

**HOBHEMIA AND THE
CRUCIFIXION MACHINE**

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Capital is dead labor.

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HOBHEMIA AND THE CRUCIFIXION MACHINE

RIVAL IMAGES OF A NEW WORLD
IN 1930S VANCOUVER

Todd McCallum



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PREFACE

“Sleep in gentle ease / little eyes shut please, / hear the raindrops in the dark, / hear the neighbour’s doggy bark. / Doggy bit the beggarman, / tore his coat, away he ran, / to the gate the beggar flees, / sleep in gentle ease.” The first strophe of Taubert’s lullaby is frightening. And yet its two last lines bless sleep with a promise of peace. But this is not entirely due to bourgeois callousness, the comforting knowledge that the intruder has been warded off. The sleepy child has already half forgotten the expulsion of the stranger, who in Schott’s song-book looks like a Jew, and in the line “to the gate the beggar flees” he glimpses peace without the wretchedness of others. So long as there is still a single beggar, Benjamin writes in a fragment, there is still myth; only with the last beggar’s disappearance would myth be appeased. But would not violence then be forgotten as in the child’s drowsiness? Would not, in the end, the disappearance of the beggar make good everything that was ever done to him and can never be made good? Is there not concealed in all persecution by human beings, who, with the little dog, set the whole of nature on the weak, the hope to see effaced the last trace of persecution, which is itself the portion of nature? Would not the beggar, driven out of the gate of civilization, find refuge in his homeland, freed from exile on earth? “Have now peaceful mind, beggar home shall find.”

**Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia:*
*Reflections from a Damaged Life*¹**

In this short excerpt, written sometime between 1944 and 1947, Theodor Adorno registers the tragic effects of fifteen years of global depression and war with a horrifying revision of Walter Benjamin's pre-war dream about the possibility of revolutionary change. The beggar, whose disappearance Benjamin had imagined as a sign of the disappearance of all classes, becomes in Adorno's wilful misreading a much more complicated figure. In Adorno's rendering, because the beggar is the target of the violence that must first be done so that myth can achieve the desired result, sleep comes to the child only by first remembering and then forgetting the hurts inflicted upon the homeless man in the shadows. This process is made all the easier by articulating the man's poverty with the appearances of racial inferiority.² Effectively effaced and made an abstract figure, yet still all too human in his ability to experience pain, Adorno's beggar is necessary to the functioning of the whole, not because he can work but because he can suffer, allowing the rest of us to remember, and then forget, and then sleep.

Adorno manages to find a kernel of utopian content in this nursery rhyme by proposing that the bourgeois dream of physically expelling each and every beggar from the whole would, in reality, "make good everything that was ever done to him and can never be made good."³ In his mind, justice for each individual historical act of persecution is an impossible goal since the very act of calculating an equivalent punishment would make one "the mouthpiece, against a bad world, of one even worse."⁴ Nonetheless, Adorno still imagines that the beggar could inflict severe damage by accepting his removal from "civilization," thereby allowing its citizens to stamp out within themselves the only remaining "portion of nature" yet to succumb to rationalization. In this logic, it is only outside of this society – now left alone with its dialectic of enlightenment, where Hitler or Hollywood represented the only choice that remained – that the abject beggar finally "glimpses peace without the wretchedness of others": "Have now peaceful mind, beggar home shall find."

Regrettably, in our present context, Adorno's final question – "Would not the beggar, driven out of the gate of civilization, find refuge in his homeland, freed from exile on earth?" – originates in a kind of curiosity about the possibilities of a utopia that most Canadian historians have learned to leave behind, an occasional object of, but not a guide to, critical historical practice. I offer in this book's opening chapters an excursus into the beggar's "homeland," doing so as something of an antidote to this contemporary historiographic departure away from utopia's long-standing attractions.

This is not to say that my account will be entirely unfamiliar to Canadian historians. Beginning with chapter 3, my interpretive journey follows paths of inquiry that should be easily understood within the framework of conventional Canadian writing on the period. If my account of the changing character of relief governance and provision pertaining to single homeless

men in Vancouver and British Columbia in the early years of the Great Depression sits comfortably within established appreciations of the inadequacies of the state response to the collapsing social formation of the 1930s, I nonetheless destabilize the usual narrative somewhat by introducing two key concepts: Michel Foucault's "governmentality" and Theodor Adorno's "rationalization." This theoretical intervention allows us to grasp more fully how mass need and the market collapse quickly overwhelmed Vancouver's Relief Department. The result was a crisis recognizable throughout the municipality and, to a lesser extent, in the governing chambers of Victoria and Ottawa.

It is my contention that the increasing number of people who distanced themselves from business methods in the face of the obvious contradictions manifesting themselves in the streets can best be situated historically and understood in our own times through an excavation of that long-buried utopian challenge posed by "Hobohemia" against capitalist Fordism. This is why I introduce this study with the real lives of homeless men, the forms of resistance mounted by the jobless, and the social alternatives that germinated in the hobo jungles of Vancouver from 1930 to 1932.

Minorities, of course, make history. The minority that might have remade Canadian history in its utopian image, the builders of Hobohemia, did not, in the end, prevail, although, as I show, they built much in a particular time and place. A smaller but more influential minority looked to the ledger sheet to find the principles of order and governance that might save Vancouver from financial ruin and political riot. This latter group, which included many business leaders, media magnates, religious activists, and social work professionals, sought a way out of the Great Depression. Their view of the chaos precipitated in the dirtiest years of the 1930s differed markedly from the perceptions circulating among the workless and homeless men, whose presence in shantytowns and on street corners caused them considerable anxiety. This minority took from the corporate world a preference for the rationalized social relationships theorized by Frederick Winslow Taylor and made both viable and visible on a mass scale by Henry Ford. Their reorganization of the core practices of relief administration and provision using the leading ideas of North American capitalism created what might be termed "forms of Fordist governmentality" across British Columbia, traces of which we can sense around us still. One part of their original purpose was to vanquish the beggars at their doors, a historical act of violence that ushered into being its own mythologies.

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CRUCIFIXION MACHINE**



INTRODUCTION

From Fordlandia to Hobohemia

HOMELESS MEN AND THE RELIEF INDUSTRY

What are the perils of jungle and prairie compared to the daily shocks and conflicts of civilization?

Charles Baudelaire, *Oeuvres*¹

This book tells the story of the creation of two worlds: one we know well, having lived there for what seems like forever, while the other we know hardly at all, having forgotten how to cultivate its growth. The first of these worlds — the truly globalizing condition of permanent siege known as Fordism, under which the “scientific” combination of mass production and mass consumption techniques produced the explosive economic and state growth that characterized the “short twentieth century” — started with Henry Ford himself:

In our new laboratory building at Dearborn we partitioned off a corner which gives a ballroom big enough for seventy couples. . . . We are all getting a great deal of fun out of dancing. We have our dancing classes two nights a week, and everyone has to learn to dance in absolutely the correct way, for a fine part of the old dancing was its deportment. The rules are followed. . . . The instructions are all in the manual we have had written.

No one objects to the formality. They like it as a change from the casualness which is so often rudeness. . . . Our complete repertoire is fourteen dances — the two-step, the circle two-step, the waltz, . . . and

so on through the infinite variety of combinations. These dances have to be danced! There is no improvisation of steps.

We are not, as has been imagined, conducting any kind of crusade against modern dancing. We are merely dancing in the way that gives us the most pleasure.²

It is tempting to read Ford's testimonial to the pleasure he and others found in the rationalization of dancing — which took up three pages of his 1926 classic, *Today and Tomorrow* — as an exemplary instance of Fordist practice. Governed by rules (naturally written down in advance) that legislated every exacting movement and yet promised (theoretically, at least) “infinite variety,” the dance floor in Ford's Dearborn, Michigan, laboratory shared much with the shop floor next door, and over time, Ford's directives would be shared with dance floors across North America. By 1943, the printed instruction manual was in its fourth edition and promised to “preserve all that is characteristic and traditional in these dances, at the same time making the descriptions as clear and concise as possible.”³ This manual captured something essential of the “structure of feeling” of Ford's brand of scientific management: his pleasure technicians rationalized “the old dances” and enabled their repetition time and again in an ever-expanding variety of locales by using sheet music, printed verse, and various types of pictograms to analytically fragment and reassemble each ensemble of physical acts along instrumentalist lines. The technicians thus separated the good from the bad — the former comprising elements branded “characteristic and traditional” and the latter, elements that confounded a “clear and concise” pedagogical process.

Ford's marriage of mass production and mass consumption, his centralization of work planning, and his extension of managerial control beyond the factory doors promised to create “a new kind of rationalized, modernist, and populist democratic society,” in the words of geographer David Harvey. Harvey emphasizes the central importance of state intervention via the 1930s New Deal in creating and recreating the preconditions for the socialization of Fordist practices. At the same time, he underlines the unevenness of this process in the interwar years, arguing that only through “myriad individual, corporate, institutional, and state decisions, many of them unwitting political choices or knee-jerk responses to the crisis tendencies of capitalism, particularly as manifest in the great depression of the 1930s,” did Fordism become the dominant logic of the North American social formation.⁴ It was inevitable that Fordism would acquire (indeed, mass produce) much symbolism. For some, it was represented by the stopwatch, the much-hated tool of white-shirted scientific managers.⁵ Nothing captures this loathing better than John Dos Passos's biting characterization of the death of American industrial efficiency champion Frederick Winslow Taylor from pneumonia: “He was dead

with his watch in his hand.”⁶ There were other symbols: the assembly line of Chaplin’s *Modern Times*, the fantastic fins of post-war Cadillacs, and the bulk-built boxes of the suburbs, exposed by Dan Graham’s photographic lens. Each inescapably captured the core values of the emergent structure of feeling: standardization, massification, and, above all, rationalization.⁷

And Fordism could not be contained by national or even continental borders. “Fordismus” swept through Germany before the war, while the French would have to wait until after that conflict had ended and the next had begun.⁸ For our purposes, the most telling endeavour associated with the name was Ford’s own keenly ambitious, spectacular failure known as Fordlandia, the company’s veritable colony deep in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon.⁹ In an attempt to break the British cartel in the rubber industry in the early 1920s, Ford’s minions ventured into the untamed wilderness and attempted to transplant and cultivate what Marxists call a totality – in this case, one predicated on the notion of an organic, traditional American way of life no longer viable in America itself.¹⁰ From the latest production techniques to modern health care and housing, which many Americans would have envied, Ford’s undertaking sought to eradicate some of the limits to capital accumulation on a global scale while deigning to provide racial uplift in Brazil as it did in America.¹¹ After all, why limit yourself to encouraging village industries when you could create the perfect village instead? That this very orderly project created copious amounts of untrammelled chaos through its dramatic transformation of social relations in the rainforest led historian Greg Grandin to conclude, “Fordlandia is indeed a parable of arrogance. The arrogance, though, is not that Henry Ford thought he could tame the Amazon, but that he believed that the forces of capitalism, once released, could still be contained.”¹² While Fordlandia itself lay in ruins following a 1930 riot, the complex set of social practices embodied by the name thrived elsewhere, taking possession of so much held dear around the globe to the extent that there is nothing left to be returned.

The second world explored in this book, that of utopia, has no fixed address or permanent location, which makes it difficult to conceive of it as a world at all. Indeed, in many respects, we have become not post- but pre-utopian: in many quarters, it is no longer enough to dismiss the utopian because we must act as if it never even existed in the first place. Its elusiveness can be traced not only to the unremittingly hostile social formation in which it must take root but also to the contradictions within utopian projects themselves.¹³ Nonetheless, as Fredric Jameson argues in his widely influential 1979 article, “Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture,” utopian practice has become ritualistic, a daily occurrence, if only fleetingly so, for all of us surrounded by mass culture. It is thus helpful to set aside Thomas More’s original definition of utopia as “no place” and instead recognize that utopia is every

place: the question we are compelled to ask is when. In our context, against the global generalization of Fordlandia over the short twentieth century, I have counterpoised a much less glorious narrative concerning the rise and fall of Hobohemia: while the jungles of Brazil threw up obstacles to Fordism's spread, the jungles of British Columbia — islands of non-capitalist, non-statist social practice — became something of an outside within Fordism, parasitically drawing from its creation of surplus value to create a homeland for a surplus population.

This book explores the history of the archetypal single transient homeless man as he could be found in British Columbia over the course of three years, from the Great Crash in October 1929 to the assumption of federal control over the bulk of British Columbia's provincial relief camp system in November 1932. It is primarily concerned with conveying the effects engendered across the social order by the "transient," as masses of individual bodies daily seeking food, shelter, and other commodities; as a collective figure in the political imaginary of those tasked with administering relief to these bodies; and as the core constituency of a mass movement that periodically sought to transform, if not overturn, this order. More modestly, I hope to add to our all-too-meagre understanding of the itinerant unemployed man on his own, away from authority figures and off with others of his kind — on the streets, in boxcars, and in jungles. From dozens of nations the world over, tens of thousands of mobile men travelled to and through Vancouver, where — to put it plainly — they made history, even if they did not always make it exactly as they would have chosen and even if what they made did not necessarily last long.

Divorced both financially and physically from the factories, forests, fields, and other places where a wage could be earned, innumerable men with no fixed address and no productive property to call their own founded and built hobo jungles in which emerged a new admixture of older forms of exchange, sociability, and culture — material and otherwise — that owed their existence to practices that had served tramps well in the pre-war period. And whether in the jungles, on the road, or in the cities, their very existence appeared to generate a perpetual "state of emergency" for the broader polity.¹⁴ In Vancouver, their presence caused Vancouver's relief and police departments to proclaim crises at regular intervals; indeed, the former more or less admitted defeat in the wake of thousands of transients. Elected officials, too, felt their wrath: more than one City Council member saw his or her career in officialdom dashed upon the rocks of itinerant intransigence, and more than any other factor, transients were responsible for bringing down the sitting premier, Conservative Simon Fraser Tolmie, generating such instability so as to make the Conservative Party an irrelevant institution in British Columbia for decades. Of course, their accomplishments were limited: they could not, after all, substitute direct democracy for the parliamentary process.

Theory and Argument

Theoretically speaking, this book is a sustained argument for social history and what might be called the “epistemic independence of the oppressed.”¹⁵ Yet it is also something decidedly more, in that I have sought, wherever possible, to deny – indeed, to provisionally erase – the long-standing “epistemic independence” available to oppressors in a host of politico-theoretical frameworks across the spectrum. Liberal, feminist, postmodern, Marxist, and so on: regardless of allegiance, we find analogous analytical forms that situate the subaltern on the margins, where they do not act but react, where they are made into subjects, bestowed with identities, disciplined and regulated within an inch of their lives. More to the point, much of Canadian leftist and social history has become inward-looking and self-congratulatory.¹⁶ This process, one scholar has argued, is an inevitable result of the “over-production” of history, the need to carve out new markets for scholarship.¹⁷ The ethical sensibility that saturated the early productions of social history – the fundamental connection between historical writers and actors – has metamorphosed into a more ironic, pessimistic sense of detachment from the subjects we study. Our post-humanist sophistications clash with the explicitly humanist elements of social history, whether methodological, theoretical, or political. Here, I have reversed the traditional flow of history from rulers to ruled, both as a conceptual exercise and because the extant evidence demands that I do so. Here, we will situate the relief industry in the shadow of homeless men’s lives.

This book offers four arguments concerning the past and one concerning Canada’s progress as one of many branch plants of the Anglo-American “Theoryworld.”¹⁸ First, the mass need engendered by the crisis of the early 1930s led to the emergence of a distinct socio-economic order embodied in hobo jungles, communities that were parasitic upon and yet never fully integrated into the wider liberal capitalist social formation. The jungles of the early twentieth century were characterized by an “ethic of reciprocity and mutualism” rooted in “unapologetic rejections of acquisitivism,” to quote American historian Todd DePastino.¹⁹ Frank Tobias Higbie, another American scholar, extends the argument, citing the “transient mutuality” that was forged in contexts of “social marginalization” as an important “marker of community among migrants *and* between migrants and nonmigrants who chose to help them.”²⁰ In the early 1930s, the social practices with which unemployed homeless men sustained themselves on the road and in the jungle owed much to a similar internal moral economy predicated upon mutuality and reciprocity.²¹ Through a variety of activities – begging and borrowing, foraging and stealing, working and collecting relief from government and private charities – tramps acquired resources, which they then distributed

among their fellow tramps in the recognition that tomorrow, someone else would rustle up food and other necessities.

Jungle life was only periodically labour intensive and, especially in the peak years of the crisis, rarely involved waged work. Just as important, in the jungles themselves, the monetary value of these goods as commodities mattered little, and the exchange was usually conducted face to face, without recourse to a medium such as money. Neither paper nor writing, in fact, appears to have had a role in the internal governance of jungle life. Social relations tended to be immediate and relatively consensual, conducted in contexts in which neither capital accumulation through the exploitation of other people's labour nor the imprisoning of those considered criminals or moral offenders could become an ongoing, systematic concern. There is, in short, no state here, no administrative body (centralized or decentralized) that we can identify as having established juridical, legislative, disciplinary, or regulatory functions. Although these road-based communities were never free of conflict, hierarchies within them owed little to the acquisitive individualism of *laissez-faire* liberalism or the abstract notion of "rights" of the liberal-democratic state.

Second, as thousands of itinerants moved from the jungles to the city, filling the cafés, flophouses, and shelters, and swelling the streets, they made innumerable demands upon Vancouver's Relief Department, consuming resources at a rate that threatened the municipality with bankruptcy. To save their city from financial ruin, those who embraced the ideas of Frederick Winslow Taylor and Henry Ford unleashed a new reorganization on Vancouver's Relief Department. The changes were extensive: a new card-control system was employed and the tasks of investigation and assessment were separated, with new procedures formalized for both. This new system of knowledge production translated applicants into faceless textual objects, stripped of all traces of individuality in order to rationalize and standardize treatment. Yet they were not Fordism's only victims: the Relief Department staff — those who laboured so that tramps could be fed, clothed, and housed — had their own experience of scientific management. Employees found themselves singled out for efficiency tests, and the "speed-up" of the investigation process was accompanied by a network of office spies detailed to collect information about co-workers for the "Crucifixion Machine," the name bestowed by one disgruntled investigator upon the host of punitive sanctions for those judged inefficient. The economic crisis thus occasioned state formation on a scale that had rarely been seen in Canada save in times of war, a process that is best understood as a moment in the primitive accumulation of Fordist forms of governance.²²

Third, most histories of unemployment in the 1930s are predicated upon the conceptual separation of business and the state, and thus focus their enquiries on the obvious political dimensions of entitlement to government

aid. As a consequence, however, we lack a critical understanding of the extent to which relief provision was inseparable from capitalist social relations broadly conceived. In other words, while relief is typically associated with use value — the provision of goods and services as determined by human need rather than market mechanisms — the archives suggest a different portrait, one of exchange value and of exploitation. To provide transients with food, shelter, and clothing, Vancouver's municipal government entered into contractual relationships with dozens of private businesses, tendering bids for meals in much the same fashion as for printing jobs and construction projects; the sizeable number of entrepreneurs who clamoured to get their share of this state spending testifies to the profits that could be made by providing charity. Here, too, we see the influence of Fordist ideas in the preferential treatment that the Relief Department accorded to those businesses able to effect economies of scale in order to reduce the relief budget. In this way, the 1930s witnessed the emergence of a relief industry grafted upon already existing relations of production, distribution, and consumption. However, this was not a free market for everyone involved: under this system, homeless men were refused cash and instead given tickets or scrip, which they could exchange for commodities and services such as clothing or a night's shelter at a host of state-approved businesses. Because relief policies sought to remove the jobless man from the free market of consumption in order to deny him the ability to make the moral choices that came with hard currency, they also prompted the emergence of a powerful protest movement, dominated in the main by Communist-led organizations, such as the National Unemployed Workers Association, that asserted a program of consumer rights and relief in cash. In so doing, they would find willing allies in the form of small-business owners denied relief business because they were unable to effect savings through economies of scale.

