
municipalities maintained a rigid control over expenditures. Fur-
ther regulations were added to those already laid out for relief 
applicants, so that only those in the most depraved condition 
would be considered. All persons seeking relief were now required

to make a declaration stating what other funds, if any, were available to them. It was further charged that all cheques issued on relief work be stamped "relief". This move would undoubtedly discourage many of the local unemployed from submitting to the humiliation of what they regarded as the "dole". For, in small, rural communities like Cowichan, the acceptance of aid was accompanied by a social stigma.

With the arrival of the new year the people of Cowichan were able to look back over the first twelve months of the depression and to count the cost. The rapid development of 1929 had been seriously curtailed. In contrast to the record construction period of that year, only $33,650 worth of building had been done in 1930. 20 This was the lowest figure since 1922. Liquor sales, which in 1929 stood at $180,678.80, had dropped by $54,000 to $126,789.70. 21 All of the business concerns in the city had registered decided losses over the previous year. Not the least of those organizations to be seriously affected was the local hospital.

Early in 1931, the hospital's financial condition became critical. Because of the extended closure in the lumber industry and the continuing rise in unemployment, The King's Daughters' Hospital was going broke for lack of patronage. In February, it was announced that unless $5,000 was found immediately, the hospital would have no alternative but to close. The forest closure

had brought a loss of $1,000 a month during the last five months of 1930, and already in January of 1931, it had experienced a loss of $1,500.

Dr. A. S. Lamb, Provincial Hospital Inspector, announced that it would be necessary to shut down a portion of the hospital in order to reduce overhead. There was definitely no use looking to the government for any financial help beyond the seventy cents per patient per day that was currently being paid.

The depressed conditions of 1930 were also responsible for bringing various inter-municipal differences to a head. One which was to crop up with almost monotonous regularity during the thirties concerned the matter of school costs.

In 1919, the City of Duncan and the Municipality of North Cowichan ratepayers had voted approval of consolidation of their respective school districts. In 1922, the northern end of the Municipality of North Cowichan (the Chemainus region) had desired separation and the Consolidated School District had been redefined. At this revision of the Consolidated School District, Duncan had insisted that the payment for transportation was none of their business and the North Cowichan representatives had agreed to assume the whole burden of transportation costs.

The consequences of this move were shown when the school accounts for 1930 were examined:

City of Duncan (274 pupils) cost $10,260 or $37.50 each.
North Cowichan (259 pupils) cost $13,027 or $50.30 each.  

ation might be of equal benefit educationally to the children, the economic benefits fell entirely to Duncan.

It is a fact that removal of the North Cowichan pupils from Duncan to say Chemainus would stop a flow of $55.00 each day in the year from North Cowichan into Duncan.23.

The North Cowichan council therefore appealed to the City fathers to consent to bear their equal proportion of all Consolidated School expenses, but the latter group were content with the arrangement as it stood and let the matter drop.

While conditions in the Cowichan Valley were serious enough in the early part of 1931, the local officials were not faced with the unemployment problems of areas like Revelstoke, Kamloops, or Vernon, where the railway lines deposited fresh groups of hungry men with each train. However, some of these transients did find their way into the valley, as may be witnessed in the following article.

Like many others through this intense industrial depression, I am on the hobo, and have perchance drifted into the little town of Duncan, and am much struck by the atmosphere of the charming environs, resembling an old world garden village. My abode has been in the local caravan-seria, near the sand pit, or more rudely and commonly known as "the jungles" - a graceful compliment to Darwin indeed!

Our life isn't what one would call a bed of roses and the sweaty aura of our midst not quite the fragrance of sweet smelling myrtle, but we are indeed an interesting little crowd and our emotions and idiosyncrasies would certainly intrigue the more placid dweller of main street. .... Thus we make the best of our life today in this chaotic condition of industry; "Micawbre-like", waiting for things to turn up ...

Box Car, No. 372907,
Duncan Freight Yard.24.

---


It was in an effort to combat the ever growing number of transients who were flocking into British Columbia, that the Provincial Government came up with a new unemployment relief scheme in July, 1931. According to the new plan, whether or not a man got relief depended not upon local municipal officials, but upon the authorities in Victoria. Previously the care of transients had fallen upon the municipality in which they happened to be. But now the government had assumed responsibility for them. They were to be moved out of the cities and placed in what were commonly known as "great concentration camps", to work on highway projects. There they would be given food and shelter and a "subsistence allowance". This was not meant to be a wage, and would be nothing like the previous year's rate of four dollars a day. Citizens of the Cowichan area were warned that these camps would not necessarily be for transients only. Every applicant for registration must undertake "to go to any provincial government unemployment relief camp", if and when required.

To be entitled to relief under the new scheme a person must be "in need of the necessities of life, or destitute and without means of subsistence, not actively employed or in receipt of any permanent charitable allowance of any source."

There had been a slight resumption of employment in the local lumber industry late in the spring of 1931, but with only the Chemainus and the Youbou mills working steadily, and with the government supported relief schemes having come to a close at the end of March, the situation remained serious. Private citizens, while they may have been unsure of the causes behind the depression,
felt a definite sense of responsibility toward the unemployed in the area. The following poem illustrates this feeling:

I think the time has come to say
To everyone of us today,
"Go, and help our fellow man"
Let us all do what we can
And try in one way or another
To help our hungry, workless brother.
So that by such means as we may,
We'll help and cheer him on his way.
It's a situation we've got to face.
'Tis a duty we owe the human race...
Some can do much, and others more.
Then give as you never gave before,
But not with patronizing show.
These men have feelings, too, you know.
It will come to pass, make no mistake,
If they don't receive, they'll simply take,
And if they do, they're not to blame.
In a like position we'd do the same,
For every man, of any nation,
Will steal when faced with stark starvation.
Some say, "They have themselves to blame."
That may be true, but all the same
There's one thing we're too prone to do -
Condemn the lot because of a few.
But we're not concerned with why or how
They got that way. They're hungry now.
That's all that matters, and we must give
Them money and food that they may live.
But for the grace of the Diety we
All in a similar plight would be.
I have no doubt, but our friend R.B.
Will raise some money, and then will see
Them through the winter, but that is all
He promises. What of summer, and fall?
There are scores of plans to relieve the strain,
And many are worrying heart and brain.
Division of labour, the shortening of hours,
Conscription of wealth by our governing powers;
But we want no revolution here,
And meanwhile, everyone should give
What they can, that their buddies may live. 25.

The local municipal and city councils were also becoming increasingly worried about the local unemployment problem. In August, 1931, with the prospect of another winter before them, and with even more serious unemployment conditions than those faced in 1930, the North Cowichan council appointed a committee composed of the reeve, one councillor, and the road superintendent to interview the Provincial Unemployment Committee, stressing the fact that the Municipality had no money available for relief, and not much, if any, work required to be done. The committee explained to the Hon. R. W. Bruhm, Minister of Public Works, that the previous winter the Municipality had given relief to 159 men at a cost of $10,500. This year they estimated that at least 200 men would want relief and that at least $15,000 would be needed. Bruhm was not able to say what assistance the Provincial Government would be able to give however, as they were still waiting to see what action the Federal Government would take.

At this point, with the number of unemployed growing daily, and with the future uncertain, an attempt was made by a group of outsiders to organize the unemployed in the Cowichan district. This movement was sponsored by the National Unemployed Workers Association, a Communist led organization affiliated with the Workers Unity League. J. R. Berry of Victoria and Tom Bradley, the Vancouver organizer for the N.U.W.A., spoke to a small crowd of fifty or so unemployed who attended the Association's open-air meeting in August.

The purpose of the National Unemployed Workers Association was allegedly to take up any grievances of the unemployed; to care for the people who were out of work; and to advance the standard of wages of the working class.

The Association's demands were as follows:

1. That all married unemployed should receive four days relief work a week at union wages, or failing this, the cash equivalent.

2. That all single persons should receive two days' work a week at union wages or cash equivalent.

3. That there should be no evictions in the event of a person out of work being unable to pay his taxes.

4. The Association takes no notice of race discrimination and that all persons, no matter what nationality are treated on the same basis.

5. Abolition of "government prison camps".

6. A non-contributory insurance for persons unemployed. 27.

Bradley maintained that the capitalists were trying to unload the burden or crisis of the depression on the backs of the workers through methods such as wage-cuts, speed-ups, and unemployment camps. "In registering for these camps, you, the unemployed, should be very careful in taking the proper precautions in filling out the blanks. Do this carefully and don't let the officials in charge of this make you act against your mind." 28.

He went on to compare the situation in Canada with that in Russia. "The standard of the working classes in Russia is superior to that of those in the United States and Canada."

Contending that unemployed individuals would receive no help by applying to the local municipal authorities, he stressed the

27. The Cowichan Leader, August 27, 1931, p.1.
need for a branch of the N.U.W.A. in Duncan. "There needs to be a local branch with a chairman and delegates to make representations to these bodies, and when they see that you are in earnest and also that you belong to an association that is nation-wide, they will think twice before refusing you aid."

A few people in the area, particularly the younger European and Scandinavian groups in the logging camps, accepted the N.U.W.A. proposals and began to organize a local branch, but for the most part, local opinion was not in favour with the Association's ideas. The editor of the Leader probably voiced the majority opinion when he wrote:

If the standard of the working classes in Russia is better than it is here, it might be well for all concerned if those who think so would save up their money or work their own passages to that land of happiness.

Those who are unemployed in this city and district stand to gain much more from the sympathy and efforts of their own friends and neighbours who make up the community than from the vapourings of representatives of so-called unemployed associations which have appeared in the larger cities.

Most of us see ... that work and wages have to be secured for a considerable number of men, even in this district. The government and the municipal bodies are doing their best to devise means to overcome the problem. The duty of every loyal Canadian is to assist them to do it. 29.

A further reaction to the N.U.W.A. was forthcoming at a meeting of the local branch of the Canadian Legion a few weeks later. The attention of the members was drawn to the clause in their constitution which states: "No avowed anarchist, communist, or other

29. The Cowichan Leader, August 27, 1931, p.4.
person who advocates the destruction of organized government in Canada by force, shall be permitted to become or remain a member."

In this connection, it was pointed out that at a recent meeting of the National Unemployed Workers Association, Duncan Branch, a circular had been handed out which contained the following, under the signature of the local executive committee:

Join the N.U.W.A.; affiliated to the Workers' Unity League (Canadian Section of the Red International or Labour Unions) ... Forward to a programme of militant struggle against capitalism ... Rally to the banner of the revolutionary unions.30.

It was then pointed out that at least one member of the Legion was connected with this organization, and the executive was asked to investigate and take the necessary action.

From this point on, little was heard of the local branch of the N.U.W.A., although the organization did meet with more sympathy in some up-island communities. Areas like Ladysmith and Nanaimo, which had more of a history of labour agitation than did Cowichan, were particularly receptive to the League's proposals.

In the meantime, some progress was being made by the local municipalities in the matter of setting up relief work for the coming winter. The Hon. R. W. Bruhm, Minister of Public Works, notified the local officials that the two senior governments had at last reached an agreement. Federal assistance would be available for certain provincial public works in the autumn of 1931. Henceforth municipalities would be expected to provide relief only for men with dependents when these men and their dependents were bona fide municipal residents who had resided continuously

in the municipality from May 1, 1931. The dominion and the provincial governments were to undertake, jointly the relief or employment of all single unemployed men without dependents who were residents in the municipality, and also of all unemployed transients who had entered the municipality before May 1, 1931. Relief allowance rates were established as follows: two dollars a day for labourers; two-twenty a day for teamsters; two-fifty a day to fallers, buckers, rock-drillers, and gradermen; and two-seventy-five a day to truck drivers, tractor-drivers, and powder-men. In addition to the above, a subsistence allowance of eighty cents a day was payable directly to the dependent family of each worker. 31.

Reeve G. A. Tisdall sent a letter to the Hon. R. W. Bruhm, setting out the position of the Municipality of North Cowichan with regard to this new relief scheme, objecting to certain features of the method used to allot the relief. He also pointed out that the government, in taking care of transients and men without dependents, while leaving married men and their dependents as a municipal responsibility, was giving far less benefit to rural municipalities than to the larger city municipalities. For, while Vancouver had 2,215 transients, Cowichan only had 8; similarly, while Vancouver had 6,111 men without dependents, Cowichan had only 38. Other arguments contained in the letter were as follows:

2. For this municipality to undertake a 50% labour cost agreement with the government on the basis of the government registration and under the present schedule of subsistence allowance, six days per week would total in the next six months an expenditure of some $27,000 for labour and some $5,000 for materials, etc., of which amounts we should have to pay $18,500.
4. The present intentions of the government, if carried out, will necessitate our ratepayers being taxed in 1932 for the sum ... ($18,500) in addition to $16,000 representing the approximate cost of our ordinary road work for the coming year. (N.B. The above figures do not take into consideration the increase in registrations, which are coming in some two or three daily.) It is therefore undeniable that:

   a) Any share laid upon this municipality could not exceed 20% with a limit of $3,000.

   b) This municipality must have the decision as to who is eligible to receive work, as we feel we can interpret the applicants' actual needs and circumstances in a more satisfactory manner than through the medium of government registration.

   c) This municipality must not be tied down to giving six days work per week.\[32.

By September, 1931, 347 men were registered for relief work in the Cowichan area; 121 of them from the unorganized territory; 127 from the Municipality of North Cowichan; and 70 from the City of Duncan. Of these, thirteen were transients.\[33. It was imperative that new relief works be developed.

On September 21, a special meeting was held by the North Cowichan council to deal with the ever-growing unemployment problem. A number of ratepayers and representatives of the Duncan Chamber of Commerce were on hand to offer suggestions as to the most suitable programme of works to be proposed by the municipality. The schemes chiefly taken up were:

1. A general road improvement programme to cost approximately $7,500.

2. A sewerage system for Chemainus townsite under the Local Improvement Act, to cost approximately $1,400.


33. The Cowichan Leader, September 17, 1931, p.1.
3. A Mount Prevost road costing from $4,000 to $25,000 according to the type of road desired. \[34\]

After all present had given their opinions, the reeve was authorized to go to Victoria to conclude an agreement for unemployment relief in accordance with the letter already sent to the Minister of Public Works.

Late in September the Municipality of North Cowichan's new works for relief plan was approved. It included the general road improvement programme, and the sewerage system for Chemainus townsite. In addition, a new cost sharing system had been worked out for payment of relief works. Under this plan the municipalities were asked to pay one quarter of the labour cost of approved municipal undertakings and all material costs.

For its share of relief work in 1931, the City of Duncan proposed a surface drainage scheme which would cost approximately $1,200. The Dominion Government was to pay 50 percent of the total cost, the Provincial Government 25 percent of the labour cost, and the city was to pay the balance.

Public reliance on relief continued to grow and as it did so, it gave rise to new and difficult social problems. One citizen could not help but notice the "extraordinary apathy of the general public, the electors of this province, and particularly of this district towards the subject of politics." He continued:

How many can say that they have tried to do their bit or have done one little thing to help the cause of good government? The majority, I fear, can only admit to carping and criticisms and the use of such phrases as "bunch of crooks", "No, not for me", and such and similar self-righteous things.

Others, and not a few businessmen and working men who have said the same to me, say, "I just daren't take part, I'll lose some business", or, "I might lose my job!" or, "My son (or brother) works on the road and I dare not take part in politics."

One does not blame these three latter; one can but sympathize; for the sum of the whole thing is that under the patronage system theirs is the common-sense view and unfortunately for good government, only too true ... 35.

In the City of Duncan, according to the census figures compiled on June 1, 1931, of a total of 590 wage earners, twenty years of age and over, 231 or 39.2% were unemployed. And it may safely be surmised that the proportion would be even larger in the Municipality of North Cowichan and the unorganized territory in the valley which were populated in large part by loggers and their families. For these many unemployed people, relief, if they were destitute enough to be receiving it, was only providing a subsistence livelihood.

