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"Stand by the Union, Mr. Arch": The Toronto Labour Establishment and the Emigration Mission of Britain's National Agricultural Labourers' Union

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Article abstract

In the fall of 1873 Joseph Arch, the President of the England's National Agricultural Labourers' Union (NALU), embarked on a mission to scout Canada as an emigration destination. He was received with much hospitality in Canada. Large-scale migration of British farm-workers had the support of an extraordinary consensus between the NALU, Canadian political and business élites, and the Toronto labour leaders who wielded enormous influence over the labour movement in Ontario. The consensus was the result of developments in British agricultural unionism, Ontario's farming sector, Canada's immigration policy, and the Toronto labour establishment's approach to immigration. However, during the mission, tensions emerged between Arch and the Toronto labour establishment that strained the appearance of international union solidarity. These tensions revealed the treacherous nature of a relationship between labour leaders in an immigrant-receiving country, and an organization, even a union, looking to promote emigration.

ARTICLES

"Stand by the Union, Mr. Arch": The Toronto Labour Establishment and the Emigration Mission of Britain's National Agricultural Labourers' Union

David Goutor

IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER of 1873, two visitors from Britain enjoyed eager audiences and glamorous receptions from Canada's political and business élite. The Governor General Lord Dufferin, Prime Minister Macdonald, Official Opposition leader Alexander Mackenzie, Ontario Premier Oliver Mowat, a host of business leaders, Dominion and provincial cabinet ministers, and senior bureaucrats made a point of meeting personally with the visitors and of presenting themselves as enthusiastic partners in their enterprise.[1] One of the visitors declared in a speech that the Governor General himself "listened as attentively to what [I] had to say as if I had been the Archbishop of Canterbury."[2] According to the other visitor, no expense was spared by their hosts: "Our hotel bills were discharged. Free passes over the

[1]"Movements of Mr. Arch," *Globe*, 4 October 1873; "The Times on Mr. Arch's Visit," *Globe*, 23 October 1873; and Henry Simpson, *The Emigration Mission of Mr. Joseph Arch to Canada* (Liverpool 1873), 3-5.
[2]Joseph Arch, *From Ploughtail to Parliament: An Autobiography* (London 1986), 201. See also "The Times on Mr. Arch's Visit," *Globe*, 23 October 1873.

David Goutor, "'Stand by the Union, Mr. Arch': The Toronto Labour Establishment and the Emigration Mission of Britain's National Agricultural Labourers' Union," *Labour/Le Travail*, 55 (Spring 2005), 9-35.

Joseph Arch at the time of the formation of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union in 1872. *Courtesy of the Warden and Fellows of Nuffield College, Oxford.*

railroads were given to us. Carriages were placed at our disposal ... efficient guides were deputed to facilitate our researches."[3]

The visitors were not royalty, diplomats, or prominent members of the British business class, aristocracy, or political élite. Rather, they were representatives of a union: Joseph Arch, the president of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union (NALU), and Arthur Clayden, a middle-class supporter of the NALU, and a member of its "Consultative Committee."[4]

What made the reception for Arch and Clayden even more remarkable was that in the fall of 1873, Canada's politicians and media already had plenty on their minds. The government of John A. Macdonald was — correctly — viewed to be on the verge of collapse due to the Pacific scandal. Almost every day brought either more testimony by senior officials in Macdonald's government before the Commission of Inquiry, or news regarding preparations for the showdown coming when Parliament reopened at the end of October.[5] The financial panics in the United States and Britain created deep concern about the economy. Anxious stories of business failures and rising unemployment in America filled the papers.[6] In October, the capture of one of Louis Riel's lieutenants, Ambroise Lepine, re-opened the fractious debate about the first uprising in the north-west.[7]

Moreover, Canadian unions and their leaders had not achieved the same strength and status as they had in Britain or the United States. It was just the year before that workers had mounted their first coordinated, multi-regional movement, the Nine-Hour campaign, and that unions had won some legal standing through the Trades Union Act. But even these breakthroughs came with qualifications. The momentum of the Nine-Hour movement was sapped by the Toronto printers'

[3]Arthur Clayden, *The Revolt of the Field* (London 1874), 228.

[4]Simpson, *The Emigration Mission*, 3; Clayden, *Revolt of the Field*, 202, 228-9.

[5]For instance, the Tory paper the *Toronto Daily Mail* ran front page stories almost every day under the headlines "The Slander" (ie. the accusations against Macdonald). The scandal first broke in April 1873, and became a crisis in July when Liberal newspapers published correspondence between Macdonald and Montreal railway magnate Hugh Allen. Macdonald's Conservatives had used over $300,000 from Allen to bribe voters in the 1872 election, and then gave Allen the contract to build the Pacific railway. Most of the money the Tories received proved to have been from Allen's American backers. The Tories finally lost power on 5 November 1873, and then were crushed by the Grits in the election on 22 February 1874. See W.L. Morton, *The Critical Years — The Union of British North America* (Toronto 1964), 274-7; Donald S. Creighton, *John A. Macdonald, Vol.2: The Old Chieftain* (Toronto 1955); and Donald Swainson, *John A. Macdonald: The Man and the Politician* (Kingston 1989).

[6]The *Toronto Daily Mail* also regularly ran headlines like "The Crash," and "The Financial Crisis." On the struggles in the economy, see Kenneth Norrie and Douglas Owram, *A History of the Canadian Economy* (Toronto 1991), especially ch. 15.

[7]On the first rebellion in the north-west, see George Stanley, *Louis Riel* (Toronto 1985), 190-5; J.M. Bumstead, *The Red River Rebellion* (Winnipeg 1996).

strike, and the activities of unions were limited by the Criminal Law Amendment Act.[8] The only labour paper in the new Dominion, the Toronto Trade Assembly's *Ontario Workman*, was surviving only because of under-the-table subsidies of Prime Minister Macdonald.[9] The *Workman* stood as one of the few outlets for labour to counter the attacks of hostile employers, particularly of George Brown, a father of Confederation, great advocate of *laissez-faire* liberalism, leader of the opposition to the Toronto printers' strike, and owner of one of Canada's most prominent newspapers, the *Toronto Globe*.

Moreover, as Gregory Kealey observes, Canada's first national central, the Canadian Labour Union (CLU), was little more than a regional body, "an extension of the Toronto Trades Assembly (TTA)."[10] The CLU's inaugural convention, which took place during Arch's visit, attracted only 44 delegates — few from outside Toronto — and little press or political attention.[11] The limited scope of the labour movement reflected the slow and uneven spread of industrialization in Canada. In particular, as Craig Heron has shown, only a few trades in Ontario, such as printing, barrel-making, shoe-making, and the building trades, were sufficiently developed to allow for craft unions to be firmly established.[12] As the lists of CLU delegates confirms, organizations from about eight trades dominated the movement — printers, moulders, coopers, shoemakers, machinists, cigarmakers, tailors, and bricklayers.[13] According to Kealey, a Toronto-based labour élite (which he calls a "junta" but which I will call an "establishment")[14] emerged from some of these trades to wield enormous influence over the movement in Ontario. The voice of labour thus

[8]John Battye, "The Nine-Hours Pioneers: the Genesis of the Labour Movement," *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 4 (1979); Eric Tucker, "'That Indefinite Area of Toleration': Criminal Conspiracy and Trade Unions in Ontario, 1837-1877," *Labour/Le Travail*, 27 (Spring 1991).
[9]Ron Verzuh, *Radical Rag: The Pioneer Labour Press in Canada* (Ottawa 1988), ch. 2.
[10]Gregory S. Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892* (Toronto 1980), 142.
[11]Eugene Forsey, *Trade Unions in Canada, 1812-1902* (Toronto 1982), ch. 6, 119-37.
[12]Craig Heron, "Factory Workers," in Paul Craven, ed., *Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto 1995), 550-3. For an illustration of the predominance of these trades in the labour movement, see the report of the Credentials Committee at the 1873 convention of the Canadian Labor Union, Leslie Wismer, ed., *Proceedings of the Canadian Labor Union Congresses, 1873-1877* (Ottawa 1951), 15-6.
[13]Heron claims that 80 per cent of Ontario's unions came from 7 crafts; he does not include the bricklayers. Based on representation at the CLU and the prominence of some of its leaders, I have added the bricklayers and masons to the list of crucial trades. Heron "Factory Workers," 553. For an illustration of the heavy representation of these trades at the CLU, see the report of the Credentials Committee at the 1873 convention, *CLU Proceedings*, 15-6.
[14]Since "junta" has become strongly associated with repressive military regimes, the present author substituted a different term.

came largely from a few people — particularly from Toronto Typographical Union leaders James Williams (editor of the *Ontario Workman*) and James McMillan (co-founder of the *Workman*), Coopers International Union vice-president John Hewitt, and future International Bricklayers Union vice-president Andrew McCormack.