Fourth, in exchange for relief, thousands of homeless men paid with the only currency available to them, their labour, as they were forced into the carceral archipelago of work camps created by the Government of British Columbia. The relief camp system would literally pave the way for the generalization of Fordism by developing a network of roads and airports to facilitate the transportation of natural resources and manufactured goods. Officials believed that once the crisis had passed and the unemployed migrant worker was reabsorbed into industry, the camps could be rented out as resorts, thus enabling a boom in the tourist-driven image economy. It is my contention that work relief needs to be recognized as a distinct form of unfree labour. If we strip away the label of "work relief," we find thousands of men in situations that were in many respects identical to those they would encounter as "free" wage workers. In fact, as a result of the government's decision to rent then-empty logging camps owned by a cabinet member, some itinerants found

themselves living in the same logging camps and listening to the orders of the same foremen as when they had previously worked for wages. Yet the political distinction between free and relief labour produced a living contradiction, the “unemployed worker” who worked for a living – not for wages, but for relief. It was precisely this identity between past and present that spawned a host of campaigns to oppose the labour camps. The most radical critique of work relief came from Communist groups, like the National Unemployed Workers Association, that recognized that the coercive context of economic need forced thousands of transients to participate in a new form of sweated labour. Eventually, the particular form of exploitation found in work relief programs led to the emergence of the most significant protest movement in 1930s-era Canada, the On-to-Ottawa Trek led by the Relief Camp Workers’ Union.

Finally, in its combination of subject matter and interpretation, this account differs from the existing historiography of the Great Depression. In part, this difference is theoretical. I have drawn extensively from the following schools of thought (which are now also segments of the market): the research on rationalization conducted in the 1930s and 1940s by Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Siegfried Kracauer of the Frankfurt School; Michel Foucault’s writings on sexuality, disciplinary power, and, especially, madness; and the oeuvre of E.P. Thompson and R.W. Connell, the latter being imaginatively understood as the socialist-feminist half-brother of the former.²³ Indeed, the experiential epistemological break that initiated this project was my 1993 reading of the script for Laura Kipnis’s stunning 1985 film, *Ecstasy Unlimited: The Interpenetrations of Sex and Capital*, which combines all of these schools of thought and more in a materialist-feminist exercise in estrangement and transcendence.²⁴

If theory moved me in different directions than those that are commonplace in conventional historical treatments, so too did my pursuit of the available evidence challenge me to follow different analytic routes. This project had its origins in a dissertation first sketched out at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, in the 1990s. My subject had a certain coherence: a social history of homeless men from the Great Crash of 1929 through to Bloody Sunday, 1938. The initial written plan followed a fairly orthodox chronology: commencing with the crash in 1929, the thesis then proposed to outline the experience of the homeless in the urban jungles (1931); the provincial and federal relief camps (1932–33 and 1933–35); and the mobilizations associated with the On-to-Ottawa Trek (1935), the Spanish Civil War (1936–38), and the Post Office sit-downs (1938). In addition, thematic chapters on communism, race, masculinity, and sexuality were envisioned. It all seemed so straightforward, with beginnings and ends that could be recognized as self-evident, some of this history even having been written about by the likes of Pierre Berton.

The archives put an end to all this. Everywhere I turned in the records of municipal and provincial governments, as well as in archives of private individuals and organizations, people spoke of the economics of relief provision, of the parallels (if not the identity) between the state and private industry, and of the crisis in value surrounding them. These stories are highly suggestive of the normalization of capitalist social relations. This did not mean that those who produced these records *accepted* the classical capital-labour form as much as they *expected* it: relief provision was experienced as a market relationship by every group involved, and in these early years, market mechanisms of exchange became a fundamental measure of value, both for goods and services and for the lives of the jobless. All of this has added up to what is perhaps best called a “mode of production” history, centred on the practices and processes of commodification and rationalization. This only served to heighten my awareness of an existing utopian alternative to these processes.

It is inevitable that histories of the Great Depression, whether popular or professorial, are saturated with talk of economics. It is difficult to imagine them otherwise. Yet our focus on the forest of the global unemployment crisis has prevented us from seeing the trees – the basic market relations that, taken as a whole, formed what might be termed the “relief industry.” Much ink has been spilled discussing the nature of the modern welfare state. By and large, interpretations derived from liberal political philosophy situate the state as the arbiter of the contending positions of different interest groups and as the guarantor of social order. This state is not monolithic in these accounts: intergovernmental conflicts remain an attractive subject.²⁵ Scholars have also noted the quest for stability and security that motivated the development of policy. Along with the increase in Keynesian forms of spending, social policy like contributory unemployment insurance aimed at limiting the severity, if not the occurrence, of cyclical economic downturns.²⁶ While some scholars explore the direct ties between the business community and various levels of government, and thus the subsequent absence of genuine reform policies during the 1930s, others emphasize the coming to power of politicians who challenged the traditions of *laissez-faire* competitive capitalism and the “night watchman” state.²⁷ More recently, the welfare state has been conceptualized as an ensemble of techniques of social and moral regulation. The male breadwinner model of provision and the policing of women’s experiences in both public and private spheres has been at the heart of the welfare state.²⁸ Finally, a number of historians, in order to explain the broad structural transformations entailed by the rapid expansion of welfare programs, have taken up Marxist ideas about the “relative autonomy” of the state and its “decommodified” role in developing the infrastructure for accumulation.²⁹ While each of these interpretations has

produced much of value, each is premised upon the separation of government and business.³⁰ In other words, they shed little light on how state activities such as relief provision could not exist outside of capitalist social relations broadly conceived.³¹

Because of the differences in approach, I have not devoted much space to a detailed demonstration of the myriad ways in which my interpretation clashes with the historiography of the transient, of relief administration, and of the era more generally. This I have done out of a profound respect for the literature: the Canadian historiography of the 1930s is too thoughtful, too interesting, and too politically engaged to warrant dismissing it because a single author steps outside its boundaries. Also, at this moment, I am hopeful that I can initiate a discussion about the significance of the commodification process – what I call capitalogic – rather than end one, and in the current climate, where Marxist criticism is all too often caricatured, I prefer to adopt a passive approach. In taking up the dialectical approach that Fredric Jameson labels “metacommentary,” this book is premised on the incorporation and reworking of the existing literature rather than its rejection.³² Thus, save in those cases where Canadian interpretations pose an obstacle to the adequate comprehension of a particular context, I have eschewed lengthy critical engagement and opted instead to focus my theoretical attentions on the works of the Frankfurt School and Michel Foucault, as is detailed below.

Definitions and Delineations

Let us turn to the first important methodological matter at hand, that of definitions. While everyone knows that Chicago’s greatest accomplishment is to have provided the soil in which urban blues could flourish, I like to think that second on the list would be its role as the “Main Stem” for migrant workers. In this not unrelated development, birth was given to a host of classification systems designed to come to terms with the realities of life on the road. Ben Reitman, one of America’s better known tramps, settled upon a tripartite scheme. “There are three types of the genus vagrant,” he explained. “The hobo, the tramp and the bum. The hobo works and wanders, the tramp dreams and wanders, and the bum drinks and wanders.”³³ St. John Tucker, one-time president of Chicago’s Hobo College, refined Reitman’s categories, arguing that “a hobo is a migratory worker. A tramp is a migratory non-worker. A bum is a stationary non-worker.”³⁴ Turning on notions of employment and mobility, these designations were far from arbitrary. Nicholas Klein, another president of the college, issued a warning to those who would confuse these distinct groups:

A hobo is one who travels in search of work, the migratory worker who must go about to find employment. . . . The tramp is one who travels but does not work, and a bum is a man who stays in one place and does not work. Between these grades there is a great gulf of social distinction. Don't get tramps and hobos mixed. They are quite different in many respects. The chief difference being that the hobo will work and the tramp will not, preferring to live on what he can pick up at back doors as he makes his way through the country.³⁵

By and large, this tripartite system of classification became the standard. Nels Anderson's *The Hobo*, which captured the imagination of the sociological marketplace, employed it with a few modifications.³⁶ In short, by the beginning of the Great Depression, self-generated itinerant systems of thought had been prominently incorporated into the most expert of expert studies produced under the auspices of the Chicago School of sociology.

This classification of the three types of propertyless migrants makes a good deal of sense, but I have not followed it, largely because of uncooperative evidence. Whether public or private, relief agencies rarely employed these distinctions. True, some officials knew of this literature and believed in its relevance.³⁷ They did not, however, rely on it in their day-to-day work of administration. Nor do archival records contain information sufficient to allow the historian to move beyond speculation as to the specific identity of individual itinerants. Itinerant writers did on occasion discuss the differences within their community, but such texts are few and far between. Most important, the economic crisis of the 1930s fundamentally transformed these categories. No longer could a hobo be defined as one who "works and wanders," since work was difficult to find. Instead, the difference between hobo and tramp became that of the expressed willingness to work. Given the collapse in the market for unskilled labour, it is well-nigh impossible to sort homeless men on relief into those who worked and those who dreamed. As a consequence, I use the terms *itinerant*, *hobo*, and *tramp* interchangeably to refer to all those who travelled in search of work or relief, or those who attempted to live without either during the 1930s.

This book examines men, provided we understand that category to include anyone who successfully passed as a man in the context under study.³⁸ Most of the individuals for whom there are records are of indeterminate racial, ethnic, and national origin; I have foregone subjecting the available information to much analysis because of the tentative, fungible character of assertions of such identities in a context where discrimination was assumed to be (indeed, demanded as) the norm, and where deportation proceedings could await the hapless applicant for relief. There is also considerable ambiguity about the marital status of those under examination; without information

to the contrary, I have considered them to be unattached, a term that includes men who deserted families and those who intentionally separated themselves from the family unit as a survival strategy.³⁹ To be homeless, a person had to lack a fixed residence, which included those who declared the jungles their home as well as thousands of propertyless men who periodically received relief from public and private charities in Vancouver. This latter group should be considered homeless because of the absence of a long-term residence. They might have known that they had a week's worth of lodging tickets; beyond that, the future was uncertain. The nature of the extant archival records can but frustrate the historian. All too often, we can know nothing of the situation of these itinerants, save for the fact that they were thought to be single and homeless. As a consequence, there is a certain homogeneity in my treatment of their history. It is regretted; it cannot be avoided.

Another term of great relevance to this study is *transient*, the central administrative category in the governance of relief programs for homeless and jobless unattached men. Here, I have retained the distinction between the "transient population" – a complex and yet carefully delimited group produced in the course of relief administration – and the larger and ever-changing cohort of itinerant men who lived on the roads and in the jungles – the other "population" of interest here. Due to the political process, the former was subject to much redefinition in ways that the latter was not. Indeed, as we will see, "transient" was a category flexible enough to include those who had never left the city limits. As well, I want to note the difference between the actually existing transient population (i.e., the statistically definable group of men administered as transients) and the category's ideal type as dictated in departmental policy documents. To move from starting point – the rules and regulations governing the production of the "transient" – to end result – the people who came to be classified as such on a day-to-day basis – required much work, and the small group of civic officials tasked with the job often went into the field poorly equipped. Then again, we might well wonder if their task was manageable under the best of conditions: what kind of technology could have allowed them to begin a census of a community of substantial size and yet whose very constituents embodied modernity's state of perpetual flux?⁴⁰ In fact, in British Columbia, the extant data about the transient population are best seen as evidence of one of the weaknesses of the local state: its almost total inability to make visible and legible the internal workings of these jungle-based communities, regardless of what one hypothesized these to be. On the West Coast, state officials could typically only work on these communities from the outside, rarely piercing the spatial and cognitive boundaries that would enable knowledge production and the exercise of power from within.

In general, my discussion of itinerants and transients is of a different type than that which analyzes the intersectionality of the four categories of

the social history apocalypse: sexuality, gender, race, and class. Simply put, the extant evidence did not allow me to address many of the subjects that I had initially planned to study. For instance, nothing I have read would allow me to construct any argument about gender and racial relations among the itinerants and transients, let alone the kind of careful, sensitive arguments offered by American historians such as DePastino and Higbie, and Canadians such as Cecilia Danysk.⁴¹ Before beginning primary research, I had hoped to write something of a sequel to my earlier work on masculinity and the One Big Union, the revolutionary industrial union movement that vowed to build utopia with the hands of the itinerant workingman.⁴² The archives, however, proved a disappointment. Gender and sexual politics were clearly fundamental to relief provision writ large as an organizing principle for the division of applicants into administrative categories that, in turn, governed not only the end result – the commodities received, if any – but the entire process from start to finish. Yet they appear to have disappeared once that initial ideological work was complete. In the period under examination, the fall of 1929 until November of 1932, assumptions about male identities and abilities did not shape relief provision in a systematic manner. Even the Communist *Unemployed Worker*, which I had assumed would be a fount of references to manhood, offered me next to nothing on which to hang an analysis in comparison to the radical papers of earlier periods. Over the course of 1932, however, this changed dramatically. As thousands of itinerants were relocated from the cities, and as the worsening economy began to affect residents, and as thousands of these residents created block and neighbourhood councils, raided grocery stores, and swarmed the offices of the Relief Department, gender and sexual politics became fundamental to shaping all aspects of the crisis.⁴³ Since the 1960s, Vancouver historians have called for and implemented a shift from the itinerant single male to the family as the weightiest force in shaping local politics.⁴⁴ But in isolating a small piece of the history of the transient as a first step in a project designed to map Vancouver's 1930s, I felt safe in returning to the single transient man without fear of undermining the gendered histories of the period already written, to my mind among the best recent scholarship on the Great Depression in Canada.⁴⁵

The Mecca of the Surplus

As a point of origin into the lives of homeless transients, Vancouver has a rich history that is of considerable value. Unfortunately, this rich history comes at a cost paid long ago in the form of mass suffering, experienced not as an abstract, continuous state of being but as millions upon millions of acts, the discontinuous and cumulative effects of which the term *alienation* can

hardly begin to convey. Per capita income in British Columbia decreased by almost 50 percent from 1929 to 1933. A census taken in June 1931 revealed that one-third of those who had worked in manufacturing, two-thirds of those in construction, and one-quarter of those in transportation were unemployed at that time.⁴⁶ British Columbia also had higher jobless rates in every employment category in the federal census than any other region in Canada.⁴⁷ Seasonal unemployment, especially in the resource industries, soared to new heights: 58 percent of unskilled working men reported being unemployed for six months or more in 1930–31.⁴⁸ There is no context in which these few figures add up to anything pleasant: evidently, the early 1930s in Vancouver saw much suffering surrounded by a surfeit of surplus stock.

That Vancouver was also a traditional resting point for migrant workers and other wanderers also helped guarantee that the city would see hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of “boxcar tourists” over the course of the decade. In addition to the network of employment agencies, hotels, restaurants, flophouses, and poolrooms geared to serving workingmen during the winter off-season, Vancouver was also home to numerous organizations concerned with unemployment that offered transients material support and sociability. For a group that is still largely hidden from history, Vancouver’s archives contain a treasured abundance of source material on the daily struggles of unemployed homeless men, both as individuals and en masse, to gain access to the means of life. The expansive nature of records concerning the economic relationships through which relief was provided allows us to articulate the relations of production, distribution, and consumption that made up the relief industry. We are also able to explore in detail the processes of abstraction and rationalization that swept through the Relief Department with the introduction of a Fordist managerial regime. The archives thus provide us with the possibility of a deeper understanding of the social relations that we traditionally label “relief.”

Chapter 1 explores a period that is normally viewed as the first serious phase of the Great Depression, December 1929 and January 1930. All of the elements associated with the better-known conflicts of the mid-1930s are present in these opening months: the growth of mass need, the miserly policies of municipal administrators, Communist-led organizations of the unemployed, public conferences on unemployment insurance, and street battles between the police and jobless crowds. Yet the politics of this period are not those of the dramatic confrontations waged on the streets of Vancouver in 1935. In fact, in the Depression’s first winter, most people involved in the public debate agreed that unemployment was a significant social problem that could only be solved through federal intervention and the enshrining in legislation of basic welfare state measures such as unemployment insurance. Instead, the real battle lay in the realm of relief provision — the specific social relationships

through which poor men and women sustained themselves. Here, there was no consensus, only chaos. What was the minimum standard of living that could justly be accorded to those on relief? What form should this relief take? Who was responsible for transients? And how could they be stopped in their tracks and prevented from becoming an obstacle sufficient to halt Vancouver's progress as a city in a world that included more and more of them?

In chapter 2, we enter the refuge for the homeless that I have called Hobohemia, imagined as a combination of what Michel Foucault calls "heterotopias" and what Karl Marx labelled "the realm of freedom." British Columbia's hobo jungles are best understood as a non-contiguous homeland fashioned by an ever-changing population of men physically separated from domestic and industrial sites of capitalist production and reproduction. Spread across the province at locations usually close to transportation networks, the jungles housed a mobile, provisional cohort of residents who, in their daily actions, asserted a claim to physical property and to social relations that were non-hierarchical, non-statist, and non-capitalist, to define them against the commonly accepted norms of modern life in Canada. What made the jungles a homeland, an actual physical space distinct from the Canadian nation-state and populated by an identifiable group whose members would never all meet, is also what made them a non-state. These wanderers were united not through any form of juridical right or familial relation, any bond of political affiliation or personal allegiance, or any claim grounded in identitarian thinking, but rather through the methods with which they organized the acquisition of the means of life: to live in the jungles may have required the acquisition of new skills, but it did not mandate a new mentality. Moreover, no documents, no oaths, no military service or forced labour were present in these temporary settlements, whose borders were as mobile as its residents. Indeed, where the jungle way of life ended cannot be definitively settled, and we may want to posit the boxcar as a liminal space, somewhere between Hobohemia and Fordlandia. In short, across the province thrived an archipelago of mobile islands of utopian practice within, but still separate from, the rationalized world of state and capital. While the land they occupied had been subject to certain juridical claims, the actual presence of authority, whether in public or private form, was periodic and weak. On this land, thousands of men lived without any of the trappings of the modern state and without a formalized capitalist market that governed exchanges of goods and services. One was free to participate in this mode of organizing life, and one was free to leave.

We can borrow for Hobohemia Fredric Jameson's characterization of "utopian enclaves," imaginatively devised blueprints of the future that, in their present-day context of creation, act as "something like a foreign body within the social: in them, the differentiation process has momentarily been arrested, so that they remain as it were momentarily beyond the reach of

the social and testify to its political powerlessness, at the same time that they offer a space in which new wish images of the social can be elaborated and experimented on.”⁴⁹ Over the course of several years, this archipelago of squatters’ settlements was widely understood and acted upon by people arrayed across the political spectrum and the social body as if it embodied, indeed was home to, a different way of life. In fact, the itinerant as a species ultimately proved a significant obstacle to the efficient and accountable governance, acting as that which was always irreducible, unassimilable by the established order. By taking this division as my point of entry into tramping history, I hope to reconnect with whatever historical forces enabled Boxcar Bertha to say, “I have always known strange people, vagrants, hoboes, both males and females. I don’t remember when I didn’t know about wanderers, prostitutes, revolutionists.”⁵⁰

Chapter 3 begins the discussion of what I have called the “relief industry.” Like any market-oriented set of social relations, the exchange of value was the crux of commodification of the relief industry. In order to receive food and shelter, unemployed people unable to secure support outside of official charity institutions first had to offer something to the investigator. On occasion, this meant manual labour, but in every case, the jobless were obliged to offer information about their lives and a pledge of loyalty to the regime of private property and the tenets of the work ethic. They would not lie about their personal history. Nor would they steal. They would look for work and take whatever job was available. These oaths were often set out in a written agreement, although oral pledges were taken during those moments when the demand for relief far exceeded the administration’s ability to thoroughly process each case.⁵¹ With these guarantees secured, relief could then be exchanged.⁵² In caring for the unemployed, both government and private charities operated in a similar fashion. They assigned a value to each jobless man and woman — sometimes individually, but more often with blanket categorizations like “single transient unemployed man” — which translated into a certain amount and type of goods and services. Value, in these thousands of cases, was largely determined by the calculations of relief administrators: this was an exchange in which one party clearly had more authority than the other. In this sense, relief is not just a history of giving. It is also a history of taking.

