

Minutes of AUCE Provincial Affiliation Committee with Jess Succamore of the
Confederation of Canadian Unions-CCU Feb. 8th, 1980.

AUCE: At our last convention, we passed a motion that we had to join the CLC intact. This committee was struck to investigate the possibilities of joining. They informed us that we couldn't join as an intact union because of their clause on redundancy; we're a redundant union because we're within the jurisdiction of three other members. What we're doing is investigating all the different possibilities of affiliation. Tonight we're pleased to be able to start off our discussion with you.

Succamore: What format do you want to follow?

AUCE: Principally, do you want to give an introduction as to the format and history of CCU, and then we'll throw it open for questions.

Succamore: Fair enough. I suppose everyone here knows my name is Jess Succamore. I am National Secretary-Treasurer of CAIMAW and I work full-time for that union and have done since 1971 and I'm one of the founding members of the union out here in B.C., in fact I'm the only founding member left. I was also a founding member of the Confederation of Canadian Unions. Very recently a Canadian union was set up in Sudbury as the main member of the Council of Canadian Unions. In 1969 I attended there and I was there as a delegate from the Canadian Electrical Workers Union, which is a small group that has started to break away from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers here in B.C. So the reason I'm telling you this is that my roots go right back to the beginning of the CCU and CAIMAW here, and subsequently we had a great lot of contact with the Committee for Canadian Unions being set up here as a result of the Ironworkers Union that broke away in the early sixties and was snatched by the American Unions in that field with the help of the Canadian Labour Congress. It didn't surprise me at all; of course, I've said it before and people from your group have told me that they wanted to join the CLC. To me, that was a foregone conclusion because the last thing they want in the CLC is a union with any independence or any freedom of thought. And I think that's the whole basis of why we're actually an entity at all. And the CCU is just a getting together of various groups that have either started to break away from American unions, workers' Internationals, felt they were no longer, not just not represented, but they didn't respect them as workers, you know, they left no decision-making process to us. And of course they were unions like Canadian Textile and Chemical Union that was the real founder of the group who had, many years before, in the textile fields, such men as Harold and Ken Rowley, they had set up a union and asked the old Canadian Trade and Labour Congress for a charter, and they wouldn't give them one because the jurisdiction was already claimed by an American union, in the Canadian Labour Congress. Same result you got when you were applying, it's this jurisdictional system they set up. Well, the Canadian Textile and Chemical Union was the founder of the CCU, they set up the Textile Workers' Union, chartered Locals of the Textile Workers of America, and they built that union up to several thousands, and then because they had the audacity to suggest that the work ought to go on contracts, not on sell-outs, they were purged as Communists; they were not Communists, until the late fifties. The same things remain true today of the CLC, this is essentially what

Jean-Claude Parrot has run into. So these are not new, it's a continuing involvement of that sort of unionism. And the reasons for that are simply that the majority of the CLC is controlled by American unions. The affiliates are seventy-five percent American unions. The total membership is down somewhere around sixty-five percent, give or take. So each of the unions that have broken with the CLC, or most of them, have refused to go along with that sort of activity. And I think the constitutions of the CCU and its affiliates speak more than anything I could say in practice because most of them have democratic electoral processes, the right to recall officers, things of that nature, which I would say is inherent in your union, because I was one of the people consulted, involved right at the beginning, and so was Madeleine Parent. Is anybody here from those days? I remember when Madeleine was invited to speak out at UBC at one of the women's weeks in the early seventies, and she spoke out there. I remember quite well, she was one of the people involved, there were quite a few other ones of course, why I got to know her so well was because she was on the Constitution Committee, we had several meetings. But at that time, basically, The Office and Technical Employees Union, called OTEU here, and called OPEIU, I think, elsewhere, but it's the same union, they were starting to sign up, and they asked Madeleine whether it was good to organize, and I said, well, certainly, but what are you organizing into, and she had some misgivings, about them going into it, but she said, I'd rather speak out of the meeting on it, I'll talk to you after, because she didn't want to get pegged as someone who was there just to disrupt things, she was there as a guest to speak about women's rights, things of that nature, she didn't know there was an organizing campaign going on. There was a meeting, with my friend George Brown, who died in '74, so I know it was quite a bit before that, he was there, and I was there with Madeleine, and we met with a group, at the Ritz Hotel, if I remember correctly; we said, well, certainly it's better to be in that union than in no union, but we pointed out, we felt that we should give the organizers the opportunity to understand what it was they were getting into. We told them to ask about certain things, and if they were alien to them, to seriously think about it. If they didn't worry about the constitutional aspects of it, and the real control in the union, then they shouldn't worry about it, but when they went to the Office and Technical workers, they got their local bylaws; and they asked about the Constitution, and they were told, no, that's not the Constitution, that's just the bylaws, and they told them, you don't have to worry about the rest, the rest is all good. The funny thing is that when they saw their Constitution and the way they evaded that issue, they said, no bloody way, they recognized the people and they branded them as dishonest. They said, they're not levelling with us and telling us what we're getting into. We never counselled them one way or the other, we just felt we should advise them what they were getting into, and they should realize they were getting into an American union. When the chips are down, Canadian workers in those unions just don't seem to have any rights, unless they're in line with what the hierarchy wants. So, as I say, that's a bit of an aside, in one way, but it's still not an aside where you're getting back to the basic issue, because your group has grown so much since then. Through the years, some of the leaders have changed, in AUCE, at one time, I didn't know who was who, and I don't know how interrelated that is today, I don't think it's anywhere near what it was, but basically you can't knock that because we're all struggling together. the situation is that we had asked, we had felt that you'd be better affiliating with us right at the beginning; they chose not to, and it's a free country, we fight for the right for workers to have a choice, and all that, so we're not going to get too upset when somebody

exercises their right to be different. But it still comes down to, and I think the question you're facing still today, is what are you going to do? Are you going to stay as you are, or are you going to affiliate with CLC? And by the way, they're lying to you when they say they don't allow people like you in because they just let in a group who broke away from the Steelworkers Union; they were worried about us getting them and so they let them in. The Fishermen's Union couldn't get into the Canadian Labour Congress until they came to the CCU, and they got in then. Same with the United Electrical Workers, they said they were all Communists, and then they had one meeting with us and they got in. So if any of you really think the CLC is Valhalla, it might do you good just meeting with us and letting them know. But I think, you know, that is just a fact of life, I'm being perfectly frank with you, and I don't doubt maybe some of you think that's the way to do it. But the idea of joining a labour central is surely for unity and the sense that goes with it, and all things being equal in the labour movement, bigger is better. But then you've got to examine whether things are equal. I'd say they're definitely not. And I'd say unity is the easiest thing in the world to accomplish if you agree with your enemies. And I don't think you approve, the fact that you have, in your various ways, it may be uncoordinated and appear naive to certain people at certain times, but the fact is you've shown a willingness to band together and organize in the best traditions of the labour movement. And I think the fact that you were isolated from the CLC certainly didn't hurt you, but I'd just as sincerely say that having affiliated with the CCU, it could have helped you, and I still think that is the case. But if anybody thinks that I or anybody else can give you the answers, you know, join us and it's a great deal, you know, pay twenty-five cents a month per member and that's the end of it, I'd be completely dishonest. I remember, must be about four or five years ago, that the Manitoba Government Employees Association was considering joining the CLC, and somebody suggested the CCU. Ken

Rowley and I spoke at the meeting there, a meeting at the University of Manitoba, the CLC was doing a real nice job there, a guy from CUPE was there, and they told them all sorts of things. They finished up, the Manitoba Government Employees, they finished up joining the CLC, and they joined them for the great research facilities, knowing, you know, we only need to ask and we've got all this here. And the first letter, you can check me out, I think Bill Richway was the Vice-President of the outfit at the time, but I know people on the executive of the Government Employees' Union, and the first time they sent in a letter, for help, and they were told, of course, this is for extra charge. I'll tell you this much, if anybody wants to bet on it, you phone our office up, we've got one person doing research, or you phone up the CAIMAW office, and you're from AUCE and you're not affiliated with us or anything, and you'll get more information from us, quicker, than you'll get from the CLC or the BC Federation of Labour. If you can't believe that, don't affiliate with us. But there it is, you get a chance at the halls of labour, the legitimate labour movement. And I say quite candidly, a bigger bunch of bastards never existed. They talk about legitimate, legitimate, you know, great, and it's not funny, because it's quite deliberate, you know, they attacked your union, one of the most violent anti-union strike-breaking material to come out of the CLC conference has recently attacked you, because they misled you and got you into bloody trouble. And I don't say they misled you that much, the women in this leadership stayed there and led the battle, but they bloody started, you know. I But by all accounts, and I got first hand accounts from some of our members who were there, for people to do what Friar did, doesn't surprise