What generated the hospitality for Arch and Clayden, despite the crowded political agenda and the uneven development of Canada's industries and labour movement, was the purpose of their visit: to scout the Dominion as a destination for large-scale emigration of English farm workers. For Canada's business and political leaders, attracting immigrants with agricultural skills and experience was a top priority. As a number of scholars have shown, by 1873 Canada was desperate for immigrants to settle vacant lands, and especially to provide labour on established farms.[15] "We want, and grievously want, the very class that Mr. Arch represents," declared the *Ottawa Times*.[16] Even George Brown's *Globe* set aside its animosity for unions and portrayed the NALU leaders as potent allies to be courted: "[T]hey will, we are sure, be treated everywhere with kindness due to their position in the movement they represent, and the importance of the mission they have undertaken."[17]

The basic story of the NALU mission has been told by a number of historians. Early on, Arch and Clayden were discouraged by what they found in Canada. They did not hide their disappointment at the "backwardness" of agriculture in Quebec and the poverty suffered by settlers in parts of northern Ontario such as Muskoka. But their spirits were lifted when they toured southern Ontario, where they were impressed with the opportunities that seemed available for NALU members wishing to migrate. Hence, Arch completed agreements with both the Ontario and Federal governments, under which roughly 2,500 to 4,000 NALU members arrived in Canada.[18]

While significant, this influx was not enough to make a lasting impact on Canadian immigration history. The economic slump and setbacks of the NALU in Britain rapidly dimmed hopes for a massive emigration system managed by the union, and discussion of the NALU's plans became scarce in Canadian sources by early

[15]Terry Crowley, "Rural Labour," in Craven, ed., *Labouring Lives*, 49-50; Pamela Horn, "Agricultural Trade Unionism and Emigration, 1872-1881," *Historical Journal*, XV, 1 (1972), 87-101; Pamela Horn, *Joseph Arch (1826 -1919): The Farm Workers' Leader* (Kineton 1971); Joy Parr, "'Hired Men:' Ontario Agricultural Wage Labour in Historical Perspective," *Labour/Le Travail*, 15 (Spring 1985), 91-103; Cecelia Danysk, *Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880-1930* (Toronto 1995), 39-41.
[16]Horn, *Joseph Arch*, 91.
[17]"Agricultural Labourers and Immigration to Ontario," *Globe*, 27 September 1873.
[18]Horn, *Joseph Arch*, 86-102; Horn, "Agricultural Trade Unionism and Emigration," 92-5; Crowley, "Rural Labour"; Parr, "Hired Men," 91-103; Danysk, *Hired Hands*, 39-41.

1874. Nevertheless, Arch's visit provides a valuable opportunity to Canadian labour historians.

Indeed, the reception given Arch and Clayden made their visit a unique episode in Canadian history. At what other time did the Dominion's élite rush forward to welcome union officials from overseas, and to endorse and facilitate their efforts? An extraordinary sense (however brief) of common interest emerged between Canadian political and business leaders, and a union representing marginalized British farm-workers. Even more noteworthy was that the Toronto labour establishment was part of the consensus. Whereas most Canadian labour leaders during the late 19th and early 20th centuries were almost constantly hostile toward large-scale immigration and particularly toward promoters of immigration schemes, the Toronto labour establishment's views on the issue were ambivalent. Toronto labour leaders supported large-scale immigration in principal, viewing it as essential to national development, but were often bitterly critical of the government's existing recruitment and promotional systems. The labour establishment saw Arch's mission as both a resolution to this difficult balancing act, and a vindication of its position that the best way to recruit immigrants was to make Canada known internationally for offering "a fair system" to workers and their unions. Moreover, Arch's mission made it possible to believe that immigration could become a boon to labour, a means by which a union in the "mother country" would oversee the infusion of vast numbers of committed union members to Canada's population. The first section of this paper will trace developments in British agricultural labour activism, Ontario's farming sector, Canada's immigration policy, and the Toronto labour establishment's approach to immigration, to show how this broad consensus was forged.

The second section will explore the tensions that developed during the mission between Arch and the Toronto labour establishment, tensions that reveal the treacherous nature of a relationship between labour leaders in an immigrant-receiving country, and an organization, even a union, looking to promote emigration. In fact, just a few weeks after looking to the NALU's mission with such confidence and expectation, the Toronto labour establishment found itself pleading with Arch to acknowledge the recent struggles of Canadian unions, and to recognize some members of Canadian élites, particularly George Brown, as enemies in those struggles. As a result, the Toronto Trade Assembly's reception for Arch, held near the end of his visit, threatened to become an ugly showdown rather than a shining illustration of the bonds Canadian unionists had claimed to share with their British "brothers."

The Common Ground

Joseph Arch came to Canada on the heels of rising from an itinerant hedger and local Methodist preacher in Warwickshire (in central England) to the leading figure in a campaign to improve the lot of a "downtrodden" people. Farm labourers were

seen as among the most oppressed groups in English society. Through the late 18th and early 19th centuries, there emerged a process of "pauperization" of agricultural workers, whereby they went from "upright members of the community, with a distinct set of *rights*, into inferiors dependent on the rich."[19] The process was driven by massive population growth, the consequent pressure on the land, the expansion of commercial farming to feed the booming domestic market, and the "enclosures" of lands held in common (converting them into private property). An insurrection against this pauperization in the 1830s was decisively suppressed by force, and while the mid-19th century was a "golden age" for landowning farmers, conditions for agricultural workers remained generally miserable.[20]

The NALU was the most important organization to emerge from a new surge in rural labour activism in the late 1860s and the 1870s. The surge was inspired in part by anger over decades of poor wages and conditions, and by new organizing and agitation by urban unions, which had achieved such gains as the legalization of unions through the British Trade Union Act of 1871. By early 1872, a host of local organizations had sprouted up around the English countryside, but it was an organizing drive and a strike — which its leaders dubbed a "revolt" — in Warwickshire that stimulated the most excitement. Arch deserved much of the acclaim he would receive for leading the "revolt," as he rounded up new members and rallied them behind the strike with a zeal and determination that reflected his background as a fiery Methodist preacher.[21] Moreover, Arch exploited his strong ties to the British Liberal party, and particularly to the "Lib-Lab" unions that had helped achieve many of the gains for urban workers. Indeed, the "revolt" received organizational and financial support from urban "Lib-Lab" unions and favorable coverage from several Liberal newspapers, which in turn generated sympathy and donations from the public.[22]

After winning significant wage gains in their settlement with Warwickshire farm owners in April 1872, Arch and his organization were besieged by appeals from groups all around rural England eager to join the movement. They drew upon this interest to build a farm-labourers union along the same lines as the urban, Liberal-allied, "new model" unions of the period: it embraced Victorian notions of re-

[19]Eric Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: From 1750 to the Present Day* (London 1969), 101-2 (italics in original); Eric Hobsbawm and George Rude, *Captain Swing* (London 1969).

[20]Alan Armstrong *Farmworkers: A Social and Economic History, 1770-1980* (London 1998); Alun Howkins, *Poor Labouring Men: Rural Radicalism in Norfolk, 1870-1923* (London 1985); Pamela Horn, *Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside* (Wolfeboro 1976).

[21]Armstrong, *Farmworkers*; Horn, *Joseph Arch*; Horn, *Labouring Life*; Nigel Scotland, *Methodism and the Revolt of the Field: A Study of the Methodist Contribution to Agricultural Trade Unionism in East Anglia, 1872-1896* (London 1981).

