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By this time, in '36, the C.I.O. (Committee for Industrial Organization) had caught hold in the United States. There was a wonderful enthusiasm. But John L. Lewis wasn't too fussy about moving into Canada because, well, they didn't have the apparatus to move in. They were having a hell of a tough time with the employers in the U. S. The C.I.O. steelworkers, S.W.O.C. (Steel Workers Organizing Committee), was set up in Hamilton. A fellow by the name of Ernie Curtis who had been in the '23 strike here • I wrote to him and I got credited as an organizer. Then Carl Neville, by this time he became president of the union • Harry Davis was hurt and couldn't continue. Carl and I went to a District 26 convention in Truro, asked for help, and was promised. They asked John L. Lewis to appoint Silby Barrett to help us • Silby was international board member for the U. M.W. at the time. On the 13th of December we held our first meeting • now we were C.I.O., S.W.O.C • started with 10 names. By March we must have had 3000 members. Oh, they just flocked. We hired halls all over town. Did it ourselves. Didn't cost the international a red cent. We had the little bit of money left over from the old Independent Union. We had really come to the crunch. We had a union but the company had a plant council. And I went down to the plant council and asked them to resign in a body and make way for the union. They were only holding things up. They wouldn't do it. So at that stage it would have to be political. So Angus L. MacDonald, Premier of Nova Scotia, came to town on party business. We got a meeting with him. We convinced him there, if he wasn't already convinced, that we had to have a Trade Union Act or we had to have a strike of steelworkers and miners like in 1923. We had drawn up a bill based on the Wagner Act in the U. S. and the Goal Mines Regulation Act of Nova Scotia. We wanted recognition, wanted the check-off. We went after them on the political front. The act would say that the company could not fire you for belonging to a union, company would have to recognize the union once you could establish that you had a majority. company would have to provide you with a check-off of union dues once you had shown that you had a majority in favour. Before he left, Angus L. said he couldn't promise it would be passed, but that it would be brought up. But he said, "I'm going to need support. Get public support for your bill." Which we did. We got really good support by means of petitions and resolutions. Took petitions to businessmen, professional men all around the industrial area. We contacted all the organizations we could think of. Any organization. The only organization that didn't endorse our resolution was the Sydney Board of Trade. You can see the good that's in people when you think of the work they did in that union freely. And the signing up of union members. 3000 members. Any number of people on the plant would take cards out, sign people up. Even today it's encouraging to think that people, once they've understood a thing and taken hold of it, can really move mountains. The businesses, as a Doay, disagree with us, but as individuals they signed the petitions. It was a rare time. Older, experienced people would have hesitated. But we didn't know better and just went after it. Going up to the Law and Amendments Committee in Halifax, with our



petitions and resolutions on the Trade Union Act, there was an old railway Unionist on the train. We told him of our mission. He said, "Good God". Presumption born of ignorance. Do you really expect to get that? You must be crazy. Look, I remember when we tried to get automatic couplings. You know, we drank a whole bottle of Bobby Burns whiskey before we went to get automatic couplings instead of the old link and pin." But we had lots of confidence. And we rode on a tide of success, all those people signed up. And you just think: all those broken strikes and broken unions, for people to go into one and particularly an international one • because some of those plant councillors had been in the 1923 strike and they were death against international unions. (Well, they saw John L. Lewis break that strike; how could they trust him now?) That's right. (Did you trust him?) Well, to be honest, I wouldn't have been surprised if he turned on us, but he didn't. He had changed.

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