The intertwining of economic and disciplinary logics in the daily workings of the Relief Department calls into question the boundary that historians use to separate “the state” from “the market” and suggests instead lines of inquiry that can register Fordism’s wide-reaching yet partial transformation of the practices of governmentality in the context of the transient crisis. While Vancouver’s appears to have been the only municipal relief department to turn to Fordism in the dark days of the early 1930s as a solution to

the relief problem, the path taken by the Relief Department was not altogether a strange one. By that date, millions of North Americans had already participated in rationalization of some form or another – labouring on the assembly line and in the home, going to Family Court or the doctor, shopping in the department stores and participating in mass-market surveys, and watching the movie screen in a crowded theatre.⁵³ Our specific case exists at a juncture of two historiographies of rationalization, that of charity administration and that of the modern office in the age of scientific management.⁵⁴ Since the war, white-collar workers across Canada had found themselves subject to new workplace regimes premised upon increased labour efficiency, cost reduction and cost certainty, and the ability of managers to measure and regulate work processes.⁵⁵ A plethora of arguments about the benefits of efficiency circulated among private charity providers, some of whom believed that modern management techniques could reform those in need more economically and thoroughly than could older voluntarist programs.⁵⁶ In such a world, why would the rationalization of civic relief be unthinkable, especially since it was already expected that recipients would submit themselves to economic discipline in the form of the work ethic? The rationalization of Vancouver's Relief Department involved the use of practices drawn from both public and private sources and thought to be modern and scientific to govern both relief recipients and relief providers.

Chapter 4 explores the economic relationships through which unemployed and unattached transients sought relief in Vancouver. When providing the poor with food, shelter, fuel, and clothing, Vancouver's Relief Department and charities like the Central City Mission operated much as did service industries. However, faced with a demand for goods, the municipality acted to remove the jobless from the free market of consumption by denying them the choices that come with hard currency. As illustrated above, the money did not go to the poor but to local businesses. For most of the 1930s, married unemployed men and women received their relief in the form of scrip. This enabled them to shop for certain approved commodities – scrip could not be used to purchase alcohol, tobacco, and a host of other products. Businesses, in turn, exchanged the scrip for money at the Relief Department. Single unemployed men who did not own property were given bed and meal tickets. Those who approached private charities like the Central City Mission or the Emergency Refuge were given food and a bed. From both public and private agencies, single transient men could receive clothing.

The records of state and private relief provision are instructive in several respects. First, *pace* Vancouver Mayor McGeer, these transactions rarely meant that governments gave money to poor people, which then vanished down the black hole of improvidence. Across the city, firms clamoured to get their share of relief money, hoping to translate some of the money spent on

the unemployed into profit. This form of exchange, intended to remove single unemployed men from the market in order to control them and keep them under surveillance, actually increased government spending on administration. Second, the primary focus of department officials was all too often the bottom line. They used moral and often explicitly humanitarian arguments to publicly explain and justify relief policies. Nonetheless, at the end of the day, administrators of every ilk discussed relief in terms of dollars and cents. It was in these terms that its value was determined. Such policy determinations rarely took into consideration issues related to quality of life. The jobless had a right to relief, but little else. Their own ideas about relief provision — what they needed and how they should receive it — commonly met with blanket rejection. Provision thus centred on how to provide food and shelter cheaply and efficiently, all the while enabling a more thorough form of investigation. These goals were to be met by limiting control of the unemployed over their consumption. The market had failed them. Now, it would be denied to them as well.

In the face of such opposition, Vancouver's Communists became the most ardent defenders of the right of poor people to freely choose what and how to consume. Through the organ of the *Unemployed Worker*, not to mention countless delegations and demonstrations, Communists contested the specific conditions of the relief exchange; their goal was to remove relief provision from the market altogether. For these men and women, each decision by City Council, each Relief Department regulation, each subsection of each policy document like Mundy's "Special Instructions to Visitors" stood in the way of a genuine relief effort. "The militant unemployed workers must prepare a counter offensive," explained one radical. "The law that says, thou shalt not eat in this land whose rivers are teeming with fish, whose elevators are choking with grain, whose grazing lands are alive with live stock, whose warehouses are glutted with boots and shoes, clothes and food, that law must and will be broken."⁵⁷ Interestingly, in their campaign to increase relief rates and to ensure the right of freedom of choice, Communists found unexpected allies in small entrepreneurs such as the proprietors of rooming houses and restaurants. This uneasy alliance reveals the market relations that formed the basis of the relief industry.

Chapter 5 explores the relief camps organized by the government of Premier Simon Fraser Tolmie. Without question, when we think of work relief during the 1930s, the term "boondoggle" comes to mind. Mayor McGeer was certainly not alone in suggesting that work programs for the unemployed were worthless, but this idea, heard across the political spectrum, was misguided in that it failed to recognize that work relief projects increased the property value of both the City and the Province. The former, to highlight but one project, ended the decade with a revenue-generating golf course, while

the latter had roads valued at more than \$1 million. The development of the camp system also allowed for the primitive accumulation of state forms. In Marx's use of the term, primitive (or original) accumulation referred to the practices through which the preconditions of capitalism were forged: namely, the separation of people from the land and from access to the means of production, rendering them propertyless and obliged to work for wages.⁵⁸ "Primitive accumulation," he wryly noted, "plays approximately the same role in political economy as original sin does in theology."⁵⁹ The process of primitive accumulation did not end with the solidification of capitalism, however. Instead, the concept can help us to understand subsequent processes of economic and state formation.

In the 1930s, provincial and federal intervention in the lives of the unemployed through the creation of the work camp system helped prepare the way for the generalization of Fordism across Canada by – in perfect Fordist fashion – developing a network of roads and airports to facilitate the transportation of commodities. The park-building strategy of provincial politicians looked to a future in which tourism would generate much economic value. Boxcar tourists would, in this scheme, craft cultural experiences for tourists of the self-supporting variety.⁶⁰ Along with property creation and development came a trained labour force: to facilitate these hundreds of thousands of acts of production, governments gave work to thousands of architects and engineers, civil servants and military officials, gang bosses and skilled tradesmen across Canada. Such a large-scale relief program also dictated the creation and expansion of administrative practices and institutions designed to govern the jobless, paving the way for the state interventions of the 1940s and 1950s. That the Japanese could be unjustly interned during the Second World War is no surprise to those familiar with Canada's long history of denying the rights of citizenship to subordinate groups.⁶¹ That such a campaign could happen so quickly and efficiently was testimony to the camp system brought into being a decade before to house unemployed men. Through the provision of relief, then, new forms of governance – financial, administrative, and disciplinary in nature – were created, enabling the socialization of Fordism on a mass scale via the welfare/security state that began with the outbreak of war.

While I want to draw attention to the economic value produced by work relief programs, it should be noted that the essence of work relief – that which separated it from wage work – was political in nature, rooted in the distinction between free and unfree labour. When men entered into the production side of the relief industry, they did not find themselves in a wholly alien world. As we have seen, men in the city performed many of the same tasks that were assigned to the municipality's outdoor workers: building and improving parks, roads, and sewers. For their part, jobless men sent to camp

may have found themselves living in the same shacks, eating food from the same cook, and listening to the orders of the same foreman as when they had logged for wages. In other words, if we strip away the label of “work relief,” we find thousands of men in situations structurally identical in many respects to those of the everyday world of waged employment.

It was precisely this identity between past and present, however, which brought about the host of campaigns to oppose the labour camps. The most radical challenge to work relief came from Communist-organized movements of transient men, who sought to eradicate the political distinction between waged and relief work. The latter, they argued, was forced, sweated labour, not because of the work performed but because of the legal relationships that governed their labour. Instead, they claimed the rights and entitlements of wage workers: namely, a genuine wage and the right to collective representation in the form of a union. The Depression produced a living contradiction, the “unemployed worker” who worked for a living. The oppositional movement that grew out of the camp system pledged not to rest until this contradiction had been resolved.

Foucault / Kracauer / Adorno

Before concluding, I will briefly outline the relationship I have forged between Michel Foucault and two individuals associated with critical theory in its original incarnation, Siegfried Kracauer and Theodor Adorno. Many of the conceptual questions that guide my interpretation were already asked, if not wholly answered, shortly after the symbolic moment of the genesis of the crisis, the Wall Street crash of October 1929. Kracauer’s *The Salaried Masses*, initially serialized in the *Frankfurter Zeitung’s* *feuilleton* in 1929 before appearing in book form in 1930, traversed the entire surface of white-collar life in Berlin.⁶² A trioka of beautifully constructed vignettes that take place in a Labour Court, a nightclub, and a train introduce Kracauer’s book. Together, they interact as an inescapably engaging comment on how office and sales girls negotiated the ever-moving dialectic among men and women of different classes, in which sexual, gender, and class relations truly mutually constituted one another. Kracauer’s attention to detail and his willingness to say what was (and remains) in most contexts unsayable made each “thought-image” a powerful statement indeed.⁶³ Male clerks, faced with the increasingly powerful cult of youth, employed hair dyes to reinvigorate their appearance, ending up facilitating their abstracted alienation by such acts of individual stylistic non-obsolescence.⁶⁴ Another white-collar man rigidly obsessed with a wholly rationalized courtship through correspondence served as evidence of “the insanity with which business principles here penetrate a field where

they have no place,” providing a “straitjacket” for both the letters themselves and the feelings they were planned and written to express.⁶⁵ After reading Kracauer’s book, Walter Benjamin bestowed upon him a wonderful complimentary characterization, “a ragpicker at daybreak.”⁶⁶

The school of analysis inaugurated by Kracauer was continued in many respects by Adorno, Benjamin, and Horkheimer, among others. In particular, this account owes many debts to Adorno’s work from 1937 to 1947, eleven of his years in exile in America. *The Case of Wagner*; his research on radio in New York, including his essay “On Popular Music”; his encounter with the Hollywood horrors of Los Angeles in *Minima Moralia*; and the now famous *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, written with Max Horkheimer: each of these writings has inspired much wonderful intellectual work. For the North American market segment known as popular music, David Jenemann’s discussion of the National Broadcasting Company’s attempt to provide *Musical Leadership* over the airwaves and Eric Lott’s note-perfect essay on The Carpenters employ Adorno’s ideas about fetishism and regression to brilliant, if often disturbing, ends.⁶⁷ More indirectly, Michael Denning’s *Cover Stories* and *Mechanic Accents*, and Janice Radway’s *Reading the Romance* can be considered within Adorno’s ambit, as can hundreds of other works, via the postmodern reworking of Adorno by Fredric Jameson over the past forty years.⁶⁸ In this group, Ariel Dorfman’s analysis of “the infantilization of the adult reader” via the rationalization of knowledge production in *Reader’s Digest* deserves special attention.⁶⁹ Above all, I appreciate Adorno’s unending ability to demonstrate in and through his writing the truth value of dialectical methods, it being understood, of course, that one of the truths he offers is the fact that non-dialectical methods have their own truth value.⁷⁰

In an interview published in 1983, Foucault suggested that his early work would have possessed a different character had he been exposed to the work of the Frankfurt School.⁷¹ As Foucault acknowledged, “I then understood that the representatives of the Frankfurt School had tried, earlier than I, to say things I had also been trying to say for years.”⁷² He even imagined an alternative history in which he would have encountered the Frankfurt School when young and would “have been so captivated by them that I wouldn’t have done anything else but comment on them.”⁷³ Nonetheless, Foucault remained critical of what he saw as the humanism of the Frankfurt School in its reliance on a belief in the possibility of liberating identity, suggesting that he was unfamiliar with Adorno’s writings on identity and non-identity. Nor does he appear aware of the Frankfurt School’s detailed empirical studies in the areas of mass culture, the authoritarian personality, social science research methods, and so on. Most important, Foucault appears to have been unaware of Adorno’s writings on music: here, more than on any other terrain, they could have conversed productively for hours on end.⁷⁴

I count myself lucky to follow in the footsteps of the thoughtful, respectful (if ultimately negative) analytical assessments of Foucault's writings offered by Dews, Neil Brenner, David Garland, Kate Soper, Pieter Spierenburg, and Paul Paolucci, among others.⁷⁵ One of the most important lessons I learned from E.P. Thompson is that "Marx is on our side; we are not on the side of Marx."⁷⁶ I think the same of Foucault. Also, as a historian of the 1930s, I believe that there are clearly enough productive points of contact between Adorno and Foucault as to warrant rereading them together, in the hopes of creating a new hybrid. In many respects, Adorno did for mass culture in the twentieth century what Foucault did for disciplinary institutions in the nineteenth, partly through his concept of governmentality.⁷⁷ Both were concerned with the "human sciences": psychology and social sciences are particularly fruitful areas of overlap. Both understood the making of power-knowledge, even if Adorno was to focus on the further rationalization of these units through their commodification.⁷⁸

In arguing for the complementarity of Foucault and Adorno, I am mindful of the many areas of the former's complex and multi-faceted *oeuvre* in which critical theorists have identified analytic problems. Among these are Foucault's framing of power as if it possessed human characteristics and his tendency to depict resistance as the opposite reflection of power, spontaneous rather than planned, chaotic rather than strategic. Certainly Foucault's minimal textual engagement with Marxisms and feminisms, as well as his occasional outbursts of knee-jerk hostile reaction to movements associated with these theoretical orientations, compromised his project. Finally, for historians serious about their craft and the difficult negotiations it entails, Foucault's philosophic mode of presentation — which all too often confuses actually existing social relations in contexts bound by time and space with an ideal-type efficient and effective model of the workings of power — while illustrative and stimulating, too often contains questionable if not crude characterizations of the historical context and extant evidence.

Nonetheless, as the following pages reveal, the insights that can be drawn from Foucault and Adorno are productive of a materialist reassessment of "relief." Combined with a Thompsonian appreciation of the human agency that created the beggar's homeland, this theoretical ensemble animates my study of Vancouver as a "mecca of the surplus" in the early years of the Great Depression. In what amounts to a final articulation of difference from conventional historiography, I attempt to write the history *and* the theory of the making of this mecca simultaneously. Rather than opt, as most historians do, for a separate articulation of conceptualization (which usually introduces and then concludes a study) and empirical narrative (evidence-based and seemingly untouched by analytic concepts, constituting the substantive body of most historical texts), I instead regularly punctuate my outline of historical

developments with theoretical introductions and interludes that flow logically from my reading of the archives or that usefully preface my engagement with evidence. I do this for two reasons: first, because it makes a particular kind of sense, and second, because my hope is that it will suggest the possibilities of new kinds of historical practice in which theory and evidence are not separate and unequal realms but part of an indivisible analytic totality.

A Strike, a Conference, and a Riot

DECEMBER 1929 TO JANUARY 1930

Articles may not be exchanged. — We are forgetting how to give presents. Violation of the exchange principle has something nonsensical and implausible about it; here and there even children eye the giver suspiciously, as if the gift were merely a trick to sell them brushes or soap. Instead we have charity, administered beneficence, the planned plastering-over of society's visible sores. In its organized operations there is no longer room for human impulses, indeed, the gift is necessarily accompanied by humiliation through its distribution, its just allocation, in short through treatment of the recipient as an object. Even private giving of presents has degenerated to a social function exercised with rational bad grace, careful adherence to the prescribed budget, sceptical appraisal of the other and the least possible effort.

**Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia:*
*Reflections from a Damaged Life*¹**

The bold type of the December 1929 headline in the *Daily Province* leaped off the page: "Vancouver Millionaire Pays Monthly Allowance to Knight of the Road."² For all those who dreamt of the day of reckoning, when wealth would be redistributed from those who owned it to those who needed it, this report raised hopes only to cruelly dash them. "Somewhere on the continent," explained a *Province* newsie, "is a tramp with the wanderlust that every month can present himself at any bank on the continent and receive an allowance which will continue as long as he lives." Sadly, this was not a

universal social program but a private contractual arrangement between two individuals: the rest of North America's wanderers would have to find their own millionaire. The nameless tramp's benefactor was Major-General A.D. McRae, a successful businessman and one of British Columbia's most powerful political figures in the interwar years. McRae's government service came in many forms: he had acted as quartermaster-general for Canadian forces overseas during the war and would return home to become a member of Parliament and senator in turn. He even experimented with third-party movements as one of the founders of the short-lived Provincial Party. Yet his crowning achievement — if we can call it that — would come in 1930, the year after the publication of this story, when the Conservative Party machine he built secured for R.B. Bennett the office of prime minister.³ But before McRae could become king-maker (by unmaking Mackenzie King), he first had to cheat death on a long and lonely road.

On an automobile trip through the Rockies, McRae noticed a tramp, "unshaven, ragged, tired and dishevelled," on the side of the road and offered the "ne'er-do-well" a lift, which he "gladly accepted." After motoring a while, the car suddenly plunged into a ditch and flipped over. The tramp extricated himself without serious injury, but the general was helpless, pinned beneath the automobile. Then, "with almost superhuman effort," the tramp managed to lift the car by himself, free McRae, and administer first aid.⁴ The tramp as Good Samaritan and the millionaire as needy victim: we do not come across this type of story very often. Yet the newsie's account does not allow us to linger long over this nameless itinerant's selfless act. Instead, we are put in McRae's shoes and asked to sort through the ethical questions involved in recognizing this heroism. "How to reward the tramp was the problem," the reporter observed. "If he was given a large sum of money it would be of no permanent benefit." The tramp's thoughts on his new-found "cash allowance" were not recorded, although it was implied that he was grateful for this "token of General McRae's thanks."⁵

In McRae's decision to redeem his life with a reward that regulated its recipient, we can discern more than a hint of what Adorno characterized as the "sceptical appraisal of the other." From the few details available to us, it appears that the tramp acted in the immediacy of the moment — a conjuncture of time and space that made irrelevant customary lines of authority and in which he alone possessed the power to save life or allow death — without any rational consideration of the potential economic worth of his actions. He did not demand that McRae promise to make him rich or even give him a job. In fact, he did not seek anything of "permanent benefit" before acting. In contrast, McRae's "reward" betrayed a careful calculus, "a just allocation" that figured in the flawed and essentially illiberal character of the "Knight of the Road" to devise the form of the gift, a trust fund that instructed while it

rewarded (or was it the other way around?). Despite his heroism, this nameless tramp wound up in the same place as would hundreds of thousands of his brethren during the 1930s – on the receiving end of rationalized social relationships that created value and regulated behaviour. Even the most Romantic of stories – the homeless nomad, more accustomed to life in the jungle than civilized society, who “with almost superhuman effort” generously comes to the aid of those more fortunate than he – contains, it seems, the seeds of objectification.