[22]Horn, "Labour Organizations," in G.E. Mingay, ed., *The Unquiet Countryside* (London 1989), 99-111; Horn, *Labouring Life*; Howkins, *Poor Labouring Men,* 57.

spectability, and was a national organization with a centralized structure and full-time officers. It also sought some of the same reforms demanded by urban unions in Britain and elsewhere, such as the nine-hour day.[23] By early 1873 the NALU's membership was over 70,000, by far the largest in Britain, and it continued to grow, though at a slower rate, until peaking at just over 86,000 in early 1874.[24]

From the outset of the organizing surge in the late 1860s, agricultural unions had a strong interest in migration within Britain and especially emigration overseas. Relocating "surplus population" was seen as a sensible way to allow some workers to find new opportunities in more "open" areas, and to reduce competition in the labour market in "congested" areas. Not long after expressing interest in emigration, agricultural unions became prized commodities among New World governments, which were eager to attract experienced farm workers. Agents representing countries throughout the Americas, plus Australia and New Zealand, descended upon the unions, promising heady opportunities overseas, offering incentives such as subsidized passage to their destinations, and giving union officials posts as emigration agents.[25]

Canada was particularly keen to forge partnerships with agricultural unions, as it had vast "open spaces" in the Prairie West waiting to be settled. But even more important was an outcry from established farmers in Ontario that they faced serious labour shortages. The problem was especially pressing because it seemed unprecedented in the province, where since the late 18th century, most intending settlers and their families ended up in a large pool of rural wage labour. Indeed, starting an independent family farm in Upper Canada was a costly proposition. Cleared and productive land was expensive, and clearing one's own lot in the backwoods could take years of intensive work during which the farm produced minimal revenue. Finding paid work for established farmers (or in the timber trade for men, or as domestic servants for women and girls) was therefore required to make ends meet.[26]

According to many historians, government policies increased the pressure on aspiring settlers to enter the labour market. They contend that Upper Canada's original "British architects" were eager to entrench a firm social hierarchy in the colony, and so they created land allocation systems that heavily concentrated ownership in the hands of a small group. The hierarchy was further entrenched in the 1830s by colonial administrators influenced by the British thinker E.G. Wakefield. Wakefield held that Britain's new world colonies had to limit the accessibility of land in order not only to maintain a properly stratified social order like the Mother Country's, but also to ensure there was a large supply of landless wage la-

[23]Horn, "Agricultural Trade Unionism and Emigration," 87; Horn, *Joseph Arch*; Howkins, *Poor Labouring Men*.
[24]Armstrong, *Farmworkers*, 124-6; Horn, *Labouring Life*, 128-33.
[25]Horn, "Agricultural Trade Unionism and Emigration," 88-94; Armstrong, *Farmworkers*, 113-5.
[26]Parr, "Hired Men," 91-100; Crowley, "Rural Labour."

bour that the economy, and particularly new manufacturing industries, would need to develop. Through the mid-19th century, productive land remained costly but industrial growth was sluggish, and thus new immigrants had few alternatives to serving as hired farm-hands.[27] While some historians have questioned the commitment of Upper Canadian élites to Wakefieldian policies, there is a consensus that for established farmers, whenever the unpaid labour of their family, especially their children, was not sufficient, a store of wage labour was readily available.[28]

However, a number of factors at work through the mid-19th century would rebalance what Joy Parr calls the "see-saw between demand and supply in rural labour."[29] First, Ontario's "territorial frontier" was closing, as good farmland was running out and settlers were forced onto marginal land in the province's north. Second, farming became progressively more efficient and commercialized, with small farms that grew grain for export being acquired and replaced by larger, more mechanized and diversified farms that produced fruit, vegetables, dairy, poultry, and meat for Ontario's expanding cities. To start a farm that could compete with these sophisticated "new agriculture" operations thus required even greater initial investments.[30]

Hence, Ontario farms were increasingly big businesses that were dependent on large amounts of hired help, devoting up to 20 to 30 per cent of their operating expenses to wages. At the same time, growing numbers of farmers' children and intending settlers recognized the trends in farming in Ontario, and thus decided to migrate westward rather than continuing to toil with little prospect of becoming independent farmers. Most went to the US, especially after the Homestead Act of 1862 opened up the western Plains for settlement. To compound the problem, the period of intense immigration from the British Isles that had started in the 1840s finally ended around 1857, and immigration rates remained low through the 1860s.[31]

By the early 1870s, therefore, both Macdonald's federal and Mowat's provincial governments, which were always sensitive to the demands of affluent farmers,

[27]Parr, "Hired Men," 92-3; Gary Teeple, "Land, Labour, and Capital in pre-Confederation Canada," in Gary Teeple ed., *Capitalism and the National Question in Canada* (Toronto 1972), 44-60. See also Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto 2001).

[28]Crowley, "Rural Labour," especially 41-2; J.K. Johnson, "Land Policy and the Upper Canadian Elite Reconsidered: The Canadian Emigration Association, 1840-1," in David Keane and Colin Read, eds., *Old Ontario: Essays in Honour of J.M.S. Careless* (Toronto 1990).

[29]Parr, "Hired Men," 97.

[30]Parr, "Hired Men," 97-100; Crowley, "Rural Labour," 43-7. Douglas McCalla also notes the emergence of larger-scale farms, but argues that small scale farms in earlier periods were also diversified and producing for domestic markets. See Douglas McCalla, *Planting the Province: the Economic History of Upper Canada, 1784-1870* (Toronto 1993).

[31]Crowley, "Rural Labour," 45-9.

were urgently scouting the "old country" for new supplies of agricultural labour. In fact, they reached out to Arch's organization from its earliest stages. In March 1872, for instance, agents hired by the Ontario government came to Warwickshire to promote emigration as an option for striking farm workers.[32]

But in general, Canada was proving a weak contestant in the race for immigrants. The six year-old Dominion did not have as developed an immigration promotional system, not to mention as hospitable a climate, as other states or colonies in the New World.[33] Indeed, during the Warwickshire revolt, representatives of Brazil proved more effective at both hiring union officials as emigration agents, and enticing migrants to that country. Later in 1872, agents from Queensland and New Zealand enjoyed the greatest success in luring agricultural union members.[34]

Arch himself was another problem, as he was initially an adamant opponent of emigration. He insisted that agricultural unions had to focus on improving conditions in Britain, rather than allowing their members to be "driven across the seas" by the greed of landlords and wealthy farmers.[35] Arch flatly refused offers of employment as an emigration agent for Canada. Only after a concerted lobbying campaign by federal and Ontario officials, including Colonel George Denison, did Arch finally agree to visit the Dominion.[36]

Arch's change of heart was motivated in part by a need to find new solutions for the plight of farm workers. While the NALU expanded its membership and financial base through 1873, gaining further improvements for "downtrodden" rural labour was proving a formidable task as employer resistance mounted. Smaller strikes in the spring ended without workers making significant gains.[37] It was in light of these concerns that the emigration option was "resorted to," as Arch tellingly put it in his autobiography.[38]

British landlords, farmers, and the conservative press portrayed Arch's decision as evidence that his movement was losing strength. They claimed that Arch

[32]Horn, "Agricultural Trade Unionism and Emigration," 89. The author could find no references to Arch in the archival papers of Macdonald or Mowat; see, "Finding Aid to John A. Macdonald Fonds," and Political and Personal Papers, Sir John A. Macdonald Fonds, National Archives of Canada, MG-26-A; and Premier Oliver Mowat office records, Archives of Ontario, RG 3-85.

[33]See for instance Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto 1998), 100.

[34]Kelley and Trebilcock, *Making of the Mosaic*, 92-3.

[35]Arch, *From Ploughtail to Parliament*, 200-1; Clayden took a similar initial view of emigration, Clayden, *Revolt of the Field*, 201-2,

[36]Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto 1971), 67-8.

[37]Horn, "Labour Organizations"; A.J.F. Brown, *Meagre Harvest: The Essex Farm Workers' Struggle Against Poverty, 1750-1914* (Chelmsford 1990), especially "A Time of Hope," 42-53.