The fundamental objection to the direct relief which many were forced to accept even though they would have preferred to work for their money, was that it bred the very conditions it was seeking to relieve. It generated poverty and pauperism. In many cases it denied the worthy and rewarded the unworthy, and in every case it failed completely to solve the problems arising from unemployment. Such a scheme gave assistance only to the destitute, to those who were reduced to a condition where life or health was threatened by absolute lack of food, clothing or shelter. It penalized the thrifty workman by denying him aid until his savings and property were exhausted, while it gave relief

35. The Cowichan Leader, October 15, 1931, p.4.
promptly after loss of his job to the man who was careless with his wages while he was at work.

Unemployment was reducing drastically and dangerously the living standards of the majority of the working people. Health and vitality were being undermined while there were serious increases in malnutrition and dental defects among school children. The very present problem of caring for those sick people who were on relief fell upon the nurses of the Duncan Health Centre. Food and shelter might be provided through relief allowances and community help, but care in sickness was a special problem because it required the services of trained peoples. Doctors were doing a wonderful work, giving their time and services, but they could not carry on alone. The free services of the Health Centre nurses were particularly of value when families, due to financial stress or because of the barrier of an unpaid doctor's bill, would not call a physician unless, in their opinion, there was an absolute need for him.

One of the most serious conditions noted by the nurses in their visits to the homes of the unemployed was an increasing nervous instability and breaking down of the moral fibre of the people. One nurse observed:

This worry and uncertainty is gradually undermining their health and unless there is an improvement in the economic world, serious consequences may result. Any change for the better would be quickly reflected in the general health of the population. 36.
Perhaps the worst consequence of the continuing depression was that unemployment was killing freedom. No man or woman is free who lacks the means of livelihood. He is not free to say what he thinks, to do the simple things he would like to do, to function independently as a free citizen, if he must bend every step towards obtaining a job or if he must beg for charity.

Expenditure of public money on roads and streets might assist in tiding over some of the unemployed, but it would not solve the problem of continuous unemployment. Perhaps a more satisfactory solution to the economic crisis, particularly in an urban area such as Cowichan, would be to pursue a "back-to-the-land" movement. For surely, suggested the Leader, there was no better means of disposing of the unemployed population. It would not be an easy task, for in the past, farm settlement schemes had proved both abortive and exceedingly costly. But former attempts had taken place during prosperous times, times when the comparison between the man on the land was with the man in the city earning big wages and patronizing the bright lights. Now the comparison was rather with the city man out of work. It was noted that:

Not long ago this country was spending millions to induce Europeans to come here and settle on the land. Why not tackle the problem ourselves? With British Columbia importing around $120,000,000 worth of agricultural produce each year, there appears to be room for expansion of our farming industry. 37.

By the end of 1931, there seemed to be little cause for renewed hope in the future. Lumber markets were becoming increasingly more scarce and production had fallen to a fraction of its former volume. There is little wonder then, that a great deal of enthusiasm and interest were shown not only in Cowichan but throughout the province when, in November, the Hillcrest Lumber Company commenced operation of a new mill, the first of its kind in Canada. The self-contained plant had been erected to meet the exacting British demands for accurately sawn lumber. Carleton Stone, managing director of the Hillcrest Company, had toured Britain and the Scandinavian countries during the previous year and was now making an active bid to recapture a portion of the British market which had been lost to the Russians in 1929.

The new mill was equipped with a Swedish gang-saw and the lumber was produced in exactly the same way as the Baltic countries had been doing for the United Kingdom. The aim of the new plant was accurate sawing, the lessening of waste, and simplicity of operation. In a nine hour day the seven man crew was capable of producing 40,000 feet, and the mill was built so that the equipment could be doubled if market conditions warranted it.

The first shipment of specially cut and kiln-dried Vancouver Island timber left Hillcrest for the United Kingdom in February, 1932. The shipment was a significant portent for the British Columbia lumber industry, but unfortunately the British market was not yet well enough developed to maintain the operation of the new mill, and once again Carleton Stone set out for Britain,

Norway and Sweden in search of new markets and more efficient methods. He was to return in September, however, still uncertain as to when he would resume operations.

At the beginning of 1932, the City of Duncan was able to take stock of its position after nearly two years of depressed conditions. Financially the city was found to be basically sound. The previous year's taxes had been paid up well, with no less than 89.71% of the year's levy having been collected by December 31. Taxpayers were directed, however, to the following points. First, the city had spent practically nothing during the previous year on tarviating of streets, whereas in normal years several thousand dollars would have been expended on this work. Owing to increased relief costs in 1931, the council had found it necessary early in 1932 either to retrench or to increase taxes, and a former course had been adopted in an effort to help the residents of the area.

Second, in spite of tax collections being so good, there was a serious falling off of revenue in certain other directions as compared with the previous year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1931</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poll taxes</td>
<td>765.00</td>
<td>525.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Licence Fees</td>
<td>4,344.00</td>
<td>3,991.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road tax receipts</td>
<td>236.00</td>
<td>114.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquor profits</td>
<td>3,035.57</td>
<td>2,507.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was no doubt in the officials' minds but what these items would show a still further reduction in 1932, trade licence fees especially, on account of several businesses being closed.

Warnings had also been received from the Provincial Govern-

ment of an impending reduction in school grants and the intimation that aid in other directions would be seriously reduced. City Council was now faced with the problem of meeting increased expenses arising out of the still growing unemployment relief costs without increasing taxes. It was therefore deemed advisable to cut out, absolutely, all expenditures that were not essential for the upkeep of the town.

The North Cowichan Council determined to reduce their rate of taxation in an effort to help the overburdened farmers of the area. They also hoped to reduce the costs of road maintenance as a means of furthering their programme of economy. The existing tax rate was 23.7 mills, and this included a provision of $20,000 for roads. The reeve planned to cut the tax rate by two mills, thereby cutting back assessments to a value of $1,820.

These reductions and economies on the part of the local municipal bodies were to be of little significance however, for during the coming year the depression was to hit its lowest depths for the Cowichan region. The year 1932 was to be the bleakest the lumber industry had experienced since 1859, and by far the most serious that Cowichan had ever known. It was also, however, to be the year which produced some of the most interesting responses to the problem of the depression.

The arrival of the new year did not bring with it any signs of the hoped for recovery from unemployment. Instead, labour market conditions continued to deteriorate. By 1932, coastal production of lumber had dropped by approximately 60% from its
1929 level, while the price of lumber had declined to less than half the average of the preceding seventeen years. As a result, many operators, both large and small, had been forced to discontinue production, while others could only continue to work on drastically reduced time schedules.

Perhaps the most severe blow of all to the industry came in the form of the Smoot-Hawley tariff, which effectively excluded British Columbia's lumber from the United States. This tariff, designed to protect American industries from competition with foreign sources in the home market, became law on July 1, 1932. This Congressional action virtually shut out British Columbia lumber from the United States, thereby marking the bottom of the slump in the industry.

Under these circumstances it became necessary once again to attempt to repeat the performance of building almost from nothing a new market for British Columbia's lumber. This would be no easy task in a time of world-wide depression, when international trade was declining and intensified nationalism was erecting trade barriers in the form of higher import duties, quotas, and other restrictions.

The plight of Cowichan's farmers was no less serious than that of many of the loggers in the community. Earnings were dropping and taxes were increasing. The average price for butterfat had dropped to 29.45¢ in 1931, from 38.4¢ in 1930 and 45.5¢ in 1929. An increase of 28,927 pounds of butter in 1931 over the previous year's total of 146,368 pounds, did little to offset the

price differential. The farmers of the area, speaking through the auspices of the Cowichan Creamery Association, felt that it was absolutely necessary to demand a halt in the orgy of public expenditure. They strongly criticized the whole fabric of living in British Columbia as being entirely out of proportion to the production capacity of the province. A resolution was prepared for the provincial government protesting against any further increase in taxation, looking to the fact that all agricultural commodities had reached very low price levels and that any increase in taxation, no matter for what purpose, would place the farmer in a position wherein he would be unable to maintain himself on the land. John Gibb, manager of the Cowichan Creamery Association, asserted that:

We have a social structure imposed on our country that is out of all proportion to what we produce. I think it is time to call a halt and give the farmers a show and the industrialist not quite so much.

The year 1931 had been one of decreasing commodity prices in agriculture, and the directors of the Creamery Association regretted that there appeared to be no immediate prospect of an increase in prices.

In an effort to help the faltering farmers, a special convention of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities was held with the Provincial Government. A resolution with regard to the high incidence of taxation was submitted. It requested that the Provincial Government be approached with a view to bringing down legislation that would cause the incidence of municipal taxation to

42. Loc. cit.
fall with more equality on every municipal taxpayer, instead of, as it stood, almost entirely on the land-owners.

The Municipality of North Cowichan submitted the following figures, based on a recent year's taxes showing the inequitable manner in which taxes were levied.

885 landowners paid $52,000 or 91.8% of the assessment. 887 others paid road taxes and poll taxes of $4,629 or 8.2%. 43.

During the same year the school taxes had amounted to $19,536. Had this sum been equally distributed, it would have averaged $12.43 per head, whereas some farmers had paid as high as $170.00.

The continued failure of the provincial government to act decisively in combating the depression was causing a growing sense of disgust to develop in the Cowichan area. And the Kidd Report, presented to the government in April, 1832, did nothing to mitigate this sense of disillusionment. The Kidd Report, drawn up by a committee of five business and professional men, was a survey of British Columbia's financial situation. This committee suggested that the main reason for the 1932 deficit of $6,500,000 was the extravagance involved in British Columbia's crude form of party politics. Expensive works were undertaken to please influential constituencies, and mere office-seekers who were spending public money freely had no moral position for resistance to demands for social legislation. The government had not foreseen the depression. It had borrowed money in the belief that the buoyant revenues of the prosperous years would continue; and in doing so it had fixed charges too high for the revenue available in poor

Certainly there was no financial provision made in British Columbia for any such contingency. Nor did the educational curriculum of the public schools of the province include any serious attempt to prepare pupils for the economic hardship which they were destined to encounter. When the depression struck, it was met by improvised methods, justified, if at all, by the hope that it would not last very long. The anonymous author of the following poem gives his impression of the provincial government's faltering efforts:

**Politics in B. C.**

Why think of unemployment?  
What matters bankruptcy?  
We are playing again across the Bay  
The same old game in the same old way  
God bless the P.G.E.! 44.

Hugh Savage, commenced an editorial campaign in the Cowichan Leader in the early months of 1932, aimed at doing away with party politics in British Columbia during the depression period. He felt that there was absolutely no excuse for the huge sums spent during the previous fall on roadwork in which a large proportion of the so-called unemployed were very far from being destitute and certainly did not give an honest day's work.

The genuine unemployed do present a vast and complicated problem. Its solution is not helped by inaction such as that of the past winter. Satan, in the form of the Communist has not been idle among idle men.

Our legislators are still running in a groove and consider votes above everything. So far, they have failed to grasp the opportunity to prove whether they have the capacity to govern. The old fog of partisan politics so possesses them that they cannot differentiate between the art of governing and the art of obtaining votes.

What do our elected representatives propose to do after the road programme? ... Cannot the legislature now devise some plan by which every worthy unemployed person can be put in the way of winning at least food and shelter for next winter?

A general election is due soon. If Conservatives and Liberals are sincere in wishing to economize, they will get together and let the election go by acclamation. The public is prepared for economies and realize that British Columbia urgently needs some form of business government during the next four years.45.

Jack Kinellar, who seems to have become Cowichan's protesting poet during the depression, soon joined with Savage, in denouncing the provincial government. The following is an example of one of his many poems.

My Party 'Tis of Thee

Political parties are all much the same,  
There seems to be certain set rules of the game.  
The Government Members will rise and deplore Mistakes of the Party in power before;  
And any old measure, no matter one whit,  
Is crazy to Tory, if sponsored by Grit.  
The bright Opposition, with unction and charm,  
Will stand in their places, and view with alarm,  
All things that the Party in power has done,  
Obstruct every mortal thing under the sun;  
And 'tis often the case, the plan they deride,  
Is something that they would have sponsored with pride.  
To Party advantage, they scheme and debate,  
The needs of the Country can very well wait;  
And so all the members, in tedious procession,  
Waste time, with Election Talk, during the session. 46.

A more important response to Savage's campaign was the formation of the Taxpayers' Economy League. The first meeting of this group was attended by forty-two of the community's most prominent residents. The following resolution was drawn up:

45. The Cowichan Leader, March 10, 1932, p.4.

46. Ibid., April 7, 1932, p.4.
Whereas, it is apparent to the taxpayers of the Cowichan District, assembled today in meeting on a non-party basis, that the financial position of the province is such as to cause grave concern, and

Whereas, it is the opinion of this meeting that the burden of taxation both direct and indirect, has passed beyond all reasonable limits, in view of the prevailing low level of commodity prices, and

Whereas, according to the vast information to be gleaned from press reports it is apparent that our taxing authorities hope to develop new sources of taxation without making any real effort to cut down the cost of administration and of social service;

Therefore, be it resolved that the taxpayers of Cowichan District assembled at this meeting demand that our governments, federal, provincial and municipal, make every effort to curtail expenditure and that in order to enforce our demands this meeting proceed to organize a Taxpayers Defence Association and thereafter to use every effort to bring about the formation of similar organizations in every electoral district in the province.47.

This resolution was signed by the chairman, W. Waldon and the directors, H. B. Vogel, John Gibb, J. H. Whittome, Dennis Ashby, Admiral Rowland Nugent, George H. Savage, Captain A. B. Matthews, K. F. Duncan, C. R. Dreyton and E. W. Neel, some of the most prominent farmers and businessmen in the community. The meeting went on to elect Gibb as president and Whittome as vice-president. The Taxpayers' Economy League's purpose was to impress the necessity of maintaining law and order on all public administrative bodies; the necessity of confining themselves to the proper functions of administration; the necessity of distributing the burden of taxation over all classes in an equitable manner; and the maintenance of rigid economy and businesslike methods of expending public funds.

47. The Cowichan Leader, May 12, 1932, p.1.
Savage's editorial, following formation of the League, reinforced the warnings issued by the businessmen in even more militant terms.

Let the government beware. Let it pay attention to the representatives of thinking men, (Taxpayers' Economy League) apprehensive of the comfort and future of themselves and their families, and - what so many politicians forget - the welfare of their country.

We deplore force. We draw a grave warning to the attention of the government. If it utilizes its powers to perpetuate dishonest acts through constitutional channels, a long suffering people may resort to unconstitutional methods to ensure that those channels are purged. 48.

Quite unwittingly the Leader's militance and exuberance began to arouse the unemployed in Cowichan to more decisive action. On May 26, twenty ratepayers appeared without warning at the North Cowichan Municipal office demanding that some action be taken to help the hundreds of unemployed in the district. There was virtually a total lack of employment in the valley and municipal relief had been cancelled at the end of April. The spokesman for the group, David Coupland, made it clear that many families in the area were practically "up against it", and desperately needed work. Reference was made to the fact that relief work was still being carried on in other districts while in Cowichan it had ceased during the previous month.

Reeve Tisdall informed the men that the council had already been in communication with Victoria regarding the unemployment problem, and suggested that two of them go with him to the capital city to confirm to the government the seriousness of the situation. This idea was approved and David Coupland and Douglas Ford were

selected to accompany the reeve.

On June 2, a special municipal council meeting was held to try and arrange some form of emergency relief. The meeting was attended by a delegation of twenty-eight unemployed municipal ratepayers who were desperately searching for work. The Hon. C. F. Davie, the local M.L.A., was also present and represented the provincial government in the discussion on unemployment. Although it was divulged that not a municipal family, represented by those present, was starving, as had been intimated, the seriousness of the situation in many local homes was made clear. D. Coupland, spokesman for the delegation, explained that the men did not want direct relief, but rather, wanted to work for their money.