For the moment, however, I prefer to stay with the mildly Nietzschean characterization of the tramp’s “almost superhuman effort.” After all, the possibility exists that if the tramp had not acted as he did, Canadians could have ended up with five more years of “King and Chaos”! More to the point, this tale will probably strike Marxists (and a few others) as raw material perfectly suited to conveying Walter Benjamin’s sense of historical materialism as a method that “appropriates a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger.” Indeed, the very notion of the tramp as forerunner to the pulp fiction superhero, somehow able to accomplish what lay beyond the ken of most, seems to “brush” this history of objectification “against the grain” on its own accord, demanding that this irreducible moment of subjectivity be recognized.⁶

The following chapter will provide a proper account of the jungles, this as yet mythical “homeland” for the homeless. Here, we consider the winter of 1929–30 – now generally regarded as the opening of the Great Depression – in order to argue for the value of an anarchist interpretation of the struggles over relief provision in the city. In this context, anarchism’s insistence on exploitation and oppression as constituent elements of the liberal-democratic polity as well as on the possibilities of effective collective action helps us understand the ways in which these thousands of itinerants exerted pressure, set limits, shaped conduct, and moved from the margins to the centre (to choose phrases closely associated with agency and determination), all by making the smooth and orderly functioning of relief government both impractical in its current form and, as we will see, impossible in its next incarnation as well.

Strikes, public conferences, and riots are classical set pieces in the historiography of the Great Depression, and in December 1929 and January 1930, Vancouver was home to them all: an abortive strike of relief workers, a public conference of notables (and the not-so-notable) on the subject of unemployment, and a substantial number of public demonstrations, one of which ended in riotous circumstances.⁷ Over these two months, thousands of nameless, faceless men from the world over arrived in Vancouver just in time to find and place themselves in the midst of class war – the “state of emergency” that Benjamin argued “is not the exception but the rule.”⁸ In this period, the tripartite figure of the transient – as the thousands of itinerant individuals who

walked Vancouver's streets in search of sustenance or something else, as the masses conjured up by administrators and politicians in attempting to govern those thought to resist governance, and as the backbone of a Communist-led movement that set its sights on dismantling the social relations that divided citizen from outsider – dominated the public sphere, both initiating a political debate and forcing changes in the substance of that debate. Vancouver's crisis, in other words, did not follow directly from the crash of stock markets but rather emerged from the countless decisions, individual and collective, that led thousands of migrant workers to congregate in that city that winter. Over the course of two months, the mass need for resources literally embodied in a mobile international proletariat destabilized and made obsolete the long-established local practices of governmentality grouped together under the name of "relief." The obligations that came with satisfying the insistent daily demands of this seemingly inexhaustible mass of itinerant bodies for food and drink, shelter, and clothing overwhelmed the administrative capacities of the Relief Department to the extent that the long-standing mandate to investigate each applicant was discarded almost entirely. This breakdown of discipline would eventually cause officials to seek out solutions in the field of scientific management, reconstructing bit by bit the foundational practices of relief administration, investigation, and provision. In this way, the Relief Department's traditional way of doing business was a significant casualty of the itinerant phenomenon of these two months.

What's more, the itinerant invasion profoundly shaped the broader polity. Under the auspices of the Communist-led Vancouver Unemployed Workers' Organization (VUWO), thousands assembled to employ the time-honoured tactics of street demonstrations and parades in a quest to secure cash relief at union rates for all, whatever their place of origin. In so doing, many personally witnessed, if not directly felt, the exercise of state coercive practices, leading them to engage Police Department officials in a battle over the rights of freedom of speech and assembly, and thereby prompting the jobless movement to publicly articulate economic and political challenges, the rights of citizens and the rights of workers. The VUWO's rejection of practices that divided the working class into the deserving and the undeserving would, over these two months, prompt a series of political realignments, culminating in a civic conference intended by officials to publicly enact the creation of "community" consensus on economic issues. There, caught up in the demands of its role as stage manager of the public rituals of civic hegemony, Vancouver became the first municipality in North America (and possibly the only one) to endorse, even in a quasi-official venue, the principle of non-contributory unemployment insurance. This was a program to make capital responsible for the cost of relieving poverty, and its most devout local advocates were members of the Communist Party.⁹ More than five years before the idea of

the On-to-Ottawa Trek entered some anonymous itinerant's head, Vancouver had already unknowingly agreed to the Relief Camp Workers' Union's central demand. In these ways, the migrant unemployed made their very existence a crisis that undermined the solidity of well-established practices of rule.

Fall 1929: A Tragedy

An army of occupation from the prairies is drifting into Vancouver at the rate of several hundreds a month. It is an army equipped mostly with large bank accounts and household baggage and its coming will help to swell the sum total of Vancouver's prosperity. . . . Some of the invaders, it is true, are arriving practically penniless, following a rainbow and hoping to find the fabled pot of gold in Vancouver. Others, however, and these are believed to be the majority, have already found the pot of gold in the harvest fields of the prairies, and are coming to spend the rest of their lives at ease. Still others, having gathered a comfortable stake, bring their capital with the object of starting business here.

Vancouver Sun, 22 October 1929

A city is like the human body. Unless the organs can function freely, and the blood circulate without restraint, an unhealthy condition is produced in the system which leads to lower vitality, lethargy and decay. . . . Every ratepayer in the city is vitally interested in the commercial activity, the payrolls and the industries of Vancouver. Every public building which goes up in the city speeds up business by so much, and puts gold into the arteries of the city's community life.

Vancouver Sun, 9 December 1929

The years preceding the New York stock market crash of 29 October 1929, or Black Tuesday, as it became known, witnessed a record-setting surge of economic growth on Canada's "Left Coast." "It was the greatest boom that Vancouver had yet known," Margaret Ormsby wrote in 1958: "The spirit of the city was still, as it had been at the beginning, predominantly materialistic. An eager, grasping, acquisitive community, it squandered its own resources of natural beauty, all the time extending its economic power until it held most of the province in fee."¹⁰ As Ormsby's antimodern interpretation makes clear, this concentration of capitalist power in the city largely depended upon the commodification of natural resources and of common unskilled labour

throughout British Columbia. In practical terms, casual employment and labour mobility entailed the spatial separation of production and reproduction during this period of the life cycle: it was expected (and often necessary) that these men, when not needed for production in the hinterland, would reproduce their labour elsewhere, in urban centres and on homesteads across Canada, even in other countries.¹¹

Throughout this period, the leading ideologue of Vancouver's pro-growth movement was Robert Cromie, publisher and editor of the *Vancouver Sun*. Under Cromie's stewardship, each issue of the *Sun* helped readers to fill their minds with the minutiae of the good life of the marketplace. The front pages, the business pages, the real estate pages, the society pages, even the want ads — all made visible the glorious machinery of the capitalist social formation. Each weekend, the *Sun* featured a different industry, explaining how each helped the “community” by providing products for citizens to consume and by increasing British Columbia's total wealth. News coverage of the business world glorified the “cult of free enterprise and money-making,” observes historian Paul Rutherford; stories “thrilled with a sense of the drama and excitement and significance of the little doings of these worlds, never troubling to criticize or question.”¹²

A month before the market crash, Cromie's lead editorial proclaimed, “Vancouver Must Look Ahead.” He scolded local politicians for their failure to expand storage facilities on the local waterfront to facilitate international trade, particularly with the Pacific Rim. “In planning expenditures,” Cromie wrote, “Vancouver's public bodies forget that Vancouver's progress is not temporary, but continuous. . . . If periods of national or international depression come, they can only affect Vancouver for short periods, because our prosperity must continue as long as our resources continue and as long as development in trade continues on the Pacific.”¹³ Growth, development, progress — all served as keywords of the modern liberal press, and Cromie explicitly yoked them to a Fordist vision of class formation. In an editorial lauding Henry Ford's decision to pay seven dollars a day to auto workers, the *Sun* explained, “Higher wages mean a greater buying power, a wider market, greater absorption of all commodities, including that which the men themselves produce. . . . More wages mean more demand, more prosperity.”¹⁴ This advocacy of Fordism left several things unsaid: the package of “higher wages” and “more prosperity” also meant no unions, managerial control over all aspects of production, and various programs designed to Americanize immigrants and to reform the lives of workers and their families outside the workplace.¹⁵ With each turn of the page, Cromie's *Sun* articulated the identity of the interests of the “community” and those of industry.

Nor did Black Tuesday prompt a more cautious line. On 30 October, the *Sun* reported on the belief of unnamed “expert observers” that the “market

crisis would pass today” and soon “show signs of returning strength,” adding that “the continent-wide impression is that the worst has passed.”¹⁶ A few weeks later, the editorial page hammered home the same message. “This continent is too rich for panics,” Cromie wrote, “too stable and secure to be injured by stock gambling.”¹⁷ He returned to this idea often: that the crash had done nothing to change the “genuine value” of businesses.¹⁸ “So long as North America is the production centre of the world,” he wrote, “unbounded confidence may safely continue.”¹⁹ Just before Christmas, the *Sun* began a three-week-long celebration of business. “New Prosperity Era Here,” proclaimed one front-page headline.²⁰ On the last day of 1929, Cromie imagined the “stupendous” growth awaiting Vancouver in the coming year, which could “double the value of every home and every piece of real estate in the city, and double the earning power of every man, woman and child fortunate enough to live here.”²¹ And why had stock markets crashed? Cromie had an answer:

If any evidence were necessary to connect humanity with the habits of cattle, that evidence would be fully forthcoming in a review of the recent stock debacle. Like a great herd of cattle feeding on the prairie that is suddenly stampeded into a frenzy, the public was stampeded into an orgy of stock selling that upset the entire situation.²²

Responsibility for temporary fluctuations in market value thus lay with the timidity of the masses. There were no flaws in the system save for the “cattle” and their petty, ill-informed speculation. This elite understanding of the capitalist foundations of Vancouver’s progress and prosperity — what the *Sun* labelled “the basic laws of greatness” — would figure in much of the initial public discussion of the market. In intertwining the future of Vancouver as a city — a place that deserving people of all classes could make their home — so tightly with that of capitalist development — the only force that could prevent the body’s “lethargy and decay” — this brand of boosterism would identify as foreign in origin all purported threats to its health.

The *Sun*’s first story on unemployment in Vancouver was printed on 29 October, the day of the New York Stock Exchange crash; it was short, noting only that the relief officer, George D. Ireland, claimed that “unemployment in Vancouver is assuming alarming proportions.”²³ The next day, Ireland informed City Comptroller A.J. Pilkington that only \$8,000 remained of the department’s yearly appropriation; with two months remaining, he required an additional outlay of at least \$50,000 to cover projected expenditures on married and family cases, and much more if single men were to be required to work for their relief.²⁴ In response to this emergency situation, City Council struck a special committee consisting of Aldermen William Atherton, William Lembke, and Angus MacInnis, along with Ireland and

Pilkington; the majority recommended that relief be granted in the form of works projects at a wage of two dollars per day for married men and one dollar for single men, regardless of residency. Unemployed women, now and throughout the period under study, remained ineligible for state work relief projects.²⁵

This decision mobilized the local left in defence of union wage standards. MacInnis, a prominent member of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) who would win election to the House of Commons the following year, attacked the wage scale as substandard compared to the \$4.00 to \$4.61 per day earned by the city's regular outdoor workers, who were members of the Civic Employees Federation. The Building Trades Council criticized the wage scale for relief work as contrary to "the best interests of either the City or the citizens. We believe with Alderman M[a]cInnis that short periods of useful work at the standard scale of wages is a more satisfactory method of dealing with unemployment."²⁶ The Vancouver Trades and Labour Council (VTLCL), the city's largest council of labour organizations, also went on record against the two-dollar and one-dollar scale. Noting that previous administrations had declared \$4.50 the minimum "for the class of work done by these relief workers," VTLCL secretary Percy Bengough maintained that "this practice does not reflect credit on this City." To have relief workers receiving less than half of the union wage for repairing roads and building parks, Bengough feared, would lead to wage reductions for regular outdoor staff.²⁷

In November, the issue of pay on relief projects resurfaced at a meeting of the Board of Works. While still critical of the relief pay scale, MacInnis expressed grave doubts as to City Council's ability to deal effectively with the effects of unemployment: "The question is far too great for Vancouver," he lamented. "It must be forced by the city on someone who is able to take care of it. It is a universal problem." Harry DeGraves echoed MacInnis, suggesting that the councillors "are only nibbling at the question when we give work to a couple of hundred men, with hundreds more pouring into the city on freight trains."²⁸ Nonetheless, the booster faction of the council won out. Alderman Atherton, chair of the Relief and Employment Committee, maintained that relief projects — road and sewer building and maintenance, and park clearance and construction — did not conflict with the work done by permanent civic employees: relief labour was not scab labour, despite the clear wage discrepancies. Alderman Bennett cited tradition in rejecting payment at the standard scale; the last time this had been policy, he argued, "the payrolls swelled to 1100 men in a few days," what with "drifters coming to Vancouver from all over the west to work at the expense of the ratepayers."²⁹ Later that month, MacInnis would again criticize the relief wage scale. "You are penalizing the unemployed," he scolded his brethren, "and placing them in the same class as criminals."³⁰

Those who opposed union wages on work relief projects usually singled out transients — then administratively defined as those who had not lived continuously in Vancouver for at least twelve months — as the primary source of the municipality’s economic problems. Having contributed nothing to the tax coffers, it was said, these men illegitimately demanded aid, consuming public resources and increasing civic debt in Vancouver instead of in the municipalities to which they properly belonged, although we should note that most belonged to no municipality, given their lack of continuous residency anywhere. In an article entitled “The Problem of Unemployment,” ILP activist John Sidaway challenged this logic by linking capital accumulation in the city with the forced mobility of resource workers in the hinterland:

Of those who do the hard work in scattered parts of BC it is natural that they return to Vancouver when a shut down occurs. Many have families and homes here, and most of them are hired from this city. To lay claim, as local boosters do, to the success and profitableness of an enterprise far removed from the city, and at the same time wish to deny temporary shelter to those whose exploitation has made it possible is neither just nor humane.³¹

In practice, the Relief Department’s categorization of “resident” excluded those who depended on the seasonal labour markets upon which the resource industries were founded. The logger who wintered in Vancouver, living alone in a flophouse or with family members in a rented apartment or house, thus became a transient for administrative purposes and was located several steps from the top of the pyramid of civic relief provision.

At the top of this organizational structure sat married resident men who owned property. They received first preference on work relief projects and typically received cash for their work. Married relief cases also received a food allowance, given in the form of food itself. Each week, poor folks tramped from all across Vancouver to the downtown Relief Office and back again to pick up their allotment of groceries, which was more or less standardized for every family of the same number, in what was known as the “gunny sack parade.” Resident families without a male breadwinner “head” — single mothers and older sisters were usually designated as household “head” in such cases, underlining the importance of the familial model for relief provision to residents — also took home groceries, as did single male property owners and (eventually) single women. Only a handful of cases received any kind of financial assistance with their rent, electricity, water, and clothing bills. Municipal relief, in short, covered but a small portion of the needs of the unemployed and destitute, and it was not intended to do otherwise, even

for those who received the greatest amounts of aid. In exchange for these resources, clients endured a series of investigations, the rigour and efficiency of which Ireland claimed as a source of pride:

Every form of indigency requiring relief from this Department is investigated. No help is rendered until a thorough inquiry into the case is first made. . . . This includes an inquiry into funds, domicile of the applicant, work record, relations to fraternal society, organized union and church, relatives, if any, the medical history, health of children and children's school record. Assistance is given after the merits of the case have been fully considered.³²

For decades, migrant workingmen had typically received bed and meal tickets for local hotels and restaurants. In order to reduce the financial burden on the Relief Department, officials referred many unattached men to private charitable organizations, such as the Central City Mission, the Returned Soldiers' Club, and the Salvation Army.³³ Since each organization provided some measure of social work, Relief Department officials assumed that most of the vetting of transients would be conducted on-site, at cost to the private agency, thus allowing for the municipality to employ a relatively streamlined application process.

With the tremendous increase in the number of people applying for relief, however, the department's ability to function according to regulations became severely compromised. Between December 1929 and mid-March 1930, the department averaged over five hundred married cases and the same number of single cases each week, at an expense of over \$10,000.³⁴ Soon, temporary staff hired to cope with the crisis outnumbered permanent employees, meaning that most jobless people dealt with officials with no ingrained sense of department customs. And despite these staff additions, it took little time for investigators to be tasked with concentrating on family cases, leaving single men on the relief rolls without any proper investigation for weeks, if not months. For example, of the 937 single men designated for works projects on 11 January 1930, 768 were classified as transients.³⁵ Each received an advance on their work relief allotment of bed and meal tickets, after which many simply avoided their assignment. Because the program to monitor work relief broke down due to insufficient staffing, many jobless men who failed to report to their work gang continued to collect relief for months because investigators remained unaware of their absenteeism. When later asked to explain discrepancies between department-issued statements of expenditures and the numbers produced by an external audit, Ireland emphasized the peculiarities of the transient situation:

For many days this winter the Relief Office building has been crowded to the doors with destitute and starving men. This resulted in a great pressure of work on all sides, and owing to the shortage of trained staff, lack of space, and office equipment, and being without appropriate machinery or system for the occasion, we were obliged day after day to tell men to come back tomorrow. The men came in faster than we were able to handle them. Large numbers were obliged to be carried over. We had no time to take their records and arrange work for them. These men could not be turned adrift and out into inclement weather at the close of the day. They were starving and had to be given Meal Tickets and a place to sleep.³⁶

In two short months, a deluge of homeless men overwhelmed the Relief Department's administrative machinery. It would soon threaten the judicial system as well.

In early November, Vancouver's chief constable, W.J. Bingham, instructed his officers to take "special measures" in order to "prevent begging on the streets and other violations of the law."³⁷ The intensified police presence on pavement led to a dramatic increase of charges of begging and vagrancy offences against unemployed men. In front of Magistrate J.A. Findlay on a vagrancy charge, G.W. was instructed, "Take your choice! Toronto or jail"; he chose the latter, receiving one month in Oakalla.³⁸ For much of October, unemployed men charged with vagrancy received the choice to leave the city or be jailed. At the beginning of the month, most opted to leave within twenty-four hours. One man told Findlay that his home was "wherever he was working," so he chose to move on.³⁹ As the month came to a close, however, a greater number opted for jail. "I'll have to go to Oakalla. I can't find any work," said one vagrant.⁴⁰ Also on the rise was the number of charges for trespassing on railway property, the crime of those who rode the rods for free. In a press interview, Findlay confessed that he was "hard put for a solution of the problem of what to do with those who come before him."⁴¹

In December, with the increasing likelihood of inclement weather, Findlay resorted to more substantial deterrents, issuing stiffer sentences for crimes committed by the unemployed; one man convicted of stealing a pair of boots received three months in jail, while another was sent to Oakalla for one year on a begging charge.⁴² Constable Frank Godber reported that some of those who were supposedly needy sold the clothing and footwear they received from private charities in order to get money to purchase "'Jakey' (presumably Jamaica[n] Gangie)." Godber found the private missions anything but peaceful. The Central City Mission, he observed, "is the scene of fights practically every night."⁴³ Other city officials focused their gaze on how the presence of the jobless affected the citizenry. Dr. F.T. Underhill, Vancouver's medical health

officer, recommended the removal of “crippled beggars” from the downtown area in the interests of their health and because “their appearance shocks and impairs the health of women of nervous disposition.”⁴⁴ While unemployed men on the streets faced an increasingly coercive police force, politicians remained focused on the question of how best to make relief cases work for what they received. The council meeting on 2 December again addressed the question of relief scales. Angus MacInnis repeated his call for union wages for married residents on relief while abandoning the union wage for single men; still, he was voted down by Atherton’s faction, 7 to 4.⁴⁵ With the parliamentary struggle of social democracy stalled in council chambers and the intensification of police repression in the courts, Communists sought to initiate a different type of struggle, one predicated upon mass support, to make the council responsible to those in the streets.