[38]Arch, *From Ploughtail to Parliament*, ch. 11.

was not only making a "confession of failure" regarding his attempt to improve conditions for farm workers in Britain, but was also falling under the influence of emigration interests.[39] Arch was stung by accusations that he was receiving money to "sell" English labourers to overseas employers.[40] He was put further on the defensive by the disastrous results of the emigration program to Brazil. Most migrants were sent to an underdeveloped area that had little arable land and few potential employers. Many succumbed to diseases and some even to starvation. Horror stories told first in letters from Brazil and later by survivors returning to Britain made many look warily at emigration schemes.[41]

Hence the NALU president had a decided interest in finding Canada to be a suitable home for British farm labourers that offered ample opportunities and good working conditions. Above all, Arch needed to deliver a solid emigration program from his trip to Canada, a plan that would demonstrate his union had the wherewithal to deliver plausible remedies for the problems of farm workers.[42] The pressure on Arch was not lost on Canadian observers. For instance, the *Daily Mail* editorialized that Arch needed "an emigration plan prepared, accepted, and agreed upon, to be acted upon immediately.... If he goes home without this, he will find himself like Samson, shorn of his locks."[43]

However, the continuing growth of the NALU, and especially Canada's eagerness for agricultural workers, gave Arch enormous strength in bargaining with Canadian officials. Arch's decision to visit Canada was seen as a coup in itself — but one on which the Dominion had to capitalize. Arch was continually complimented for having "chosen well" in looking to Canada as a new home for his members. Canadian papers and political leaders worried that if Canadian officials did not impress Arch, he might eventually prefer to send migrants to the US — which he would visit next. For instance, the *Globe* argued that "if Canadians neglect to avail themselves of any opportunities ... we have go-ahead neighbors to the south of us who will never be slow to take advantage of them."[44]

Arch, therefore, was not just left to hope that Canada would suit his plans. Canada's élite was heavily invested in presenting the Dominion as a land of opportunity readily awaiting NALU members. Clearly encouraged by this reception, Arch showed no hesitation in reiterating his determination that "his" farm-labourers would not be sent to destinations that did not offer adequate working and living conditions.[45] In particular, for those arriving to work on established Canadian

[39]For a sample of the hostility towards Arch, see "British Affairs," *Globe*, 3 October 1873.
[40]Arch, *From Ploughtail to Parliament*, 204-6; Simpson, *The Emigration Mission*, 8.
[41]Horn, "Agricultural Trade Unionism and Emigration," 89-92.
[42]Horn, *Joseph Arch*.
[43]"English Farm Labourers for Canada," *Daily Mail*, 4 October 1873.
[44]"Agricultural Labourers and Immigration to Ontario," *Globe*, 27 September 1873. See also "English Farm Labourers for Canada," *Daily Mail*, 4 October 1873.
[45]See for instance Simpson, *The Emigration Mission*, 8-11.

farms, he wanted accommodation built sufficiently large for the worker and his family. The NALU also demanded "fixed hours of work" for all migrant farm workers, "with extra pay for additional hours."[46] Only this, he claimed, would ensure these incoming workers a "secure and lasting" existence on the farm. In order to assure the success of those arriving to settle the Canadian "backcountry," Arch wanted "a lot with a home and a few acres cleared for them, with time to pay for it, and meantime work by which they could support themselves."[47] The NALU's emissaries clearly had not become swept up in any romantic myths about the frontier in Canada, and they insisted that their members would not be sent out into "the bush" to fend for themselves. "The age for going with a family to squat in a vast forest, and living, like John the Baptist, on locusts and wild honey, is gone past, and a very good thing that is," declared Clayden.[48]

Given their stance on immigration for most of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, one might expect Canadian labour leaders to have reacted to Arch's visit with hostility and cynicism. Indeed, Canadian unionists regularly portrayed immigration policy as a favorite tool of governments to undermine the position of "native" workers by flooding the labour market with "imported" competition.[49]

In the fall of 1873, however, this critique of immigration policy had only just begun to surface in the pages of the *Ontario Workman* and among the Toronto labour establishment. In fact, the labour establishment's views on immigration were deeply conflicted. To be sure, in the months before Arch's mission, the *Workman* had become quite exercised about the government's "immigration system." Over the summer of 1873, the paper portrayed immigration agents as "second-rate puffers" who were serving to make "all the mechanical callings even more than uncomfortably crowded," allowing employers to "trade upon the necessities of the new arrivals, and thus wring from the toilers a larger margin of profits."[50] By the eve of Arch's visit, the Toronto labour establishment was describing the immigration system as "a system of legalized robbery," and "a set-up job by the monopolies of this country — a whip for which the people pay to lash them into submission." It identified the migration agent in the Port of Toronto, a Mr. Donaldson — a name to keep

[46]See for instance Arthur Clayden, "Mr. Joseph Arch's Mission," *Globe*, 20 October 1873.
[47]"Joseph Arch," *Daily Mail*, 3 October 1873; "English Farm Labourers for Canada," *Daily Mail*, 4 October 1873; Arthur Clayden, "The Agricultural Labourers' Mission," *Globe*, 1 October 1873.
[48]Clayden, "Mr. Joseph Arch's Mission," *Globe*, 20 October 1873.
[49]David Goutor, "The Walls of Solidarity: The Mainstream Canadian Labour Movement and Immigration Policy, 1872 to the Early 1930s," PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 2003; Desmond Morton, *Working People* (Montreal 1998), 35-6, 45; Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994* (Toronto 1995), 25, 31, 37-8.
[50]"Emigration," *Ontario Workman*, 6 June 1873; "The Emigration Bonus System and How It Works," *Ontario Workman*, 14 August 1873.

in mind — as "in reality nothing more than the private labor agent for the big [employers] of this city."[51]

Impressive as these attacks were, the labour establishment's criticism of immigration policy was neither as sophisticated nor comprehensive as that of unionists in later periods. For instance, labour leaders would later amplify and expand the *Workman*'s attack on the "legalized robbery" of workers by taxing them to pay for recruiting more immigrant competitors. They performed detailed analyses of government budgets to expose just how much money had been "stolen over" to immigration promoters. Starting in the 1880s, Canadian unionists also targeted not only immigration agents, but also British organizations that promoted immigration, including ones with strong working-class roots such as the Salvation Army, as groups of "shams," "hucksters," and "scoundrels" that reaped profits from "trading" in desperate migrants.[52]

Some of the specific problems with British immigration to Canadian farms that would trouble labour leaders in later years also had not yet emerged in 1873. As Joy Parr has shown, the first "extended debate" on the migration of British children mostly to rural Canada did not occur until 1875.[53] It was not until the 1880s that labour would make broader claims that purported "immigrant farm labourers" were entirely mistitled, as they would quickly end up in Canadian cities, where they would compete with "native" workers.[54] Even if these concerns simmered beneath the surface — or just outside the available sources — Arch's specific demands offered further assurances that farm immigrants would stay in rural Canada.

Most important, the Toronto labour establishment embraced a vision of national development, and particularly of immigration's role in it, that stood in sharp contrast to labour's views in later decades. As Kealey has shown, the members of the Toronto labour establishment were high profile partisans of the Tory party. In the 19th century, Kealey writes, "Toryism had deep roots in the Toronto working-class world," in large part because the Loyal Orange Lodge had "successfully harnessed Toronto working-class voters to the Tory machine."[55] These roots were

[51]"The Emigration Bonus System and How It Works," *Ontario Workman*, 14 August 1873.

[52]Goutor, "The Walls of Solidarity," especially ch. 4. See also Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924* (Montreal 1980).

[53]Parr, *Labouring Children*, 51-2. See also Phyllis Harrison, ed., *The Home Children* (Winnipeg 1979); Kenneth Bagnell, *The Little Immigrants: The Orphans Who Came To Canada* (Toronto 1980); Gillian Wagner, *Children of the Empire* (London 1982); Philip Bean and Joy Melville, *Lost Children of the Empire: The Untold Story of British Child Migrants* (London 1989).

[54]Goutor, "The Walls of Solidarity," especially ch. 4.

[55]Kealey, *Toronto Workers*, 142, ch.7, 98-123, and 125-6. See also ch. 6, "The Working Class Tory," (490-584) especially section iii, (522-59) in Craig Heron, "Working-Class Hamilton, 1895-1930," PhD Thesis, Dalhousie University, 1981.

reinforced after Reform leader George Brown emerged as the primary opponent of the nine-hour movement and the Toronto printers strike in early 1872.[56]

Moreover, both Kealey and Bryan Palmer contend that the producer ideology prevalent in the Tory party was particularly attractive to Toronto and Hamilton labour leaders. According to Palmer, "early working class thought stressed the mutuality of interests" of all "producers," be they "manufacturers" or "mechanics."[57] According to the producer ideology, government policy should foster the growth of domestic markets and opportunities for Canada's producing classes — or as the *Workman* put it succinctly, foster "home production and home consumption."[58] The cornerstone of the producer ideology was the protective tariff. A high tariff was seen as a means of protecting fledgling Canadian industries from cheaper imported goods from more developed countries.[59]

For the labour establishment, encouraging immigration was a crucial (but understudied) flip-side of the protective tariff. Labour leaders argued that rather than importing goods from over-seas, the Dominion needed to import *people* in order to provide workers for protected industries and expand the markets for their products. Thus the *Workman* announced: "If American, English, German or Swiss workmen have not enough work without our country, why, let them come here to do it, and thus consume our Canadian produce at our own doors, keeping our wealth at home, and no longer fatten strange lands."[60]

Furthermore, Williams' paper concurred with the Tories' view of immigration as a key part of the nation-building project. Without massive immigration, the *Workman* argued, Canada was in danger of "becoming a province when we ought to be a nation."[61] In particular, "bringing over" thousands of the "farming classes" was seen as crucial to both expanding the Dominion territorially and expanding do-

[56]Brown instigated the formation of a Master Printers' Association and had the strike leaders charged under an ancient law against seditious conspiracy. This aggression handed Macdonald a prime opportunity to embarrass Brown and strengthen the allegiance of labour by legalizing unions through the Trade Union Act. Kealey, *Toronto Workers*, 126-7, and 136-9; Tucker, "That Indefinite Area of Toleration"; Tom Traves and Paul Craven, "Class Politics of the National Policy, 1872-1933," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 14, 3 (Fall 1979), 17.