me at all , but I think it was very stupid, he's usually a lot smarter than that, he usually accomplishes the same thing in a lot smoother way, he lets somebody else do the job. But, as I said then, they were laying the groundwork for some time to take over your group, and you've got to evaluate the merits of that. As I say, when I was talking to the sub-committee that came to talk to me, I was kind of amused by the situation, whether it was affiliation to the CLC or the CCU, or a merger, because you know, the two things are entirely different. A merger, you know, by joining the BC Government Employees or CUPE, that's it, you become part of them and you've no organization. By joining the CLC or the CCU you have your organization. They've said you couldn't join them so you'll have to come in. I dare say they could stretch a point and allow you to affiliate as a charterer local. And then you have to look into the merits of that, and you'll find out that history shows very clearly that directly chartered locals of the CLC have a history of bad service, getting nothing, and they're just usually holding companies, to push them into American unions. That's a fact, if you just check the record you'll find it's correct, but the fact is that a few years ago that changed somewhat, because CUPE got big and ugly that they got some militant leadership, so therefore they demanded that they get on these ballots as well, which is the case that happened. A few years ago, the University of Saskatoon, I got a call from a group that wanted somebody to go and speak. Ken Rowley was speaking someplace else, and I went there as a representative of the CCU, and talked to them. They were a group of library people at the university, about a hundred and twenty or so. They sent me a letter, and I've got the stuff in my office there, from Local 54 of the CLC, asking, it's from the chairperson, saying come up here and speak to them. And I thought they must be pretty naive, you know. And I phoned this woman up, and said they won't allow someone from our group to come and speak to you. And she said, oh yes, it's quite all right, so I said all right, it would be nice to think so, but I would be very surprised if that was the case. And what happened was, the day before I was to leave, I got a wire from the CLC, saying sorry for the inconvenience, but this meeting has been cancelled indefinitely, and stuff of that nature. However, I'd warned them about it, and they had another leaflet around, and the CLC had all these bulletins around saying it was cancelled, and they had about sixty to eighty people show up. And when I got there, there were some people there, two fellows from the Saskatchewan Government Employees Union, myself as representative of the CCU, and nobody there from CUPE, and nobody there from the other one, the Service Employees and Transport Union, and the OTEU, those were the three. And they asked me to speak, and I said I thought the CLC were trying to create selective ballots, and most likely they'll have two or three unions on it, they'll have the Office and Technical workers, and most likely CUPE, because they're big enough and ugly enough they can't ignore them. This guy from the Saskatchewan Government Employees jumped up and said, That's exactly right, they told us to stay away but they wouldn't put us on the ballot, and that's why we came here to talk to you. The reason I'm telling you this is it's nothing new , these are old things and nothing's changed in that movement, and it never will. Because you know, there's no real interest. I don't know how many of you saw, in last night's Sun, a part in there about \$300,000. available to independent unions in grants. Well, of course the government's still trying to suck the CCU into accepting that money, and we came out flatly opposed to it, because they gave the CLC ten million dollars a couple of years ago. And all it was was ten million dollars to sell Tripartism. And Tripartism would wipe out all

your rights and put you in one big bargaining unit across the country. The Friars and these people would be the guys who would be leading in it, working out with the government, sitting down and telling them how much you shouldn't get, you know.

AUCE: Can you talk a little bit about how you see that working, Tripartism?

Succamore: Well, that's a subject in itself, but basically Tripartism was rejected by the vast amount of unions, in the CLC even, and that was because their leadership couldn't sell it. Their membership, the people, you know, don't get me wrong, there's a lot of good people in the CLC unions, but as you must have found out, the CLC is like a hierarchy type of operation, and there's where the rub is, and you can see that since it was formed. But Tripartism is essentially the government, the bosses and the union sitting down, so you're sitting down, and immediately it's two to one. It's a deep subject, that every progressive union has turned down.

AUCE: What about the B.C. Federation of Labour?

Succamore: The B.C. Federation of Labour, well, you've got to understand, the B.C. Federation of Labour is traditionally far more militant than the rest of North America, not just Canada, always has been, and militancy and trade union principles is reflected to a far higher degree here than elsewhere. But Len Guy had to go, because of the push from the CLC, a reactionary group, far more than from the rank and file here, because of his position on several of the unions outside of the B.C. Federation of Labour, he took the position that we took, that you can't confine trade union principles to whether you're affiliated with somebody or not. And that's a line he was pretty open about. But he also took the line that you don't put all your eggs in the basket with politicians. You don't just say, we'll support the NDP and they'll be fighting for us, have legislation for us. So those are positions that we supported, it's one thing to support the NDP, to say they're the best of a bad bunch, but any trade union official who tells you to support the NDP on the basis that that's the answer to all your problems, in my opinion and in the opinion of any trade unionists I have any respect for, they think that's misleading people, looking for easy answers.

AUCE: But also it mobilizes people.

Succamore: Yes, of course it does, but they don't want a militant labour movement. However, as I say, I'm rambling quite a bit here, but it's just that, your organization and its background, in quite a short period of time, and my involvement in and around it, and the labour movement in general, it's been quite a hectic period. When was your union set up, in 1972?

AUCE: I think our first contract was signed at UBC in 1974, and we probably started organizing--

Succamore: Yes, there was one organizing drive that fell flat on its face, then after a while it got rejuvenated.

AUCE: There might have been four organizing drives.

Succamore: There was quite a lot of effort and work.

AUCE: Could you inform us, if we decide to join your organization, how could we join? And also, if we decided to leave, what is the method?

Succamore: Well, affiliates of the CCU, it's spelled out, I'll give you copies of the Constitution, I've got one here, anyway, there's a twenty-five fee, to make out an application, you'd have to phone the Secretary-Treasurer, John Lang, and he'll send you the form, it's just a matter of filling out the form. He has the authority, all you want is a copy of the form and a copy of the Constitution. It's simply a matter, we're opposed to taking anybody in whose constitution is undemocratic, we've only had one instance of that and the people were only too happy to change it, but that's the basic requirement, and you've got to be a Canadian union, not dominated from outside the country.

AUCE: Is that fee an initiation fee?

Succamore: No, that twenty-five dollars is the affiliation fee. What happens then is that pending approval by the National Executive Board, taken from the membership, if there's any queries or anything like that, well, in your case, I can say quite candidly there would be no problem, because the thing that we're looking for, AUCE wouldn't, it wouldn't be a concern. The per capita payments are twenty-five cents per person per month. The structure is we have a convention every second year, officers are elected at the convention, President, Vice-President, a Western Vice-President and an Eastern Vice-President and a Secretary-Treasurer. The Secretary-Treasurer is the only full-time position in the organization with a secretary and an office there in this place in Toronto. Each affiliate names their own representative to sit on the Executive Board. The Board usually meets two or three times or if there's an emergency or something of that nature, on call. So we meet about three or four times between conventions, and of course the policies adopted at the conventions is our mandate, the officers and the Secretary-Treasurer. We presented quite a lot of briefs to the various provincial authorities across the country, and as a matter of fact we've got a meeting with the Minister of Labour here, but Bennett cancelled it out, the Minister of Labour is having trouble with, it's just one of the things he's having troubles with, but it was not formal, it was just a hurry-up meeting the Minister of Labour agreed to have with us, but they cancelled out, but we have a meeting coming up, in the next couple of weeks. In British Columbia, we've got a council of all the affiliates here, there's about sixteen to sixteen and a half thousand members here, we've got a B.C. council that's got their own elected officers, a chair and a vice-chairman, a secretary, and the affiliation fees to that are a flat fee, I think the maximum is one hundred dollars a year, and they're valuated down on the scale. Now most of the unions, like the Pulp Workers and our union, we affiliate, the national union affiliates so you can send officers to participate in the policies and the discussion, and each of the locals affiliates too. So, your union has got about five locals, and your provincial organization, each one of those would affiliate, the cost to your provincial would only be about five hundred dollars, and the rest, the locals, it would be from twenty-five dollars up to about seventy-five dollars, depending on the membership of the local. I don't remember off-hand what that is, but it's not a big issue. That's just a flat fee. The costs there are mainly involved with some of the activities; what we are doing in this

area is presenting briefs and lobbying. We have one large educational seminar, I think the next one is coming up in May, it's usually about a three day seminar, it's quite intensive, it's a labour school, we go from labour history to labour law, arbitration and stuff like that for the advanced. So if the affiliates need help in getting established, like steward training, the CCU helps a lot of the new unions with steward seminars and stuff of that nature. The York Staff Association joined the CCU and were helped right from their initial stages, yours was the same, but yours was done much more by your own people, of course, but they had John Lang, he was an assistant to Ken Rowley, he was sick in the last few years, he had a stroke, but John was doing quite a lot of his actual work. He was working on that project of organizing the University Staff Association, and then Ken's health seemed to improve and they wanted him to go and work full-time for their union, doing negotiations and stuff of that nature. He worked for them until Ken died. By that time they had several of their own people ready and trained, and they went right into the CCU. They had no doubts in their minds that it was beneficial. But then again, it's each one to their own poison.