Reeve Tisdall sympathized with the men but pointed out that: "It is a recognized fact that unemployment is not lessening, but is still increasing." He went on to report that the committee which had visited Victoria the week before, had received "no glad tidings". The government claimed that they were unable to assist the municipality until current negotiations with the Federal Government concerning relief work should be completed. In spite of this report, the municipal council passed a resolution asking the provincial government to recommence work on the Island Highway diversion at Tyee, as a special emergency relief measure for married men in the community.

When asked by Coupland what the unemployed should do in the

50. Ibid., June 2, 1932, p.1.
meantime, Davie replied, "If you have men who have nothing to eat, they should come to the municipality and obtain direct relief."\textsuperscript{51}

In the meantime, seeing the unsettling effect that his outspoken editorials were having among the local unemployed, Savage cautioned that "the Taxpayers' Economy League did not propose to start a revolution but to work in a constitutional manner."\textsuperscript{52}

For almost three years now the Cowichan Valley had been locked in the ever tightening grip of the depression. It is perhaps no wonder then that certain sections of the community were becoming increasingly disaffected. The farmers in the valley were particularly embittered as they struggled to maintain themselves on their lands while resisting the temptation to join the unemployed on the road-gangs. One of them wrote:

Sir: The squander mania has spread to the North Cowichan municipal council. Just recently a motion ... raising the road men's wages, was passed by council.

I am sure that this action will be condemned by the majority of taxpayers and more particularly by those unfortunates now receiving 18¢ per pound for butterfat; Also by the chicken men selling eggs for below the cost of production.

The additional wages being paid the men now employed could have been used to better advantage by giving one or two extra men a job. There are families in this district not getting enough to eat. Patriotism is just as necessary in peace time as in war. The men guilty of expecting and accepting a raise of wages at the expense of their fellow men are, to my mind, most unpatriotic.

Might I suggest ... that the farmer is the only man that has been faithful to the community. For years the

\textsuperscript{51} The Cowichan Leader, June 2, 1932, p.1.

\textsuperscript{52} Loc. cit.
public has ridden on his back. He is the only man who does not get any returns on thousands of dollars invested in land, stock and implements, and, with the present price of farm produce, one does not get one cent for the long hours of labour on the farm. 53.

Many of the unemployed, being ex-servicemen, were members of the Canadian Legion. It must have been particularly disheartening for these men who, having risked their lives for the cause of freedom and democracy, now found themselves struggling to stay alive in what should have been a land of plenty.

Having struck several Germans with a bayonet
For Canada, the Empire, and Civilization,
This unemployed ex-service man
Surveys the fruits of his endeavours. 54.

Members of the Legion attempted to help each other with small jobs as much as they were able. For, like many other members of the community, they were of the opinion that if the public helped with provisional work and did not deal with Orientals, there would be little need to call on the municipalities or the government.

The solution to the problem of the Great Depression was not that simple however. The country was by this time facing a situation which was far more serious than that known during the war. For at least during the war years dependents were taken care of; there was a Patriotic Fund; and there was work for everyone. But by 1932, jobs had become "rarer than diamonds", and the general feeling of unrest was increasing. Something must be done.

We venture to suggest that the time for concerted action is here. It is madness to sit inactive. If the

53. The Cowichan Leader, June 2, 1932, p.4.
government will not act, then the local bodies must do all in their power to improve the situation. 55.

The burden was by no means eased when in June the local schools released a flood of young men and women, boys and girls onto the labour market. What were they to do?

We come with pulses clear and strong
And gay winds rippling fleet,
With dancing hope and running song -
We come on eager feet.

Still as the land, without a sign,
Dark images, uncouth,
We stand against a light May sky -
The living-dead of youth! 56.

Leaving school or college, and giving up plans for advanced education, they attempted to help support the family in its crisis. Many others left their homes in an effort to relieve the family's economic strain. Roaming the country, not yet settled down to a very disciplined existence, it was inevitable that they become "bums", unreliable, incapable, indolent, and unemployable.

Some people in Cowichan were suggesting that single men and women with employment be made to give up their place to married men with families. But this was not an answer to the problem. Youth too demanded the right to live and to work. The editor of the Leader warned:

To condemn our young people to idleness and worse is folly unspeakable. Its consequences to them and to us scarcely bear thinking of - but they must be thought of. And some plan of work must be devised. 57.

Every effort was being made by the local officials to keep

55. The Cowichan Leader, June 23, 1932, p.4.
57. The Cowichan Leader, June 23, 1932, p.4.
as many young people as possible enrolled in the district's schools. For during the depression a great deal of emphasis was placed upon the value of education. In a time when employers were able to pick and choose from a huge labour market, they invariably took the man with the best educational qualifications.

However, by the summer of 1932, money was becoming so scarce that people began to question the value of the educational system, and increasing public concern was expressed over what were described as "exhorbitant educational costs". As one man put it:

Sir: Can we continue to finance the cost of our educational system, under the present economic conditions?

It would seem that a reduction of at least half in such costs must be effected at once, and to do this, it will be necessary to lower our school teachers' salaries by a substantial amount. ... It is impossible to maintain taxation at the old level. ... It is to their (the teachers') interests to accept a big reduction now with continued employment rather than to have some schools closed. 58.

On June 30, 1932, with the end of term, the school board released six teachers and a principal, and severely cut back the salaries of the remaining teachers.

Even the community's churches were finding it difficult to meet their obligations during the period. St. Peter's, the mother Anglican church in the district, had "met all its obligations in 1931, but in 1932 all stipends were reduced by 10%. The parish had raided ... its reserve funds the previous year, but in 1932 ... there were no reserve funds. The Bishop exhorted the parishioners to give jewellery to the church to augment funds." 59.

58. The Cowichan Leader, July 14, 1932, p.4.

59. Williams, D. R., One Hundred Years at St. Peter's, Cowichan Leader, Duncan, 1967, p.32.
As conditions continued to worsen, the Taxpayers' Economy League was persisting with its efforts to come up with some effective measures to combat the grave economic situation facing the community and the province. A gathering of sixty members unanimously adopted the following platform in June, 1932.

1. To press for a provincial redistribution measure, whereby a reduction of at least 50% of the membership of the provincial legislature will be effected and that we are prepared to recommend the Cowichan-Newcastle Electoral District be merged with other provincial districts, provided, however, that a similar policy be adopted throughout this province.

2. That the number of cabinet ministers be reduced.

3. That responsibility for expenditure on roads be placed directly on the district engineers; that permanent road employees be retained where they have proved to be effective, and that casual labour be distributed fairly amongst those who need work.

4. That, for the time being, no new capital expenditures be made on roads or buildings.

5. That the control of school expenditure in cities and municipalities be vested in the city and municipal councils.

6. That expenditures on education be reduced; that alterations be made in the school curriculum, and that the taxation for school purposes be more widely distributed so as to reduce the present excessive burden on lands.

7. That all existing government owned enterprises (with the exception of the Liquor Control Board) be disposed of on the best terms obtainable and as speedily as possible, and that the government do not again enter into other commitments for government ownership.

8. That expenditures on social services be more rigidly supervised and administered under the existing regulations and, where necessary, the regulations be amended to prevent abuse.

9. That whereas the revenue for the year ending March
31, 1933, is likely to fall short of expectations by a considerable amount, it is therefore the opinion of the Taxpayers' Economy League that drastic reductions in the costs of administration should be made in all provincial government departments, such being brought about by:

a) cutting down the present excessive overhead costs of the various departments and

b) by the elimination of all such services as cannot be regarded as absolutely necessary.  

The League went on to express its concern over the growing sense of apathy which was apparent in the Cowichan area, resulting from the extended period of unemployment.

The people seemed incapable of even protesting effectively. This was a dangerous situation for, as the League pointed out, the problem was far from being near an end. Indeed, there was still a long period of depression ahead; some even suggested that the bankruptcy of the province was not far removed.

Savage reinforced the opinions of the Economy League. He placed the onus for the present economic condition at the people's feet, and challenged them to face up to their responsibility.

There are no corners to be turned in this depression. It came upon us slowly, like an insidious disease. We shall grow out of it slowly if we face it like men. Of one fact we may be sure: There can be no improvement for anyone until the prices of primary commodities, of farm produce, begin to rise and keep rising steadily.

You may go broke, may even wander the country looking for food, but you may still keep your soul intact. It is not for nothing that one liturgy prays: "In all time of our wealth, Good Lord, deliver us." We have all had an era of unprecedented luxury and spending. It turned many of our heads and hearts. Are we now entirely repentant?

The Leader also renewed the charge that the majority of those who were receiving relief, were not giving a day's work for a day's pay. It was probably true that a certain number of those drawing relief were indolent and incapable. But their critics should not have forgotten that a very large part of this indolence and unemployability was attributable to the economic insecurity, the state of privation, and the consequent bad social conditions under which these people were forced to live.

Fortunately, not all of those who were forced to accept relief work became apathetic or lost their sense of pride. In reply to an editorial which had suggested that most of the workers were loafing around at the taxpayers' expense, one of the relief workers wrote: "I am only an ex-Royal Marine and jolly glad, at present, to get as much work as I can, even at relief rates, I can only say that your assertion that 95% of relief workers are openly and shamelessly loafing is a lie."\(^62\).

Still another letter to the editor contradicted a charge that a group of men had quit a job (picking peas) on account of the heat.

The facts are that those men ... were overcome by the excessive wages, 15¢ per hour, and had the nerve to strike for 25¢ per hour.

No doubt the heat on that day (90 degrees in the shade) induced them to ask for that excessive wage!

Another point is that none of these men are asking or expect relief from the city.

The present trend among some employers of labour is to bring the wages down to 15¢ per hour. They tell you they can get Chinamen for 10¢

---

62. The Cowichan Leader, August 18, 1932, p.4.
Who can blame the men for kicking? 63.

Some encouraging news was forthcoming during the summer of 1932, when the people in Cowichan heard that the British Columbia lumbermen were preparing to make the strongest bid ever attempted for the lumber trade of the United Kingdom. For the United Kingdom was the greatest lumber importing country in the world, requiring over thirty-three billion feet a year. If that market could be captured or even shared in a reasonable way with the other great producing areas, the problem of the province's first industry would be largely solved.

In July, 1932, representatives of Great Britain and the Dominions, met in Ottawa in order to find some solution to the general economic impasse in which their respective nations found themselves. They agreed that the only hope for solution lay in increased intra-Commonwealth trade encouraged by imperial preference. The significance of Britain's abandonment of her traditional policy of free trade to British Columbia lumbermen lay in the 10% preference which Great Britain agreed to accord to lumber from the Dominions.

The 10% preference did not prove large enough, however, to dislodge the Baltic and Russian products from the United Kingdom markets. The Canadian industry, therefore, requested a preference of at least 20%. Great Britain did not agree but instead, in accordance with Article 21 of the Ottawa Trade Agreement, imposed an embargo on Soviet lumber. 64. This embargo was to be one

63. The Cowichan Leader, August 18, 1932, p.4.
of the principal causes of labour trouble in the British Columbia lumber industry during the next few years, as Communist agitators worked to disrupt production, in the hope that Russia would once again be able to step into the breech.

The Baltic region now remained the Canadian industry's most serious competitor in the United Kingdom, and in the Commonwealth and Empire. This formidable competition was based upon ample, satisfactory and accessible forest resources, first class machinery, high grade management, competent labour at under 15¢ per hour, and a freight haul averaging only 1,000 miles to the United Kingdom market, as compared with British Columbia's 9,000 miles. 65.

British Columbia's lumbermen were willing and anxious to accept the challenge, however, and began an active sales campaign in the fall of 1932. Over the next few years the success of their efforts would become quite evident as shipments of 81,000,000 feet to the United Kingdom in 1931 were to grow to 455,000,000 feet by 1934. 66. This great consumption of lumber in Great Britain in the depression decade was based on the decision of the British government to aid slum clearance and to subsidize large-scale housing development projects.

The Ottawa Trade Agreements also gave British Columbia a good position in the Australian market. Australian trade grew rapidly from 41,000,000 feet in 1929, to 158,000,000 feet in 1937, as British Columbia's share in the total export of lumber from the Pacific Coast to the Australian market rose from 16% in 1929

to 92% in 1934. 67.

It would be some time, however, before direct benefits from these negotiations would be felt in the Cowichan area. In the meantime, conditions continued to deteriorate during the summer and fall of 1932. Those few men who were still employed in the lumber industry, at either the Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing mill at Chemainus or in the Industrial Timber Mills at Youbou, had received three wage cuts since the beginning of the year and were now earning only 25c an hour; and closure of these last two mills seemed imminent. 68.

The winter of 1932 was by far the worst ever experienced in the Cowichan Valley. Over 25% of the population in the Municipality of North Cowichan were being supported by direct relief; the need was estimated to be at least 50% more urgent than that of the preceding year. 69. The Duncan Health Centre nurses, who were probably more aware than anyone of what was going on behind the scenes, gave a report on conditions just prior to Christmas.

Families on relief had only enough money to purchase foodstuffs, there was no surplus for clothes or shoes. And even the food purchased was of the most inexpensive quality. "While we all may be able to subsist on vegetables for a long time, we undoubtedly need meat, eggs, and a little fish occasionally, in fact they are necessities." Many of the unemployed hunted deer, in defiance of game regulations, while others fished for cod or dug clams to eke out their meager relief funds.

During the previous winter the Health Centre had managed to keep most people clothed, but with the passage of another year their stock of clothing and underwear was practically gone. Children were in desperate need of woolen underthings and stockings, and the Centre was anticipating a deluge of requests, particularly if the cold weather continued. It was not a case of extravagance, but of families, through unemployment, eking out a subsistence on bare necessities, until those necessities were at an end.

In the face of this emergency the local service clubs, the Health Centre, and the newspaper sponsored a drive to collect foodstuffs, clothing, and any cash which might be available. In spite of the extremely severe conditions being experienced by most of the population, the response to the plea demonstrated that community spirit was still strong, as enough material was collected to assist more than seventy families over the Christmas period.

The new year did not offer much in the way of hope. Mayor Prevost's New Year's message forecast a much harder year than that through which the city had just passed. Building permits in 1932 had been the lowest ever recorded, with only $8,673 worth of construction being carried out. The volume of sales at the farmer's market had increased slightly but further price drops in 1932 had meant that little profit was forthcoming. Liquor sales had reached an all-time low, having dropped over $115,000 from the 1929 level, to stand at $65,479.00. What was even more

70. The Cowichan Leader, January 12, 1933, p.1.
startling was the decrease in the birth rate which in 1930 stood at 111, and in 1932 only reached 88.  

In an open letter to the Leader in January, the mayor was able to make some encouraging remarks. The City of Duncan was still rated financially as one of the most sound municipalities in the province. At a time when many municipalities were defaulting, Duncan's bonds were being quoted at a price near provincial issues. In addition, all of her sinking funds were fully paid up to date and intact.  

The Municipality of North Cowichan had managed to come through the year with a surplus of $6,700, a figure far exceeding the estimated amount. Unexpectedly good tax collections and sales of land made for the higher surplus. During the year the ratepayers' share of relief costs had come to $1,500. It was becoming increasingly difficult, however, to find economic work to allot for relief.  

In the spring of 1933, provision of work for the unemployed was by far the greatest problem facing the local officials. The large Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing Co.'s mill at Chemainus had failed to reopen after the Christmas closure, thereby leaving the Industrial Timber Mills plant at You's as the only operating mill in the valley.  

By March, the Municipality of North Cowichan council reported that over one-quarter of the municipal population was receiving direct relief and that the number was growing daily. There were

73. The Cowichan Leader, January 12, 1933, p.7.  
74. Loc. cit.
266 registrants, but, including dependents, the lists showed some 800 men, women, and children being helped. Of this list, 189 were residents in the Chemainus townsite where there was an almost total lack of employment due to the closure of the mill.