[57]Kealey, *Toronto Workers*, 126; and Bryan D. Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1914* (Kingston and Montréal 1979), 98-9.

[58]"The Political Situation," *Ontario Workman*, 1 August 1872.

[59]Palmer, *Conflict*, 98-101.

[60]Palmer, *Conflict*, 98-101. Note that the paper assumed immigrants would come from Britain, northern Europe, or the US.

[61]"What Will Be The Result?" *Ontario Workman*, 30 May 1872. For an excellent over-view of how immigration fit into Macdonald's vision for building Canada, see Creighton, *The Old Chieftain*.

mestic markets.[62] Hence, the *Workman* also lent its voice to the effort to present Canada as a good destination for migrants, at times even sounding like a promotional pamphlet. "We can assure emigrants that they are welcome to the Dominion of Canada, where they can all secure comfortable homes and steady employment at high wages," one editorial proclaimed.[63]

Kealey argues further that the Toronto labour establishment did not simply ally itself with the Tories and dutifully uphold policy ideas handed down from the party's leaders. Instead, labour leaders found enough independence within the party — regarding both ideology and political action — to "perform stalwart service in the interests of the Canadian working class" in the 1870s.[64] When it came to immigration, the view that Canada sorely needed immigrants to prosper was used to add weight to demands for social and legislative reforms, and especially as valuable ammunition in the labour establishment's rhetorical battle with George Brown. As Christina Burr has shown, the *Ontario Workman* was a key part of Toronto labour leaders' effort to challenge the "negative definition" of organized labour, the nine-hour movement, and workers in general that were propagated by employers, and particularly by Brown's *Toronto Globe*.[65]

Some of the most fiercely contested ground in this battle was the definition of the Canadian "national community," and the impact of the labour movement on its future. As a *laissez-faire* liberal, Brown insisted that in order to prosper, societies had to reward independent individual initiative and enterprise, and be governed by "the simple operation of economic laws" like "supply and demand." Brown's *Globe* thus presented the labour movement as fostering personal character traits and economic policies that would keep Canada from flourishing.[66]

Burr notes several counter-images offered by the Toronto labour establishment in the *Ontario Workman*, such as the nine-hour day giving "workingmen" the time to become educated "mainstays of the country" and upstanding heads of working-class families. They attempted to cast Canada's nine-hour campaign as part of a wider movement, following the lead of fellow workers in Britain, generating a "cosmopolitan feeling" in the working class, and putting Canada not on the path to ruin and underdevelopment but on the same path as the "Mother Country."[67]

Another crucial counter-image presented by the labour establishment (not mentioned by Burr) was of a mass of potential migrants that could deliver not only prosperity to the Dominion, but also had a clear set of criteria on where to settle. It

[62]"Coming to Canada," *Ontario Workman*, 12 September 1872; see also "Emigration," *Ontario Workman*, 24 April 1873.
[63]"Coming to Canada," *Ontario Workman*, 12 September 1872.
[64]"Coming to Canada," *Ontario Workman*, 12 September 1872.
[65]Christina Burr, *Spreading the Light: Work and Labour Reform in Late-Nineteenth- Century Toronto* (Toronto 1999), 15-7.
[66]Burr, *Spreading the Light*, 15-7.
[67]Burr, *Spreading the Light*, 15-7.

was the labour movement, the *Workman* insisted, that was seeking to establish in Canada precisely the advantages immigrants prized. Indeed, the paper declared that Canada could never expect to attract the immigrants it "must obtain ... in order to progress" if it only offered unlimited working hours and fewer freedoms than other countries. Would immigrants dream of coming to a Dominion where, "the relations that should exist between employee and employed [were] a struggle of NEED against GREED," or where "employers could break the law with impunity?" "We think not," the paper declared.[68]

In early 1872, the *Workman's* position had some resonance with Macdonald and other Tory leaders. Indeed, the Prime Minister viewed the Trade Union Act as a means of attracting skilled migrant British artisans, who had the same legal protections at home and could find them in the US.[69] Moreover, in the *Workman's* broad construction, employers like Brown would turn Canada into the "gaol of the immigrant's hopes" if they succeeded in their efforts to criminalize the labour movement and force workers to sign pledges against the nine-hour cause. The working-class and the labour movement could be portrayed as not only "mainstays of the country," but also heroic saviors of Canada's future. The Toronto establishment could therefore appeal to workers' patriotism to join the labour movement and steer Canada away from the path to national failure set by the "innate lack of good breeding in the employers." Indeed, the *Workman* announced "what the fate of the country will be rests entirely with the workingmen."[70]

In 1873, it was a growing sense that the government was casting aside the labour establishment's particular approach to attracting immigrants that fuelled the *Workman's* protests about the "immigration system." Rather than making Canada a beacon to those looking for social justice and opportunity, the government was accused of using agents to dupe new migrants into coming to Canada. The *Workman* complained that these migrants found few of the opportunities promised by Canadian agents, and thus were forced into a desperate competition for work. Moreover, disillusioned immigrants were allegedly writing home and conveying a dismal picture of Canada to their friends and family in the "mother land," thus damaging the Dominion's precious international image.[71] Hence, instead of attracting "independent and self-reliant" workers and settlers looking for a prosperous and democratic home, Macdonald's system was filling the country with "cheap labour," as well as "the most shiftless and thriftless of the mother country, who have nearly al-

[68]"What Will Be The Result?" *Ontario Workman*, 30 May 1872.
[69]Traves and Craven, "Class Politics," 16-7; Morton, *Working People*, 59; Bernard Ostry, "Conservatives, Liberals and Labour in the 1870s," *Canadian Historical Review* 41 (June 1960), 93-127.
[70]"What Will Be The Result?" *Ontario Workman*, 30 May 1872.
[71]"Emigration," *Ontario Workman*, 24 April 1873.

ways been a burden upon the rates of the mother land, and in nine cases out of ten will be the same here."[72]

In short, the labour establishment's approach to immigration paralleled its approach to other issues. Its views were consistent with those of the Tories and particularly the producer ideology, but labour leaders tailored those views to support the agenda of labour reform, and they "never suspended their critical judgments" of prevailing government policy.[73] However, supporting large-scale immigration in principle, while attacking the government's promotional efforts in practice, was a difficult balancing act that created discord within the labour establishment. The problems were evident at the first congress of the Canadian Labour Union, where the debate on immigration was one of the few times that the Toronto labour establishment failed to present a clear policy position that was endorsed by the convention.