(Tape indecipherable at this point; question from AUCE re B.C. Council)

Succamore: Right now, the B.C. Council is represented at these hearings on uranium, and we've had more input into that, although you don't always read it in the press, but we've had better representation than any other union. Also, all these WCB'ers, it's a crying shame, you know, we don't believe in coming out and knocking some of the bad things that other unions are doing, because they're pretty inept, like the B.C. Fed., on health and safety, as you know, their health and safety officer, has anybody ever heard his statement? I've been to WCB hearings, where I've been there representing the CCU, and he's totally inept and incompetent. He's picked not because he has any capabilities in that area, but because he's from the biggest American union in Canada, and they've got to have their guy in there. And that's the way that big machine operates. I could tell you things that would make your hair stand on end but that's not the issue I'm here for. But briefs, compensation matters, all that matters. The CCU spearheaded the attack on the Workers' Compensation Board with the help of the IWA, got those three commissioners fired two or three years ago. We were the ones who spearheaded that. The IWA got most of the credit for it, we don't mind that, but there was no other bloody union in it, it was just the CCU and the IWA. The IWA played a pretty dominant role, it's natural enough, they're a pretty big union, forty-odd thousand members here, and they did a pretty good job on that issue, but we co-operated with them. I often say the Compensation people have got good relationships with that end of it. And the reason they'll have meetings with us is not because they like us, because if we were ineffectual at those things, they would just isolate us and say, look at them bunch of yokels over there, they're no good. It's only our ability that keeps us with them because they're a bit leery of us, being outsiders. Those are secondary, you know, high profile, we don't make a big deal out of it, the only reason I'm mentioning it is to show, you know, you'll get some messiah going around telling you there's all these experts on this, and you know, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

AUCE: If the IWA has a good record with health and safety, well, I find a lot of your comments hard to deal with...you're not giving us a lot of the details but you're making comments like, Keith Graham was appointed the B.C. Fed's health and safety officer...

Succamore: Yes, he's the head, he's the B.C. Fed's health and safety person. I've never seen a comment from him since he's been in office, in a year and a half. I've been at conferences with him and meetings with government agencies and I've never heard him speak. I've had people sitting at hearings for months, what was the one, the Amendments to the Workers' Compensation Board, you know, the hearings, the first ones they've had in seven or eight years, and he was there, and he never spoke, I don't think he spoke once. What I'm saying is, those appointments there are more political than practical. And it's unfortunate, but that is a fact. But I say, it doesn't carry over, to people like the Carpenters' Union, Colin Snell, he would have been quite a good guy to have in there, or someone from the Longshoremen, or from the IWA, but the guys in the IWA are too busy in their own union. They wouldn't put a guy like Snell in because he's supposed to be a Communist. They won't put you in if you haven't got the right politics or if you aren't from the right union.

AUCE: The other question I had was, what was the issue on the Workers' Compensation Board commissioners?

Succamore: Well, the Workers' Compensation Board, when the NDP were voted out, one of the first things the Ministry of Labour did was to fire Terry Iseman (sp. ?), one of the most favourable and innovative people in that field of endeavor, but they didn't like his politics because he was an NDP'er. But he was a terribly competent guy, he was innovative and far in advance of the rest of North America. And immediately the employers were screaming for his scalp straight away, and the first thing Williams did was to fire him. And he was left with a bunch of real incompetents. They put in, I can't remember his name, Perry (sp. ?), he was the Vice-Chairman, they put him in as temporary chairman, a fellow called Watt was the management representative, and (tape indecipherable at this point.) They were the commissioners, and they started overturning practice that had already been established, past practice, like the Labour Board, they establish their own practice when they change the law, many of the issues and the way things are going to be done depends on the precedents set after they've enacted the legislation. These guys started overturning decisions, and going about things in an entirely different way, right to the employer's side, cutting off claims, doing this and that, and appeals were piling up, and we started attacking them, and the IWA starting attacking them. That is how we got involved with the IWA on that. As a matter of fact, to his credit, I went into Jack Munroe's office one morning, with one of our health and safety people, and I said I'm only down here for one thing, I'm no expert on this, that's what other people are paid to do, in the general political scheme of things I wouldn't be on top of it, but we think (the IWA representative on the Workers' Compensation Board) has just gone completely right-wing, he's just gone along with everything these guys are doing, he hasn't come out with any dissenting opinions. It seems to us that he's more intent on hanging onto his forty-five grand a year than he is on representing labour's interests. It's a tri-partite board,

you might say, where you've got somebody from management and somebody from labour and a supposedly independent chairman. Well, this independent chairman has gone completely right-wing in his approach, and (the labour representative) hasn't written any dissents or made any waves. I said that we felt that the IWA should call for his resignation. And I said, we're going to do it if you don't. But we felt that coming from their union, that it was unfair for us to do it, because people would say, oh, that bunch of flag-waving head-cases, and we feel you have an obligation. So we'll leave you with that one for a minute, if you like. And he looked at the other guys, and said, no, you're right, we'll do it. And by god, they did it. But that was co-operation with us and them. That was dealing directly with people that know us. But you couldn't have that sort of co-operation with the B.C. Federation of Labour, because they want to make their own grandstand plays.

AUCE: Could you give me an example, because each time you make one of those claims about the BC Fed or the CLC, because I don't know the difference between--

Succamore: Well, you know, when it stares you in the face just about every day. You know, there's a legion of it, every time there's a statement out of the BC Fed, have you got any precedent, if you give me one I'll give you the political background on it. If you want the biggest one that's come along, let's take the CLC, they passed a convention condemning Tripartism, and condemning the action against the Postal Workers, and Parrot gets put in jail, and not a whimper out of McDermott, and it turns out that he was working with, some of the heads of the CLC were working with, some of the NDP and some of the Liberal government were working to smash the union, that's what they were out to do. That's the best concrete example you'll have. But if I talk in generalities, it's because it's nothing new, it's been going on since it came into being. And this is the thing that's so hard to impress on people, people look at it and say, things like that, they just can't be so. But you've got to understand the nature of the CLC and what sort of a creature it is. Has any of you here seen one condemnation from the CLC at any time about the copper tariffs, or about the zinc tariffs, or about the steel tariffs? No, not one, because when they start interfering in that sort of thing, they get their money cut off from the United States.

AUCE: Could you explain?

Succamore: This legislation was legislation supported by a senator and representative, the authors of the bill in the United States House of Representatives, but the bill was sponsored by the AFL-CIO. It was dreamed up there and written up by their researchers and it was a tariff restriction, a tariff on all imports to the United States, and when we, the CCU, got hold of it and researched it and got some of the stuff from the AFL-CIO, I've got copies in my office, anything I say here I can back up. The thing is, we found out and broke it on the news here, Jack Webster and all of them got hold of it and thought it was terrible, some people on the Vancouver and District Labour Council thought this was terrible, these American unions lending their support to this legislation, and then we got this P.R. job from all these American unions. Oh no, our workers passed resolutions, and the Steelworkers pointed to their convention, in 1972, we passed a resolution calling for exemption for

Canada. But we said that didn't make much difference to us, because the legislation didn't allow for a country's exemption, it was unilateral. So they had guys in Canada telling people that they were not doing what we said, which was in effect taking their members' money from Canada, and using it, part of that duties, to enact legislation that took our jobs away. When you think of it, it's outrageous, but that's exactly what happened. (Indecipherable passage.) The person who presented the brief on behalf of the AFL-CIO was none other than the International President of the Steelworkers' Union and the President of the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO. And I've got the full minutes in my office up there. And when asked specifically, asked about any exemptions for that, he said no. And people phoned up, I remember Webster specifically, I said they're lying, I've got the minutes here, I'll send you copies of it. And he phoned up Jack Moore, who was head of the IWA at that time, and he said, Jack, that's a bunch of hogwash from these flagwavers, our union voted exemption and that's full of prunes. So he took his side of it. Who were we? And we're always in that position, and we're always going to be in that position, until we get more people like you to join in and fight with us and expose this. To fight for what we believe in, and that's an independent labour movement in Canada, one where the workers control their own destiny democratically.

AUCE: Could you tell us how the York University Staff Association got started and how they got into the CCU?

Succamore: All I know is that some groups, similar to like what we got involved with AUCE, like I mentioned some people, like Madeleine Parent, I think she's quite well known back East, more than she is here, she was speaking to some of these women's rights groups, some people opposed her, I believe, and she talked to them (indecipherable passage). They involved themselves directly with the CCU in an ongoing way, and sought their help in how to organize, and as soon as they got in started a steward's training program. That was all done directly, as a matter of fact, John Lang was assistant to Ken Rowley at that time and he worked just about full-time helping them get themselves established.

AUCE: What's the nature of the relationship right now? What services are you providing them?

