

history — academic and non-academic alike — will work both collectively and cooperatively to make sure that the history of Canadian women not only gets into the record, but stays there. Recently, interested members of the Canadian Historical Association founded a new section on women's history. Agitation continues for the appointment of an archivist for women's history at the National Archives, an appointment which is long overdue. These are good signs and the publication of *Women at Work* is another. Hopefully it is the beginning of many good things to come. As Linda Kealey's interesting introduction to the essays suggests, there are a great many questions to be asked and a fascinating variety of sources in which to seek the answers.

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MARY V. JORDAN. — *Survival: Labour's Trials and Tribulations in Canada.* Toronto: McDonald House, 1975.

It is not an easy task to review hagiography and remain neither a heretic nor a devotee. More than anything else, this volume is testimony to the admiration and affection its author had for Robert Boyd Russell, long time secretary — and heart and soul — of the One Big Union. Mary Jordan was Bob Russell's secretary for thirty-nine years; and in this very personal and idiosyncratic book is quite incapable of any perspective. It is truly a labour of love.

It must also be pointed out immediately that it is not a scholarly book. The research is narrow; there are many (far too many) errors of fact and interpretation and the narrative is often confused and jumbled. The title is completely misleading for the story follows the career of Bob Russell, a prominent Western Canadian labour leader, who was imprisoned for his leading role in the Winnipeg general strike. Yet, for all its problems, the book is not unwelcome.

The volume of literature on the Winnipeg strike and Western Canadian labour radicalism is now substantial. Bob Russell, secretary of the Winnipeg local of the International Association of Machinists played an important, but not a dominant, role. What is now being made clear by young labour historians such as McCormack, Bercuson and Friesen is that the radical labour men of the west were planning a revolution in 1919. They were committed syndicalists who were determined to destroy the capitalist system. Their methods were education through the Socialist Party of Canada and control of the trade union movement. Their weapon was the general strike.

The leadership of this cadre, Pritchard, Kavanaugh, Midgley and Stephenson in Vancouver, Knight in Edmonton and Russell and Johns in Winnipeg won influential positions in their local labour organizations. They then captured control of the Western Labour Conference at Calgary in March of 1919 and launched the One Big Union. The general strike which erupted in Winnipeg in May, 1919 was not part of the scenario. It was, in fact, both premature and damaging. It is probably fair to say that the OBU was the major casualty of the strike, not least because that was the precise object of the intervention of the federal government. But the labour militancy which flourished during the Great War and, at the urging of radical leadership, chose direct action, could not be rekindled.

The mythology of the general strike can now be laid to rest. The strikers did not have a monopoly of virtue. It was not merely a righteous struggle for collec-

tive bargaining and a living wage although, these were probably the objectives of most of the labour rank and file.

Mary Jordan's book, obviously, does not fit at all in the context of this recent historiography. It is firmly in the romantic and naive tradition, oblivious to the subtleties of contemporary labour thought. What then is its merit, if any?

Simply that it fills in many of the details of the early life of Bob Russell when he left the Clydeside and came to Winnipeg. Miss Jordan's long association with Russell and his wife adds a human dimension to the academic analysis of Labour's evolution in Western Canada. More importantly, it tells the story of the long twilight of the OBU as it lived a precarious existence for almost thirty years after the general strike.

It had a small membership but a faithful one, based in Winnipeg. It supported the O.B.U. *Bulletin*, Russell's vehicle for many years and financed itself through a very successful football pool. A sorry end, perhaps, to that flaming idealism of 1919 which concluded when the O.B.U. formally disbanded and entered the mainstream of Canadian Labour. "Singled out as the chief conspirator in 1919, Russell would not leave the doomed ideal of the One Big Union."

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LOUIS AUBREY WOOD. — *A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada: The Origins and Development of Agrarian Protest, 1872-1924.* Introduction by FOSTER J.K. GRIEZIC, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975, 406 pp., \$5.95.

A reprint of a book described as "still the best study of the origins and early development of agrarian protest in Canada" is particularly appropriate at a time when the problems which induced that protest are recurring with possibly greater impact than in the past. Railways, tariffs and quotas, agribusiness, marketing boards, and related government policies have been and continue to be among the central concerns of organized farmers.

Those who share any of these concerns can find valuable perspectives in the 1975 reprint of Louis Aubrey Wood's history of agrarian protest, which was first published in 1924. Wood's book covers in remarkable detail the problems which farmers faced between the 1870's and 1924. And as a valuable addition, the reprint includes a 28-page introduction by Foster J.K. Griezic.

Griezic summarizes Wood's life and works as a means of explaining the latter's reformist approach to agrarian problems. The introduction also provides a descriptive bibliography of more than 100 titles. These contributions, combined with a summary of agrarian protest since 1924, make the 1975 reprint a most comprehensive reference.

Louis Aubrey Wood (1883-1955) was the son of a sales representative in London, Ontario. Up to 1924, his education and teaching were confined to Ontario, with the exception of a period at Heidelberg, where he obtained his doctorate in history; and a year (1912-13) as a lecturer in religious history at Edmonton's Robertson Presbyterian College. This predominantly Ontario background may help to explain Wood's neglect, as pointed out by Griezic, of such matters as western help in organizing the United Farmers of Ontario; or the extent of agrarian discontent in Quebec.