The committee on immigration, led by labour establishment member Andrew McCormack, produced a narrow and tepid resolution against "imported labour," which it defined only as "making a contract in a foreign country for less wages than are actually paid here."[74] Another member of the labour establishment, John Hewitt, found the report inadequate, and gave voice to the *Workman's* frustrations about government policy. Hewitt demanded that the report be sent back to the Committee, to add a broader "condemnation of the system pursued by the Local and Dominion Governments of voting large sums of money for the purpose of bringing out immigrants to this country."[75] But for the only time at the congress, a member of the Toronto labour establishment faced a direct challenge from a less distinguished delegate. Thomas McDuff, from the Toronto Bricklayers and Masons, labeled Hewitt's position as "most selfish," and declared "there are many worthy persons in the old country who could not pay their own passage out."[76]

Instructively, none of Hewitt's colleagues in the labour establishment came to his defense against the attack from someone outside their ranks. McCormack did repeat some of the *Workman's* recent complaints about immigration agents, but stopped noticeably short of endorsing Hewitt's demand for a stronger resolution. Indeed, Eugene Forsey describes McCormack as taking "a middle line" in the dispute.[77] On motion by McDuff, the convention settled on the immigration committee's original resolution.[78]

[72]"Emigration," *Ontario Workman*, 24 April 1873.
[73]Kealey, *Toronto Workers*, 136-9.
[74]CLU Proceedings, 23-4. See also "Labor Congress," *Toronto Daily Mail*, 26 September 1873.
[75]CLU Proceedings, 23-4 and "Labor Congress" *Toronto Daily Mail*, 26 September 1873.
[76]CLU Proceedings, 23-4.
[77]Forsey, *Trade Unions in Canada*, 123.
[78]Forsey, *Trade Unions in Canada*, 123. See also *CLU Proceedings*, 23-4, and "Labor Congress," *Ontario Workman*, 26 September 1873.

Arch arrived in Canada just when the establishment needed an escape from its bind over immigration policy. If Arch's project succeeded, his union, rather than "second-rate puffers" working as agents for "big employers," would take control of much of the immigration business, advising potential migrants about prospects in Canada, selecting immigrants from its membership, and coordinating their move to Canada. Indeed, the NALU's role as a part of the management of any migration seemed taken for granted. The *Daily Mail*, for instance, was already urging the agricultural societies of Ontario counties to contact "the Emigration Department or the Labourers' Union in England in direct" with lists of Canadian farmers who needed more labour.[79]

Equally important, the NALU's emigration mission seemed a powerful vindication of one of the Toronto establishment's main arguments on immigration: that making Canada a more just society for workers and implementing reforms demanded by organized labour were the best "inducements" for immigration. When Arch arrived in Canada and insisted that no NALU members would come to Canada without assurances of fair working conditions including the nine-hour day, "proper wages," and good long-term prospects, it seemed like a prophesy come true for the Toronto establishment. In order to obtain the immigrants it "grievously wanted," the Dominion would have to meet the expectations of a British union leader.

Altogether, it seemed like a vast array of factors and developments in Britain and Ontario had combined in the fall of 1873 to produce an extraordinary consensus among a British agricultural workers' organization, Canadian élites, and the key figures in Ontario's emerging labour movement. A British farm-labourers' union emerged and looked to emigration as a solution for its members at the same moment as Canada's immigrant recruitment system was not yet fully established, as federal and provincial policy-makers grappled with a perceived crisis in Ontario's farm-labour supply, and as the Toronto labour establishment struggled to balance supporting large-scale immigration with assailing the government's emerging recruitment system.

Another part of this consensus was that NALU members were ideal immigrants to Canada not only due to their agricultural skills, but also due to their race and ethnicity. Migration from Asia or Eastern and Southern Europe had not yet become a major issue in central Canada. Chinese immigration, for instance, was rarely discussed in the *Workman*, and not at all at CLU conventions. Nevertheless, it was clear that a racist ideology had taken hold in the Toronto labour establishment. As Christina Burr has shown, the *Workman* portrayed the building of the Dominion as part of fulfilling the white man's destiny. Moreover, the paper was convinced that if Chinese immigration did become a serious issue, all Canadian workers should know exactly how to respond. When it came to the Chinese "menace," the *Workman* declared, "the duty of every workingman is too apparent to render it necessary

[79]"English Farm Labourers," *Daily Mail*, 4 October 1873.

for us to say what his course of action should be."[80] Altogether, it was taken for granted that the "best acquisition to [Canadian] citizenship" would be white and British. The so-called "Brazilian fiasco" seemed to confirm these sentiments. There was a shared conviction that British farm workers should be settled in a place that was under "the old flag," and aspired to become as much like the "Motherland" as possible.[81]

The Complications

For Canadian labour, the most immediate gratification came from simply witnessing Canada's élite rush forward to embrace the NALU president. Canadian unionists leapt at the chance to be part of this top story. On October 2, the Hamilton Trades Union held a "complimentary dinner" for Joseph Arch. The reception received almost as much press as all of the previous week's convention of the Canadian Labor Union.

Eager to display that "cosmopolitan feeling" among workers, Hamilton labour leaders paid Arch the highest tributes. "Of [our own] views," declared Frederick Walter of the Iron Moulders' Union, "Mr. Arch is an able exponent, and consistent in practice with them besides."[82] In their official address, the Hamilton Trades Union assured Arch that they were "fellow workers in the great work of labor reform," and in particular that "there are warm hearts here who can readily understand your mission among us."[83]

In his response, Arch pronounced himself overwhelmed by the generosity of his hosts. He promised that unionists in the Mother Country would hear about their "hearty reception." Cheers and enthusiastic applause from the large crowd punctuated Arch's overview of the history of his movement. Arch also assured his listeners that he saw great opportunities for English agricultural workers in Canada.[84]

While the evening in Hamilton seemed a great success, the two visitors continued to spend most of their time enjoying the hospitality of Canadian employers and their political allies. Arch and Clayden appeared to be quite cozy with Canada's élite. And then, for several days in mid-October, the two were hosted by none other than the great enemy of Canadian labour, George Brown.

Brown's paper had continually supported Arch's mission, although it expressed some reservations about his particular demands for the provision of

[80]Burr, *Spreading the Light*, 18; "Coolie Labor," *Workman*, 21 November 1872; "Labor Notes," *Workman*, 20 February 1873; "Chinese Labor," *Workman*, 22 January 1874.

[81]On views about emigration to Brazil, see Horn, "Agricultural Trade Unionism and Emigration"; Horn, *Joseph Arch*; and Simpson, *The Emigration Mission*.

[82]"Joseph Arch," *Daily Mail*, 3 October 1873.

[83]"Ovation for Joseph Arch," *Ontario Workman*, 9 October 1873.

[84]The *Daily Mail* reported that the organizers of the event "under-estimated the probable attendance" and booked a room that could only hold 100 people; "Joseph Arch," *Daily Mail*, 3 October 1873.

accommodations for his union's members. While expressing confidence that the migration of farm-labourers would be a great benefit to the Dominion, the *Globe* urged the "intelligent and friendly visitors" to recognize that for an immigrant, "the less 'coddling' he is subjected to in Canada the better."[85] True to form, the *Globe* was especially opposed to "imposing arbitrary limits" on the hours of work. "No more fatal blunder could be committed in the interests of the labourers themselves," the paper declared.[86]

But these differences did not prevent Arch and Clayden from enjoying their visit to Brown's farm. Indeed, of any single event during their visit, Brown's guided tour of farmland around Brantford probably made the strongest positive impression on Arch and Clayden regarding the opportunities Canada offered farm labourers. While they were impressed with the conditions in most of rural southern Ontario, the two described the area Brown had shown them as "look[ing] like a fruitful garden," with "commodious buildings," "picturesque meadows," "energetic proprietors," and soil "of the most fertile character" put "under the highest cultivation." The tour fired Arch's imagination about the possibilities of his emigration plan. "Oh yes," he wrote in his autobiography, "a man may be a king among farmers out here ..." He added that if "some hundreds Englishmen with ... go and grit, and youth as well, came out" and found work "under a successful emigrant farmer," they could then "take up their own farms and employ good English labourers, who can have land of their own in turn, and then emigration will be as good as a tale come true."[87]

The visit with Brown was met with alarm and consternation by the labour establishment. The British union's emissaries had visited the most "ill-bred" of Canadian employers — and formed their most positive views of prospects in the Dominion in the process! This was precisely the opposite of what was supposed to happen according to the *Workman*'s view on how to attract immigrants. Arch's visit was suddenly far from a vindication of the establishment's claims that Brown would turn Canada into the "gaol" of immigrants' hopes.