The Defeat of the Six Points: The Politics of Financial Restraint and Law and Order

On 4 December, some 250 people gathered at the Powell Street parade grounds under the auspices of the Vancouver Unemployed Workers’ Organization (VUWO). Launched only three days earlier by Communist Party activists, VUWO was intended to be, in the language of the day, a “non-sectarian” organization, ideally bringing together in common struggle workers of every political shade around a common program that was anything but apolitical. The occasion for this initial mass meeting was to spread awareness about the parade to take place the following day, after which five members would meet with Mayor W.H. Malkin, the grocery store magnate then in the first of a two-year term. “You are out of employment through no fault of your own,” said one speaker, according to the report of an undercover officer (himself a sign of the aggressive policing campaign already underway): “It’s up to the City to provide for you, and through organizing we will be in a position to hang around the City Chambers, and compe[l]⁴⁶ the *Grafters* to do so.”⁴⁷ To negotiate with government officials in the absence of collective organization would be strategically ineffective and politically misguided, these activists publicly declared. Only mass action in the forms of demonstrations and parades would forge the context in which better relief policies could be won.

The next day, “carrying no flags or placards, and marching four abreast in absolute silence except for the occasional orders of the marshals, a parade of unemployed marched from the 800 block East Hastings street, Thursday afternoon, to the square at Carrall and Powell streets.” A *Sun* reporter noted the illegality of the parade, which lacked a Union Jack at the front of the procession, as mandated by municipal law; Chief Bingham overlooked this

matter “in the interests of peace and quiet.”⁴⁸ The VUWO called on demonstrators “not to answer any ‘provocation’” and issued clear instructions to marshals to remove anyone who caused trouble.⁴⁹ The crowd assembled outside City Hall while William McEwan, chair of the VUWO, and James Litterick, its secretary, presented a letter that formally introduced their delegation to the Relief and Employment Committee. “The purpose of the deputation is to draw your attention of the unemployment situation in this city. You, Sir,” they addressed Alderman Atherton, “are probably aware of the gravity and serious nature of the situation and will, we hope, give your sympathetic consideration to our just claims.”⁵⁰ The absence of picket signs and rallying cries, along with the firm yet deferential tone of the letter, points to the care taken by organizers to prevent the discussion of relief policies from being diverted to talk of Communist agitation.

Along with Litterick and McEwan, John Neres, Glen Lamont, and Robert McCabe represented the VUWO; the City contributed Aldermen Atherton, Lembke, DeGraves, and Miller, as well as Relief Officer Ireland. The personal histories of the VUWO’s delegates — none of whom satisfied the residency requirement set down by City Council — speak to what have become long-standing historiographical claims about the casual nature of unskilled work, particularly in the resource sector, and of the dual problems of unemployment and underemployment. McEwan had emigrated from Scotland two years before; a seaman by trade, he had not worked in three months. McCabe fished for a living, having worked for only five months in 1929, while Lamont logged and had been employed for six months that year. The only married delegate, Neres, had been let go from his job at the Canadian Pacific Railway yards two months before. Finally, Litterick, the VUWO secretary, declared himself currently employed — we can assume by the Communist Party. In just four days, McEwan claimed, the VUWO had organized between 750 and 1,000 members, a substantial portion of the estimated 14,000 unemployed workers then in the city.⁵¹

After listening to a summary of the Relief Department’s programs, the VUWO delegates introduced their relief administration program, which comprised six points that generated controversy throughout the coming decade.

1. “*Work or full maintenance at union rates.*”

This was perhaps the most significant issue at stake because of the widespread effects across the social formation that such a policy would have engendered. In asking the City that it “provide work for the unemployed at the Union rates of pay, and that those for whom work could not be found, be given relief in money at the same rates as if they were working,” the VUWO delegates explicitly refused the existing administratively conceived differentials

in relief, embodied by the two-dollar and one-dollar scale, and vehemently argued against any wage that would allow for relief work to become a cheap substitute for municipal public works programs, tendered for most of the 1920s at union rates of between \$4.00 and \$4.50.

Looking beyond the abstractions of dollars and cents, we should recognize that Vancouver's Communists employed a universalizing logic of labour equivalence in determining their policy. The City of Vancouver asked unemployed men — usually Euro-Canadian male residents, but the evidence suggests that any man not considered "Oriental" could find himself assigned to a work gang — to undertake the same types of tasks, often at the same sites (streets and fields and sewers), as those performed by an elite group of common labourers. These "outdoor workers" were organized as part of the Civic Employees Federation, also male residents and more likely to be Anglo-Canadian and to have marketable skills pertaining to white-collar work than their unemployed colleagues (although this ratio clearly decreased over the years). In using this fact to argue for the equivalence between relief and wage work, Communists sought to universalize union rates traditionally reserved for skilled Anglo-Canadian white men.

It requires little effort on our part to imagine the profoundly revolutionary effects of such a program. Many of the already unionized would see little or no decrease in their standard of living due to unemployment or underemployment. A more explosive consequence was that the poorest of the employed — workers who made less than the union minimum of the Civic Employees Federation, a rather substantial number including those who encountered some form of gender, racial, religious, or national discrimination in labour markets — would actually enjoy a substantive increase, not just in monetary terms but in relation to their autonomy within social relations more broadly. The actual achievement of the union minimum — in essence, a guaranteed daily income — would, for instance, spell the end of sweated labour conditions across the city and elsewhere. Profound changes would be required to entice women back to domestic work and other positions central to the commercialization of the reproduction of labour, and this policy would also probably begin the long process of eroding the significance of racial classifications in the labour market: Japanese men would have an alternative to the hop fields while Chinese men could avoid the bowling alleys, both segments of the labour market organized according to a combination of racial and national categories. Four dollars per day would also reduce the economic need that obliged many to participate in prostitution and organized crime more generally. Finally, this policy would allow all of these groups a greatly increased measure of autonomy in their dealings with social agencies, whether public or private. In these ways, four dollars was an abstract figure that owed its meaning to the capitalist market, all the while imaginatively overturning

so many of the basic social relations of this market by allowing tens of thousands of Vancouver residents forms of autonomy and choice that had never been theirs. In this context, the VUWO's demand for union wages for all in need offered marked change, especially in relation to the identitarian segmentation of the labour market, that would materially benefit most of those workers considered to be the most marginal.

2. *"That a sufficient sum of money be appropriated by the City Council for the purpose of immediate relief of all unemployed workers irrespective of color or nationality pending action on the part of the Provincial and Dominion Governments."*

In anticipation of the coming years of political buck-passing among various levels of government, the VUWO called for immediate action so that no worker should be made to suffer because of intergovernmental intransigence. The VUWO also explicitly reinforced the call for union wages for all, whether working or not, by rejecting the claim that relief provision was a privilege of race or nationality. Again, on the one hand, the VUWO promised security and stability for the archetypal British North American working man: a guaranteed weekly income at union rates. On the other, the VUWO entertained a much more revolutionary transformation by allowing everyone access to the same standard of living.

3. *"That proven unemployment be sufficient claim for relief and the question of twelve months residence be discontinued."*

As with the previous resolution, this plank refused policy-based differences in access to relief that separated resident and transient, citizen and foreigner. Intended to combat the effects of seasonal labour markets that made twelve months of continuous residence impossible, this was both a moral stance — unemployed workers deserved support regardless of legal residence — and a political position — the working class would never become a force while divided by race, nationality, and citizenship.⁵² Also, by bringing to an end the means test and the investigation of residency claims, the plan would drastically reduce the civic relief bureaucracy and act as an obstacle to the administrative pretensions characteristic of private charity administrators associated with the Vancouver Welfare Federation.⁵³ Nor would workers have to reach the point of destitution before they could apply for state aid. Instead, the unemployed — presumably including those whose jobs would be rendered obsolete by such a policy change — could walk in with a letter from their former employer and walk out with assistance.

4. *“That applicants in receipt of relief be paid in cash, not kind, as permitting recipients to purchase at any store they may desire.”*

Here, too, the civic bureaucracy would be shrunk by dispensing with the elaborate system of clerical practices necessary to the printing, distribution, and redemption of bed and meal tickets. With cash in their pockets, the unemployed could avoid the sneers of restaurant and rooming house owners that often accompanied relief tickets. Indeed, cash in pocket also served to make one immune to vagrancy charges, if not police intimidation in general. For married unemployed men, the humiliation of the “gunny sack parade” would disappear, and their purchasing power would stimulate the economy and put money in the hands of local merchants. Finally, those responsible for organizing domestic reproduction would have a measure of income security, especially in terms of predictability in budgeting expenses.

5. *“That the City Council call upon the Greater Vancouver School Board to provide boots and clothing for children of the unemployed.”*

Singling out the needs of children was a popular tactic across the political spectrum in the 1930s. This type of demand would be particularly popular with community-based party organizations such as block and neighbourhood councils of the mid-1930s. Clothing and footwear were essential because without them, most children would be unable to attend school.

6. *“That a special meeting of the Council be called for the purpose of meeting the representatives of the above organization and giving consideration to our demands.”*

Rather than shuffling before the various subcommittees of council, the VUWO wanted its platform to be discussed in special session, in recognition of the import of the matter.

Obviously, the VUWO’s six points would have revolutionized the practices of civic relief, if not the broader social formation. Rather than engage with these matters of race and residency, of cash relief and aid for children, however, the City Fathers limited their response to two elements: budgetary restraints and the ideal of self-sufficiency through hard work and thrift. Atherton noted that given McEwan’s estimate of 14,000 unemployed in Vancouver, a city of 150,000, union rates for relief work would cost the City \$56,000 a day, an unimaginable expense. Alderman DeGraves attacked what he saw as McEwan’s lack of concern for the City’s budget and wondered why Vancouver should be “singled out” by migrant workers. An offer of union wages, DeGraves believed,

would “induce unemployed from other cities to pour to the coast.” Logger Glen Lamont retorted that many so-called transients flocked to Vancouver of necessity: “we must come here to ship out, and when the lumber camps close down we have to come back here.” After Lamont suggested that most of the province’s 11,000 lumber workers would soon be unemployed, he was asked “if the lumber men could not make enough money in six months of work to tide them over the winter.” He responded, “Not on a proper standard of living; they could if it were a question of merely existing.” The “proper standard of living,” in Lamont’s mind, meant union rates of pay.

In the end, the VUWO representatives walked away from the meeting with only the hollow promise that the committee would consider their six points. “At the conclusion of the interview,” Atherton reported, “I told the delegation that we sympathized with the unemployed and were doing as much as we could out of the funds at our disposal to meet the problem, and that we could not hold out any hope that the demands of the Organization would be met. I promised them, however, to take the matter up with my Committee.”⁵⁴ Press coverage was disappointing: the *Province* did not cover the meeting, while the *Sun* had a small story, 90 percent of which was preoccupied with Mayor W.H. Malkin’s awkward legitimization of the demonstration that preceded the meeting. “There is no objection as far as I can see to an unemployment parade,” he said. “It would be foolish to try to prevent the unemployed from making a demonstration.”⁵⁵

The following day, VUWO representatives met with Mayor Malkin himself. “We are all trying to find a solution to this terrible situation,” he told them, “and if you have anything practical to suggest I shall be glad to consider it. At the same time, it must be remembered the council has only a limited amount of work and a limited amount of money.” Why a “limited amount of money” prevented the municipality from giving relief in cash rather than groceries or meal tickets, for instance, passed without explanation. Malkin ended the meeting by recommending that the VUWO meet with Atherton, which it had just done twenty-four hours before. If Atherton was favourable, then Malkin would call a special meeting of the Finance Committee.⁵⁶ No doubt frustrated by the procedural obstacles, the delegates agreed to Malkin’s offer, hoping that they could eventually force the council to publicly address their grievances. Three days later, members of the VUWO once again paraded to the meeting of the Relief and Employment Committee, where they were refused an opportunity to speak. In the interests of time, and to avoid repetition, Atherton had already agreed that they should present their case to the Finance Committee.⁵⁷

The lone City Council voice of concurrence with the VUWO’s program came from Angus MacInnis, who drew parallels with an earlier crisis. “When the state needed these men to protect the country, it took them,” he observed

mournfully. “If their stomachs are good enough for the point of a bayonet or a piece of shrapnel, they are good enough to hold a square meal.”⁵⁸ But MacInnis could not compete with the chorus of voices stressing financial restraint. George Miller lamented, “I cannot see that we shall get anywhere if the unemployed insist on taking an unreasonable attitude,” and Relief Officer Ireland questioned the motives of VUWO organizers, claiming that “this organization of unemployed is primarily political . . . and I do not think unemployment ought to be confused with politics.” Alderman Atherton agreed with both colleagues: the city had done all it could to relieve unemployment. Work relief was underway; roads were being repaired and extended, and hundreds who flocked to Vancouver for its mild winter climate found themselves shovelling snow on city streets after a particularly bad storm.⁵⁹ Other projects in parks and sewers would soon begin. Several days later, the *Sun* published an interview with Alderman John Bennett, chair of the Finance Committee. He joined the chorus sounding the note of monetary restraint. “We all know the demands of the unemployed organization are unreasonable. It is financially impossible for the city to pay out \$4.50 a day to all the unemployed.” Bennett did see a solution on the horizon, however: Vancouver should handle the jobless “easily and inexpensively” by housing them in the sheds maintained by the federal Department of Immigration.⁶⁰

The theme of financial restraint espoused by the council’s booster faction never addressed the VUWO’s challenge to the practices at the core of relief policy. While the VUWO asked that relief be paid in cash, Alderman Bennett proposed to take away whatever choices existed for propertyless unemployed men in matters of food and shelter by forcing them into shabbily built sheds whose original purpose was to house unfortunates awaiting deportation. The demands to abolish racial and residential restrictions, the calls for clothing and shoes for school children — all were ignored by the council in its emphasis on the bottom line of civic finance. And the final demand, for an immediate special meeting of the council, was also eventually refused after the VUWO delegates had completed their second tour of the subcommittees. In contrast to the VUWO’s expansive vision of relief as an automatic entitlement granted to everyone when unemployment struck, for most City Fathers, relief was ideally something of a gift furnished by the propertied taxpayer, to be given only to those truly deserving (based on residential and moral as well as racial and national criteria) and only for something such as work in return. Yet the claims of financial obstacles offered by Malkin, Miller, and others made up but one dimension of the local government’s response to the VUWO’s program: another would be provided by Chief Constable Bingham.

While Bingham initially reported that unemployed “processions have been orderly,” conducted with “no cause for Police interference,” he soon changed his assessment and argued for a view of unemployed demonstrations

as part of a conspiracy against constituted authority.⁶¹ As noted, Communists had on occasion refused to carry the Union Jack at the front of their parades, “which in itself is illegal,” declared Bingham, a violation of a civic bylaw. He had overlooked this, however, because “the unusual circumstances justified latitude in my action whilst the processions were orderly.” The increased availability of work relief, Bingham wrote, satisfied the genuine jobless but “did not appear to suit some leaders of the Communist Party, who gathered around them a number of mal-contented discharged from City work.” He then used his presumed knowledge of plans of violent protest to ban “unauthorized” processions:

Information was forthcoming that if a clash came between the Police and the Unemployed, it was to be in the streets where advantage was to be taken of the melee to start a window-smashing campaign. In order to avoid this, I instructed the Unemployed that, whilst I was prepared to allow them to hold their meetings, an unauthorized procession could not be permitted.

For the VUWO, in contrast, Bingham’s ability to ban parades under city bylaws violated the time-honoured rights of assembly and free speech. Indeed, the increasing limitations that Bingham placed on unemployed parades served to underline Communist critiques of state coercion.

On 15 December, the *Vancouver Daily Province* reported the death of a common labourer in the east end under the headline “Man Starves to Death Here.” The next day, some five hundred people, the bulk of them jobless, “stormed” the Relief Office, but Ireland refused to deal with their complaints “en masse.” “I have been used to dealing with men,” he began to say, but was interrupted: “You’re dealing with men now — not slaves — hungry ones,” someone shouted.⁶² Ireland offered them work at the rate of a dollar per day but was met with the cry, “No Scab Jobs!”⁶³ Ninety minutes later, after being dispersed by police, another crowd assembled in front of City Hall, where Litterick and McEwan spoke about the VUWO’s demand for a hearing with City Council. At one point, a group attempted to gain entry into the council meeting in progress, only to meet with police resistance. An editorial in the *Daily Province* noted that the mood had been one of “good humour on both sides.” However, the VUWO’s plan for subsequent daily demonstrations was “crazy”: “no good can come of it, either for the unemployed themselves or for anybody else.” The *Sun* editorial gently criticized police tactics, maintaining that “demonstrations and disorders are too often confused. The one is merely a safety valve, letting off steam. The other is a frequent result of keeping the safety valve shut, and the martyr complex flourishes under high pressure.” At the same time, the *Sun* made clear that Communist agitation, as opposed to genuine discontent, lay behind the demonstrations.⁶⁴

The next day's gathering of the VUWO saw the "threatening" of a police officer: "Vancouver's unemployed continued their demonstrations Tuesday afternoon with a noisy parade through city streets, shouting and occasionally breaking into 'The Red Flag,' the revolutionary song." The parade, moving west on Hastings Street, stopped at the traffic light on Main Street, and Communists in a car at the head of the procession began honking the horn. Police Superintendent J.W. Tracey motioned to the car, telling the driver to obey the signal. In response, one of the men inside shouted, "Grab him in. We'll strip him." After reaching the Cambie Street parade grounds, the crowd was, according to one reporter, "harangued by leaders," and eventually dispersed after planning another demonstration.⁶⁵ Tracey and the press took the "stripping" comment not as a harmless joke but as a legitimate threat to Tracey's person, evidence that Communist revolutionaries controlled these gatherings and could make their will manifest. Tracey asserted that "not 25 per cent of the so-called unemployed parading the streets were bona fide. Most of the men came from the prairie provinces, and while they marched through the streets the legitimate unemployed of Vancouver were standing on the sidewalks." Bold declarations like this played well in the press, particularly in light of denunciations of transients who drew on the civic treasury and clogged the courts with vagrancy charges. "These men don't want work," Tracey concluded. "They want \$4.50 a day or nothing."⁶⁶ The VUWO began its public career as a peaceful, even quiet organization of jobless men. In less than two weeks, it had been declared a centre for lazy foreign Communist agitators. On 18 December, the VUWO asked to send a delegation to be heard by City Council; their request was denied.⁶⁷

While Alderman Bennett's suggestion to house the unemployed in the Department of Immigration's sheds went unheeded, one jobless worker did end up there. On 18 December, "direct action was taken against the organization of unemployed" when William McEwan was arrested and exposed as Allan Campbell, a local Communist Party member.⁶⁸ Department officials ordered Campbell deported, but he was allowed to stay pending appeal. The VUWO immediately applied for a permit to march on 20 December in support of Campbell's release along West Hastings to Burrard Street and the offices of the Immigration Department. Bingham refused, limiting the march from the Powell Street parade grounds to the Cambie Street grounds, a route that bypassed Campbell and much of the downtown business district. On the appointed day, some four hundred men and women collected at Powell Street before they snaked their way through downtown streets, passing well-known gathering places for unemployed and migrant workers on Abbott, Carrall, Cordova, and Hastings Streets.