Succamore: They had a strike a while ago, it was over a year ago, and there was quite a lot of support, mostly helping on (strategy?). Strikes are pretty basic things, but if you've never been in one, and a lot of people haven't...the other thing is, democracy has got its pitfalls, as you're most likely aware, you try to be democratic and it doesn't allow for any action at times. But the thing is, and maybe this is the wrong thing to say, but I think we had kind of a sobering influence, because when they were all starting with us, they would say well, what do you think, they didn't have to take the advice, they weren't required to do it, but they were willing to listen to somebody else when they weren't willing to listen to some of them. And I think it was good in the sense that there were some experienced people there, that they were at least willing to kind of mediate between themselves. I think it's been a good effect on them that way. The York University Staff Association has won some arbitrations that CUPE and all these that are all on the same campus refused to take, said it's crazy. They fought all sort of things and got stuff in their contract, fighting for women's rights, they're predominantly

women, as I imagine your group is predominantly women, they're about seventy percent women. If you're prepared to take issues that those other unions weren't, that's one of the things about your group, and with SORWUC. People can criticize SORWUC until it comes out of their ears, but the fact is they've still done something that those other buggers never dreamed of doing, and you won't hear me knocking them on that basis. They've made some organizational mistakes, but then again in that field, the CLC ain't done too bloody great. The Textile and Chemical Workers' Union, they've won arbitrations on this surveillance, camera surveillance, first thing of its kind. I think that the CCU, if you look at the labour decisions here, from the BC Labour Relations Board and from arbitrations in the province, I think the CCU unions are represented in precedent-setting cases and fighting principle issues far out of proportion to their actual size. It's their willingness to put more of their membership's money into fighting for their rights than into anything else. But one thing we're not burdened with is high salaries. You run a union like a business, I mean, a union's got to be run in a business-like way, but not as a business, you can't equate that sort of relationship, you lose it.

AUCE: One thing you mentioned before was, when the CLC passed a motion to create more autonomy in their U.S. unions...

Succamore: Yes, I brushed on that, I was brushing on a few things, and because if you go into everything in detail, you don't know what people want to hear. But in 1974, after many years of the tide of nationalism, well, they tried in 1973, to raise a half a million dollars from their affiliates to smash the rising tide of nationalism in the trade union movement; now, can you imagine any other trade union in the world that would try to stifle a feeling of national identity and militancy in the union movement? They tried to raise a half a million bucks and fell flat on their face. So they said, what are we going to do, the workers in Trail are trying to break away, and they would have broken away but they got shafted by the Labour Board. There's all sorts of histories of those things. But what the CLC did in 1974 at their convention in Edmonton was pass a resolution saying they should have minimum standards of autonomy for their Canadian unions here in Canada, international unions operating in Canada. What was so interesting about all this was that who was holding off was unions like the Steelworkers, who have no autonomy really at all, within their constitution, look at the labour report for 1970, their locals were always under trusteeship, it was a phone call or a signature in Washington, D.C., or in Pittsburgh, and they take all your rights away here in Canada. That's the sort of example they were holding up about, many like the building trades and the craft trades. Their reaction was immediate, they just stopped paying per capita to the CLC, without any consultation with their Canadian members. Whoever pays the piper calls the tune. And Joe Morris, who was then the head of the CLC, went down to Washington, and I coined the phrase at the time, with his cap in his hand, and said please, and they said you keep your bloody nose out of our business, and we'll pay you. Well, it's my understanding that one of those unions still hasn't paid. That's the Ironworkers. It's also my understanding that just recently the Operating Engineers told them to go to hell because the CLC couldn't stop this jurisdictional dispute to the satisfaction of the building

trades. There was quite a debacle. But the building trades refused to pay any money to the Canadian Labour Congress. So you've got to ask yourself, just how Canadian is the Canadian Labour Congress? If these bloody high-priced pikers in another country can just cut off the funds? It's quite unique how we got that out on public record, I was at a debate with Len Williams of the Steelworkers, up at Williams Lake, and I made that charge, I said these bloody guys, without any consultation, they can just cut it off. And he jumped up, and said, that's a lie, that's a lie! So I said, let's hear your version. And he got up and repeated what I'd just said, he was so worked up. And we had that on tape. But, you know, how Canadian is that organization? Now, people might say, well, you know, I read something in one of your papers, and a lot of people say CCU is just a bunch of flagwaving activists, but that stuff's propagated by the McDermott's and stuff. I never waved a bloody flag in my life. But if I did wave a flag it would be the Canadian one, it wouldn't be the bloody Stars and Stripes, and I'm not anti-American. But the thing is, I don't want them bloody running and controlling our funds. The Corporations and Labour Unions Returns Act shows that over fifty million dollars a year of Canadian workers' dues money is being drained off to the United States. It's not my figures, it's the Government's figures, from Statistics Canada. From 1962, until the last report came out in I think 1976, I'll stand corrected as to the year, that's over 350 million dollars, and it's developing a trend. What used to be ten million dollars a year, when the first reports came out, in '67, they always come out a few years late, but when they started coming out, they showed an ever-increasing amount of money going down as dues. These American unions, the biggest lobby the CLC has put on in its history, is to get that legislation thrown out in Canada. It was brought in by the Diefenbaker government, they wanted some control over what money was going out to operate these trade unions and what was coming back. And these guys all say it's distortion, it's wrong, they don't charge us for this, they don't charge us for that, the thing is all they've got to do is show us the real figures. But the reason they don't, because for everything that they say, these reports don't show that they pay it back, they also don't show all the other money, in investments in Canada, and property and all that, what they get there. And this is where's the real control in the labour movement. This is why, when the wage controls came in, and the wage controls were an attack on women workers and lower paid workers and the public sector workers. I remember when I got contacted here the day that came out and there were only two union people in this province prepared to go on TV, I was one of them and a guy from the Firefighters, to come out and condemn them as an attack on the lower paid workers, on the unorganized workers far more than on the organized workers, because they don't get the sort of wage increases we're going to get anyhow, even under the guidelines, and it's an attack on women workers. We were the first group to come out and condemn that. We called for a general strike, it was the only way to stop this kind of legislation. A year later, the CLC had a one day day of protest. If we had a labour movement that was full of democratic unions, a sovereign Canadian union movement, they'd never get away with that. To my line of thinking, if I was in your group, I think this begs the question completely, what you need is a national union, for people like you, there's a vast amount of them, the biggest amount in the country, and they're unorganized.

AUCE: Let's talk about that, because it seems to me that a lot of the CCU affiliates are industrial workers, and our interests are different from industrial workers--

Succamore: I think your interests are exactly the same, but you don't get them.

AUCE: Well, I'd like to hear some specifics about what you think we can do for each other.

Succamore: Well, I think York University Staff Association is a similar group to yours. My own union has about six hundred and fifty workers at the University of Manitoba. There's a big group there called AESSES.

AUCE: Clerical workers?

Succamore: Yes.

AUCE: In CAIMAW?

Succamore: No, they're not ours, they're an independent union. We could have signed them up a couple of times but it would have meant technically raiding an independent union, but it's basically a company union set-up there. There's a union like yours there, around, that was a national union. I think we could get them into it, honestly I do, but we're not prepared to go and take them into ours because we're an industrial union with another base, and it would be opportunistic and it would be wrong. The organizing for your groups has got to come from within or you're never going to have a decent bloody union. You've got that.

AUCE: So tell us how, because I hear you talking a lot about how disreputable the CLC is. I'd like to hear what you think the CCU could do for AUCE.

Succamore: Well, I think that we could bloody help you in many ways. There's a group just joined the CCU, the Rail Traffic Controllers. They're a small group, about twenty-three or twenty-four hundred, right across the country. The CCU's helping them on the basis that we're co-ordinating committee meetings right across the country, mainly Ontario, some in Quebec, and out here, and some in Manitoba. We've been able to use our resources, meagre as they are, to help them co-ordinate things. We're going to their founding convention to make sure of all the legal stuff, so they won't be saddled with legal bills every time they turn around. Most legal bills, the only time we get legal bills in our union is for court work, most of the other stuff is easy for somebody with experience to handle. The thing is that I think that we could, you see, I might be insulting somebody here, I don't know how many people here and how advanced some of your people are in your own field of endeavor. I might be talking to a group of basic rank and file trade unionists who've not got any experience. I don't know if there's somebody here so I wouldn't like to suggest that there's nobody that's got any experience. What I'm saying is, if there is, you don't need any help in that area, but if you don't, I think we could be a great deal of help in that area. And arbitration law, and seminars, and stuff like that. Shop steward training and things of that nature. Madeleine Parent, in my opinion, and in the opinion of a lot of people I know,

is the most remarkable trade unionist, woman trade unionist, that this country's ever produced. You don't hear a great deal about her out here because she's basically from Quebec.

AUCE: Does she hold office in CCU?