With an ever-increasing number of men applying for assistance, the North Cowichan council was forced to once more tighten the restrictions. No persons were to be given direct relief who had a telephone or a 1933 car licence. In future, relief would be issued in scrip and cash, instead of all cash as formerly. Recipients of direct relief would be required to work out the amount of relief given at the rate of two dollars per day instead of two-fifty a day as previously.

Immediately protests were forthcoming concerning the decision to refuse relief to any person who had a telephone or a current car licence. As one man put it: "On several occasions the telephone has been the medium through which I have obtained work ... When I applied for relief work, one of the first questions asked was for my phone number. The road foreman has used this means of communication to call the men out to work as required, and most of us have kept the phone in at considerable self-sacrifice on our part." It was further argued that the small farmers needed cars to enable them to bring produce to town and to haul feed to their stock. "Would the council prefer the small rancher to sell his stock at a sacrifice price, and become a burden on the community?"

The closing remark in one of these letters clearly revealed

75. The Cowichan Leader, February 16, 1933, p.4.
the futility of the work being done by those on relief.

Most of the relief work I have done this winter has consisted of cutting grass off the roadside with a mattock which would have been killed by the frost anyway.

One of the Unemployed. 76.

Is it any wonder that these men were becoming increasingly apathetic?

"In the darkness with a bundle of grief
the people march.
In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars for keeps, the people march:
'Where to? What next?'" 77.

76. The Cowichan Leader, February 16, 1933, p.4.
77. Sandburg, Carl, The People, Yes, Harcourt, Bruce, New York, 1936.
It was at this point, in the spring of 1933, when conditions were at their worst, that the first ray of hope was offered to the people of Cowichan. It was contained in an announcement by Mayo Singh, the head of the Mayo Lumber Company, which stated that plans were being made to reopen the local plant early in the year with a working force of between 150 and 175 men. The announcement was made following reasonable assurance that the roadway between the Duncan-Lake Cowichan highway and the village of Paldi, where the mill was located, would be put into shape by the Department of Public Works.

Even more welcome was the actual resumption of operations by the Hillcrest Lumber Company early in March. The value of Carleton Stone's continued questing for British markets was revealed as the new plant began to ship over twenty railway cars a week of their specially cut material to the United Kingdom.¹

Within a matter of weeks, the entire atmosphere in the Cowichan area was changed as the results of the Ottawa Trade Agreement began to make themselves felt in the valley. For the first time in three years most of the lumber camps and mills were opening, giving employment to hundreds of Cowichan's married and single men. In addition to Hillcrest, there was the large Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing Company's mill at Chemainus, which resumed operations on March 17; while the Mayo Lumber Company saw

their promised opening take place on April 1, after a lapse of operations since October 31, 1930. The Industrial Timber Company's large mill at Youbou resumed cutting for what was expected to be either permanent or at least a very long run; while the Shawnigan Lake Lumber Company recommenced cutting early in May, after an extended period of closure. For the people of the Cowichan area, it appeared that the corner had at last been turned.

As is so often the case, however, once conditions in the valley had begun to improve, the reaction to the past years of poverty and suffering became more fervent, particularly among that section of the population which was not yet reaping the benefits of the revived lumber harvest. For these people unemployment was still a major problem, and when the Canadian Legion announced a meeting to discuss the findings of a committee which had been set up to investigate unemployment causes and local economic conditions, a great deal of interest was shown. Of the seventy-five people who attended the meeting, two-thirds were unemployed, and they were obviously disappointed that the discussion did not centre on local unemployment conditions. Some had hoped that "the corner" for the local unemployed would be located. Instead, the solutions which were offered were either regional or national in scope. At the conclusion of the meeting the following resolutions were drawn up by the Legion's committee to be presented to the provincial government:

---

1. This committee recommends some form of controlled inflation.

2. That one of the primary causes why business in Canada is depressed is owing to the contraction of the export trade, and, until we facilitate the entry of British goods into Canada by drastically cutting down tariff barriers, there is little hope of extending the market for our primary products in Great Britain.

3. That instead of putting young men in concentration camps the machinery of the present forces of the army and navy be utilized to give lads from age 18 to 24 technical training under discipline.

The failure of the Legion's committee to study local unemployment conditions brought the following protest:

We ... know that right here, in our little corner of the universe, are many young and old men who are out of work. We have families who have insufficient food and clothing. Would it not be better if we here got busy and concentrated all our activities on our own centre?

Are the commendable efforts put forth by the various organizations at Christmas sufficient for the other 364 days of the year?

Is it not the opportune time for all the organizations of this district to get together and form one central committee for the purpose of getting down to brass tacks and going after our problem?

The problem of unemployment continued to decrease during the opening months of 1933, however, as the forest industry absorbed more and more of the available labour in the community. During the previous winter Lake Cowichan, the village at the foot of Cowichan Lake, had had as many as 150 men receiving relief from the provincial office in Duncan, at a monthly cost of well over $1,000. By June, 1933, there was not one Lake Cowichan

4. Ibid., p.4.
man still registered, while figures for the entire government district had dropped from 200 in March to 42 in June. 5

In May, 7,328,000 feet of lumber were cleared by the Chemainus customs house from mills in Chemainus, Hillcrest, Mayo and Youbou. The largest portion of this lumber, 2,121,000 feet, was bound for the British market, while 526,000 feet went to the Atlantic seaboard and Quebec, 1,472,000 feet to China and 2,582,000 feet to Australasia. 6

Because the Cowichan valley was not as hard-hit by the depression as some other areas in the province, and because it was already beginning to show signs of recovery early in 1933, the valley began to receive a considerable number of new settlers under the long sought "back-to-the-land" movement, which was sponsored by the provincial government. Under the new plan, families, drawn primarily from urban areas like Vancouver, were placed on fifteen acre plots of vacant Soldier Settlement Board lands in the valley. Selected by the Vancouver Unemployment Relief Committee, these families were financed to the extent of $600, and were exempt from payment of rent for two years, after which time it was hoped that they would be self-supporting, and able to make provision to purchase their holdings. The first of these grants were made to such unlikely farmer candidates as an architect, a mechanic and a salesman.

As conditions continued to improve rapidly in the Cowichan area, many of those people who had been accused of being apathetic during the years of hardship and suffering, now became quite vocal.

5. The Cowichan Leader, June 29, 1933, p.1.
Those few who were still on relief were particularly outspoken in their criticism of the provincial government, which, in their opinion, had failed to come up with an effective answer to the depression.

These people were completely disillusioned with the regular party system as they had seen it operate during the years of deprivation and suffering; they wanted something new, something different. Hugh Savage was undoubtedly expressing the thoughts of the majority of his readers when in May he began to attack the Hon. C. F. Davie, Cowichan's Member of the Legislative Assembly, for his inadequacies during the depression. Davie had recently resigned the Speakership of the House. After all these years, Savage explained, Davie had now discovered that he had been unable to get one of his fourteen election planks implemented. Yet he was a member of the Conservative party, which had a large preponderance in the Legislature. "He has had his chance. He has failed." 7

Many of the citizens of the Cowichan area wanted something new in the way of a political party and they knew where to get it. Since early in 1933, they had been able to tune in their radios to hear Dr. Lyle Telford, a spell-binding orator from Vancouver, proclaim a plan of socialism for British Columbia and Canada. Representing the newly formed Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, Dr. Telford emphasized the merit of his party's twelve point provincial programme, drawn up to appeal to farmers,

trade unionists, small businessmen, the unemployed, and the doctrinaire Socialists. With an election due in the fall of 1933, the C.C.F. were using the effects of the depression to full advantage to gain a foothold in the province.

When Telford paid a visit to Duncan in March, over 200 people attended the meeting to hear him outline his programme. His ideas were apparently well-received for following the meeting, preliminary organizational plans were made for an affiliated branch of the party in Duncan. By the end of March the area's first C.C.F. club had been established with W. H. Hawkes elected as president and W. E. Brookbank as vice-president. Their work was to be primarily educational as study groups were formed to consider economics, sociology and other kindred subjects. Within a few months, three more clubs were organized at Cobble Hill, Shawnigan Lake and Hillcrest.

In April, 1933, the National Unemployed Workers Association, which had been more successful in up-Island points than in Cowichan, organized a hunger march on Victoria. One hundred and twenty of these "hunger marchers", including twelve women, arrived in Duncan from Nanaimo on April 6. They were demanding an increase of 25% in relief allowances, and the right to eat and sleep where they chose. "We have produced the wealth of the country, and now that there are no jobs for us, we should be kept and given a decent living." 9.

The marchers spent one day and a night in the city trying to enlist supporters from among those who were still unemployed in

the valley. However, after having spent the night sleeping on the floor of the Agricultural Hall, they left the next morning with only one Duncan man in their ranks, and it has been suggested that this man quit his job in order to join the march. In general, the more moderate socialist demands of the C.C.F. had a stronger appeal to the people of Cowichan than did the revolutionary ideas of the Communist led N.U.W.A.

It was the threat of a Socialist victory in the Cowichan-Newcastle constituency in the forthcoming election which gave rise to one of the strangest phenomenon to occur in all of Canada as a reaction to the Great Depression. Hugh Savage, editor of the Cowichan Leader, and a former president of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers' Association, decided to become a candidate for election; and while this may not have been surprising, his platform most certainly was. For, it was based solely on the tenets of the Oxford Group: absolute sincerity, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, and absolute love. It was perhaps a fitting platform for a man whose independent weekly had always carried the following pledge at its masthead:

Here shall the Press the People's right maintain,
Unawed by influence and unbribed by gain;
Here patriot Truth her glamorous precepts draw,
Pledged to Religion, Liberty, and Law.

Joseph Story, A.D., 1779.

Founded by an American, Dr. F. N. D. Buchman, the Oxford Group Movement had developed very rapidly during the early thirties as people sought to find an answer to the depression. The Movement first reached Canada in October, 1932, when overflow meetings were held from coast to coast. In Vancouver the re-
response was phenomenal as 30,000 people attended meetings in a single day. Savage, who was by nature a man of strong religious conviction, was soon converted to the Oxford Group view that the only remedy for the depression would come through the individual altering his views. "It is no use changing the government without changing ourselves."

Interest in Savage's campaign was soon widespread:

All over the Christian world people who know nothing of British Columbia ... still know about the election in Cowichan-Newcastle.

It has spread to the bounds of the English-speaking civilization and beyond, this contest in the leisurely, huntin', shootin', fishing valley of the Cowichan. It is news read eagerly in lands over the sea, because in Cowichan a candidate is running on a platform of pure Christianity.

The other candidates of course, consider Mr. Savage a well-meaning visionary. ... But Mr. Savage has no qualms about these things. To him the whole story of our present chaos, is quite simple - the trouble lies not with the state, not with the system, but with the individual, teach him neighbourliness, honesty, industry, decency and you reform the state. And until you reform the individual thus, you have no foundation to build on, all your political reforms will inevitably collapse.10.

Three candidates were in the running against Savage; C. F. Davie, K.C., now a Non-Partisan Independent; Sam Guthrie, the fighting Socialist, representing the C.C.F.; and David Ramsay, who was imported by the Liberals from Saanich where he had been managing the campaign to beat Premier Tolmie. Ramsay hardly had a chance of election, coming as he did from outside into a notoriously Conservative riding, though he was a stout campaigner and experienced politician, a man of high principles and earnest

10. Hutchison, Bruce, "On the Trail of the Election", Vancouver Province, October 31, 1933, p.3.
Liberalism. Davie naturally counted on the Conservative vote of Cowichan, but part of that would inevitably go to Savage following the incumbent's poor showing during the previous administration. The former Speaker was an able politician and a strong campaigner, who had broken with the government in the spring of 1933 to join with W. J. Bowser and the Non-Partisans.

Samuel Guthrie was one of the most experienced candidates in the C.C.F., a labour man who had built up a fine reputation for integrity when he was previously in the House. No one would have been surprised if, in the split of the orthodox party vote between the other three candidates, Guthrie had been elected, even though Cowichan was by nature one of the most Conservative places in Canada.

In the weeks preceding the election many of the C.C.F.'s leading members visited the Cowichan area to lend their support to Guthrie. In August, J.S. Woodsworth, founder and leader of the national party, addressed a large crowd in the Agricultural Hall. People of all political inclinations were included in the audience which was drawn out of curiosity and respect to see and hear this man who during the "dirty thirties" had become known as the workers' representative in Ottawa. On behalf of his candidate, Woodsworth strongly denied that there was any Communist connection in the C.C.F. Instead, he maintained that this party was not a radical organization but a peaceful, progressive movement.11.

The threat of a socialist victory in Cowichan, if the issue had been left between Davie and Guthrie, had been the determining

factor in Savage's decision to run. Previously he had repeatedly refused to allow his name to be put forward as a candidate. But when no one else came forward, he felt that it was clearly his duty "to make the sacrifice". He had no campaign funds; his only asset, outside of the strong faith he possessed in the justice of his cause, was his newspaper, the Cowichan Leader. But Savage's genial personality concealed a strong will. He was not a fluent platform speaker, but he made big strides in this respect during the campaign, and on October 31, over 900 people crowded into the Agricultural Hall to hear him make his final address.

The results of the election gave Savage a decisive victory over his opponents. After the final count, the results were as follows: Savage - 1,655; Guthrie - 1,288; Davis - 585; and Ramsay - 520. The outcome of the election would indicate that the people of Cowichan were as disaffected with the established party system in 1933 as they had been back in 1919. They had grown tired of the endless promises and assertions, the ceaseless railing at the opposition, the backbiting and meannesses. They had become nauseated with patronage and manipulations and "practical" politics. It apparently did not detract from a man's influence that he may have no coherent plan for putting everyone to work overnight; but citizens did want a man whom they could trust, who was awake to the terrible plight into which the majority of human beings had fallen. They wanted him to think in terms of humanity, not in terms of money or political advantage.

Thus, of all the curious metamorphoses brought about by the pro-
longed depression from which Cowichan was slowly emerging, this
campaign contributed a unique feature, and the advent of Savage
into the British Columbia Legislature in the exciting session
which followed was regarded with peculiar interest.

As it turned out, except on a few minor matters, Savage opp-
osed the new Pattullo Liberal Government, and frequently found
himself associated with Gerry McGeer, as mover and seconder of
motions critical of the administration. McGeer had been elected
as a Liberal member of the legislature, but he had subsequently
broken with the premier when he was not included in the cabinet.
While Savage was not in complete accord with McGeer's unorthodox
theories, it is significant that they were both very active in
the Oxford Group Movement.

Meanwhile, with the continued resumption of employment in
1933, the people of Cowichan began to experience a renewed sense
of optimism. British Columbia's exports of lumber to foreign
countries, not including the United States, increased by better
than fifty percent in the first six months of the year over the
corresponding period in 1932.14. And with steadily rising prices
averaging two dollars per thousand during April, May and June,
1933, the increased exports represented a much greater increase
in actual money than was represented in footage. By August, the
Swedish mill at Hillcrest was working around the clock to fill

14. B. C. Lumberman, Vol. 17, August, 1933, p. 15,
1933 (six months) - 241,232,150 board feet.
1932 (six months) - 163,544,317 board feet.
its orders. Almost all of the pre-depression mills were back in full operation, and the Leader estimated that for the year, wages paid by the companies were likely to reach the $1,000,000 mark should conditions be sustained.

Once more there seemed to be some hope for the future and an opportunity to enjoy the present. The following poem, while it may lack something in style, does illustrate this renewed interest in life which was becoming apparent in Cowichan.

Saturday Night in Duncan

Put on your Sunday best. You say
It's pleasure that you seek.
I'll drive you into Duncan for
The big time of the week.

I love to park my car at night
Where folks are laughing gay,
And criticize the old and young
Who pass along the way.

There's Walter with a brand-new car
And six girls in the back.
'S funny how they get the dames
And funnier still the "jack".