After arriving at the Cambie parade grounds, William Bennett, James Litterick, and others attacked the municipality's relief program and

complicity with federal deportation policies that targeted left-wing radicals. Litterick then proposed marching to Immigration Hall, both in support of Campbell and in protest of the chief constable's unjust decision to redirect the march. "It was at this point that Litterick broke faith," Bingham later rationalized to his bosses on the Board of Police Commissioners. Walking through the downtown core, small groups of protesters assembled on Burrard Street, where they encountered a line of policemen at the foot of the ramp leading to Immigration Hall. The crowd cheered impromptu speeches calling for Campbell's release, at which point Bingham sensed danger and instructed his constables to prevent the Communists from reaching the doors to the hall:

The leaders were instructed they could go no further, and as a result the crowd was dispersed. The necessity for keeping such a crowd, approximately 400, off the railway property and docks or approaching nearer to the Immigration Hall, is obvious. They insisted, however, and it became necessary to call upon the Police present to disperse the crowd.⁶⁹

The veracity of the rumour of plans for a "window-smashing campaign" is questionable. The extant reports of undercover officers contain no reference to this plan, implying that Bingham himself was the likely source, making public this rumour only in the course of defending the actions of his force to the Board of Police Commissioners and City Council. More to the point, had Communists actually planned to provoke attacks on businesses, the police response to their illegal march provided what to them would have been a legitimate cause for anger and harmless property destruction, but the only damage done was to the demonstrators themselves, several of whom were wounded by mounted police assisting in the "dispersal." Nonetheless, Bingham's claim that the parades of the unemployed undermined order was technically correct: in defying the chief's decision against an assembly in the vicinity of Immigration Hall, the crowd had literally challenged the ruling order, thus demanding from his constables a physical response to enforce the original policy and secure the chief constable's authority to regulate marches in the municipality.

In less than three weeks, the VUWO found its platform largely ignored, if not rejected as financially unreasonable, and its organization portrayed as the leading bulwark of Communist subversion of the state itself. Yet the available evidence makes clear that this joint campaign by the Relief Department and the Police Department to situate the VUWO outside the realm of legitimate political conduct – the reasoning being that given the fiscal constraints, daily demonstrations could serve no purpose save to increase the

existing chaos – involved few moments of coordination and more practical day-to-day conflict among the various staff members involved in determining and enforcing policy in these two departments. Moreover, the Police Department, a unique administrative entity within the municipality, in that it was governed through the Board of Police Commissioners rather than directly by City Council, proved relatively immune to public pressure, whether individual or collective, and the almost ritualistic rejection of the VUWO's six points by Alderman Atherton and the other brokers of civic relief programs could not reverse the process whereby the daily struggles of itinerant unemployed men became an all-too-present "absent cause" for a marked shift in municipal political alignments.

A General Strike and Spies in the Workplace

Following the confrontation outside Immigration Hall, the VUWO changed tactics and, with a general strike in favour of union wages in mind, launched an organizing campaign among the dozens of work relief gangs spread throughout the city. The removal of "agitators" from work gangs thus became a key issue for the City; one Communist labelled the use of undercover spies "police terrorism."⁷⁰ The VUWO's recruitment drive commenced with a series of public meetings, the first of which took place at the Powell Street parade grounds on 30 December; approximately 150 men and three or four women attended, according to police constables in attendance. Bill Bennett criticized the mayor and City Council and labelled the police "cossacks," and Litterick also honed in on the coercive strategies of Vancouver officials. According to a police report, Litterick

had been in the Office of the Chief of Police, and he had asked the Chief if he had *Stool Pigeons* working for him amongst the unemployed, the Chief said "no" and gave his word as a man that he had not, he then said that as he left the Office he saw two men sitting on a bench at the door waiting to see the Chief, he said he recognised these two men as members of the unemployed workers association, and he said now what were these two men doing there, I leave it to yourselves to judge.⁷¹

At a New Year's Day meeting at the Royal Theatre, Allan Campbell, out on appeal, condemned "the state" with a ferocity that made Constable Daniel Dorroch blush uncomfortably. According to Dorroch, Campbell "called all Law Enforcement officials in Vancouver 'Sons of Bitches' and 'Bastards' also our Sovereign Lord the King a 'Bastard' and a 'Son of a Bitch', also said the same of President Hoover and some German official."⁷²

The VUWO's charges about relief spies circulated through the work gangs, generating a considerable amount of discontent regardless of individual politics: one could accept the terms of work relief and still take offence at the use of state resources to collect information for such a purpose. Constable Mackenzie discovered that some of the men working at Second Avenue and Beach "have been annoyed as they had heard that there were stools at work among them."⁷³ Another undercover agent had been observed in the Relief Office, picking out agitators to be fired from the work gangs. "The men wanted to wait for him & beat him up," noted one constable, "but better judgement prevailed."⁷⁴ The Communists' highlighting of the espionage practices of local officials was not without basis. In the wake of the battle at Immigration Hall, Chief Constable Bingham devoted more resources to the surveillance of agitators on the rationale that his department now needed to be able to anticipate Communist plans. While thousands found themselves jobless, the expansion of the city's surveillance apparatus created employment opportunities for those willing to become stool pigeons and help create unemployment by identifying the discontented jobless on work relief programs so that they could be fired from their non-job.

The assignment of spying required these men to act as intellectuals, producing knowledge crucial to devising state strategies for dealing with the unemployed. One Captain Jervis carefully sketched the international character of left-wing radicalism, of which Vancouver's agitators were a central piece. "The Communists, as they style themselves, in North America, are in three circles: 1. Chicago, 2. New York, 3. Vancouver, B.C.," he wrote. "The leaders are working on a schedule. Every phase or step in this programme or schedule is being strictly adhered to, and promises some interesting developments a little later on." Their goal "in its ultimate fulfilment" was nothing short of "the overthrow of the British Empire." "The movement is growing," Jervis warned, "and these Communists are becoming bolder and bolder in their methods, which can have but one result, bloodshed."⁷⁵ While obviously fascinated by the inner workings of the continental Communist conspiracy, Jervis did not think much of the party's actual work in Vancouver: "The usual abuse of the Civic Authorities, the emigration officials, several of the police and the usual garbled and warped interpretation of the laws of political economy, these things were all that could be obtained from the open meetings." Two Communists told Jervis of plans to "harass" city officials until relief rates were increased; another said he did not expect any violence until later in January.⁷⁶

Despite Jervis's fanciful vision of Communist agitation, others found the radicals to be relatively tame; they were, after all, organizing a strike of common labourers (albeit of a special type), not a revolution. In late December, at Ireland's request, Constable Eric Hichens began an undercover stint

as a transient on Gang 25 at a rate of \$100 per month.⁷⁷ Under the pseudonym G. Pearson, Hichens showed up for an assignment of improving roads and clearing drainage ditches, and then accompanied his colleagues to the Relief Office to pick up his bed and meal tickets. To collect information, then, Hichens put in a full day shovelling dirt under the supervision of a gang boss unaware of his real name or purpose, while genuinely jobless men were forced to go without relief work due to insufficient funds. On 2 January, Hichens “noticed first sign of trouble, a man came round & spoke to sundry men, he did not speak to me, so I did not press myself on to him.” The general strike was not scheduled for three weeks, and Hichens remained cautious in his approach, “not attempting to rush matters.”⁷⁸ In the same period, Captain George Ash reported to Gang 20, which was then improving a section of West 34th Avenue. “I found many of the men grumbling on the conditions they are working under,” Ash reported. Two organizers from the “Communist Labour Party” had been travelling from gang to gang “in order to get these men to go on strike,” enjoying a measure of success; some men discussed absenting themselves from relief work to attend a VUWO parade. “I also made acquaintance with a man who goes under the name of Scotty (Alias).” This man was “one of the agitators,” Ash wrote, “that is he stated he was going to do this & that, & that he would go & steal again & would sure go on strike & parade again.” Ash included a physical description, because he had “an idear [*sic*] that this man might be wanted by the police or immigration officials.”⁷⁹ Scotty had already been the subject of police concern; department officials had secured his personal file from the Salvation Army.⁸⁰

While undercover constables were tasked with the surveillance of Communists, the nature of their work brought them into contact with Relief Department officials, who were found partially responsible for the spreading discontent with relief work. While at the Relief Office for his meal tickets, Eric Hichens encountered a clerk whom he described as “a supercilious fool and an insufferable prig, totally unfit to come in contact with a body of men”:

After making some sarcastic remarks to men pr[o]ceding [*sic*] me, he considered it part of his privill[e]ge to say to me ‘What do you do for a bed, beg it or steal it,’ — I merely replied ‘Steal it.’ One man who was near me said to me, ‘The bloody bastard, if he had spoken to me like that I would have knocked shit out of the fucker.’ . . . The manner in which the remark, and others were made, were such as to be likely to cause a breach of the Peace. They were not said in any tone of bantering, such as men use among themselves, in which accusations of the foulest immorality may be made as a joke to be passed over and forgotten, as in the Army: but in a manner most offensive and aggressive.⁸¹

Hichens was not alone in tracing some of the problems with relief provision to the authorities. "I am confident," proclaimed Constable Frank Godber about the work gang to which he had been assigned, "that no trouble will arise unless fostered & caused by some incident attributable to over anxiousness by the authorities."⁸² And the problems with Relief Department staff went all the way to the top. Hichens's work on relief gangs was terminated by Ireland on 16 January. The constable approached Ireland the following day to ascertain why he had been fired, but the relief officer's "aggressive manner could only lead to heated words so I left."⁸³ Also dismissed was John Mackenzie, whom Ireland refused to pay because he had submitted his reports to the Police Department rather than to Ireland himself. In July, with the matter not yet been resolved, Mackenzie was residing at the YMCA and hoping for Chief Bingham's intervention on his behalf with the new relief officer, Colonel H.W. Cooper.⁸⁴ The irony was telling: men paid to inform on relief workers with grievances against the Relief Department found themselves jobless and in need, shortchanged by the same officials who had assigned them to the work gangs.

Chief Constable Bingham remained firm in his conviction that the relief strike could be traced to the agitation of "a few Communists out for trouble": "intimidation became evident at various centres of civic unemployed activities, and every effort was made to suppress, but not arrest." Nonetheless, Bingham argued that the Communist "intimidation" of the unemployed had largely failed, as "only a small percentage left their work, and many have tried to get back."⁸⁵ Communists were also blamed for "attacks" on downtown cafés and restaurants. Local establishments had anywhere from a handful to upwards of forty people asking for or taking free meals; one constable concluded that "the situation in this regard is not so acute as it was late in November, and so far no attack in mass has been made upon them."⁸⁶ With newspaper headlines screaming about crime, Bingham laid the blame on "a section of the unemployed."⁸⁷

The general strike of relief workers never got off the ground.⁸⁸ While Bingham suggested that those "with no hope of obtaining even necessary food . . . presented fertile ground for Communist propaganda," others came to different assessments.⁸⁹ Constable Godber reported that "whilst this proposal is acceptable to the men to strike for \$4.50 per day there is a decided doubt & suspicion in the minds of these men that the communist party will not be able to furnish the funds necessary to support any attempt at strikes." Communists recognized this, he noted, and worked to strengthen their organizational base.⁹⁰ A week later, the constable discovered that "the attitude of the men is day by day more distrustful of the Strike movement fostered by the Communist Party of Vancouver." The VUWO remained disorganized, and three German socialists on his work gang had come out in opposition to the strike.

“I find the greatest number of Communists to be amongst the unemployed who still walk the streets and are not on the ‘relief,’ and one hears around the camp fires only the echoes of the mutterings of this type heard in the restaurants, lodging houses & pool rooms,” Godber reported.⁹¹ The VUWO managed to pull off a few strikes: at least one gang of married men left their intersection and returned to the Relief Office because “they were afraid to work being intimidated by men in a Single Gang nearby.”⁹² Others “stood at the fires practically all day” instead of working.⁹³ Nonetheless, the dream of a general strike of relief workers was dead.

The reports of undercover officers made clear that there were sizeable pockets of support for the VUWO’s demands for union wages and the expulsion of spies from relief gangs. The subsequent failure of the majority of relief workers to support the strike is not evidence of a fatal flaw or weakness in Communist political practice, although there were plenty of those, as much as an indication of the generalized independence of itinerants in relation to the VUWO leadership’s program and tactics. Listening to speeches, participating in marches, even physically confronting the police — none of these automatically required the itinerant to sacrifice money and the possibility of making more as would taking strike action and being fired from relief work altogether. Many potential strikers feared the blacklist because it would leave them and their dependants to seek private charity, since the VUWO obviously lacked the financial resources to support those who struck. Others, like the three German socialists, were no doubt suspicious of the Communist leadership and its increased sectarianism leading up to the strike. The only surviving copy of the *Unemployed Worker* from this period criticizes “Labor Party opportunists” and “yellow traitorous labor fakers,” and even launches an attack on the tiny local chapter of the Industrial Workers of the World.⁹⁴ And while the VUWO leaders clearly sought to make their organization function as a union, they lacked most of the power and privilege accorded the union bureaucrats of the labour movement for wage workers: although they could devise a program, they had nothing but speeches as their means of inducement for the thousands who participated in demonstrations and marches during these months.⁹⁵ In short, each itinerant probably made his own assessment in a context of relative freedom from any compulsion to follow the official line of the publicly identified Communist leadership, which, given its tenuous organizational base in the work gangs, amounted to little more than the adventurist desire that spontaneity would win the day. Jobless men on civic relief gangs nonetheless continued to turn out en masse for VUWO demonstrations, asserting their political rights of freedom of speech and assembly and expressing their support for equal access to municipal relief.

A Conference on Unemployment, January 1930

While January 1930 thus saw Communists shift tactics with their attempt to launch a general strike, Vancouver's labourists and social democrats continued to look to the boardroom as the primary venue for change. Several International Labour Party (ILP) members had participated in the Western Labour Conference in Regina in late October 1929, where delegates called upon municipalities to relieve "immediate suffering and want" while looking to a "permanent solution by means of a social insurance scheme." Upon their return, the representatives recommended a civic conference on unemployment, an idea that had already been endorsed by the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council (VTLC).⁹⁶ One day before Christmas, after the initial wave of VUWO demonstrations, John Sidaway asked for an interview with the Finance Committee.⁹⁷ The request was granted, and Sidaway, along with fellow ILP members R.H. Neelands and Lyle Telford, convinced the aldermen to endorse the concept. The easy passage of the conference lay in a common perception of crisis circumstances brought about by the itinerant invasion: politicians of all stripes could disagree about the worst consequences of and best solutions for unemployment, all the while remaining steadfastly united in the desire to remove the thousands of wandering jobless men then moving in and out of the city.

The Communists embraced the opportunity offered by the conference. Litterick wrote Alderman R.N. Fraser, who was acting mayor while Malkin lobbied for federal money in Ottawa, to inform him that because the VUWO "represents over 1,500 unemployed and relief workers we will send five representatives." What's more, the Communist Party itself would send William Bennett as a delegate. "As the solution of this problem is one of the first interests of the Communist Party," Bennett told Fraser, "we decided to accept the invitation extended to all bodies to send a representative."⁹⁸ Both groups were late additions to the list of attending community groups, as were other working-class organizations such as the Building Trades Council and the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers' Association. After learning of the conference plans, all asserted their right to send delegates, and were, Fraser noted, "allowed to take part." The markedly inclusive stance of City Council speaks to the continuing unevenness of the state response to itinerants within the ever-changing context of mass actions that took on a host of forms, and radicals hoped that this inclusivity would be easily channelled into support for union wages on relief projects. Several VUWO organizers already known in Chief Constable Bingham's Police Department to be dangerous subversives were publicly embraced and accorded starring roles by Fraser; the hope was that a carefully controlled conference crowd would defuse the Communist-led campaign for the six points more effectively than an exclusionary policy, which would virtually guarantee demonstrations and confrontations with the constabulary.

That a politics conscious of public presentation formed the impetus for the inclusion of labour and leftist groups in addition to the long-established Independent Labour Party and the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council was clearly spelled out in Fraser's draft copy of the confidential agenda. Meeting in the Board of Trade Building, the three-day conference was to begin on 14 January with the reading of the council's resolution sponsoring the conference as well as telegrams from Prime Minister Mackenzie King and BC's Minister of Labour, W.A. MacKenzie, both unable to attend. As chair, Fraser would offer introductory remarks, after which Litterick and Bennett, as representatives of the VUWO and the Communist Party, would address those in attendance for five minutes each before Lyle Telford of the ILP would move to "open discussion." The agenda allowed time for "general discussion" during this initial session; Fraser jotted in the margin of his copy a reminder to "control debate." Finally, a committee would be struck to deal with the dozens of resolutions already submitted: "After short time, Chairman suggests appointment of resolutions committee. Mr. W.C. Woodward will move that such committee be appointed by chair. Chairman suggest names of Mr. W.C. Woodward, Alderman MacInnis, Mr. John Sidaway, Mrs. T.H. Kirk and Alderman Vance."⁹⁹ This preliminary agenda had changed by the conference opening: Woodward's place on the resolutions committee was filled by C.E. Tisdall; Vance was replaced by fellow North Vancouver Alderman Bridgman; and Relief Officer Ireland was added as a speaker, sandwiched between the Communists and the ILP's John Sidaway, who replaced Lyle Telford.

Of all the groups to attend — at least twenty-nine private and public organizations, including fraternal organizations and municipal councils from across the Lower Mainland — only the Vancouver Unemployed Workers' Organization, the Communist Party, and the Independent Labour Party had been guaranteed a place on the agenda. Moreover, with only the mayor preceding them, leftists had been granted the opportunity to shape debate at the outset. Fraser and other political figures endeavoured, both on stage and behind the scenes, to fashion a "public transcript" about a united "community" that could be useful to the City's representatives in negotiations with the provincial and federal governments.¹⁰⁰ With this spatially bounded response to unemployment, local unions, socialist parties, and even the Communist Party could be seen to multiply rather than to reduce the force of the campaign for others to assume financial responsibility for transient relief in Vancouver.

With almost two hundred delegates at the initial session, the conference's wide representation of accredited groups certainly facilitated the appearance of a "community." According to a *Sun* reporter, "subjects treated ranged all the way from wholesale condemnations of the capitalistic system and the city relief department, to discussions of immigration, unemployment

insurance, limitation of hours of labor and prosecution of public works along [a] definite, ten-year program.”¹⁰¹ Paul Raymond of the Hope and District Board of Trade suggested that the prevailing state of unemployment could be converted into a prime opportunity to cheaply develop the transportation infrastructure necessary to economic recovery and future growth. Raymond had in mind the building of a road between Hope and Princeton: once “this shorter route is open,” Raymond had written earlier to the mayor, “British Columbia will gain the business from Tacoma, Spokane, Portland and Seattle visitors, who will be enabled to make this round trip as a week-end excursion.”¹⁰² At the conference, he declared, “Any business which comes from this tourist traffic must help all districts of British Columbia in a large way.”¹⁰³ The existence of unemployment could thus be translated into a source of capitalist development, creating the infrastructure necessary for economic growth by employing the jobless at wages lower than the accepted rate for common labour. Raymond’s scheme was one of hundreds suggested to government officials during the first three years of the 1930s, each a mapping in microcosm of the capitalist totality in which the state exploitation of cheap relief labour, organized under public or private auspices, served as the human foundation for British Columbia’s future economic development.