Succamore: She is a member of the executive and has been since the start of the CCU. She was out here just this last week, as a matter of fact. She comes out here two or three times a year, and also goes on speaking engagements. She has a wealth of experience, especially on how to fight discrimination in the workplace, she was a lot of help to AUCE, I know that. People get ideas, sometimes they know something's wrong, they just don't know how to put it together, how do you attack it, and she's remarkable on that. I don't know, it's very easy to say, join now and we can do all this and all that, but until you can really sit down with some people and start explaining the exact problems that you may have, I think the main thing the CCU does is try to help those that need it to stand on their own bloody feet, do their own thing, basically. You know, we can say, we've got this guy over here, or this woman over there, she'll come in and work for you and she'll do all your worrying for you, you know, that's b.s., it doesn't work. You've got to go with your own resource people and control your own stuff. If I were in your lot, it's very easy to say, I know it's a monumental task, but if I was there I think I would be looking, myself, to at least form some affiliation within the CLC or the CCU, it would be easy with YUSA, we've got several other groups across the country that they've got some communication with, so I think you could go in there and get the seeds of a national union, even if it was a union at the national level albeit a very loose thing where you've got provincial autonomy, things of that nature, so that you'd have the right to secede, so that you join it, you can leave, just like you can from the CCU. With the CCU all you need to do is the executive would send a letter saying you were no longer a member and that would be it.

AUCE: About the staff rep's; are they people who come from the outside or they people from within the union?

Succamore: Well, it's a mixture. Like, most of the unions back on the railway that we have, we helped to create right from the beginning right here in British Columbia. (brief interruption). I think the question was how could we help, or who would we help, with full-time officials or rank and file people. I think that basically it's all according to what sort of help it was.

AUCE: But do you have staff people?

Succamore: The only person working full-time for the CCU is John Lang right now. We had a mandate, we had the authority to set up an office here, but basically it hasn't required one. When we set up the group in Kitimat, I along with Greg Mullin (sp. ?) of the Pulpworkers went up there, they tried in the first year and they screwed it all up something fierce, they didn't read the requirements of the Labour Code, and we went up there on behalf of the CCU, no cost to them of course, and we set that up and helped them get going, and as soon as they got certified, we had people from the Pulp and Paper Workers and from the CCU and from my own union going up there and conducting labour schools,

giving the stewards some basic training. Also, their officers got some pretty intensive training on the Labour Code, that's most important for certain individuals in the union, it isn't necessarily that important for the person on the shop floor.

AUCE: How many contracts do you supervise in B.C.?

Succamore: Well, the CCU doesn't supervise somebody's work or contract, if they're requesting help, they'll get it. Suppose your group should come in here, and say they really needed help with their organizing, and the need was here for somebody to work full-time, we'd have somebody on there full-time. Who that would be, once again, is discussed by the Executive Board of the CCU.

AUCE: I was leading to that with my other question. Is there some kind of standardization of the kinds of demands? Have you thought that out?

Succamore: No, on general principles, I think we adopted equal pay for work of equal value before any other group in the country did, things of that nature, and we passed resolutions, but resolutions passed by the CCU have no more weight with any affiliate than the CLC has in that sense. They can't dictate to an affiliate, you know, you will do this. But the thing is, there are guidelines and there's also participation in the discussion surrounding them, and then they can evaluate the worth of them. I don't wish to give you the impression that everything the CLC does is wrong, or anything, but you can't tell me particulars aren't wrong, because that would be dishonest. I do know that, if somebody wants to get a meeting together about women's rights, something like that, it has to go through the President first and then the Secretary, and I don't think those two know too much about women's rights. I know as much as they do if not more. There's a screening process being brought in because they don't want to get mixed up with the wrong people, and that's the way they operate.

AUCE: One area that we're quite concerned about is the idea of joint bargaining, and we're wondering how would a CCU union relate to CLC unions in joint bargaining, because supposedly they're totally different creatures.

Succamore: Well, it's not that different, it's different at the top, basically. But wherever there's a CLC union and a CCU union, there's never been any problem from our side, at all. The York University Staff Association, they went out and got a bigger raise than CUPE got, after they'd settled and told their people they couldn't get any more. So the administration was put in a position, what they did was turn around and give CUPE an extra one percent or something. So there's an example, one of the biggest unions in the country couldn't produce what one of the smallest did. So you've got to evaluate that, now, maybe it's not going to work all the time, but it did that particular time, because one union was prepared to fight. A lot of talk goes on in the CCU executive, especially when groups are coming into bargaining, and they're worried about the overall effect and the strategies to be planned, I think there's quite a lot of help and discussion and knowledge to back them up. I think one of the reasons I personally couldn't get more involved in your dispute at

Simon Fraser, was we had a little problem up at Endaco, you know, I mean we had about twenty-five times more people arrested than you lot, I just found it very hard, I was trying to be sympathetic and I'd like to have done something, but it's like you, if I'd come to you and said, come on up and give us a hand, you'd have said, what the hell, you know. It just wasn't there, you know, we had such a terrifying experience up there. The thing is, if we 'd been a bit naive in any way, shape or form that company would have smashed us. As it was, we came out with the biggest victory, maybe, that any mining group ever got anywhere, especially in this country. The thing is, people say if you're not a great big union you can't do it, but the support we got from CCU unions during that dispute was just phenomenal. When the pulpworkers were on strike a few years, they sent out an appeal and within a week they got something like fifteen thousand dollars. And you're talking about a very small group of people. I've always felt that theory, I think when a union gets too big, I think some breakdown between the bureaucracy somehow occurs, I've never really elaborated on it. But certainly our groups, when people are in trouble like that, they've shown a real remarkable understanding in that area, and resources have been bolstered quite a lot.

AUCE: So then what is your theory on how to win a strike? Because one of our concerns is that we're so small that we can't win a strike. But what you're saying is that there's different factors that win a strike.

Succamore: You're small, well, in our union, I think we've got the highest bloody strike record in CAIMAW than anybody's ever seen in this province, but there's a reason for that. When we went into to the mining section, the Steelworkers were always harping that they were the union that had always handled the bosses, but what they were doing was playing one mine off against the other, no common expiries, the workers at one mine didn't know how much was being paid at another one, the wages went from higher than the woods industry to about two dollars behind them. That's when the Steelworkers got in, and they're a big union, big hundred million dollars in the strike fund, but how come every time they fought the bosses they got beat. Because their bosses are meeting, the Steelworkers' bosses, and the bosses, they're meeting down here, trying to find out where they should settle the strike. We forced that recognition. In the five and a half years we've been in the mines, we've got five contracts lined up within three months of each other. The Steelworkers have been in thirty-five years and haven't got two. The Steelworkers are falling into our pattern, not vice versa. What I'm saying is, we've had to fight the bloody bosses, because the Steelworkers, they have the guys to go out on strike, they have the right to go out on strike, and it's allowed, and they do what they did up in Sudbury, only that was the biggest example of American business union treachery. And that's the best example I can give you. We've had the same thing here on a smaller scale, but the Steelworkers can't do that sort of thing here anymore, because we're here. In Sudbury, they've got a hundred million dollars in the strike fund, and they paid them twenty-five dollars a week. They could have paid them a hundred and twenty-five bucks a week. Right, they've been out there six months, they've got the negotiations going on up in northern Manitoba, and what do they do, do they tell the workers, we're all in the CLC, we're going to get all this support, we're going to tie it down and take

INCO on. No, they isolated them, they got a sell-out agreement, in Thompson, and sold out the guys at INCO. That's what they do every time. The Autoworkers have done it, the Steelworkers do it, and that's what all these bloody guys do.

AUCE: Is the GEU doing it?

Succamore: The GEU? The Government Employees Union? The Government Employees Union, I think Fryar, they set up this national union of government employees, I think there's some serious problems that's going to arise, and Fryar's consolidated this pretty good, you know, talk about democracy, they need a two-thirds strike vote. And that takes away democracy straight away. Things of that nature, he's got unilateral powers. I think that doesn't bode well for any worker when their executive has got that sort of authority. I can act unilaterally in my job as CAIMAW's national secretary, but (incomprehensible) not like him (?).

AUCE: I'd like to pose a potential problem in our joining the CCU. In all of our struggles and strikes, we've really needed the support of other clerical workers, clerical unions and public sector unions. And we've had our problems getting that support as an unaffiliated union, unaffiliated to the CLC, where most of those unions are. Would we not have even more problems if we were affiliated to the CCU with those particular groups?

Succamore: Well, I've never found that, and we're faced with the same thing. It's not that at all. I think that what happens within the CLC unions, they don't give any more support to them than they do if you're outside them. There's been several strikes that CUPE's been involved in, for instance, at universities, and I don't think they got any more support, as much as what you did, as a matter of fact.

AUCE: But perhaps we might even have less, if we were affiliated.