The girls seem specially dressed tonight;
Must be a dance somewhere.
The sheiks grouped by the Island Drug
Are slicking down their hair.

Round, round the block the flappers go,
And giggle hand in hand,
And just to pass that bunch of boys
That on the corner stand.

There's Johnny ambling down the street.
His step's uncertain too.
I heard him telling Mary that
He'd only take a "few".

Some country friends in trusted Ford
Roll down the "Great White Way",
With umpteen children in the front,
In back, two bales of hay.
Most every face it wears a smile;  
A few seem rather sad.  
It seems to be the Duncan style  
To cheer and make you glad.  

The winter of 1933 brought with it a renewal of unemployment, but not to anything like the extent of the previous year. In large part it was merely the seasonal lay-off in the lumber industry. However, sufficient orders were now on hand to keep the mills of a number of the companies operating throughout the winter.

With conditions steadily improving, those men who are still on relief felt that they were entitled to a higher rate of pay, and in December they petitioned the North Cowichan council for a wage scale of $2.80 per day instead of the present $2.00. The council felt, however, that they could not raise the scale while the local mills were giving only from 17¢ to 25¢ per hour. They foresaw men leaving the mills to come back on relief.

December, 1933, also brought with it recognition of the fact that, once again, several families in the district would only have the bare necessities of life at Christmas time. The Cowichan Christmas Cheer Committee was organized to appeal for donations in either cash or kind. With improved conditions in many homes in the area, the response was good, and over ninety-five hampers were distributed among the valley’s needy families.

For the first time in many years the local officials were able to introduce a note of optimism in their annual New Year’s Messages. Hugh Savage, in keeping with his Oxford Group theories, once again placed the onus for the depression on the people themselves and challenged them to do something about it.

15. The Cowichan Leader, August 31, 1933, p.4.
Since the depression began, most of us have been poor in courage. It is, at bottom, fear which is retarding world progress, our own progress. Think that over. Then cast out fear!

... The depression CAN be beaten. There is a way out. Each of us can take that trail with cheerfulness and confidence.

... Hopes that come with 1933 have begun to be realized. Conditions are improving, many less men are out of work, mental misery is being replaced with the seeds of optimism, we view the Star with added faith.17.

By the beginning of 1934 conditions were once again improving rapidly. Prosperity, which had seemingly been "just around the corner" ever since 1930, was at last beginning to reveal itself. There were two principal reasons for this rapid recovery in the Cowichan area: firstly, the increased value of the pound sterling was adding considerably to the life-style of the many families living on fixed incomes in the valley; and secondly, the reopening of the woods and mills had provided immediate employment for those hundreds who had been eking out an existence on the paltry relief cheques.

The Municipality of North Cowichan found itself in a position by 1934, where it was deemed possible to reduce taxes. It was hoped that such a move would help to relieve the heavy burden which had been thrust upon the community's farmers. The Municipality was, to a large extent, dependent upon the farming population, and through the early thirties the farmers had barely been able to save enough money to meet the interest on mortages, or to pay taxes, and now that the recovery had begun they alone remained outside of that group which was reaping the benefits.

17. The Cowichan Leader, December 28, 1933, p.4.
Despite the loss of revenue which had been experienced during the depression, the Municipality of North Cowichan was in a much better financial condition than many others in British Columbia. This fact was attributable to the tight control which had been maintained over expenditures during the period. The financial statement for 1933 showed a surplus of $5,300. Income and expenditure had followed very closely the figures which had been budgeted for at the beginning of the year. When making up the budget early in 1933, the councillors had been faced with a very serious situation. The mills had all been closed and the municipality had had the maximum number of men on relief. During the ensuing year the municipality had paid out $18,000 in relief funds and had received $10,900 from the senior governments, leaving a net amount of $7,100 to be paid from current taxation. The original debt on roads, $35,000, and on schools, $33,550, was covered to the extent of $33,550 by sinking funds, $28,114 in bonds and $5,436 in cash, thereby leaving a total net municipal debt of only $6,150.  

Lumber exports were higher in 1933 than they had been for many years. Shipments from the Cowichan area totalled nearly 100,000,000 feet, or a little more than one-seventh of all the lumber exported from the province. The Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing mill at Chemainus was able to report a large increase in exports to the United Kingdom and China during the year. From April to December, 151 deep-sea vessels had loaded at


Chemainus, where docking facilities had been enlarged to allow for the loading of two ships at once. The improvement in the export trade is obvious when one compares the Chemainus port figures from 1928 to 1933.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Volume (ft. B.M.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>59,995,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>83,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>68,948,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>64,333,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>86,733,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>99,418,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was indeed unfortunate that just as conditions in the lumber industry were showing such marked improvement, and the worst of the depression seemed to be over in the Cowichan Valley, that a new menace appeared on the scene which threatened to thrust the community back to the desperate economic straits of 1932. The problem stemmed from a group of well organized labour agitators who had infiltrated the province's lumber camps and mills. These so-called "advanced-thinkers" were members of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union, a body formed in 1928 by a group of young Communist agitators. In her book, Tough Timber, Mrs. Myrtle Bergren, wife of one of these men "who helped organize a woodworkers' union in British Columbia", contends that they only had the interests of the loggers at heart. However, their motives will be more clearly understood when it is explained that their "union" had its offices at the same address in Vancouver as did the Workers' Unity League; indeed, many of them were active in both organizations. This fact also gives new significance to the slogan of the National Unemployed Workers Association, used earlier in the

depression:

Join the N.U.W.A., affiliated to the Workers' Unity League (Canadian Section of the Red International or Labour Unions) ... Forward to a programme of militant struggle against capitalism. ... Rally to the banner of the revolutionary unions. 21.

The Lumber Workers Industrial Union, taking full advantage of conditions which had developed during the depression, sought to break down employer-employee relations, to create unrest and dissatisfaction, and to curtail production in the British Columbia forest industry. Far from having the interests of the men at heart, it would appear that this "revolutionary union" was being directed to stop the shipment of coastal lumber to Britain in the hope that Russia might once again be able to gain control of that huge market.

Throughout 1932 and 1933 these men "walked long distances into the camps contacting the loggers without knowledge of the boss, talking to the men, giving them ideas of other men, learning from them, so that together they might one day act concertedly to change the poor conditions of life under which they lived." 22.

The union's men emphasized the conditions which had grown up during the depression. They pointed to the mass unemployment in the province and suggested that the "boss loggers" were taking advantage of conditions to continue wage cuts and indiscriminate firings.

Outside some logging camp in a clearing he would stand, where only the trees and the rugged loggers could hear; away from the management's ears, he would speak, his hands speaking too, his eye's meeting theirs.


"Loggers are second class citizens. You are a skid-road bum! You don't get enough pay to live like humans, they treat us like animals. Sure, they let you go to town, but they'll be back they say, they'll get broke! And on the boats, they don't let you sit where other people sit. You can't sit here! We say we paid as much as anyone else and we can sit where we like! And who built these cities? Who built these mills? As long as we allow them, the people who own these lumber camps will get away with it. "They have to depend on us", they say, "They'll always follow the camps." We don't have any choice boys, we have to organize!"  

The agitators were well aware of the principal complaints registered by the loggers against the camp system in the British Columbia lumber industry. For many months of each year the men were cut off from the outside world. There was a feeling that the job could never be left behind. Since the company owned and controlled everything in the camp, "the boss" was all pervasive. This often created the suspicion that the employer could and did apply extra sanctions against recalcitrant employees. In most camps there was a complete lack of social or recreational activity. But where such activity did exist there was simply a transferal of the organizational hierarchy of the company staff into the social and political structure of the camp. This led to the feeling that the worker was expected to "know his place" and "not step out of line".

For these reasons, the camp loggers were in the habit of making for the big city and the bright lights for a real "bust-up" each time they had a holiday. Over the years the loggers acquired for themselves a certain degree of notoriety with respect to excessive drinking, frequent brawling, and other forms

of anti-social behaviour in the skid-road section of Vancouver. Large numbers of loggers patronized the skid-road district in a vain attempt to blot out the memory of the long months of loneliness and boredom they had experienced in the bush.

The Christmas-New Year break of 1933 gave the executive of the L.W.I.U. a good opportunity to spread their influence among the many loggers who were in Vancouver enjoying their first holiday with pay in three years. The union members formed themselves into squads and went down on skid-road and "persuaded" many of the loggers, who were by this time broke and hung-over, to attend grievance meetings. At these meetings the union agitators harangued the men about the conditions in the industry. Wages were not based upon ability of the industry to pay, but upon the whim of the employer. No effort was being made to prevent the increasing number of accidents in the woods. "In other words," they concluded, "a man working in these camps, in the logging industry, you are not a man at all - you are a serf!"

So it was that when the men trekked back to work following the holiday, they were nursing a carefully developed grudge against their employers. The result was soon forthcoming. Early in January, Camps 3 and 4 of the Bloedel Company in the Alberni Valley struck for an overall fifteen percent wage increase, the $3.20 a day minimum, recognition of union camp committees, and an end to Sunday work. Within a few weeks most of the camps north of Chemainus were out.

The first direct effect of the logging strike was felt in

Cowichan when Camp 10, of the Victoria Lumber and Manufacturing Company, at Lake Cowichan was closed down by the company. The reason given for this move was that the company intended to await a general settlement of the wage question on the Island. About 150 men were affected at Camp 10, but if a settlement was not reached within two or three weeks, stoppage of the Chemainus mill would affect some 500 more. 25.

The up-Island operators made a representation to the Provincial Department of Labour to settle the dispute, and Adam Bell, Deputy Minister of Labour, was appointed as intermediary. He drew up a proposed wage scale of $4.13 a day as against the rate of $4.80 which had prevailed in 1928. The ability of the companies to pay the increased wages depended in the final analysis upon the price obtainable for the product. An industrial group, especially one with such huge carrying costs as logging, must regulate its payrolls in proportion to the return upon its investment. The reduction in average log prices from 1928 to 1933 was thirty-three percent, and to the end of February, 1934, was twenty-four percent. 26.

When logging companies agree to the average wage scale $4.13 proposed by Mr. Bell as against the rate of $4.80 prevailing in 1928, it will be agreed that their action, while generous to the employees is decidedly uneconomic as far as their own interests are concerned.

In their own words, "the companies accept the wage scale and conditions proposed by the Department of Labour as a basis of settlement but realize that unless better conditions in respect to lumber values materialize, the concessions granted will simply add to the present operating losses." 27.

27. Loc. cit.
The following table compares the logging camp wages of 1928 with those being paid at the date of the strike, and with the scale proposed by Bell:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1928</th>
<th>Date of Strike</th>
<th>Scale Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After having been reluctantly accepted by the operators, the Bell proposals were rejected almost unanimously by the strikers. At this point the operators withdrew their approval of the camp union committees, claiming that the union was run by Communists whose only interest was in crippling the lumber industry in British Columbia.

The operators were also annoyed by the behaviour of outsiders who were apparently endeavouring to widen the breach between employers and employed. Most notable was the action of the Mayor of Vancouver, whose description of the existing wage scale as a "racket", and whose setting of the precedent in authorizing public assistance to the strikers in the form of a tag-day, called forth a severe rebuke in the British Columbia Lumberman, the publication of the British Columbia Loggers' Association:

His worship's easy acceptance of the absurd statements concerning the present price of logs and rate of profit made by the operators was extremely foolish, for the true facts were so easily obtainable. ... The utter insanity of the declaration that the logging operators are making 480% profit at current prices is evident when one considers that in the banner year of 1928 the best logging companies could do was a profit of 5% on actual net investment. ...

In his public position of "Mayor of Vancouver", Mr. Taylor has consented to a tag-day in aid of the strikers provided they can prove their "complete disassociation from communism". It would appear that his Wor-
ship is no better informed regarding the nature of the power behind the strike than he is concerning the price of logs ... for we are advised that the Lumber Workers Industrial Union directing the strike is of undisputed Communist origin. We are not at all in the habit of ascribing any and every revolutionary activity to the money and machinations of Moscow, but here is an instance in view of our increasing export trade, where Russia has something to gain and where the expenditure of a few thousand dollars would certainly appear to be justified from the Soviet point of view.28.

The timing of the strike was, so far as the men were concerned, unfortunate, considering that the lumber industry was only just beginning to offer employment after the most disastrous depression it had ever experienced. For the logger the road had been long, the work hard, and the remuneration scanty. Every sympathy was held out to the worker, particularly to those to whom the last few years had been a desperate struggle to keep home and kin together in a land where peace and plenty should have abounded. But for the people of British Columbia to permit communistic control of their main industry was unthinkable. The continued refusal of the strikers to accept the suggested government rates only served to alienate them and their union from the sympathy of the overwhelming majority of the public.

The huge market of the United Kingdom was just beginning to take British Columbia lumber in very large quantities, and sales there could only be maintained on a price and service basis against Baltic and Soviet competition. To jeopardize that important market, which was seemingly the aim of the union, would mean suicide for both employer and employee.

As the strike continued to stop all logging operations on

the northern portion of Vancouver Island, the Cowichan area was able to reap the benefits. The appeals by the union leaders for Cowichan loggers to come out in sympathy with the rest of the loggers on the Island had had singularly little effect in the isolated valley. Very little preliminary "softening up" had been done in the Cowichan area in the months preceding the strike, as the union had concentrated its efforts in the more northerly Alberni valley. In addition, there was a sense of community solidarity in the Cowichan Valley which was missing in many other logging areas in the province. For while the camps around Lake Cowichan contained many young, single loggers who might have supported the strike, they also contained a large number of married men who commuted to work each day from homes in the more urban centres in the valley. The moderating influence of these men, combined with the very good employer-employee relations that existed in the local industry helped to snuff out any unrest that might have developed.

With all up-Island camps on strike, the demand for logs at coastal mills increased rapidly. In the month of March, five new logging operations were started in the area west of Duncan. Nine trucks began dumping over a thousand dollars worth of logs a day into Cowichan Bay for shipment to up-Island mills.29. Early in April the Leader was able to report that the lumber industry was running "at full blast". In consequence, the Municipality of North Cowichan found that among the features of the debit side of their budget was a reduction by some $4,500 in the 1934 relief

estimates compared to the previous year.

Meanwhile, group by group, the up-Island loggers were gradually becoming disillusioned as to the real objective of the "strike" leaders, whose motives were not so much the material betterment of the workers, as the establishment of machinery for creating a continuous atmosphere of misunderstanding between the employers and their crews. Disillusionment with the 'union' continued to grow:

The organizers came from God knows where; only a few camps were affected; in cases where men did "down tools" it was by a small majority; the assistance of the government after being sought by the "strike" committee was disregarded, and the sympathy of the public with the "strikers" temporarily gained by an appalling misrepresentation of actual facts, has now been alienated. To designate such a succession of happenings as a "strike" is to over estimate its quality and over-rate its origins.

During the latter part of the strike, the union tried dragging in side-issues concerning the quality of board and commissary arrangements in the camps, but this argument was completely unjust. As early as 1929, the Provincial Board of Health had reported that the food supplied at the camps in British Columbia was equal to that found in hotels, and the sleeping accommodation superior to the average city lodging house. There was not a logger who would deny that it would cost him twice as much to provide for himself food as good, and lodging as clean, as the logging companies procured for him.

Regarding the request of the union to be able to set up camp

committees, the British Columbia Lumberman, speaking for the operators, replied:

The operators have given their pledge that there will be no discrimination against any competent workers. They also express their willingness to meet at any time a bona fide delegation of their own employees who wish to bring any matter to their attention, but they quite rightly refuse to recognize alien disturbers of good relations of the type of those who have engineered the present trouble at a cost to the people of the province of over two million dollars. It is a sad reflection in the midst of our strenuous endeavours to emerge from the depression that has spread so much poverty and hardship around, that the loss of this huge sum should have been tolerated in order to advertise the claims of a self-serving bunch of extremists to a place in the executives of our logging companies, for in plain English their ambitions in this direction have been the cause of all the trouble. 33.