The next day’s session, which focused on Communist charges about the secret machinations of the Relief Department, disrupted Fraser’s nascent “community.” The headlines “Blacklisting Charged by City’s Jobless” and “Espionage Laid to Relief Office” leaped off the back page of the *Sun*. In session, Allan Campbell publicly charged that the Relief Department “has maintained a system of stool pigeons on relief work this winter, carrying on espionage among the men and blacklisting all who have attempted to organize relief workers.” He also claimed that many of the blacklisted activists “have been ‘railroaded’ to jail by the city police.” Many delegates reacted strongly to these accusations, and Fraser immediately promised “a full investigation of the complaint” in order to “forestal[l] a motion calling for an inquiry,” according to one reporter. Campbell estimated that of the ten thousand unemployed workers he believed were in Vancouver, fewer than one thousand had received aid on works projects; four hundred more were jailed at Oakalla Penitentiary. Reiterating the demand for union wages on city projects, Campbell told delegates that “the cheapest respectable ‘flop’ in the city costs 75 cents a night,” thus making the one dollar per day allotted to single men grossly inadequate. James Thomson, president of the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, joined in Campbell’s condemnation, suggesting that BC’s lumber barons “are largely to blame for the present situation” because they maintained “a huge blacklist in full and constant operation . . . and have spent \$2,000,000 on a lobby at Ottawa to induce the Dominion government to allow unrestricted immigration from Europe in order to prevent their employees

from forcing them to pay decent wages.” What was needed, according to Thomson, was “an intellectual revolution along industrial lines to prevent a possible revolution of blood.”¹⁰⁴

After the interventions of Campbell and Thomson, the delegates had the following day off, while the resolutions committee — E.H. Bridgman, C.E. Tisdall, Mrs. T.H. Kirk, Angus MacInnis, and John Sidaway — screened the numerous motions proposed by the delegates. The conference resumed on 17 January to consider its report.¹⁰⁵ Because the internal deliberations of the committee are undocumented, we can only guess as to responsibility for its decisions or divisions among the group. The committee chose to discard many proposals concerning various taxation and other fundraising schemes offered during public meetings, and appears to have taken care to distribute motions among significant persons and organizations. Also rejected were recommendations that “dual or multiple incomes in single families be discouraged” and that “all civic employees whose wives and husbands are working be discharged immediately”; these rejections may provide evidence of lobbying on the part of Mrs. T.H. Kirk, an executive member of the Local Council of Women and the wife of a Conservative M.L.A. Here, the focus on external solutions acted to temporarily trump calls for gender exclusion.

The committee chose as the first motion to be considered one from Vancouver Aldermen Harry DeGraves and Warner Loat that “deplore[d] the attitude of the Provincial Government and the Federal Government in not sending Official Representation to this Conference.” DeGraves and Loat articulated the vision of community consensus in the argument that it was “only by the co-operation of all public and semi-public bodies, but more particularly of the Governing bodies such as the Provincial Government and the Federal Government and Civic and Municipal Governments that this present national problem can hope for a solution.”¹⁰⁶ The involvement of federal and provincial legislative bodies did not mean, however, that municipal politicians envisioned relinquishing control of the administration of relief. As with provincially funded Mothers’ Pensions, officials actively promoted the use of local Relief Department staff to serve as investigator and administrator, if not banker, of welfare measures.¹⁰⁷ With city government well served by the first motion, the resolutions committee proposed its own motion asking the Dominion government to halt state-sponsored immigration schemes, which only “accentuate[d]” the “Unemployment situation,” and to assume responsibility for “all such persons and their families by means of employment or Relief until they have been domiciled in Canada for two years,” policies that “would be in the best interests of the Country.” By emphasizing an external federal solution and omitting any characterization of the immigrants themselves, thus avoiding a key difference among the presumably all Euro-Canadian conference crowd, the committee’s careful stance could appeal to the Right and the Left, nativists and socialists

alike, if not the Communists, who opposed all restrictions on the free flow of labour.¹⁰⁸ Both motions were ratified at the final public gathering.

The Independent Labour Party submitted by far the most detailed set of proposals. Of the twenty-four motions officially considered by the resolutions committee, fifteen had been submitted either by the ILP itself or by Dr. Lyle Telford, one of its prominent members. Telford's first plan was a direct tax on industry to create a fund to provide relief for seasonal workers "during slack season"; this motion committee members laid on the table in favour of a similar one put forth by the Vancouver Labour Council, the local affiliate of the All-Canadian Congress of Labour. Telford's next idea — that "Birth Control information should be made legally available to all" — no doubt would have struck some as the most controversial, and it too was set aside by the committee.¹⁰⁹ Telford also asked the conference to go on record as "strongly opposed to men being compelled to work a full day for relief wage[s]." The solution was to require only half a day's work for the same amount, thus allowing the jobless "to search for further employment." This too was rejected: while approving "of the principle of doing relief work," the committee decided that the "real value of work done" should be "computed by the Engineer."¹¹⁰ To this point, the most substantive determining factors had been the marital status of the recipient and, most important, the budgetary restraints upon Relief Department programs. The city engineer had had no involvement in establishing the two-dollar and one-dollar scale, which became policy through the estimates of Relief Officer George Ireland and the actuarial calculations of City Comptroller A.J. Pilkington. Again, we can imagine Communist dissension over the difference between an administrative fiat and collective bargaining as methods for arriving at the value of labour power.

The gathering considered eleven motions from the ILP, from changes to old age pensions and the Minimum Wage and Workmen's Compensation Acts to the creation of state-run health insurance and an incremental income tax "to bring greater returns from those better able to pay." The ILP attacked other levels of government for "passing the buck and shielding behind the legality of B.N.A. Act," as well as Canadian industrialists who profited "in foreign lands [with] the use of foreign labour while we are faced with the problem of unemployment in this Country."¹¹¹ Delegates thus spent considerable time discussing many of the core political ideas to circulate among third-party movements in the interwar years, all of which looked beyond the borders of the municipality for their instruments of change.¹¹² Indeed, despite the recommendation from the resolutions committee to table some of the ILP's motions, delegates voted to endorse them anyway. The ILP's prospects, then, looked good on 17 January 1930. In the February issue of *ILP News*, Sidaway proudly noted that their delegates had "put up a very good case": while the "resolutions adopted were mainly suggestions as to how best to treat the problem now," he

noted that “much of the discussion centred around the method of finding an ultimate solution.”¹¹³ Nonetheless, the ILP joined with City Council members in stressing that the City was limited in what it could do: it too would endorse a works program for Vancouver residents alone, and it would also remain silent on the racial and national categories so central to relief provision. And despite its prominent role at the inaugural gathering, the ILP would later find itself on the outside, looking in. In August 1930, R.E. Timmins, secretary of the ILP’s Vancouver Branch, wrote to city officials after reading a report about an upcoming civic conference on unemployment. “We would be pleased to remind you,” he gently chided, “that it was our organization that, to some extent at least, was responsible for initiating the idea of the necessity of holding a conference to discuss unemployment. The three day conference at the City Hall held last spring was the direct result.”¹¹⁴ This time, however, the ILP had not been invited to participate; Timmins fruitlessly offered to send a delegate.

The practical limits on any “community” consensus at the January conference became clear with the question of unemployment insurance. The resolutions committee recommended the adoption of a motion proposed by J.B. Macaulay and Henry Burgess of the Vancouver Labour Council. This motion distilled the collective wisdom of the Left: given the systematic character of unemployment (and underemployment) under capitalism and the similarly central inequalities in the creation and distribution of wealth, poverty should be relieved by taxing capital, in one sense giving workers the full value they would have received were it not for the accumulation process. Macaulay and Burgess argued for “a measure of unemployment insurance to be enacted as a Federal measure and to be a direct charge against Industry, and that provision be made for Labour representation on the Boards of Administration.” Leftists labelled this type of unemployment insurance “non-contributory,” funded as “a direct charge against Industry” rather than with money deducted from workers’ paycheques. Others saw non-contributory programs as economic heresy and held out for contributory unemployment insurance, a tripartite solution in which workers, employers, and the government unevenly shared the financial burden. Alderman John Bennett argued that while the seasonal nature of industry could be blamed for unemployment, industrialists should not be blamed for its effects:

Owing to the great distress and serious economic loss caused each year in Canada by Unemployment, and due to [the fact that] the seasonal operation of many of our Industries is unavoidable, this unemployment Conference strongly recommends for the earnest consideration of the Dominion and Provincial Governments the introduction of Legislation with a view to the enactment of an Unemployment insurance measure to be contributed to by both Governments and the Employers and Employees.¹¹⁵

The resolutions committee referred both motions to the conference. Faced with a clear choice between contributory and non-contributory unemployment insurance, what did delegates do? They passed both resolutions: the workers of Vancouver would have not one unemployment insurance plan, but two, one of which they would pay for, and one to be funded solely by the bosses. In the quest to create a “community” consensus in support of the municipal government’s approach to provincial and federal counterparts, local officials created the context in which delegates postponed serious consideration of the conflicts engendered within every urban locality across Canada’s capitalist social formation. While Vancouver’s leftists used their new-found public resources to secure legitimacy for a wide range of radical programs, none of these measures could be implemented by the municipality alone: the victory of public endorsement of non-contributory unemployment insurance was therefore of ceremonial value alone.

And the Vancouver Unemployed Workers’ Organization? It offered the following motion:

That this conference realizing that work provided for a small portion of unemployed workmen at less than half union pay for a married man and less than one quarter for a single man, while it provides work, leaves the problem of relief of chronic poverty untouched; And further the past and present method of arresting unemployed workmen as vagrants be discontinued. The Vancouver Unemployed Organization therefore states emphatically that the only available methods to be adopted are work or full maintenance at Trade Union Rates, the cost to be borne by the exploiters of the workmen.

The resolutions committee endorsed the first sentence up to the word “untouched” and noted that “unemployment is not in itself sufficient cause for arrest.” The sentence on “Trade Union Rates” was deemed “not relevant.” In general, the specific problems with relief administration articulated by Communists in the initial six-point program and in subsequent actions were not so much ignored as left to dissipate in the netherworld of bureaucratic procedures that insulated the various departments from democratic control. The blacklist is a wonderful example: aldermen at the 15 January session who knew of the blacklist’s existence did not publicly confirm Allan Campbell’s suspicions, even to justify the policy. Nor did Fraser’s promised investigation of the charges of undercover spying ever occur. In the end, Vancouver officials managed to keep private the seamier aspects of public administration, ensuring that coercive and restrictive measures would remain an essential part of their relief programs.

What did citizens learn of the conference? *Daily Province* readers were treated to a dry recitation of several successful motions, while *Sun* readers divined even less: a single story on the proposals for various works projects was printed side by side with a much longer article enthusiastically detailing the medicinal experiments of John D. Rockefeller's father.¹¹⁶ Here, we descend into the comi-tragic: City Fathers had worked incredibly hard to convey the impression of an inclusive "community," but few citizens would learn of their endeavours. Alderman Fraser concluded his final report with a grandiloquent passage on the pleasant tone of the gathering:

A full and free discussion took place at each of the sittings of the Conference; every one who had anything to say on the problem of unemployment and any remedy to propose was given the opportunity and a reasonable time within which to lay his or her views before the Conference. Most of the delegates availed themselves of this, with the result that the ideas and opinions expressed were many and of wide range. I may add that the meetings were orderly, and that the utmost good feeling prevailed throughout.¹¹⁷

In one sense, it is difficult to believe that Fraser had paid attention to the proceedings over which he had presided. Delegates had engaged in debates over the relative merits of capitalism and socialism, and the "orderly" nature of the Saturday session had disappeared amidst charges of blacklists controlled by the Relief Department and by logging companies. Yet, in another sense, Fraser's summation perfectly captures the actual spirit of civic citizenship that had ruled at the conference. In the interests of "good feeling," delegates had sidestepped the fundamental conflicts among different proposals and had given every group in attendance save for the VUWO something to take back to their members. That the resulting program was a jumbled, contradiction-ridden mess was of little consequence. All who participated had been heard and a "community" formed.

There were exceptions, however. Communists would experience an intensification of their outsider status in the aftermath of the conference, which probably facilitated the embrace of the new Comintern program of "Third Period" ultra-leftism, as in the decision to run one of their own, William Bennett, against Angus MacInnis in the upcoming federal election.¹¹⁸ True, a programmatic basis for a united front existed in embryo: during these two months, Communist, socialist, and labourist alike called for union wages for relief work, an end to the blacklist against activists and the discontented, and the rights of freedom of speech and assembly. What they lacked was organizational unity, and here none emerged because few partisans of any stripe desired the combination of forces, at least at the leadership level: even

before the start of the Third Period, most ILP members evinced nothing but disdain for their Communist counterparts, and the feeling was mutual. Yet the lack of an effective united front on relief translated into the dissipation of political pressure on City Council, enabling officials to ignore the promise of an investigation of the blacklist system used against those who had organized on work gangs and participated in demonstrations. This, in turn, eviscerated the economic supports for many jobless itinerants who counted themselves as part of the movement. Within weeks, the VUWO would be reduced to a paper tiger, a shell of an organization that existed in name only. Eugene Debs once said that “the thud of a policeman’s club on the head of a striking workman is merely the echo of the last election.”¹¹⁹ This echo would be heard in Vancouver.

A Four-Minute Riot and Its Aftermath

The title of the front-page story in the 27 January evening edition of the *Daily Province* read “Whips Used to Break Up ‘Jobless.’” At 2:30 that afternoon, some seven hundred had gathered at the Powell Street parade grounds. After listening to three speakers, those at the front motioned to begin a parade downtown; Allan Campbell suggested that the police should be “careful with their truncheons” because the crowd was in a “dangerous mood.” When Deputy Chief Murdoch informed Campbell that the VUWO had no parade permit, Campbell responded by saying he would “take responsibility”: “The men then started to march and half a dozen mounted police charged them, beating down the ranks of the unemployed with their sticks. The uniformed men then charged, striking down anyone who refused to leave. In about four minutes the parade formation had been broken up.”¹²⁰ The *Daily Province* noted the randomness of police violence; in fact, one of those “clubbed over the head” by constables was Detective John Berry, assigned to the demonstration as a plain clothes officer.¹²¹ The *Sun’s* recap of events also emphasized the police’s offensive role. “Monday’s parade was smashed before it had really started,” readers learned. “As soon as the jobless clan had taken the first step they were charged by four mounted police, whose horses were spurred to a gallop. Back and forth through the disorganized regiment of strikers rode the police officers, lashing in at demonstrators with their lead-tipped whips.”¹²²

Chief Constable Bingham rejected this interpretation. In his explanation to the Board of Police Commissioners, given after dozens of groups and individuals had condemned police conduct and defended the rights of freedom of speech and assembly, the chief maintained that his force had not erred in any way:

Speakers on the day of the demonstration openly stated that it was their intention to hold a procession, and the Police could “Go to Hell”. Those were the words used by a man named Litterick. During the meeting there were unfortunately many hundred of sightseers who pack[ed] the streets immediately adjoining Powell St. Grounds, and I distributed a number of Police amongst these sightseers and caused them to be acquainted with the danger to them unless they dispersed, as the procession would not be permitted, and this might lead to a clash.

I then . . . approached them, advising moderation. We were defied. The procession formed up about 400 strong with boards containing inflammatory print. Again, without any Empire flag, and I walked out on to Powell St. Grounds, with other officers, and again appealed to the leaders not to march off. Litterick gave the command to march. There was much shouting, and bad language, as the procession commenced to march from the Grounds. I again called on the leaders to halt, and they declined. One man holding a banner said “Go to Hell,” and pushed the banner-post against me. Missiles began to fly, and a woman struck one of the Police horses with a stick.

Seeing there were no other means of enforcing the law of this land, and the necessity for keeping disorder away from the streets, I called upon Police to break up the procession, which they did, using very much less force than one would have anticipated under the circumstances. The procession was then dispersed. The strikers rushed amongst the crowd on the footways, continued to pelt the officers, and put up a running fight out into Hastings Street, on Dunlevy Avenue. Many of the strikers had their pockets full of stones. One of them arrested with his pockets full of stones, was found to be receiving relief from the City for a number of years.¹²³

The intertwining of vagrancy, unemployment, and Communism to produce a portrait of demonstrators of weak character and worse politics would prove a hallmark of Bingham’s term as chief constable. In this case, he conjured a picture of Communist extremists, swearing, armed, and disloyal to the Empire. Looking for violence, they had provoked moderate policemen, and their illegal parade had required that constables enforce “the law of the land.” While many onlookers thought that the police had attacked the unemployed, as evidenced by their letters of complaint, the cause of the violence of 27 January, according to the chief constable, was the procession itself. “It is clear that Litterick, Drayton, Campbell, and Bennett intended to force an issue,” Bingham wrote. All four were arrested on charges of unlawful assembly. “The law must be maintained.”¹²⁴

The chief constable’s defence of his actions and those of his men was absolute. As the melee of Communists and cops flowed onto Dunlevy Street

that afternoon, combatants had found themselves in the midst of another crowd — people attending the funeral of the late Mr. E. Demer, a former member of Local 138 of the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paper-hangers of America. Ed Smith, secretary of Local 138, mournfully noted that the funeral had been “delayed some twenty minutes” because “the mourners were subjected to rough handling, one of them suffering a broken rib,” but his complaint did not touch Bingham’s heart:

Many persons who could merely be described as sight-seers, were roughly handled. One woman, Mrs. [D.S.] . . . was attending the funeral mentioned. As one, amongst many of the men fleeing from the officers tried to pass her, she alleged he struck her with his fist, deliberately causing injury to her rib. She was later seen and examined by Dr. Graham, who now reports that she has no injury, or evidence of an assault; that she has been an out-patient of the Hospital for four years. It is clear that this allegation is merely another effort to counter the action of the Police in enforcing the law.¹²⁵

As with the person on relief with rocks in his pocket, Bingham used the fact that Mrs. D.S. had used state social services — which in another context would be a sign of the humanitarian impulses of liberalism — to disqualify her testimony. Yet Bingham also argued that violence against “bystanders” like Mrs. D.S. inevitably occurred; the crowd had been warned to disperse, yet people stayed in the streets. In a press statement, Bingham simply noted, “It is not possible to distinguish the innocent from the guilty when trouble starts.”¹²⁶

In the aftermath of the 27 January riot and Bingham’s decision to refuse all future requests for parade permits, the Board of Police Commissioners was inundated with letters, some from as far away as Brandon, condemning “the brutal attacks of the Vancouver Police on the Unemployed workers and relief strikers in that City.”¹²⁷ Perhaps the strongest criticism of police conduct was found in the motion of Local 452 of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, a union with a small yet vocal Communist presence. The attack on the parade “has raised within the ranks of organized labor, a storm of protest and resentment. The spectacle of well fed, clad and paid, strong and healthy Policemen, beating up undernourished, poorly clad and shivering working men, who because of vile conditions and starvation rations, dared to protest in public, is one that no right thinking Citizen can afford to ignore.” In the final analysis, such violence

denies the right of free speech and assembly to those, who by reason of circumstances are placed in that section of society, which has to

toil for a livelihood. Surely the administrative ability and humanitarian principles of those in control must be of the poorest character, when they have to resort to the primitive methods employed by their hirelings on the Powell Street grounds.¹²⁸

Similarly, Local 213 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers bluntly claimed in a letter to City Council,

There is absolutely no justification for using violence in dispersing a gathering of citizens, who through no fault of their own are unable to obtain employment and wish to draw their plight to the attention of the authorities and other citizens of the community. We are also of the opinion that these men could be employed on public works at the current rate of wages for laborers and mechanics. Relief is a misnomer when you extract a day's toil at a quarter of the wage paid for that class of work.¹²⁹

ILP members also criticized what they saw as the use of “unnecessary force” and asked for an investigation into police conduct and the chief constable's ban on parades.¹³⁰ Some unionists, however, were not as ardent in their defence of the rights of freedom of assembly and speech due to the prominent role played by Communists in organizing street demonstrations. The Building Trades Council protested against police “brutality” while suggesting that “the same object could have been obtained by more peaceful and gentlemanly methods.”¹³¹ A similar opinion was voiced by Local 844 of the International Order of Operating Engineers: “The brutal tactics adopted were absolutely unnecessary and better results could have been obtained through more peaceful methods.” For these and other unionists, mass action, especially that directed by Communists, represented a potentially dangerous response to unemployment.