The *Workman* responded by drawing on the old labour anthem and issuing a call for Arch, "at any sacrifice," to "Stand By The Union!" The paper stated it was "fearful" that Arch would be lead astray by the "cunning suggestions" from the "flattering advisers" who guided him around Canada. In particular, it was anxious that Arch might be "led to" believe that "there existed no social distinctions in Canada," and few of "the feelings of animosity which disturb the harmony between employers and employed in the Mother Country." The *Workman* thus declared itself to have a "duty" to ensure that Arch appreciated the "actual condition of his fellow

[85]"Immigration of Agricultural Labourers," *Globe*, 1 October 1873.
[86]"Agricultural Labourers and Immigration," *Globe*, 10 October 1873. See also "Immigration of Agricultural Labourers," *Globe*, 1 October 1873.
[87]Arch, *From Ploughtail to Parliament*, 192. See also Clayden, *Revolt of the Field*, 219-23; and Simpson, *The Emigration Mission*, 5.

unionists" in the Dominion. In providing the NALU President with its version of Canadian labour's recent struggles, the paper employed even more excited language than usual, describing "the rugged nature and magnitude of the field — the number and strength of the mighty hosts in fierce battle array against trades' unions — with their standard upraised, and emblazoned with the decisive words, 'Victory or Death'."[88]

The editorial concluded with an appeal for Arch to enlighten himself about the views of Brown's newspaper. Not only had the *Globe* continually rejected almost all the values of the labour movement, but its London correspondent also authored a "sharp criticism" of Arch and his movement.[89] As for immigration, the *Workman* claimed the *Globe* advocated having "the labour market here flooded with those Englishmen with no conditions whatever...."[90]

The *Workman's* goal was not to dissuade Arch from pursuing his emigration plans, and especially not to suggest that Canadian employers had succeeded in "aggrandizing themselves" to the point where they could "insult workmen with impunity."[91] Indeed, the labour establishment had no intention of conceding defeat to the "mighty hosts" arrayed against them. The *Workman's* objective was to have Arch and Clayden understand the extent of the struggles "between labour and capital" in Canada, and especially understand where their loyalties should lie.[92]

The *Workman* also took pains to avoid the appearance that it questioned Arch's "reliability" or his "grand designs." Throughout the commentary, the paper insisted that the root of the difficulty was simply that Arch did not have "ample opportunity" during his "cursory visit" to "meditatively survey" the landscape of Canadian labour relations. To be sure, the paper had a point, as Arch and Clayden frequently conceded that they knew nothing about Canada before their visit.[93]

[88]"Stand By The Union, Mr. Arch," *Ontario Workman*, 17 October 1873.

[89]"Stand By The Union, Mr. Arch," *Ontario Workman*, 17 October 1873. For an illustration of the criticism of Arch by the Globe's correspondent, see "British Affairs," *Globe*, 3 October 1873.

[90]"Stand By The Union, Mr. Arch," *Ontario Workman*, 17 October 1873.

[91]The quoted phrases are from "What Will Be The Result?" *Ontario Workman*, 30 May 1872, and "Mr. Arch and His Mission," *Ontario Workman*, 23 October 1873.

[92]"Stand By The Union, Mr. Arch," *Ontario Workman*, 17 October 1873.

[93]It should also be noted that it is highly doubtful that there was serious concern that Arch would strike an alliance with fellow Liberal George Brown against Macdonald and other Tories. As we will see in more detail below, Arch needed the cooperation of the federal Tory government. Arch consistently spoke favorably about Macdonald, and was careful to distinguish between Canadian Conservatives and British "old Tories." See for instance, Arch, *From Ploughtail to Parliament*, 201-2. In one of his letters to the British press, Clayden, who was also a British Liberal, expressed sympathy with Macdonald as "the best-abused man in Canada just now," because of the Pacific Scandal, and stated further that "no one can come into contact with Macdonald without feeling that he is in the presence of no ordinary man." Clayden, *Revolt of the Field*, 227.

But the problems ran deeper than that. More than "cunning suggestions" from "flattering advisers" were making Arch susceptible to overlooking or downplaying the extent of class conflict in Canada, and particularly the antipathy of some Canadian élites to labour. Indeed, if Arch found that Canadian political and business leaders could not be trusted as partners in his union's plans, or that Canada was a site of constant labour strife, it would seriously damage the credibility of emigration as the viable new solution he was seeking. Proceeding with an emigration program would become much more difficult if NALU members appeared at risk of being exploited or oppressed by Canadian employers. Arch would thus have to return empty-handed to Britain, likely to be "shorn of his locks," as the *Daily Mail* put it.

The NALU's perspective in this regard was evident during the mission. While in Ontario Clayden claimed that "workmen here could afford a policy of moderation," because conditions gave them "great power."[94] Yet, the NALU leadership in England was displeased with Clayden after his report to the *Birmingham Daily News* described Québec agricultural employers as "toilworn, narrow-minded farmers without one other idea than that of how much work they can get out of a man for the dollars they must pay him. I know of no agriculturalist in England whom I would not elect to serve under in preference to them."[95] Clayden received a public scolding from NALU executives, who wanted better news about prospects and labour relations in Canada.[96]

The *Workman*'s editorial demanded a prompt response, because just four days after it appeared, a banquet was to be held for Joseph Arch at the Toronto Trades Assembly. Both sides proved eager to avoid a confrontation. We have seen that Arch was sensitive to claims that he was "selling" NALU members to New World interests, as well as to concerns that emigrants be sent overseas on false promises, as in the Brazilian fiasco. Hence he needed to dispel suggestions that he had been deceived by members of the Canadian élite, let alone a well-known enemy of organized labour. We have also seen that the Toronto labour establishment faced division and uncertainty over immigration policy within their movement. Even a staunch opponent of government policy like Hewitt could not have felt confident about stirring controversy on immigration at such a widely observed event. Moreover, despite the clash of interests when it came to assessing Canada's progress in labour relations, there was still obvious promise to be found in an emigration scheme managed by a British union.[97] Finally, it was doubtless advantageous for both sides to present an image of unity and brotherhood on an occasion when organized labour had the attention of the media, public, and national leaders.

[94]"Joseph Arch," *Daily Mail*, 3 October 1873.
[95]Clayden, *Revolt of the Field*, 206-7.
[96]Horn, *Joseph Arch*, 93.
[97]"Mr. Arch and His Mission," *Ontario Workman*, 23 October 1873.

The NALU's emissaries mollified Toronto unionists by means of a missive by Clayden at the *Globe*. In a letter to Brown's paper published the day before the reception, Clayden reiterated the conditions that the NALU demanded for migrating farm workers, and decried "the twaddle" about regulations on the terms and hours of work being untenable in agricultural industries. In a thinly veiled attack on Brown (especially given how impressed Arch and Clayden had been with his farm), Clayden also derided those who insisted that migrant farm workers should not be given any cleared lots or accommodation: "The very men who write our demands down [as] 'coddling' are surrounded at their houses with luxuries that a Monarch did not possess half a century ago."[98]

Clayden was careful in his letter to protect the credibility of the emigration mission and Canada's promise for English farm workers. He asserted that the "ever-widening gulf between the rich and the poor," which was the "great curse of Europe and especially of England," was "unknown" in Canada. "Therein lies ... one of the secrets of [Canada's] power."[99] Nevertheless, Clayden's letter served notice that neither he nor Arch had been swayed from their demands by any influence of George Brown.

The Toronto labour establishment made an even greater gesture towards the NALU by welcoming the emigration agent of the Port of Toronto, Mr. Donaldson, to the reception for Arch. Toronto's labour leaders set aside their concerns about his role as "the private labor agent for the big [employers] of this city," and offered their hospitality to Donaldson, whose support was vital to Arch's plans.[100] The new CLU president, James Carter, went so far as to propose a toast to the Dominion, "coupling with it the name of Mr. Donaldson."[101] Donaldson's speech endorsing most of the proposals of the NALU president was warmly received.

Altogether, Toronto's labour leaders seemed to spare no effort to present themselves as allies of their guest. "Every age has its heroes," Carter declared in his speech, "and every cause its champions, and I rejoice tonight to say, that we have amongst us, the champion of a down trodden and despised portion of the people."[102] This was followed by the presentation of the "endorsed address" wishing success for Arch's efforts, signed by Hewitt, Williams, and Carter.[103]

[98]Arthur Clayden, "Mr. Joseph Arch's Mission," *Globe*, 20 October 1873.

[99]Clayden, "Mr. Joseph Arch's Mission," *Globe*, 20 October 1873. In fact, the *Globe* continued to support the migration of NALU members; see "The London 'Times' and Emigration," *Globe*, 23 October 1873.

[100]In fact, Arch and Donaldson were working out an agreement whereby the NALU would compile applications for work in Canada, and Donaldson would collect information on potential employers in Ontario, including the "wages, hours, and accommodation" they would offer. Arch, *From Ploughtail to Parliament*, 194-5.

[101]"Joseph Arch," *Daily Mail*, 22 October 1873.