The strike was finally brought to a close in April, 1934, when the government's Industrial Relations Board brought down a report establishing new minimum wages in the forest industry. The orders, which took affect on April 26, provided for marked increases in rates to be paid log-producing and sawmill employees. The logging order provided for a minimum of 40¢ an hour for log producing operations; 37½¢ an hour for track and grade men; and $2.75 per day for cooks and bunkhouse employees. The sawmill order set a minimum wage of 35¢ an hour; with the contingent provision that one-quarter of the employees of any mill might be paid 25¢ an hour during present conditions.

While the logging companies in Cowichan were not affected by the strike, they were required to comply with the settlement. Hillcrest Lumber immediately notified its employees that it would be forced to close on April 26, the date the new wage scale was

to come into effect. The Shawnigan Lake Company also felt that it would be necessary to close down their operations. Kapoor Singh, manager of the Mayo Lumber Company, reported to the Leader: "It will be impossible for us to continue our operations if the Minimum Wage Act is enforced." 34.

North Cowichan Council, the City of Duncan, and the Duncan Chamber of Commerce each notified the government of the serious situation that would ensue upon closure of the mills. The latter two groups urged the government to investigate the financial condition of the Hillcrest and Shawnigan mills, with a view to ascertaining if they could operate under the new wage scale, while the North Cowichan resolution concluded with the warning that "Any further relief, which may be demanded in consequence of the closing of the mills will have to be provided for wholly by the Government." 35.

The Hon. George S. Pearson, Minister of Labour, assured the local bodies that his department was having the matter investigated by a sawmill expert, and that if it was found impossible to pay such a wage, steps would be taken to prevent closure of the mills. He concluded: "It seems a pity that a mill of the importance of Hillcrest has to close down because it cannot pay what is unquestionably a very moderate wage." 36.

When the deadline for adopting the new minimum wage scale arrived, the majority of those mills which had announced that they would have to close, did not do so. In fact, in many cases lumber

34. The Cowichan Leader, April 26, 1934, p.1.
35. Loc. cit.
36. Loc. cit.
production and employment increased. Despite the wage increase, the Industrial Timber Mills at Youbou expanded their operations by almost one-quarter; while a large, new camp called the Lake Logging Company, began operations in April paying the minimum scale. 37.

Hillcrest was an exception however. On May 31, they closed their logging camps and sawmill, "owing to the impossible position brought about by the Minimum Wage Act", thereby throwing 450 men out of work. Kapoor Singh kept the Mayo mill open, but said that continued operation would be at a loss. 38. This unhappy situation was not long-lived however, as improved market conditions allowed for the reopening of the Hillcrest plant early in June. In that same month the Evans Brothers' mill on Mount Prevost resumed operations after a four year shutdown.

With the rapid increase in employment in 1934, relief was not nearly the problem that it had once been in Cowichan. The City of Duncan had not found it necessary to maintain a relief scheme since July, 1933. The Municipality of North Cowichan was still caring for a number of unemployed however, particularly small farmers who were still not able to make an income from their lands and who either could not or would not take employment in the local forest industry. In an effort to cut down the size of this group, a stricter investigation of the applicants' circumstances was adopted in August, 1934. All those desiring relief had to re-register. This registration included special

38. Loc. cit.
forms for farmers and transients. The farmers were required to give information regarding crops, markets, live-stock, machinery and other details in an effort to determine to what extent they might live off their own farms. Relief rates were also reduced to a bare minimum in an effort to encourage the men to seek employment elsewhere. For, on the whole, relief demands upon the Municipality had neither increased nor decreased for some time. The recipients included 157 married men, resident in the municipality; 19 single men; and four single women, for a total of 222. Government assistance to the municipality amounted to 66 2/3% for the married men and single women, and 100% for the transients and single men. 39.

The people of Cowichan were well enough on their feet in 1934 to be able to send a railway-car full of clothing and foodstuffs to the drought-stricken area of southern Saskatchewan. The only setback experienced during the year occurred in December, when the Mayo Lumber mill was destroyed by fire, throwing 125 men out of work. An otherwise steady year in the lumber industry had permitted the accumulation of a small surplus in many homes in the area, sufficient to make the difference between a poor and a good Christmas. During the season sales were up 25% to 30% over 1933, and extras, such as radios, gas lamps and Christmas tree lights were becoming increasingly popular.

The building trade had remained quiet during 1934, but that was perhaps to be expected, as it is usually the last business to recover following a depression. Lumbering had experienced its problems during the aftermath of the strike, but both wages and

prices had gradually strengthened to give a record of steadily increasing employment and output. When figures were released for the Port of Chemainus, it was found that the amount, 135,241,000 feet, was the largest for many years, if not a record. It was more than one-third better than the 1933 figure of 99,418,000 feet, and the Chemainus export figure did not include shipments by rail to Victoria, which were estimated to be 1,000,000 feet. Unfortunately agriculture was not making the rapid recovery which was being enjoyed in the lumber industry. The farm income in 1934 had not been large enough to warrant capital expenditure by the farmers of the area, and the apparent result was that, instead of improving, conditions on local farms were going down-hill.

The Municipality of North Cowichan had come through the year with a budget surplus of $1,332. Total relief costs for the year had been $13,533, of which $10,090 had been repaid by the senior governments. The reeve congratulated residents on the way in which they had worked out their relief money when not legally bound to do so. Warning that there would be extra relief costs in the future due to a provincial government order to increase relief rates to 40¢ an hour, and because of an extra grant of $20 to be given to each expectant mother on relief, Tisdall concluded: "I am afraid the relief problem is still with us and will be with us forever." 40

Two important projects aimed at curtailing the crippling

malady of unemployment, particularly as it applied to young people, were instigated in the Cowichan area in 1935. The first of these was begun by the provincial government and followed a plan which had been outlined in a legislative speech by Hugh Savage. Pointing out that there were in British Columbia more than 2,000 youths between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two on relief and 2,500 more of the same age in relief camps, he suggested that the government initiate a series of forestry training camps to prepare these young men for employment in British Columbia's lumber industry. 41. This plan, being practical in application, economical in operation, and beneficial in rehabilitation, was quickly taken up by the government.

On May 15, $90,000 was allotted by the Department of Labour to the British Columbia Forest Service for the employment of single, young men in useful work, with the objective of helping fit them for jobs in the forest industry. 42. Preference was given to men between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five who needed work, who had been resident in the province for ten years, and who possessed at least a partial high-school education. It was hoped that the training would help the young men regain their lost self-confidence, while preparing them for a career in the forests of British Columbia. Far too many of the province's youth were searching for work in the cities and urban areas while neglecting the opportunities offered in the basic rural industries. The forestry programme offered them useful work under conditions that must benefit them physically and mentally, leaving them self-

42. "British Columbia Forest Service Young Men's Forestry
reliant and with a saner outlook toward the future. Here they could gain experience in various kinds of construction, learn how to clear land, build trails and handle an axe. The programme was also balanced with suitable periods of instruction and recreation to assist in the rehabilitation of the youths.

By May, 1935, one of the forestry camps had been set up at Lake Cowichan, with young men arriving from the City of Vancouver to take the course. Within a short time the camp was winning the praise of local citizens and government officials. It was comprised of twenty-eight tents, occupied by fifty-four men. Good food was provided and the general atmosphere of the camp was one of cleanliness, neatness and congeniality. Apart from their work the young men took elementary courses in surveying, fire protection, dendrology, ecology, and woodcraft from Professor Khapp, of the Forestry Faculty at the University of British Columbia. The camp was reportedly the best conducted in the province, thanks to the understanding between C. Schultz, the superintendent, and the men. In all, ninety men passed through the Lake Cowichan forestry camp in 1935. By the end of the season perhaps the most encouraging feature of the whole scheme was the splendid cooperation extended by the local logging and milling concerns as they readily gave employment to the trainees upon completion of the course. It soon appeared that the difficulty would not be in finding positions for the men, but in developing enough men who would be suitable for the positions which were available.


The second experiment to take shape in 1935, created a good deal of interest in the Cowichan Valley, particularly among the farmers. In February it was announced that the 1,000 acre Pemberton farm, situated on the Koksilah River, had been sold to a group in England who planned to establish a Fairbridge Farm School on the site. The school, sponsored by the Child Emigration Society of Great Britain, was to be patterned on the several schools which had been set up in various parts of the world by Kingsley Fairbridge, a young Rhodesian Rhodes scholar. The project would introduce into the valley an undertaking founded upon the practical training for youth in farming. This would be, as the Leader saw it, possibly the most important step along the lines of settlement in the history of the Cowichan district. For, as the undertaking progressed from an initial introduction of forty children, until it was in full operation with some four hundred boys and girls in residence, it was bound to be of ever increasing value to the community and to the province. Certainly it would be a great asset to the district if only in the advertising it would bring with it. A Fairbridge school in Australia had handled over 1,000 boys and girls, mostly orphans, and of these, only three had been returned as misfits. The advantages to the farming community were of particular importance:

It is generally admitted that youth, brought up on farms, is not desirous of going in for a farm career, and that, despite the present condition of unemployment, farmers do not find it easy to get efficient - mark that word "efficient" - farm labour. It is an even more incontrovertible fact that efficient domestic servants are very difficult to obtain, ... The Fairbridge Farm School have as their chief objective the training, from the ground up, of efficient farm youths and domestic servants.44

44. The Cowichan Leader, April 4, 1935, p.4.
Twenty cottages were erected for the youngsters, a school, a dining hall, and a house for the superintendent, Major W. F. Trew. The month of September saw the arrival of the first forty-one children at the site. The twenty-seven boys and fourteen girls were soon attending classes in the school, where, in addition to regular subjects, they were to take manual training and domestic science. When older they would also take specialized courses in agriculture and household arts.

Promoters of the scheme pointed out that it would be at least five years before any of the youngsters would be old enough to compete in the Canadian labour market; that they would start their life out in Cowichan so young that they would grow up with the country; and that by the time they were old enough to make a start away from the farm-school, general conditions would probably have improved greatly.

The year 1935 was not without its labour problems. The trouble once again stemmed from Communist infiltration of unions; this time it was the longshoremen's union. Having failed to halt production of lumber for the British market in 1934, they seemed bent upon blocking its shipment in 1935. On June 27, the longshoremen in the port of Chemainus struck in sympathy with their Vancouver union, which had been seeking recognition from the British Columbia Shipping Federation. The Federation had "locked out" the union after having refused to negotiate with it. Because almost a hundred percent of the lumber products produced in the Cowichan Valley were shipped out through Chemainus, the strike
had an immediate paralytic effect on the entire local industry. Within days the operations of the V.L. & M., Camps 10 and 8 at Lake Cowichan, and of the sawmill and planing mill in Chemainus were at a standstill. Soon more than 1,200 men were out of work in the district, and were coming to the municipal authorities seeking relief. The situation was indeed serious.

Fortunately for the people of Cowichan, the stoppage in loading at Chemainus was relatively short-lived. The longshoremen were persuaded to load deep-sea vessels, and while the strike went on at larger provincial centres, the local mills were able to re-commence operations. Some of the local longshoremen continued to picket certain ships however, and in September, when it was learned that twelve of these men were receiving relief from the Municipality of North Cowichan, the reeve ordered that "no picketing must be done by relief recipients." 45

The federal election of 1935 gave to the Nanaimo riding, of which Cowichan was a part, their first Socialist representative. This marked quite a change for a constituency which had been Conservative since 1921. The victor, James Samuel Taylor, of Vancouver, was a leader in the organization of the C.C.F. in the province. At the time of his election, the sixty-three year old bachelor was secretary of the Commonwealth Printing and Publishing Company, which printed the C.C.F. party organ. He received 35% of the total vote cast. 47 In the Nanaimo and Newcastle region, to the north of Cowichan he had tallied 46% of the votes; in

45. The Cowichan Leader, June 27, 1935, p.l.
46. Ibid., September 12, 1935, pl.
47. Ibid., October 17, 1935, p.l., with 78% of the voters
Saanich, to the south, he came in second with 32% of the ballots; while he placed third in Cowichan, Esquimalt, and the Gulf Islands, those areas which contained the largest number of farmers in the constituency.

The incumbent, C. H. Dickie, a native of Duncan, and Conservative member for the past fourteen years, still headed the polls in Cowichan and Saanich and in the Islands. He was defeated in Nanaimo and Newcastle where the depression was still causing a good deal of hardship, where unemployment was still serious, and where left-wing arguments appealed strongly to communities which had a long history of labour unrest arising out of the coal-mining industry.

Alan Chambers, the Liberal candidate, had closely followed Dickie in the Islands and Esquimalt, was second in Cowichan and third in Saanich. Aubrey M. Clark, a last minute Reconstructionist entrant, had fallen so far behind the other candidates that he lost his $200 deposit.

Despite the depression and the many failings of the Bennett government, Dickie had lost the election by less than 600 votes. The split of the vote between the Conservative and the Liberal parties in the southern portion of the constituency had allowed the C.C.F. to win out in this usually Conservative riding.

Seasonal unemployment during the winter of 1935 brought with it a new relief payments scheme from Ottawa. An increase was to go into effect, but the grants were only to be given on the condition that no racial distinction be made. This was something of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Total Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taylor (C.C.F.)</td>
<td>6,840</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickie (Cons.)</td>
<td>6,277</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambers (Lib.)</td>
<td>6,101</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke (Recons.)</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a bitter pill for some of the people in Cowichan to swallow. For throughout the depression there had been a wide discrepancy between the rates paid to Orientals and those paid to the whites. Chinese were receiving relief from the Municipality at the rate of 15% a day. Oriental families were cared for on the monthly basis of $5 for the first adult, and $1.50 for each dependent, plus 50% of the total. White residents, on the other hand, received $9 for the first adult, $3.50 for the second, and $2.50 for each dependent, plus 50% of the total. It had been found some time earlier that Oriental families on relief averaged 6.21 persons per family, and white families 4.7 persons. There were in December, 1935, three Oriental families on relief, with eighteen dependents; and nine single Chinese males, while there were fifty-seven white families still accepting relief payments. Prior to the depression many of these Chinese had been employed by the British "gentlemen farmers" either as houseboys or labourers, but with the devaluation of the pound sterling many of these "gentlemen" had found it necessary to economize and the servants had been released.

The year 1935 was by far the best that Cowichan had experienced since 1929. Not so much because of great financial gain, nor because of enormous industrial development, but because, overshadowing all, confidence had been reborn in the hearts and minds of the people. The area had experienced good all-round development, fluctuating of course, but with a general trend ahead. Business had been better and unemployment had been reduced almost to the

vanishing point. Agriculture was not yet fully recovered, but quite definite improvement was evident in many of its branches. It still needed to receive more consideration however.

Individual financial returns might still seem all too meager, but these too were steadily increasing. Early in January, 1935, both the V.L. & M. Company and the Hillcrest Lumber Company announced general increases in wages to employees, retroactive to January 1. 49.

The effects of the previous year's longshoremen's strike were apparent when the 1935 lumber exports were totalled. There was a reduction of 41,000,000 feet over 1934. The burning of the Mayo Mill was also a factor, but the main decrease in shipments coincided with the dates of the strike. 50.

Councillor D. D. Chapman, Chairman of the Finance Committee for the Municipality of North Cowichan, reported that the Municipality had begun the year with a surplus of $1,342 and ended with one of $2,010, which would have been much larger but for the

50. Ibid., January 23, 1936, The following figures represent the output of all the Cowichan mills, with the exception of the Industrial Timber Mills at Youbou and the small G. E. Wellburn mill at Deerholme, who shipped via the C.N.R. to Victoria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1935</th>
<th>1934</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>7,372,000</td>
<td>12,216,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>8,810,000</td>
<td>11,932,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>7,303,000</td>
<td>7,773,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>11,503,000</td>
<td>9,727,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>14,121,000</td>
<td>11,846,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>2,296,000</td>
<td>13,256,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>5,379,000</td>
<td>15,417,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>8,308,000</td>
<td>11,728,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>8,183,000</td>
<td>9,995,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>6,218,000</td>
<td>9,582,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>3,904,000</td>
<td>11,107,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>10,357,000</td>
<td>10,652,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93,756,000</td>
<td>135,241,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
longshoremen's strike which threw a large number of men on relief for a time. Relief costs should be much lower in the future, however, as the municipality would only be required to meet 20% of the total relief costs. The senior governments had announced an increase in their grant from 60% to 80%.  