Succamore: I don't think so, I think it's a matter of getting your message across. I mentioned to about four or five every time I spoke to them about your strike, that may not seem like much, I thought there was one mistake, and I think the clerical workers tend to do it every time, they talk about percentages and so much a month, and the working classes understand dollars and cents an hour. And you come out and instead of saying to them we're only getting four per cent, work it out and say we're only being offered this, that's what they'll understand. You talk about percentages, on figures, they're abstract, you know, four percent of forty thousand is not bad, four percent of four thousand dollars ain't very good. I said that as much as I was up to the neck. I talked to about four or five people that phoned me for an opinion on something, through that strike, and every one of them have said, every time they come out and they put a lovely leaflet out, and it says four percent, instead of saying what it was in dollars and cents an hour. I think you can get a lot more understanding with little things like that. That monthly thing, that whole syndrome of approaching things like that was put there to keep office workers segregated from the working class. White collar workers and blue collar workers. And if we could get rid of those bloody things, the more we'd all understand what you're fighting for, and so would

everybody else. I think the CCU has taken better positions on trying to distort that, like, YUSA's fighting a grievance on the basis that a person can come to work there as a janitor or something and get seven or eight bucks an hour, and yet a person with all these clerical skills can come to work and get six bucks an hour. The evaluation there is crazy. It's because it's a woman, that's what it is, it's not fooling anybody, that's how it got there, and I think we've got to work to eliminate that, and I don't think the CLC has ever taken a good crack at that stuff. You've got to make sure people understand the issues. We were fighting a company that was paying millions of dollars up there, the press was playing up all the violence up there, we had to try to combat that up there, the fighting was up there, keeping the bloody troops up there, it was a day and night experience, and we won the thing. But we had good support from most people in the trade union movement. And you'll get good support, because they can't come out against you if you've got the right issues. Most of our strikes have been pretty principled issues, fighting, and you've got to identify the issue, because if it's just a matter of fighting for another half percent, or another one percent, you've got problems right away. You've got to fight for an issue. YUSA, the accomplishments are good out there, but they've had quite a lot in the contract language, in the last few contracts. If you look at contract language in most of ours to what they were, most of the contracts we've got are inherited from supposedly big powerful unions, that have all this backing. Where's all this backing got the Adams strike?

AUCE: Can you tell us a little bit about the NorthAir(sp. ?) settlement, at Squamish?

Succamore: To give you an example, George Goby (sp. ?) even his own close friends now, that ridiculed a statement from me that I said he gets paid by them, agreed that he does, they issued a statement that the NorthAir rates were ahead of CAIMAW's. Our's had been negotiated, so they came and piggybacked a few cents ahead of it. But what they forgot was that our guys get a dollar an hour more if they don't miss a day. It was something that we hadn't negotiated, so we never claimed it was ours, it was something the company had instituted, and it saves them money, believe it or not. If you analyze our contracts, vis-a-vis Steels', ours are better contracts than theirs. Wages, working conditions, grievance procedures, all the revolutionary changes in those things. They keep claiming they do it. You see, you're fortunate, in a sense, that you're a Canadian union, because it's the craziest thing in the world to go into an American union. I can see, if somebody thought you could work in CUPE, well, that's your business. But what you've got to be careful about doing is thinking that you have to do something. If you think you have to do something, it means you're losing your confidence as an organization to conduct your own affairs. And then you're open to suggestion, well, if we can't do it, well where can we go, and the appeal then is to some great big thing that obviously can do it. I think you've got to be careful about that, sapping your own energies and your own confidence. Because there's no doubt in my mind that you can exist as you are. I don't think you're ever going to fulfill expanding and building the sort of organization that's needed in that industry, the way you are. You've come a long way in a short time, don't overlook that. You've got the achievements, and if you look back at some of the other unions, what they've been doing, the resources they have, you'll find out yours compares reasonably well.

AUCE: All of the AUCE locals are on campuses with CLC unions representing other workers. I wonder if you could comment on what you think this would mean for AUCE if we affiliated to the CCU.

Succamore: What would it mean? I don't think it would mean a great deal. In real day-to-day terms, I don't think it means any more than a group that was unorganized that becomes unionized. You know, was there any great change in your relationship when you joined AUCE? And you were previously unorganized? It's not a big deal, and the only people that are trying to make it a big deal are people who are trying to take away your confidence, saying we've got the bill of goods for you; we've got a pre-owned car instead of a used car. As I was saying before, look at the Adams strike. I was out at a CUPE demonstration out there in Delta, it was quite a good demonstration, and there said there's people from different strikes there, we had two or three from, the Endaco strike was on, and then they got this young woman there from the Adams strike, and she got up there and spoke, and what she said bloody brought tears to my eyes. She said, I'm glad that the BC Fed has pledged all their assistance, I'm glad that you're going to get that, they did it with us, unfortunately with us, it hasn't meant anything. Now she didn't mean that the way it sounds, but she was speaking right from the heart. And that's not to knock some of the efforts that a lot of people do.

AUCE: Have they not supported them at all?

Succamore: You're talking about the Adams strike? Well, there was a lot of problems, they went out on strike, they needed a lot of help, there wasn't any help, they had no help from their own union half the time, but these guys came to us, and we said, look, if we're seen around there, everybody will blame us for it. They were at a quite a few of the postal meetings, that's how I got to know them. It's quite heart-rending, some of the stories. One guy got sent to jail for six months, and he didn't even do it, he wasn't even there, well, he was near there, but he didn't do it. And you know, he belongs to a big bloody union in the CLC. And they had an incompetent bloody lawyer. I got a call from a friend, and I said you can ask me and if I can give you any advice, I will, but don't let anyone know, because they'll just use it against you, and do the opposite. So he said, this guy didn't do it. And I said, that's the history of guys in jail, there's some that did do it and some that didn't, and even the guys that didn't do it are still there, there's nothing new in that statement. But he said there's another guy that did it and he's willing to swear it, but he's scared of getting nailed. Well, I said, he can give evidence under the Canada Evidence Act, and he can get out, I'm certain of that. Do you know that nobody had told them about that? And do you know that their union knew when their guy got nailed that first time and they never did anything about it? And they're in the CLC. So what bloody good, I mean, there's a lot of people in the CLC who could have helped them, what I'm saying is, it's not an automatic key, you don't just put it in the lock and turn it and all these things fall out. It just doesn't work that way. Most of them are up to their ears in their own business, and it's very difficult.

AUCE: I heard a similar story about one of our former members, how she'd been fired and the lawyer they gave her was totally incompetent, he met her in the morning for coffee or something, and flirted with her, and she

eventually lost her case and was fired. And this was taken to an appeal to the LRB at the time. It was just total incompetence.

(There follows here a repetitious discussion of the legal case of the person arrested at the Adams strike.)

Succamore: The thing is, all the good unionists will support you, regardless of affiliation.

AUCE: You mean there are good unionists and bad unionists?

Succamore: Oh yes, you'd better believe that. The thing is, you know, look, maybe the best way to explain this, in 1966, I was a steward at (?) Electric, predominantly women workers out there, and there was a bloody wildcat affair, contract negotiations, and all the fight out there, five or six hundred people picketing the place out in Burnaby, twenty-six charged with contempt of court, hundreds arrested. And that was where I got involved in this fight, and I said no bloody way, because the union movement was behind us, and what sold us out was our international president down in the States. He phoned up the bosses of the bloody company, and said okay, just tell the BC Fed to get out, and the Fed came to us, called a meeting, Ray Haines was down there, the head of the BC Fed, Len Guy, who was then one of the vice-presidents, called us in and said we can't do nothing, we've been told to get out. That's when I got involved and said I'll never belong to another union if I can help it where we don't have control. That was the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

AUCE: I have two questions. The first one is, how do you respond to the criticism of the CCU that your membership is based largely on raids of CLC unions?

Succamore: Well, you've got to analyze that a bit before you look at it. First of all, the Canadian Textile and Chemical Union, the founders of it, built the bloody Textile Workers of America Union up here in Canada, and because Ken Rowley and Madelein Parent would not sign a sell-out agreement, when a fellow called Wade Cranner (sp. ?) who finished up in jail for stealing his membership's funds, come up here to do a sell-out agreement, in 1952, with Dominion Textiles, to sign an agreement that was worse than the agreement they had on the table when they went out, because he wouldn't do that, he got fired from his position of Canadian director, and then he took some of the old locals, that he'd organized a lot, him and Madeleine, so they took some of them, and then they had the audacity to call that raiding. The pulp mills, like the mines in this province, they're doing a sell-out agreement. You don't get a chance to organize them, the bosses organize them with American unions. So then when these workers get there and they get shafted, and they want a union of their choice, then we get called raiders. This is what we're fighting in the pulp mills. These guys are invited in. Pat O'Neill of the old International Pulp (?) Union was invited in, come in there, sign an agreement, no workers on the job. Then they have a union that's not going to fight with them, they say it's great. I say they'll be raiding, and there has been, and it's more or less particular to the North American continent. It's only prevalent where there's business unionism, where people are out to get dues dollars and not do a job.

That's where you get raiding. You've got some of the biggest raiding going on right in the house of labour itself, as you call it. The carpenters raid the (?), the electricians raid the pipefitters, they've got special jurisdictional boards set up in Washington, so they can go down there and argue about it. It's true and it's downright degrading. And if we've got to do that, we've got to fight the bosses to get decent conditions and wages in the mines, you've got to overcome all that, and it's very hard, because people are a bit cynical in this day and age, they say, well, maybe that's the way it's got to be done.

