

Trinity East Local Council of the Fishermen's Protective Union fonds, 1917 - 1930 - 3.7 cm textual records.

The Fishermen's Protective Union (F.P.U.) was started in 1908 by William F. Coaker when he held public meetings and launched verbal attacks on those he deemed as enemies of the fishermen. Which is namely: the trader, the fish exporter and the Government. Coaker spoke for a long time about the plight of the fishermen, in various communities around Newfoundland and gathered supporters and started new localized union groups.

The basic unit of the F.P.U. was the small community unions, such as the one started in Trinity East. All members of the following occupations were eligible for membership to the F.P.U. fishermen, coasters, and planters. These people were likely to join the Union due to the issues held by fishermen in 1908 when a very good catch lowered the price of fish, which meant that regardless of their exceptional catches many fishing families suffered from want, not being able to afford the things they needed, from the low sale price of cod. This was an underlying tension between the fishermen and the tradesmen which made many realize that the Truck or credit system in place was not to their benefit.

The F.P.U. tried to promote several things in order to improve the situations of fishermen in Newfoundland. The first was to try to abolish the credit system in place in most mercantile premises, and then to combat the rising prices, due to other strategies set in place, by starting the Fishermen's Union Trading Company, to which they would eventually deal only in cash. They also established the "Fishermen's Advocate", to encourage solidarity amongst the fishermen. Eventually, after the 1911 convention in Bonavista, a policy statement for the party was proposed called the "Bonavista Platform" which proposed 31 specific reforms to improve the social, economic and political lives of fishermen.

This did not last long and eventually the F.P.U. favour started to decline, with the F.U.T.C. reverting to a credit system and the president's beliefs in conscription and prohibition after entering politics in Newfoundland many of the fishermen felt alienated and turned away from the F.P.U., and in the 1950's the Labour Relations Board denied recognition as an employee union for the purposes of collective bargaining, and the remaining members joined other organizations such as the Canadian Labour Congress. The Fishermen's Advocate survived until 1980 while the F.U.T.C. continued until 1977 both without any connection to the now extinct F.P.U..

Notes

Supplied title based on provenance

Originals Donated by Bruce Edwards, 2010.

Location: Trinity East Fishermen's Protective Union fonds.

Series 1: Meeting Books. 1917 - 1930. - 3.5 cm

Series contains three books which includes two books of meeting notes and another which is a record of dues paid to the union.

- 1.01 - Meeting Book - 1917 - 1921
- 1.02 - Meeting Book - 1921 - 1928
- 1.03 - Dues Book - 1912 - 1930

Location: Trinity East Local Council of F.P.U.

Series 2: Union Papers - 1920 - 1924 - 0.2 cm

This series contains various papers including union application forms, written applications, correspondence and other records.

Location: Trinity East Local Council of F.P.U.