A move was made early in 1936 to relieve the burden of taxes from the farmers of the Cowichan area. Taxes had increased during the depression to such an extent that the land could no longer bear the burden. John Gibb, President of District A of the Farmers' Institutes, presented a brief in this connection which drew a comparison between the gross sales and local taxes on a mixed farm in North Cowichan from the early twenties through to 1935.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Ending June</th>
<th>Gross Sales</th>
<th>Taxes Paid</th>
<th>Taxes to Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>1,730.66</td>
<td>328.71</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>2,170.61</td>
<td>304.45</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>2,843.00</td>
<td>298.76</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>3,771.00</td>
<td>275.32</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>2,719.08</td>
<td>450.26</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>3,004.34</td>
<td>334.34</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>3,333.25</td>
<td>334.33</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>3,972.83</td>
<td>339.80</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>2,695.21</td>
<td>309.35</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1,629.21</td>
<td>310.20</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>1,883.03</td>
<td>325.35</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>2,220.41</td>
<td>326.97</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>1,856.17</td>
<td>393.06</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the expenses to be deducted in the operation and maintenance of the farm are considered, the enormous proportion of taxes to

52. Ibid., January 30, 1930, p. 6.
net revenue can be visualized.

In 1936, for the third year in succession, Cowichan's recovery from the depression was threatened by renewed labour agitation in the lumber industry. This time the problem was much closer to home, being centred in the Cowichan Lake area. The Lake district surrounded by mountains covered with heavy stands of high quality timber, was one of the most important logging areas on Vancouver Island, and, as such, had soon drawn the attention of the union organizers. Bert Flatt, a "pack-sack" organizer, had arrived in July, 1934, as the first resident union man. His arrival marked the first step in a plan which had been set up by the executive of the Lumber Workers Industrial Union in Vancouver after the 1934 strike. Cowichan had been the only large logging area not to support the strike in that year and in so doing had helped to foil the plans of the union to shut down the entire industry in British Columbia. It was clear to the executive of the union that they must work more effectively in Cowichan where "the intimidation of the employers dangerously threatened to wipe out most of the gains the people had made."54.

The L.W.I.U. therefore set to work to have a number of their union men hired out to the new Lake Logging Company, where they felt there was a good possibility of setting up a camp committee. Their reasons for choosing this company were as follows:

It was a new outfit, independent of the B. C. Loggers

53. Bergren, Myrtle, Tough Timber, p.60.
54. Loc. cit.
Association. It was a big camp, employing about 300 men. They were situated inland at Lake Cowichan and to sell their logs they had to get them to tidewater. They had to handle their logs twice, a costly procedure, bringing them down from the operations in the woods to Cowichan Lake, boom them there, then tow and reload them on railway cars, and ship them to tidewater on the E. & N. Railway. If they were to compete successfully with other outfits on tidewater, and make it pay, they had to have an efficient crew and stable working conditions - in short, no labour troubles. 55.

So it was then, that the union's blacklisted militants, who could no longer find employment in any camps affiliated with the British Columbia Loggers Association, moved into the Lake Cowichan area and set up a camp committee at the Lake Logging Company.

Having gained this foothold, they planned to try to elect functioning camp committees in every logging camp in the area. However, the superintendents of the local camps were only too familiar with the disrupting influence these Communists had had in the Alberni area in 1934, and wanted no part of their fledgling union. The organizers were denied the right to form the committees and were dissuaded from either visiting the camps or having their union paper, the B. C. Lumber Worker, distributed to the loggers.

Late in 1935 the L.W.I.U. had opened negotiations with the American Federation of Labour, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, to join with them as a bloc, in the hope of strengthening their own organization. As the date for affiliation with the A.F. of L. approached, the organizers in the Cowichan area began to step up their activities. Infiltrating the camps, they held meetings without the management's knowledge and secretly

55. Bergren, Myrtle, Tough Timber, p.60.
sold the union paper to the young loggers living in the area. Time and again the organizers were removed from company property and their literature was seized and destroyed.

In March, 1936, two men were fired from Camp 10 of the V.L. & M. Company, supposedly for selling the B. C. Lumber Worker. The union saw their opportunity and decided to act. They contend ed that the real reason for the firing of the men was "the impending move into the A.F. of L. and the demand for increased wages that was coming with it." 56.

Myrtle Bergren's Tough Timber suggests that the night after the firing, "Mack McKinnon, who was president of the L.W.I.U. at the time, and Hjalmer Bergren, the organizer, went into the camp and held a meeting. ... 'All those in favor of strike action stand on this side,' he (McKinnon) said. 'All those against, on that.' The crew of 130 men moved as one, and the strike was on. It was that fast." 57.

If Mrs. Bergren had not relied so heavily on her interviews with the five men she claims organized the woodworkers' union in British Columbia, and who are today all banned for life from membership in the I.W.A. because of the "anti-Communist clause in the constitution", she would have found that this account, like so many others in her book, does not give a very objective appraisal of the situation.

The strike bulletin which was released by the Executive Board of the L.W.I.U. stated that on Wednesday, March 4, a member of the camp committee of Camp 10 (V.L. & M.), Cowichan Lake was fired.

56. Bergren, Myrtle, Tough Timber, p.90
57. Ibid., p.91
This man had been active in the move for affiliation with the American Federation of Labour. What the bulletin did not mention was the fact that the man, as a member of an illegal camp committee, was breaking company regulations.

Again on Saturday, March 7, a union member was fired for selling the B. C. Lumber Worker. The bulletin suggested that this organ had previously been sold in Camp 10 without protest from the company. It may have been sold by the local union organizer when he secretly visited the camp, but not by a company employee.

The bulletin went on to state that efforts to have the men reinstated had failed and that a meeting called for Monday night, March 9, was attended by 88 men who, after hearing full particulars from McKinnon and Bergren, voted unanimously in favour of taking strike action. It should be pointed out that the union wisely took this initial strike vote in the evening when they were only presenting their case to the young, single men who lived in the isolated camps. The married men, who commuted each day from the village of Lake Cowichan, were not present.

The same procedure was followed in V.L. & M.'s camp 8. The first vote, called on Monday evening and not attended by the married men, was 58 to 29 in favour of strike action. A second vote, held on Tuesday morning, which included the married men, was 60 for the strike and 57 against it. It is interesting to note that of the thirty married men, only two were in favour of strike action.

One might even question if all of these young men were that interested in the principle of union representation in the camp.
It seems to be extremely doubtful. Instead, it would appear to be more probable that these young fellows, with three months of monotonous routine in the isolated camps behind them since the Christmas break, saw a good opportunity to escape to Vancouver for a "bust-up". For no sooner had the vote been taken than most of them broke all records in beating a trail to Duncan to catch the first bus out. Only the union organizers remained behind at Lake Cowichan to set up a picket camp. Indeed, with so few single men remaining in the Lake Cowichan area and with the married men not really in favour of the strike, it was difficult for the union to find sufficient pickets. Mrs. Bergren makes no mention of the mass exodus of the loggers to Vancouver, but she does mention that "no one could handle the pickets as well as Robert Berg and Danny Shipwright. Berg would go right in the people's houses alone, but Shipwright would not only go alone; he would take a couple of men with him, and everyone was on the picket line."58. Hardly what one might call enthusiastic support!

When the editor of the Leader condemned the loggers for their hasty strike action without considering either their dependents or others indirectly affected by the strike, William Sutherland, the Strike Committee chairman, replied:

Mr. Long, the superintendent, met the joint strike committee from both the camps and refused to reinstate the two men or have anything to do with the committee. ... So it can be seen by their action that any organization of loggers into a union of their own choice will not be tolerated by the "Boss Loggers", or a paper be allowed to be sold openly.

We all know trade unions are recognized by practically

all industries, but the "Boss Logger" must remain king of his domain with the right to discriminate and to devil with their legitimate right to join their own trade union and read their own union paper. 59.

While the young, transient loggers from Vancouver might identify with the union in demanding these rights, the local Cowichan loggers did not, in the main, share the union's opinions of the "boss logger". For they well remembered that many of the owners had kept their mills operating, even at a loss, during the worst of the depression so that employment might be continued. And with recovery, these same operators had done their best to share the slowly increasing returns with their employees. It is no wonder then that the support of the union was so weak. They were seeking neither increased wages nor better conditions for the loggers, for, in the main, the men employed in the Cowichan area were satisfied with things as they stood. The companies had given a voluntary wage increase only two months earlier, and, as has already been noted, the working conditions in Cowichan were probably the best in the industry. Union recognition then, was the only argument for striking, and not a few people were suspicious of this particular union's motivation.

Captain J. D. Groves, a respected Cowichan businessman, returning from England in April, warned that the loss of the British lumber market lay along the trail of continued unrest and uncertainty in the lumber industry. People in England could not understand why British Columbia allowed foreign agitators to go around threatening to close the camps. Men in the British lumber trade

59. The Cowichan Leader, March 26, 1936, p.4.
had the impression that Russia was using the agitators in a well-thought-out plan to disorganize the whole British Columbia lumber industry, both through the longshoremen and the lumber workers, so that she could slip into the breach and take the trade.  

Late in March the L.W.I.U. had taken their vote regarding the proposed affiliation with the A.F. of L., and the referendum had passed as 2,000 men registered their vote in an industry which employed 20,000. Once the affiliation was an accomplished fact, the provincial union executive now felt that they were strong enough to call for a general strike in the lumber industry throughout British Columbia. Demanding a one dollar a day general increase for all loggers, the B. C. and District Council of the new Lumber and Sawmill Workers' Union also hoped to gain general union recognition and union agreement between the men and the employers.

On May 4, the day for which the general strike was called, only three of the camps in the Lake Cowichan district came out in sympathy with V.L. & M.'s camps 8 and 10. The closing of three more camps in one district hardly constituted a 'general strike'. Mrs. Bergren claims that 2,000 loggers, sawmill workers, and shingle weavers answered the strike call. This number would appear questionable, but even if it were correct, it still only represents 10% of the men employed in the industry. She further tries to give the impression that the strike became province wide, but this is most definitely not true. It never did get outside of the Cowichan Valley, and there is no record of any millworkers

60. The Cowichan Leader, April 16, 1936, p.1.
having joined with the loggers.

She also claims that "early in June the employers offered a 50% a day wage increase in the camps and minor hourly increases in the sawmills, and with this the walkout was called off in June."\(^{62}\). This statement certainly gives the union and its members far more credit than they are due, for with the miserable failure of the attempted general strike, the loggers realized the futility of further resistance and voluntarily returned to work in the month of May.\(^{63}\). After having failed to get up-Island camps to join in the strike after two tries, the union was entirely discredited; so much so, that the Communist agitators who had been causing so much trouble for the Cowichan lumber industry for the past three years, were soon to find themselves removed from the positions of power in a new union which truly had the interests of the men at heart.

The series of strikes between 1934 and 1936 had been a serious threat to Cowichan's recovery from the depression, but that is not to say that no good came out of them. For if they accomplished nothing else, they seemed to have created a new willingness among the various groups living together in the valley to try and understand and help each other. An editorial which appeared in the Leader shortly after the strike, clearly reveals this new attitude.

Environment in the woods was responsible for the loggers' actions during the strike.

There is no greater evidence of this to be found than in the "squandermania" in which the logger, all too

---

generally indulges when on holiday. ... There is then in the loggers' environment, some justification for an outburst or strike. It is a theory which has much to support it. Loggers at Lake Cowichan, as they came down from the woods at the time of the strike, did not mention the strike in their eagerness to get away. The strike afforded them a break from the monotony of the woods, and they were glad of it.

Simple recreational facilities in the woods would be certain to develop a closer relationship among the men, regardless of their nationalities. Might it not be the first step in development of a true Canadianism among those whom we now call foreigners?

That the man living in or within reach of a city is more likely to think things over before going on strike was illustrated by the progress of the recent strike. The more isolated camps at Lake Cowichan were the first to go out. The camps around Duncan remained at work some days after and, when they did cease work owing to the unusual strike methods followed, were out only for a short time.

The strength of a nation is in its communities. And its individuals who make up its communities. The present camp environment makes almost impossible for the average individual the conservation and all round improvement of himself. Hence it makes impossible the growth of sound communities. That factor should be its strongest condemnation, the strongest urge that something should be done about it without delay. 64.

With the last of these labour problems, which were in many senses repercussions of the troubled early thirties, the period of the depression lay behind the people of Cowichan. Once again they were able to look forward with optimism to what the future held in store.

It is perhaps appropriate to close this chronological investi-

64. The Cowichan Leader, July 10, 1936, p.4.
valley with the recorded impression of a visitor to the area in 1936. Describing the allure of Duncan, the visitor noted: "The depression has had less effect on Duncan, probably, than any other community in the west. It is one of British Columbia's most prosperous communities." 65.

CONCLUSION

What were the over-all or long-term effects of the depression on the people of the Cowichan Valley? How did the years of economic scarcity influence the evolution of community life and the social, political and economic development of the area?

The First World War had had a profoundly unsettling effect upon the Cowichan district, upsetting the habitual routine of the people and altering the customary relationships between different groups within the community. The rapid progress made by the lumber industry both during and after the war had increased the number of economic interests in Cowichan and had further sharpened the contrasts in the relative positions of the varied groups who lived in the valley. The inflationary period which was experienced during the early twenties held down the real income of large sections of the population, particularly among the farmers of the area, and gave temporary strength to movements like the United Farmers of British Columbia. However, as conditions began to improve, the lasting influence of tradition prevailed over the disturbing influences which had arisen during the post-war depression.

Throughout the twenties, the citizens of Cowichan still believed that *laissez-faire* individualism was the best road to "progress". The assumption was that work was available for everyone who wanted it, and those who would not work had no claim on society. Cowichan's pioneer and frontier heritage had placed a premium upon self-sufficiency. Families expected and were expected to cope with their own problems. Prior to the Great
Depression, those who were unable for any reason to make their own way were apt to be looked down upon as weaklings. Independence was a matter of pride, and there was small temptation to look to the state for assistance, as practically no provision for social welfare was available. Public assistance was generally not available and where given was regarded with loathing.

As the "Winter Years" set in, however, this sense of family self-sufficiency declined rapidly, as entire sections of the community faced the misery of continuing unemployment. With all kinds of people in all walks of life being affected, it became impossible to produce evidence in support of the theory that poverty resulted principally from a lack of moral fibre.

To understand how the 1930's depression effected the individual, it is necessary to try to assess the consequences of continuous unemployment upon a person. What permanent effects do years, or even months of idleness and uncertainty have upon a man? Is work really necessary for human character?

Unemployment in this sense, refers to the idleness of those who were able and willing to work, but who were unable to find jobs. As defined above, unemployment was, or should have been a matter of vital concern to all ranks of society. Unfortunately, many people in the community whose sympathies would, under ordinary circumstances have been with the unemployed, were alienated because of a small substratum of loafers and transients who never had worked, who had no intention of doing so, and who used the situation created by the depression to impose themselves upon the public.
Even so, what effect did enforced unemployment have upon the individual who wanted to work? For personality is always conscious of the environment in which it operates; it can be integrated or disintegrated. Character has been defined as "compelling belief in certain knowledge which forces action and thus, taken with environment, determines the conduct of the individual".\(^1\) Does unemployment in any way affect this "compelling belief" and thus influence the conduct of individuals? If so, unemployment as experienced during the depression must have had a tremendous influence on personality.