AUCE: I have another question. The second one's a little bit broader. You did mention the idea that AUCE could become some kind of base or catalyst or whatever for a national organization for clerical workers. I was wondering how you see that kind of thing happening. A couple of questions, I guess. Why hasn't CCU put more energy into organizing in that field, and if AUCE were to join and we were to do it, how would this work, would we have paid organizers going to other provinces, would the CCU have contacts with groups of women in offices who want to organize and then would somebody from AUCE, say, take it on?

Succamore: Well, how it would actually materialize would be speculative, but what I say is, there's a void, and it's not filled up by any of the present unions regardless of whether you want to join the CLC or not, and the void is a union for clerical workers working for universities. There's very few of them organized, it's my understanding, basically, by and large, across the country. Some of them are in associations, a lot of them in Ontario, (break here for change of tapes). The big breakthrough about the dues check-off came in Manitoba where it's a provincial law, where you've got to pay dues, it's the only province in the country that's got that. It would be an easy thing to accomplish in a country where every worker has got that right, although it's under federal jurisdiction it would be easy. I don't know how it would materialize, but I do know that we get constantly people from various universities, and there's quite a lot of them attend our conferences, and stuff like that, and we go to speak at various universities, to different groups, and I think the contacts there would be made. But I see, you've got a base here, YUSA's got a base there, but I'm not remotely suggesting that we'll start one union up with you two there, because I think it would be wrong, I think you've got to start spreading out and encouraging others, but I think that within the CCU, you could see the form, some kind of alliance or an affiliation, where you have some joint exchanges, stuff like that, even if it was only doing it at the time of the conference, at caucus meetings, stuff of that nature, exchanging material. But the other part of your question, is the more important one, is the way the CCU looks at it. We're not an organizing organization. We've never been set up to do that, we're not funded to do that. We're funded to help other people to help themselves. We've had a lot of bankworkers coming to us, and we said no, they should go and join SORWUC, we didn't want to get involved in that thing, so we urged them to go and see SORWUC. Because, we said, they're into it, we felt it would have been opportunistic and wrong for us to do what the CLC do, for instance, stab them in the back, basically. We thought that was wrong, if the CLC had any brains at all, they could have got with sugar what they couldn't

get with vinegar. They're big enough to get enough plants in there to put the organization over. But they were so dead set on having their own way about everything. I think that when we've talks with different groups like that one up in Saskatchewan, they even said, could CAIMAW give them a local charter, and I said we could do, but would it be the right thing to do? I said if we did, it would only be on the basis of getting you organized, so that you could work with other people and set up your own group, or get together with one of these other groups. I think it would be wrong for our union, we've had all sorts of people coming to us, saying we want to join your union, and it's still too easy a way, they're looking for an easy answer, and it's not an answer to the problem at all. We're an industrial union based in the mining industry, and we've got more than enough problems, but that doesn't stop us, for instance, we just passed a resolution at one of our CAIMAW conferences, supported by the CCU, that we're going to give some organizational help to the Farmworkers. We have a couple of organizers, East Indian guys, they're well recognized in the East Indian community, they want them, they want their own people, so we'll fund the organizing there for two or three months, this summer.

AUCE: You've talked a lot about dues drain-off, per capita taxes going down to the States, and I'd like to find out what happens to your per capita taxes, a general breakdown on where the money goes to.

Succamore: You're talking about my own union?

AUCE: No, the CCU.

Succamore: Well, the CCU has got one full-time person, about thirty thousand members in the CCU, up til now it's just been twenty cents per capita, when somebody's on strike or something like that, they don't pay, at least those workers on strike. But basically it's in organizational help to affiliates. They've built up a small treasury. But most of the work on raising funds for affiliates who are on strike is done through the affiliates, keeping them aware of the struggles going on, especially when there's real principled issues, we'd try to propagate information on that struggle.

AUCE: So would some of that be going towards publications?

Succamore: Publications, and the newsletters come out, and the executive are kept up to date on various happenings in the labour movement. Also kept aware of proposed legislative matters and how they'll effect people, how they're going to effect labour law. There's a lot more work that could be done, but the thing is that, the CCU delegates to the convention have basically taken the position that there's a co-ordinating centre, research for the affiliates, but it's not an organizing body as such. We co-ordinate and help people to organize, and in the case where people want to know their rights, like breaking away from a union or they want to set up a union, we will do the legal procedures to make sure they're established correctly, things of that nature. We would have people available immediately to do that, and they would mainly come from the affiliates themselves.

AUCE: I notice that you pay things like fringe benefit premiums for striking members. Does that come out of the per capita?

Succamore: No, there's no money, there's no strike fund in the CCU, it's not geared to that. The only money, as I say, like when YUSA was on strike, there was an executive board meeting, and I think they voted something like five hundred or a thousand dollars to them, an immediate one because it was something that was going to do some immediate good to them. But the call went out then to the affiliates. Actually, the YUSA people, they made money on that strike. It's not very well known. It was one of those things, it looked like it was going to be a lot longer, there were a lot of professors there, they were going to work and they were that shamefaced they were handing in cheques. You know they co-ordinated the activity and the information out of it very well, I'm told.

AUCE: You're from CAIMAW?

Succamore: Yes, I am personally the National Secretary?

AUCE: Have you made any attempt to organize the clerical workers in your bargaining unit?

Succamore: Yes, we've organized the workers at, Bethlehem (?) Copper were unorganized, Kenworth, we've got some small data-processing group at Kenworth, it's one of these classic situations, where the boss fought it, and the labour fought it, and then the classifications (?) went to arbitration. We tried to get the right to strike, you see, when they shut the plant down, the labour board, they can react very quickly when a boss shouts, we had them right dead, you know, and those women hadn't been getting a raise, so we had to plan that. I don't know how it turned out, we had a meeting yesterday, we're calling for a one day work stoppage, to force them to negotiate, to get the arbitrator's decision out. It's not illegal under the Act. There's a lot of things you can do, that are not illegal. And we try to exploit those sorts of angles.

AUCE: So you do have the clerical people as part of your bargaining unit?

Succamore: Yes, as part of that shop. It's one of those things, it's an industrial plant, we've never gone out of our way to say we're going to go and organize the office workers in that plant, but what we have done is try to build contact with them, build solidarity. In a few cases, we've tried to get together and find out what's going on. You usually find, in real hard-nosed companies, the people in the office know what's going on, they can see the lies and deceit going on, and they just rebel against it. But I think that if there was a Canadian union in that field, and people wanted that, we would have encouraged them, but if they come to us, what are we going to do, tell them to go where? We could go and sign up the workers down at Miranda, down at Annassis Island, the office workers there, they're in the OTEU. They came into my office one day, and I told them to come back a week after, they were really serious about it, and they came back, and they all signed up, and then they got some concessions from OTEU, and when the vote came they voted to stay with them. Only by one or two votes, but you know, their consciousness just wasn't high enough to understand that playing games like that doesn't really accomplish anything. Now they're right back and they want to do it again, but you can't take that attitude, because some people, there's not as much traditional

background to unionization. In traditional industries like mining, people tend to look and say, they've got a real tradition of unionization. That was true in the underground mining, but in the open pit mining, there's no real tradition. There's all sorts of people working there that have no experience at all, they've just come out from MacDonald's or some place, and they think it's wonderful to go and make nine bucks an hour, when they were only making three bucks an hour before. It's pretty hard to get through to some of those people.

AUCE: They think the boss is generous.

Succamore: They'll tell you so. Unfortunately, old Rowley used to say, you get ten people together, and sure enough two of them will turn out to be rats. It was a rule of thumb but it's a pretty fair one. You can get ten people slogging their guts out working for something, and get two people or one person, they undo a lot of the good work and really upset the whole apple cart. It's annoying but it's nothing new.

AUCE: That reminds me of one of our local jokes, we're always saying we should mail the newsletters to management, personal copies, because they always get copies anyway.

Succamore: Even at our meetings, there's a few plants, but most of the plants know, by the time you phone up to tell them the results of a strike vote or a vote on a contract they already know. So it's not just your place, don't think that, it happens everywhere.

AUCE: During the YUSA strike, I was told by (name unclear) that they had support from a lot of CLC unions, the UAW were on their picket lines, and sent in donations, the Teamsters were helping them during the strike, and she named a lot of others. She said the funny thing that happened was that the head of the NDP there called them up, and, I don't remember the man's name, but he was invited to come and speak at the picket line, at a big rally, he called them up and said, you're a CCU union, aren't you, and they said yes, and he hemmed and hawed a little bit, and she thought, oh here it comes, it's what I thought, we wouldn't get support, and he said, well, who else is supporting the strike, and she said, oh, the UAW and the Teamsters, and so on, and he said, oh, great, well, I'll be there.