[102]"Entertainment to Mr. Joseph Arch," *Ontario Workman*, 23 October 1873.

[103]"Entertainment to Messrs. Joseph Arch and Arthur Clayden," *Globe*, 22 October 1873.

Nevertheless, signs of strain could not help but appear at the reception. Clayden complained about "the pressure he felt in being at the meeting."[104] Arch was clearly aware of the anxieties of the Toronto labour establishment, and he displayed considerable political acumen in further pacifying them with his speech. He expressed his wish for "the working men of Canada to thoroughly understand his mission...." He offered more assurances that he would never allow "designing or interested parties" to use the NALU to "glut the market here and so cut down wages."[105] Arch then showed a keen eye for Canadian sensibilities in winning over the crowd by touching on Canada's international image. He stated that Canada was

> more than what he expected to find it. (Applause) He was told that Canada was a wild country ... An English newspaper said, when he came out to this country he would find horned-toads, rattlesnakes, wolves and bears, and cautioned him against bringing out good honest labourers to such a country, but he had not found any horned toads & Co.[106]

Arch reassured his audience that he found much potential in the Dominion for his members. When Arch had completed his performance and took his seat, he was showered with "round after round of applause."[107] It was a rousing sendoff for the NALU president who was wrapping up his visit to Canada.

It was not only the gestures of conciliation and Arch's oratory skills that allowed the banquet to appear a celebration of international solidarity. Both sides also assiduously avoided the main concern in the *Workman's* editorial: labour's struggles against George Brown and other Canadian élites. Indeed, evasion was the only option, as the divergence of interests on this matter remained unresolved. The *Workman's* last commentary on the NALU during the mission generally spoke favorably about Clayden's missive to the *Globe*, but persisted in highlighting labour's recent "conflicts" against the "fructifying" "seeds of evil that has created social embarrassments in the old world."[108] During the trip, Arch and Clayden declined to acknowledge the "conflicts" in Canada, and particularly to announce that they would "stand by the union" against George Brown. Even more instructively, in his first speech on his return to England, with Canadian labour leaders safely out of earshot, Arch began with the highest praise of Canada's élite, presenting them as ideal potential allies for the union. "I found a few old Tories in Canada," he pro-

[104]"Entertainment," *Ontario Workman*, 23 October 1873.
[105]"Entertainment," *Ontario Workman*, 23 October 1873.
[106]"Entertainment," *Globe*, 22 October 1873.
[107]"Entertainment," *Ontario Workman*, 23 October 1873.
[108]This persistence was perhaps why Clayden, once back in England, described some Toronto union leaders as "pig headed" and "demagogues." But in a letter to the *Workman*, Clayden insisted his comments were only aimed at one union leader (although he refused to name which one) and the matter seems to have dissipated. The lack of evidence makes it difficult to speculate further on this incident. "Mr. Clayden and the Trades Unions," *Ontario Workman*, 8 January 1874.

nounced, "but I must say, for the honour of the different public men of Canada whom I was introduced to ... that a more business-like and a more honourable class of men, as business men and men of responsibility, I never met with."[109]

Conclusion

It is difficult to speculate as to whether the tensions that emerged during Arch's visit signified that the NALU would have inevitably become just one more organization assailed by Canadian labour as "hucksters" and "shams" for promoting emigration. Indeed, the following years saw major shifts in almost every variable effecting Canadian immigration policy, and particularly labour's approach to it, and the window when a massive NALU emigration program seemed achievable closed rapidly.

The onset of a serious economic depression in North America, and modest increases in wage rates in Britain, made emigration a less attractive option for farm labourers. More important, a series of lock-outs by farmers and landlords in early 1874 soon had the NALU too consumed in a struggle to survive to concentrate on emigration schemes. Providing strike pay to locked-out members emptied the union's coffers, and Arch's consequent decision to cease strike payments when the dispute dragged on created bitter divisions that would spread and deepen in the following years. Most of the NALU members who did migrate to Canada in 1874 and 1875 were not following the union's plan as much as they were trying to escape its troubles and the labour strife in rural Britain.[110]

The year 1874 was also bad for Canadian labour. Unable to withstand the depression and the ouster from power of its patron, John A. Macdonald, the *Workman* ceased publication in the spring. Meanwhile, the Canadian Labour Union went backwards even from its modest beginnings, and limped on until 1877 without attracting more than 25 delegates to another convention.[111] There was no discussion of Arch's plans at CLU congresses for the rest of its existence, aside from the "Committee on Immigration" in 1875 "regretting" that the federal government was using promotional agencies to find immigrants, and "suggesting" half-heartedly that Ottawa renew attempts to work with the NALU instead.[112] But this only confirmed that the government's immigration system had continued to develop, and that the NALU program had become moribund.

By the end of the 1870s, the "producer ideology" would have much less influence in the Canadian labour movement. This was in part because its principal advocates in the Toronto labour establishment had left the movement, but in larger part because, as Bryan Palmer shows, the continued development of industrial capital-

[109]Arch, *From Ploughtail to Parliament*, 201-2.
[110]Horn, *Joseph Arch*, 102-22; Brown, *Meagre Harvest*, 53-61.
[111]Forsey, *Trade Unions in Canada*, 126-31.
[112]*CLU Proceedings*, 55-6, 64-8; "Labour Congress," *Globe*, 6 August 1875.

ism made the idea of cooperation between manufacturers and workers untenable.[113] New ideologies would emerge that cast immigration as a crucial means of capitalists to increase their power over workers. One was Henry George's land reform ideology, which opposed any immigration on the grounds that it increased population density, and allowed élites of land "monopolists" to exact ever greater "tributes" from landless working masses.[114]

What is certain is that no other labour leaders visiting from overseas would be seen as valuable allies to "be treated everywhere with kindness" by Canada's political and business leaders.[115] However, the remarkable consensus that had emerged regarding emigration in late 1873 was put under considerable strain even before Arch had completed his scouting mission to Canada. Few problems arose between the NALU's emissaries and Canadian élites, as they stuck to their common ground regarding emigration, and were able to work out a plan that satisfied Arch's requirements. Indeed, Arch returned to England believing that large numbers of "surplus" British farm-labourers could be successfully "placed" in Canada, and Canadian élites believed they had secured a new supply of agricultural workers and potential settlers.[116] The Toronto labour establishment remained firm supporters of the plan, but maintaining its sense of unity with Arch and Clayden required some hasty diplomacy and even some careful evasion of contentious issues that emerged during the visit.

The tensions were decidedly unexpected, as for the Toronto establishment, the potential of Arch's visit initially seemed almost limitless. It promised first, the realization of its vision for developing Canada, second, the resolution of a conflict within its ranks, third, the validation of its portrayal of "oppressive" employers as damaging Canada's hopes for development, fourth, the supplanting of corrupt immigration agents by a British union, and fifth, the direct infusion of thousands of

[113]Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict*.

[114]See Goutor, "Walls of Solidarity," 148-55; Burr, *Spreading the Light*, 37-55; Gregory S. Kealey and Bryan D. Palmer, *Dreaming of What Might Be: The Knights of Labor In Ontario* (New York 1982); Russell Hann, "Brainworkers and the Knights of Labour: E.E. Sheppard, Phillips Thompson, and the *Toronto Daily News*, 1883-1887," in Gregory S. Kealey and Peter Warrian, eds., *Essays in Canadian Working-Class History* (Toronto 1976), 35-57; Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto 1985), ch. 7, 105-22; Ramsay Cook, "Henry George and the Poverty of Canadian Progress," *CHA Papers* (1977), 142-57.

[115]At least, it should be noted, not until Lech Walesa, leader of the Polish Solidarity union, visited Canada in 1989, and again in 1994 as Poland's Prime Minister.

[116]Simpson, *The Emigration Mission*, 9-11; Clayden, *Revolt of the Field*; Horn, "Agricultural Trade Unionism and Emigration," 94-5. The author could find no detailed records of a deal in government sources. National Archives of Canada, Immigration Program Sous-fonds, R1206-43-9-E (formerly RG76); Ontario Archives, Department of Immigration Correspondence Files, RG11-8; Ontario Archives, Letterbooks of Ontario Immigration Agents, RG11-11.

white, British, union members into Canada. But even this potent combination of factors was not enough to keep tensions from sprouting between a British organization that had an interest in portraying Canadian élites as "men of responsibility," good employers, and reliable partners in an emigration program, and Canadian unionists struggling against (and recently almost outlawed by) some of those same élites.

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