Loss of employment had devastating physical, mental, and spiritual consequences. For the unemployed in Cowichan there was a definite pattern of degradation which commenced with the loss of income and which did not ease-up until the beginnings of recovery in 1933. Once a job was lost, accumulated savings vanished rapidly and poverty followed. Worse jobs had to be accepted, debts were incurred for food and other essentials, and pauperism was almost inevitable. Reluctantly charity or relief were sought and the family eked out a bare subsistence living on the inadequate direct-relief supplied by the municipalities. The most disheartening thing about this whole process was the gradual loss of the individual's independence. Obviously unemployment relief was not enough. The system worked after a fashion; it did one essential thing - it provided a bare livelihood for the destitute, so that none perished from starvation.

Unemployment contaminated family life. The strain and worry

---

and nervous tension inevitably associated with it made difficult or impossible pleasant and happy relations between husbands and wives or parents and children. Broken homes resulted frequently from the necessity of the husband having to leave home to look for a job, or from his desertion to get away from the nagging of his wife. Divorce rates in British Columbia skyrocketed once conditions improved enough for people to afford them. It is notable, however, that Cowichan's divorce rate failed to increase to anything like the provincial rate.\(^2\) This fact may be attributed to a number of things: the virtual isolation of the valley from the rest of the Island; the relative briefness of the depression in the area; and to the social stigma attached to divorce in such a small, rural community.

The low divorce rate might also be attributed to the influence of the church in the community, although this theory is difficult to prove. A study of local church attendance during the twenties and the thirties does not reveal any appreciable increase in times of economic stress.\(^3\) This failure of the church to appeal to those who were unemployed, illustrates a general failure of the established denominations to align themselves with the new occupational groups and marginal social groups which were drawn to Cowichan by the developing lumber industry. The churches maintained an appearance of strength in the valley through the 1920's, thanks mainly to the largely agrarian origin of the community. The problems of an essentially industrial-capitalistic society, as represented by the forest industry, lay largely outside the

---

2. See Appendix C.

3. A study of the Church Records of St. Peter's Anglican Parish,
province of interest of the churches. In Cowichan it was an established fact that:

Successful business people tended to dominate in church politics, and the middle and upper classes came to form the chief body of church supporters, while the skilled workers and the industrial proletariat turned increasingly to other agencies for leadership. 4.

Two other important effects arising out of the continued unemployment in the Cowichan district were a marked decrease in the annual marriage rate. 5. Young people simply could not afford to marry. They were therefore faced with three courses which they might follow in attempting to reach a solution to their problem. They might marry and set up a house on a drastically reduced standard of living, something very few of them seemed willing to do; they might postpone marriage and remain continent; or they might postpone marriage and enter into extra-marital sexual relationships. On the basis of most national youth studies it would appear that the latter course was the one most often adopted. This, of course, brought with it a corresponding increase in the rate of illegitimacy, but it also resulted in something of a quiet revolution in Canada in the field of sexual morality during the thirties.

The emotional effects of unemployment are, of course, very closely related to the physical effects. The fear of loss of Quamichan, failed to reveal any significant change in church attendance during the depression, although compilation of attendance was rather difficult owing to a somewhat sporadic attendance check.


5. See Appendix B.
work soon pervades an individual's life. Nerves are affected and despondency sets in. The creative urge is denied through loss of employment and one's sense of respectibility vanishes. In several cases, particularly in the earlier years of the depression, this stage was followed by despair, and finally suicide. In 1930 and 1931, the number of suicides in the Cowichan area increased startlingly. The number dropped in 1932, however, when it was generally realized that the degrading effects of unemployment were common to almost everyone, and did not represent a failure of the individual.

Some of the general spiritual effects of the depression were evidenced in a loss of self-discipline, as habits of sloth and uncleanness developed. Goodwill toward others became increasingly difficult. Aliens were discriminated against; farmers and businessmen became embittered toward those on relief; and even members of the same family lost their love and respect for one another.

While the devastating consequences of unemployment did reduce many in Cowichan to a point of absolute despair and ineffectiveness, there were those in the community who met the challenge and fought back. The active response of the area's civic and business leaders to the problems of unemployment, loss of markets, increased taxation, and corrupt government were such that they set the Cowichan area apart from many other districts in the province. The credit for this response must go in large part to the "British" section of the population. Many of these men were retired civil servants and military personnel; they were experienced people who had faced difficult situations in the past, and who had
spent a lifetime "making things happen". It is true that, because they were receiving fixed pensions each month, they did not suffer to the extent of the unemployed logger, or the small farmer, but the tradition of the "white man's burden" was meaningful to many of these men, and the depression offered them still another opportunity to help the unfortunate people around them. Their conduct was another example of men who had a "compelling belief in certain knowledge which forces action ... "

Turning to the general economic consequences of the depression, it may be seen that there was a general strengthening of the position of the lumber industry in the Cowichan area. Throughout British Columbia the depression was responsible for a heavy increase in lumber production, also for an increase in the number of operating sawmills. A large portion of the American market was lost, but due to the fortuitous combination of factors which arose as a result of the depression, British Columbia's market base was diversified and stabilized. Shipments increased rapidly and continued at a high pitch until after the outbreak of World War II. Several factors besides tariff preferences were responsible for this remarkable achievement: subsidized shipping which allowed the industry increased distribution, the aggressive salesmanship of the large exporting firms which was easily the equal of that of its American competitors, the cooperation of both the provincial and dominion governments, and the relatively stable labour condition in British Columbia industry through the thirties. By the end of the depression period there was no more talk about the
foolishness of "riding on the wave of prosperity" derived from forestry, for lumbering was now acknowledged as Cowichan's primary industry.

Unfortunately, the depression represented something of a death-knell for what had once been Cowichan's most important source of income - agriculture. The extended failure of commodity prices and specialized markets proved to be the straw that broke the camel's back. Young people had been reluctant, even during the twenties, to take up farming as a career when all around them they could see the benefits which might be derived from the lumber industry. So, when the forest industry began to make its rapid recovery in 1933, while agriculture still remained firmly locked in the grip of the depression, hundreds of would-be farmers discarded their hay-forks in favour of axes and peevees.

Milk, butter, and egg production made a somewhat better recovery in the latter part of the thirties than did produce, but Cowichan would never again be recognized as one of the major dairying centres of the province. By the time the Second World War broke out, many of the local farms had been subdivided and turned into residential housing sites for the large numbers of people who flocked to the valley from the Canadian Prairies following the severe drought conditions of 1936/37. Even Cowichan's "gentlemen farmers" found it uneconomical to continue their agricultural pursuits. Most of them had now reached an age where it was impossible to do the work themselves, and by the end of the thirties even Chinese labour was too expensive to allow for

6. See Appendix D.
profitable production.

One of the most pronounced consequences of the depression in Cowichan may be found in the field of local politics. A study of the provincial elections of 1928, 1933, and 1937 reveals a very definite shift from right to left in the political spectrum. In 1928, Davie, the Conservative, took 58% of the popular vote, while Guthrie, the Labour candidate, only received 39.6%. In that election most of Guthrie's support came from Ladysmith and the South Wellington portion of the constituency. Davie, on the other hand, drew most of his votes from the more Conservative portion of the riding, that is, the Cowichan Valley region.

The 1933 election has already been discussed in some detail. However, the strengthening of the C.C.F. position is worth noting again. Savage, the Independent, won 40.8% of the popular vote, while Guthrie followed closely with 31.8%. The same north-south division was still pronounced in 1933, but labour sympathy was noticeably increased in some of the previously Conservative polls. The village of Chemainus gave Guthrie a majority for the first time.

In 1937, the picture was quite different. With a total of 4,687 votes cast, Savage took 26.1%; A. C. Flett, a Liberal, also took 26.1%; while the persistent Guthrie was able to take advantage of this division to win with 33.3% of the popular vote.

---

7. See Appendix F.


10. Ibid., p.40.
Since 1937, Cowichan-Newcastle has remained a stronghold of the C.C.F.-N.D.P. party in British Columbia, and is today the "safe" riding for Mr. Strachan, the Party's leader.

In retrospect it is probably true that the Cowichan Valley suffered less than most other areas of British Columbia during the depression. This fact is attributable to the high percentage of residents who had fixed incomes, and to the rapid recovery of the forest industry. Because of the employment potential offered in the lumber camps and sawmills, the area attracted a good many immigrants during the late thirties. By the time of the 1941 census the Municipality of North Cowichan had a population of 4,590 and the City of Duncan, 2,189. This represented an 18.8% increase over the 1921 figure in Duncan, and a 39.4% increase in the Municipality. In 1931, 76.9% of the population had been of British racial descent, by 1941 this figure had dropped slightly to stand at 75.2%. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, the atmosphere in Cowichan was beginning to change. Duncan and the surrounding countryside used to be regarded as the most "English" town outside of England and probably was, but even here a generation of new Canadians could not be prevented from growing up. Yet, even today you will still find on the streets of Duncan some of the old breed.


12. Figures drawn from the Seventh and Eighth Census of Canada, Vols. II, Population. Also see Appendix A.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Government Publications:

1. British Columbia Attorney-General Department—Report of the Inspector of Municipalities, for the years 1929-1932, King's Printer, Victoria, B.C.

2. British Columbia Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Statistics Reports, for the years 1919 to 1940, King's Printer, Victoria, B.C.

3. British Columbia Department of Municipal Affairs, Reports of the Deputy Minister, for the years 1933 to 1940, King's Printer, Victoria, B.C.


8. Report of the British Columbia Provincial Board of Health, for the years 1918 to 1939. Also contained therein are the Reports of the Medical Inspector of Schools, King's Printer, Victoria, B.C.


11. Vital Statistics Reports for the Province of British Columbia, for the years 1918 to 1940, King's Printer, Victoria, B.C.

II. Manuscripts:


3. Cassidy, H.M., "Reorganization of British Columbia's

4. "Parish Records of St. Peter's Church, Quamichan", 1919 to 1940, M.S., St. Peter's Church, Duncan, B.C.

III. Books and Thesis:


17. Williams, D.R., One Hundred Years at St. Peter's, Quamichan, Cowichan Leader, Duncan, B.C., 1967.


IV. Newspapers and Periodicals:


3. Cowichan Leader, Duncan, B.C., 1918 - 1939.

4. French, Norman, "A Little Bit of England in the Far West", Toronto Sunday Sun, an undated clipping at the British Columbia Provincial Archives, 1925(?).

5. Hutchison, Bruce, "On the Trail of the Election", Vancouver Province, October 31, 1934, p.3.


APPENDIX A
POPULATION CHANGES: 1931 TO 1941.

Population Classified to Principal Origins:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Census 1931</th>
<th>Census 1941</th>
<th>Increase or decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. Cowichan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>3,291</td>
<td>4,590</td>
<td>plus 1,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Races:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1,663</td>
<td>2,283</td>
<td>plus 620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>plus 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>plus 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>plus 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Races:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>plus 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>minus 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>plus 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech &amp; Slovak</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>plus 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>plus 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>plus 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>plus 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>plus 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>plus 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>plus 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavian</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>plus 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>plus 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roumanian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>plus 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukranian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>plus 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asiatic Races:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese and Japanese</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>plus 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>1,843</td>
<td>2,189</td>
<td>plus 346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Races:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1,197</td>
<td>1,115</td>
<td>minus 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>plus 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>plus 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Races:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>plus 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>plus 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>plus 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>plus 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>plus 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>plus 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavian</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>plus 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asiatic Races</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>minus 80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX B
MARRIAGE AND BIRTH RATES FROM 1919 TO 1940

MARRIAGES

BIRTHS

Figures drawn from the Province of British Columbia, Board of Health, Report of Vital Statistics, 1919 to 1940, for Duncan, B.C.
It is difficult to determine the number of divorces taking place in an area like Cowichan, for most couples would travel to a larger centre, such as Victoria or Vancouver, to have their case tried. The figures used in the second of these graphs have been drawn from the Annual Reports of the Mothers' Pension Board. This Board supplied pensions to divorcees, widows, and wives of incapacitated men. When one considers the increase in population during the thirties, it may be seen that there was no significant increase in the number of divorcees living in the area. The first graph was contained in the Mothers' Pension Board Report in 1937.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE RATES**

**MOTHERS' PENSION RECIPIENTS IN DUNCAN**
APPENDIX D
QUANTITY OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FORWARDED
BY EXPRESS FROM DUNCAN, B.C.,
1919 TO 1939.

Figures drawn from Department of Agricultural Statistics Reports, 1919 to 1939, King's Printer, Victoria.
APPENDIX E

NET LIQUOR SALES, DUNCAN, B.C.,
1923 TO 1938.

Figures drawn from Annual Reports of the Liquor Control Board of the Province of British Columbia, 1922 to 1938, King's Printer, Victoria, B.C.
The following listings and graph will illustrate the swing from Conservative to C.C.F. in the Cowichan-Newcastle riding during the 1930's. The place names on the listings are given geographically in a north-south sequence. Those which are in the Newcastle area are followed with an (N) suffix, while those in the Cowichan area are appended with a (C).

### Cowichan-Newcastle Electoral District Election, July 18, 1928.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polling Division</th>
<th>Davie (Cons.)</th>
<th>Gray (Lib.)</th>
<th>Guthrie (Lab.)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. Wellington (N)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladysmith (N)</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Wellington (N)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northfield (N)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Cedar (N)</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension (N)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassidy (N)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemainus (C)</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crofton (C)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westholme (C)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someness (C)</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan (C)</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowichan Lake (C)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowichan Stn. (C)</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absentee Votes (Sec. 106)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absentee Votes (Sec. 107)</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cowichan-Newcastle Electoral District Election, Nov. 2, 1933.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polling Division</th>
<th>Davie (Non-Partisan)</th>
<th>Guthrie (C.C.F.)</th>
<th>Ramsay (Ind.)</th>
<th>Savage (Ind.)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S. Cedar (N)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassidy (N)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladysmith (N)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Gabriola (N)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Gabriola (N)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemainus (C)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crofton (C)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westholme (C)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someness (C)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan (C)</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>1,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowichan Lake (C)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowichan Stn. (C)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absentee Votes (Sec. 106)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Polling Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Davie (Non-</th>
<th>Guthrie (C.C.F.)</th>
<th>Ramsay Savage Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absentee Votes (Sec. 107)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>585</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,288</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cowichan-Newcastle Electoral Election June 1, 1937.

| Deykin (Cons) Flett (Lib) Guthrie (C.C.F.) Savage (Ind.) Reject Total |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| S. Cedar (N) | 15 | 46 | 89 | 59 | 5 | 206 |
| Cassidy (N) | 3 | 24 | 44 | 13 | 0 | 84 |
| Ladysmith (N) | 76 | 209 | 609 | 165 | 4 | 1,063 |
| E. Gabriola (N) | 16 | 19 | 30 | 7 | 0 | 72 |
| N. Gabriola (N) | 12 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 0 | 33 |
| Chemainus (C) | 54 | 136 | 113 | 114 | 2 | 419 |
| Crofton (C) | 14 | 14 | 25 | 17 | 0 | 70 |
| Westholme (C) | 9 | 16 | 8 | 42 | 0 | 75 |
| Somenos (C) | 43 | 33 | 47 | 36 | 0 | 159 |
| Duncan (C) | 274 | 529 | 411 | 603 | 11 | 1,828 |
| Cowichan Lake (C) | 16 | 29 | 32 | 28 | 0 | 105 |
| Youbou (C) | 7 | 58 | 26 | 17 | 0 | 108 |
| Cowichan Stn. (C) | 79 | 49 | 46 | 74 | 1 | 249 |
| Absentee Sec. 106 | 9 | 23 | 46 | 22 | 0 | 100 |
| Absentee Sec. 107 | 12 | 33 | 27 | 25 | 19 | 116 |
| **Total** | **639** | **1,224** | **1,560** | **1,222** | **42** | **4,687** |