Succamore: Well, that's pretty typical. You know that, in our strike, this one union, two unions that tried to strikebreak, they're both from the CLC, and both of them got a hard time from the CLC on it. I'll give them their due on that. We follow the CLC picketing policy, and have no problems with that. I've been in the room, personally, where the Secretary-Treasurer of the BC Fed, Len Guy, and later it was McIntyre, and since then, Kinnaird, and they've laid it down like the Steelworkers, that they've got to adopt a principled position. You shouldn't have to tell a union that in the first place. I don't think you'd have a problem with that. Our union gets terrific support from most people, there's two unions that don't, and we've been in conflict with a lot of them, eleven different union members left different unions to join our union, but there's only two of them, and that's the Steelworkers and the Operating Engineers. That strike we had, lock-out and four and a half months of a strike at Gibraltar, our members voted themselves to tax themselves six hours dues to pay for the Endaco strike, that was the same company operation, they got more than that back because they got a five

percent raise, the company paid for the money in the long run. But they sent over eighty-odd thousand dollars of their own dues money. Didn't come from our national union, it went straight from that local to the other one. And during that period the Operating Engineers raided them, and they raided them on the basis that, why be a weak little union where you've got to do that, join us and you'd only pay two hours. And there were four hundred and thirty workers there. And with the help of the boss they hired a bunch of people from them, they hired Operating Engineers supporters, put them in there in different parts of the plant, and the total cards they got signed up was sixty-five. And most of them were new hired, that the bosses put in there, to try and smash them. I got the information and sent it to the Fed, and said this is one of your affiliates. They told them it was terrible, but they don't throw them out for it, which is what they should have done.

AUCE: Something similar happened when SORWUC was on strike at Bimini, where the Retail Clerks tried to sign up the bartenders. And when the BC Fed found out about it they just jumped all over them.

Succamore: I talked to Guy, and so did Jack Munroe, and if you look back at the press reports, the two of them, both Munroe and myself issued statements on it, and I got hold of Guy, I tried to get him on the Friday I think it happened, I got on the phone and left a message for him, he phoned me first thing Monday morning, and he said those guys will withdraw that application, or else they won't be in the Fed, that's what he told me on the Monday morning.

I'd just like to say something before you leave. Just a couple of weeks ago, there was an article in MacLean's magazine, it was about the Oil-workers setting up this new Canadian union. I won't go into it, there was quite a bit of detail, they talked about Neil Rimer (sp.), the grand old man of the Canadian petroleum industry. And that guy's another rat, who's trying to break a strike in Montreal that CCU affiliates are in right now. The point I'm making is not so much, but that the person who wrote the article was saying she made the startling revelation twenty years ago that this is the only country in what's referred to as the free world, that had a union movement that was controlled from outside its boundaries. If you read the article that John Lang wrote, I don't know if they've printed it yet, he said it may have been startling to her but it certainly wasn't startling to us. Ken Rowley said that twenty years before she did so that's forty years ago. But the thing is, you cannot divorce effect unionism from democratic unionism. You cannot do it. People will tell you contracts like what the Teamsters have got, they've got some good contracts on the long haul. But they've got hundreds of certifications around here with some of the worst wages and conditions at any plant. It's a tough business union. Join us and forget about where your dues money goes, we'll look after it. We're tough and rough and we're gangsters and all that. Our fight is a bit different. It's maybe not as high profile and not as exciting, you get called all sorts of things, nuts, flagwavers, and all that, just for fighting to expose the corruption in these unions and fighting for something decent. And there's nothing easy about it. But the thing is, you've got a bit of bloody self-satisfaction, because you're bloody doing something that's positive and in the best tradition of the labour movement. If you join the CCU I can't say that you'll see any startling bloody changes overnight or anything like that. But one thing that we can learn from you

just like maybe you can learn from us. You can learn a lot from sitting down with people that have got basic honest trade unionism, and hearing one another's problems and how to handle them, sorting out greivances and stuff like that. I think that that's the real strength in the union movement. Whether some people try to push forward that the CCU is trying to get all the unions to switch their allegiance from the CLC, which is kind of a naive approach, but the thing is we are becoming a catalyst in the labour movement, we've forced them to clean up their act a lot, but it'll never be cleaned up properly until we've got a democratic independent union movement. And people can talk about autonomy until it comes out of your ears, it's the most prostituted word in the labour dictionary, it doesn't mean anything. What we want is independence. We've got to have our own labour movement. And that's what we stand for. And I think you'd be better off maintaining your own position and joining with the CCU. It's not something you've got to join and stay if you don't like it. I think it's well worth your consideration and I think you should seriously say, well, look, what's the worst thing that can happen to you?

AUCE: Is there a new member initiation fee?

Succamore: No, just a twenty-five dollar fee for the organization. And then twenty-five cents, as of January 1st of this year, per capita per month. And then of course, if there's any, a lot of new organizations, it wouldn't apply maybe in your case, but like these Rail Traffic Controllers, they joined and their per capita taxes were waived until they got their union functioning. That's why the CCU has never built a great treasury, it's not supposed to, it's not funded to build up a great treasury, it's funded to keep the structure intact, and to be available to help.

AUCE: Could you just explain the B.C. Council? I understand that it was a graduated, that there was one fee to the provincial, and...

Succamore: I'll give you the case of CAIMAW and then you can follow it very clearly. We're affiliated to the Council, whereas the national body is affiliated to the CCU, so the members of the locals are basically affiliated to it, but to the Council, it's a bit more grassroots in the sense that each local affiliates. And the national union, if it wants to send officers to there, they have to join as a national to send delegates there too. The CCU B.C. Council. So in my own union, if I want to go there, all the locals have to affiliate as locals, the national union can also affiliate to the Council, because otherwise who would I be going there representing? I'd be representing the national union membership and the others would be representing all the locals. So that we are affiliated as a national union, we pay a hundred dollars as a flat fee, all the rest of the locals pay on a graduated scale, up to about two hundred and fifty I think it's twenty-five dollars, three hundred and fifty or four hundred, something like that, it's fifty dollars, and then seventy-five dollars, that's one fee a year, that's how that is. All the unions that are affiliates here in BC, I think every one of the locals is affiliated to the Council. We usually have two meetings a year on that, one in the spring and one in the fall, and one is always here in Vancouver because it's a central spot, and one is in Prince George, Prince Rupert, Nanaimo, something like that, to try and get into the various areas around the province. So the locals that maybe don't always send a full delegation from there, at least they

get a chance to do it that way. And it's good for the delegates, too, because you get up into those areas, and you get a bit more understanding of what the problems are.

AUCE: How are the delegates selected?

Succamore: The delegates are selected by whatever way is prescribed, the amount is set out, in the bylaws, one every two hundred or something like that, I think it's a maximum of five or six or something like that.

AUCE: I'm confused again. The constitution described the per capita ratio ...

Succamore: Yes, the per capita ratio for sending delegates, to the CCU convention itself, but we're talking about the B.C. Council. And then, your locals, if they were affiliated to the B.C. Council, each of them would decide how they were going to elect their own delegates, of course. It's the same with the CCU national convention, the same like the CLC, that lays down how many delegates per affiliate are allowed, but the affiliates work it out for themselves how they elect people.

AUCE: Is the fee to the B.C. Council based on per capita, the graduated scale, is that based on your membership?

Succamore: Yes, on your membership, in each local. It ranges from twenty-five to a hundred dollars, that's the maximum.

AUCE: Is there a travel fund, as well, to fly people down?

Succamore: No, the only thing, the people that are elected, like the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, the Secretary, like in my own union, (name unclear) is the Chairman of the Health and Safety Committee, she's also the Vice-Chairperson of the B.C. Council, but our union's never submitted a bill to the B.C. Council for her work. Many of the affiliates pick them up, but many of them don't have that sort of funding, so therefore that funding is there to do it. We have, also, a booth at the PNE every year, that the B.C. Council sponsors and runs. We've had that lung-testing equipment down there the last couple of years, stuff like that.

AUCE: I'd like to suggest a topic. We're five locals, and it seems to me that we're dissipating our energies. It seems that if we were one local, we'd have more money and do some more organizing, and be more aggressive.

Succamore: I think that you're wrestling with the problem that just about every union does, how centralized you allow your organization to become. In my own union, we've allowed it to become very centralized without losing any local autonomy. So have the Pulpworkers, although ours is slightly different from theirs. But it's all according to the amount of service you want to provide. CUPE's got one hell of a problem, because they've got real big units and real small units, a lot of their people left them in Alberta, over this very question, and they've got a continual problem with staffing it. But I think as organizations grow, you've always got the problems of growth, and some of them are healthy problems and some of them are bad problems. I think people are silly

if you don't set up your provincial or your national office as a resource centre. It saves a lot of duplication of work. But you've got to be careful, in giving that sort of authority, you only give it authority to do service for you. I think that in the CCU we've got a pretty good handle on that, because of the problems we've all been through ourselves.