Other members of the “community” welcomed an inquiry into the administration of the Vancouver Police Department, not in condemnation of violence against protesters but to increase the efficiency of street policing. The Vancouver Central Ratepayers Association notified the council, declaring that “under the present conditions now prevailing in Vancouver, no lawabiding citizen, his wife or family are safe from molestation even on the streets of our City, but the same brutal treatment applies even in the home, where the taxpayer has been grossly and ignominiously assaulted[,] robbed, shot, left bleeding, by this contemptible scourge just for the want of a proper trained protective police administration.” The entire force, from individual constables to the police commissioners, has “not only shown gross incapacity, but lack of the necessary initiative and ordinary police executive ability to grapple with

the serious condition of Crime which has for several months been raging in all parts of our City.”¹³² Crime waves apparently made for better headlines than mass unemployment, the defence of property superseding the rights of freedom of assembly and speech.

The riot of 27 January did not bring an end to Communist-sponsored demonstrations, but it diverted much energy and many resources to the trials of Campbell, Litterick, Bennett, and Drayton, sapping the organizational strength of the VUWO. More to the point, Bingham clearly interpreted this riot as the ultimate cause that allowed him to suppress Communism wherever he found it. The chief constable’s “war on Vancouver’s ‘Red’ front” moved to Stanley Park on 29 January, when a demonstration at Lost Lagoon resulted in twenty-nine arrests.¹³³ The following day, he reported to the Board of Police Commissioners that “the Unemployment situation” in Vancouver was “well in hand.” After listening to Bingham’s assessment, Police Commissioners Malkin, Ditmars, and Neelands — the latter a printer and long-time executive officer of the Independent Labour Party — stated that “no objection should be taken to the Unemployed Association holding their meetings on Powell St. Grounds, but that no parades should be allowed without a permit.”¹³⁴

Two weeks later, the board convened in response to a council motion asking it to investigate police actions on 27 January. A.F. Amor, secretary to the board, read aloud the letters from various unions and individuals, after which Bingham gave his account, laying the blame for the violence on the protesters themselves and completely absolving the police of responsibility. Mayor Malkin reported that Corporation Counsel George McCrossan advised against initiating an investigation at that time because of the upcoming trial of the four Communists — Bennett, Campbell, Drayton, and Litterick — on charges of unlawful assembly, and as a result, board members voted to send Bingham’s report to City Council in lieu of the postponed investigation, with Malkin informing the press that the board “was anxious to conduct a thorough enquiry into the charges made upon completion of the cases now before the Court.”¹³⁵

In one sense, the police coercion against the unemployed on the streets on 27 January did not finally end until three months later. On 28 April, the Board of Police Commissioners held a special meeting to again take up the matter of the riot; City Council had requested they do so in light of the conclusion of the trials of the Communist four, which had resulted in guilty verdicts and short sentences. The decision of W.H. Malkin, David Hall, W.J. Blake-Wilson, and R.H. Neelands was as follows: “In view of the fact four men were convicted of being members of an unlawful assembly in the courts in connection with this demonstration, it was moved, seconded and carried unanimously that this matter be laid on the table.”¹³⁶ Four Communists had been convicted; whatever was done to the crowd was justified. No clearer message could be sent to those who contemplated taking to Vancouver’s streets in protest.

In part, this verdict was the bitter fruit of the sectarianism of Communist Party activists. To a large extent, they chose isolation from other leftist groups, believing that the strength of their organization would exact concessions from the municipality and win over the bulk of the resulting newly politicized workers to the party. This assessment proved incorrect: they won neither significant concessions from government nor popular support outside of the conditional endorsement of large numbers of itinerant men. In fact, the consequent decline of the VUWO should be seen, in part, as a reaction against its Communist leadership, which hindered the development of a functioning united front. At the same time, the riot of 27 January cannot be explained solely in terms of Third Period adventurism. In a context in which they had been denied justice through every other legitimate channel, this day's demonstration and parade involved the collective assertion by hundreds of migrants and other men and women of their rights of speech and assembly. Coupled with the particular viciousness of the police response — clearly calculated by Bingham and yet chaotically diffuse in its targets — the VUWO's frustrating tour of Vancouver's civic institutions had done much to confirm the view of the constabulary as operating in the interests of the propertied.

The final irony? While media outlets and ratepayers' organizations crusaded against an imaginary crime wave and Bingham decried the disorder of illegal demonstrations, a real criminal racket went undetected in the brightly lit offices of Cambie Street. It would emerge in the coming months that Relief Officer George Ireland had pilfered on a grand scale from his own department with the help of C. Maxwell, the clerk responsible for meal tickets. Between them, they had funnelled over \$5,000 into their own pockets during 1929. Their most profitable sideline was the scam they ran with local restaurants: meal tickets were worth twenty-five cents per day, but weekly books of meal tickets were valued at two dollars, so for every transient given aid, Ireland and Maxwell earned themselves twenty-five cents. Two city investigations revealed that in addition, Ireland had lined his pocket with "commissions" totalling \$2,500 and "donations" of \$2,500 from several restaurant owners.¹³⁷ What's more, the personal property of a number of entrants to the Old People's Home had gone missing. Bill Bennett, now editor of the *Unemployed Worker*, saw in the Ireland fiasco an opportunity for one jobless man:

We, the Executive Committee of the Vancouver and District Unemployed Workers Organisation, herewith make application on behalf of Allan Campbell a member of our Executive, which was democratically elected by the unemployed workers from whose pinched stomachs your former Relief Office[r] the Reverend Ireland, withheld five per cent for his own use, by cutting down on the sloppy mulligan which your niggardly and corrupt Relief Department so reluctantly "granted."

Our applicant, Allan Campbell, is both able and honest — he is not an Ireland. He is interested in feeding the hungry workers for whom your City Council is unable to find work except at scab coolie wages. He has been active in organising the jobless workers, for which “crime” he received the clubs and whips of your police and lodgings in your lousy jail, while Mr. Ireland and other respected, hypocritical and god-fearing vampires were sucking the blood from their emaciated bodies in order to play the stock market and feather the nests, which, in their inordinate greed, they fouled. . . .

Unless you appoint a member of the unemployed or some other militant worker, we fail to see the sense of removing Ireland, for he is neither better nor worse than any other you may select from the same decadent class that spawned him.

Campbell naturally did not get the job, and would, in fact, be deported. Instead, the new relief officer would be Colonel H.W. Cooper, a former warden of the New Westminster Penitentiary and an all-too-obvious herald of the new era of Relief Department discipline.

Since the 1970s, the bulk of Canadian historiography on the Great Depression has portrayed the central political conflict of the era as that within liberalism between outdated Victorian (if not Elizabethan!) conceptions of joblessness as a self-made product of an individual’s flawed character and modern understandings of the structural underpinnings of mass unemployment, according to which many Canadians wanted for work through “no fault of their own.”¹³⁸ The former, so the story goes, meant various types of punitive relief policies that blamed the victim, while the latter roughly translated as an interventionist program that assumed national responsibility for economic development and its consequences, and advocated unemployment insurance as well as broader welfare state measures. If this is true, then Vancouver must be commended for the incredible pace with which its residents conducted this debate, achieving in January 1930 — we are told — community consensus on a political program regarding unemployment so radical that it has yet to be realized.

There was, of course, no real “community” to be found, and yet the civic conference on unemployment in January 1930 — its existence, its agenda, and its democratically ratified program — is evidence of the powerful realignment of local forces as a result of the twinned threat of itinerants and the leftists who envisioned new societies because of them. As far as we know, the Vancouver Unemployed Workers’ Organization held dozens of public meetings; met with bodies of the City Council three times; organized nine street demonstrations, four of which ended with dispersal by police; and “caused” at least one

riot. These two months occasioned the creation of an organized movement with a radical program supported by a series of sustained militant protests, the likes of which had not been seen in Vancouver since the 1919 labour revolt. And it was also a local movement, with a program that was determined in Vancouver and that would come under sharp criticism from Communists in the centre of the country.¹³⁹ Transients were the particular preserve of the VUWO: with its six points, the group agitated for a union minimum standard of living and the abolition of racial, national, and residential hierarchies in relief provision. In time, every jobless worker — indeed, every worker — would receive union wages, and Vancouver would never be the same.

Yet while Communists may have controlled the VUWO's program (although extant evidence does not allow for a conclusive assessment), they did not control the movement or the events in which it participated. Front and centre during these moments were itinerants, most of them property-less, many of them receiving the barest of aid. Their power to shape if not control events, short-lived and limited as it proved to be, was secured through two means. First, itinerants overwhelmed the administrative machinery of Vancouver's Relief Department, with the ensuing chaos frustrating the liberal principle of no relief without regulation. This fact alone necessitated a substantial overhaul of civic methods of relief administration, beginning the process that led to labour camps, as we shall see. Second, itinerant power also stemmed from itinerants' willingness to organize and repeatedly take to the streets — or to refuse to do so — over a host of issues. For the VUWO, migrant workers served as both its biggest source of organizational strength and its Achilles heel. Without the support of itinerants, the VUWO could do little, as seen in the failure of its call for a general strike of relief workers. In this sense, these wandering workers represented the ultimate cause of and the outer limit on radical activity in Vancouver. The itinerant challenge to Vancouver's social order transcended the conventional historiographic wisdom that opposes outdated Victorian moralists, living in the shadow of the Elizabethan Poor Law statutes, and modern advocates of provisioning that would soon be associated with the coming of the welfare state. It struggled, in the program of the six points and subsequent acts of resistance, to make an individual's character irrelevant, superseded by the right of all workers to reclaim the fruits of their labour and enjoy a minimum standard of living that has yet to be achieved.

“Useless Knowledge” About Jungle Life

THE UTOPIAN PRACTICES OF HOBOHEMIA, 1930–32

Vagabondage is a veritable University of Vice; for if the university is correctly defined as a system for the acquisition of useless knowledge, vagabondage may be defined as a system for the acquisition of unnecessary vice.

Edmond Kelly, *The Elimination of the Tramp*, 1908¹

If uninhibited people are by no means the most agreeable or even the freest, a society rid of its fetters might take thought that even the forces of production are not the deepest substratum of man, but represent his historical form adapted to the production of commodities. Perhaps the true society will grow tired of development and, out of freedom, leave possibilities unused, instead of storming under a confused compulsion to the conquest of strange stars. A mankind which no longer knows want will begin to have an inkling of the delusory, futile nature of all the arrangements hitherto made in order to escape want, which used to reproduce want on a larger scale. Enjoyment itself would be affected, just as its present framework is inseparable from operating, planning, having one's way, subjugating.

Theodor W. Adorno, “Sur l'eau,” *Minima Moralia*, 1944–47²

Less than one week after Vancouver's "Bloody Sunday" police riot on Father's Day, 1938, in which intense street battles followed hard on the 5:00 a.m. eviction of the hundreds of single male unemployed sitdowners who had occupied the Hastings St. West Post Office for four weeks, Toronto's Communist-run *Daily Clarion* published "The Death of a Derelict," a short story penned by "R.M."³ A fictional account of alienation in the extreme, "The Death of a Derelict" offered a simple message: citizens of all sorts considered the individual homeless man a nameless curiosity undeserving of the basic feeling one has for fellow humans. R.M. established this theme with the opening sentences: "Nobody noticed him as he came slowly, along the sidewalk, old and unshaven, with his ragged coat over his arm. He squinted curiously into the sun, wrinkling his forehead and blinking." Temporarily blinded, the tramp does not see the traffic light change. He steps off the curb and is hit by a streetcar, which continues to roll for twenty feet after the collision. A nearby policeman asks the motorman to reverse the car; the derelict's remains are caught beneath the wheels. The driver declines because of regulations, and the cop contacts headquarters to request an emergency crew. The motorman proclaims his innocence: "He walked right into me. I had the light with me." The cop agrees, offering pat reassurance: "Sure, it wasn't your fault. *You did everything you could.*"⁴ This first section captures key elements of the ruling narrative about the transient unemployed. First, they are responsible for their plight: the derelict dies because of his own carelessness, combined with a sliver of fate in the form of sunshine. Second, the harm done to them is largely an accident — the machine metaphor is relevant here, oft-used to characterize an abstract "economy" beyond human control — and thus not a result of acts of oppression in which residents may be implicated, however indirectly. How many times, we may wonder, had the sentiment in the policeman's last sentence been uttered in reference to a homeless man?

At this point, a crowd assembles, as fire trucks and a police cruiser arrive at the scene: "Three policemen stood looking at what was left of him under the wheels." The derelict's dismemberment serves throughout as the literal embodiment of his alienation. A fireman remarks, "His head's almost off. This'll be a nice job for someone," and a medical intern adds, "It's going to be a hell of a job getting him out from there. He must have been a contortionist to get himself wrapped around like that."⁵ The motorman, unable like the others to latch onto the spectacular dimensions of the derelict's death, "giggled hysterically." The cop commands the intern to make sure the derelict is dead, which begins an argument as to process, reminding us that in the division of labour governing the collection and transportation of the remains lay other forms of alienation. The driver again proclaims his innocence, but it does not really matter; he slips into shock and becomes inconsolable, staring at the body "in morbid fascination."

No one in the crowd can identify the segmented body. The intern notes, "He looks like a bum of some kind. I wouldn't worry about identifying him. Anybody who wants to can go to the morgue and have a look at him. He'll keep for a while." Muttering that he will "dream of this for weeks," the driver is led to the ambulance to lie down, becoming in one sense the real victim in this story: though dismembered, the tramp is dead, while the driver must now live having traumatically encountered the grotesque consequences of his perfectly reasonable actions. The scene evokes such a visceral reaction that the reporter instantly senses that he won't need to take photos, since they would be unprintable. He asks if anyone knows the identity of the victim, and a fireman responds, "Nobody around here knows. I guess nobody cares much. A bum, by the looks of it." The emergency crew finally manages to jack up the front end of the streetcar. With the remains now visible, one cop exclaims that he "never saw anybody cut up much worse than this guy, even in the war." The reporter wryly quips, "I'd hate to be the guy who's got to clean this street," and whistles as he walks away. As the corpse is placed on a stretcher, the driver begins to weep, and is led away, while the policeman recruits the second driver to return the bloodied vehicle to the garage. Traffic begins to flow once again.

"The Death of a Derelict" is a tragic account of the erasure of the unemployed's humanity. This was death not as "limit-experience" but as the ultimate negation, a wholly appropriate end to life in a world where armed policemen viciously clubbed underfed protesters. The story offered nothing about the derelict's personality or history, the type of detail that would humanize him, even in the least, and thus enable the reader's identification with his life. In fact, most of our knowledge about him concerns the fate of his body, rendered by the streetcar into baggable bits of alienation, more interesting in death than in life, although here, too, the stimulation was fleeting. Instead, R.M. directs our attention to the aftermath, populated with stock characters – the not-so-bright policeman, the cynical, "seen-it-all" reporter, the driver scarred forever, the intern with just another corpse for the morgue – immersed in their own personal travails. No one grieves for the man; instead, his death is made into a spectacle. As a site of the grotesque, it elicits jokes, and then the mechanics of life resume until there is nothing more to see. In short, R.M. brilliantly re-enacted in prose the ritualistic denial of humanity that so often occurred in response to the very presence of jobless and homeless men, a fictional echo of the events of Vancouver only days before.

The critical strength of "The Death of a Derelict," however, is also its primary weakness. There is nothing in this tale to negate the negation, as members of the Frankfurt School liked to say: a dismembered body can hardly represent a way of life. Nor are we given any glimpse of the life the derelict left behind: Was his life one of eternal suffering, the friendless existence of

the wandering nomad, or was he instead crossing the road on his way back to an Adornoesque “homeland” for beggars? Had he found “refuge” for his kind somewhere beyond the borders of “civilization”? Is this just a sad story, or is it a genuine tragedy? Here, I argue that British Columbia’s jungles did indeed become a non-contiguous “homeland” for thousands of derelicts outside the cash-nexus, a place where alternative forms of social relations emerged involving (and at times enveloping) an ever-mobile, ever-growing population dominated by young, unattached men from many nations. This homeland, which recruited thousands of refugees for its cause, thrived on its own terms despite (and, in truth, because of) the absence of both a capitalist marketplace and a liberal-democratic state. This homeland, situated conceptually at the crossroads of the Foucauldian heterotopia and the Marxian realm of freedom, I call “Hobohemia.”

I begin this chapter with a sketch of the basic demographic features of British Columbia’s transient population as constructed through municipal and provincial census-taking practices over several years. The bulk of the chapter centres on the handful of jungles that became all too visible in Vancouver beginning in the summer of 1931 and that would subsequently serve as the archetypes of transient life in the local imaginary. By June, four distinct jungles had emerged within city limits. About two hundred men lived in temporary shelters built along the shore of Burrard Inlet on property administered by the Harbour Board. Hundreds lived on the False Creek flats near the Great Northern Railway terminal, while hundreds more, most of them at least forty years old, lived in a temporary structure built under the Georgia Viaduct. The fourth jungle, located adjacent to Prior Street, housed approximately 450 itinerants, most of them of Swedish and Finnish descent. By the end of the summer, another jungle would appear, this one at the southeastern end of the False Creek railway yards. Unknown numbers squatted in Stanley Park, on Deadman’s Island, and on the former Kitsilano Reserve (now the site of Vanier Park and the Vancouver City Archives).

I also attempt in this chapter to reconstruct the variety of activities – begging, foraging, stealing, and collecting relief from government and private charities – with which tramps acquired resources to be distributed among their fellow tramps. The monetary value of these goods as commodities mattered little, and exchanges were usually conducted face to face, without recourse to a medium such as money. The organization of jungle life was thus immediate and relatively consensual, conducted in contexts in which capital accumulation was not a consideration. Although these road-based communities were never free of conflict, hierarchies within them owed little to the acquisitive individualism of *laissez-faire* capitalism. I conclude with a brief theoretical detour in order to relate the reversals of market practice found in Hobohemia to broader social processes concerning the capitalist market and the liberal-democratic state.

Transients in the Garden of Species: Naming and Enumerating a Population

Despite the relatively slow pace of academic paradigm shifts a century ago compared to today's always-already-read, just-in-time ethos of production, it took but thirty-five years for "tramp," first used to identify itinerant male wage workers in America in 1873, to become an ossified category of analysis. At least this is the impression conveyed by Edmond Kelly's book of the cumbersome title, quoted at the outset of this chapter. "Obviously, the first task before us is that of classification," Kelly wearily begins the second chapter of his instant classic, "but the subject of classification is so arid that the exhaustive treatment of it has been relegated to the Appendix for the benefit of those who are contented with nothing less than the most precise ideas."⁶ Of course, Kelly diligently follows this admission with a nine-page discussion of his own system of categories, all the while remaining true to his dismissal of the enterprise itself. In his calculus, what tramps were in the present mattered less than what society could do to them (and for itself) in the future, with a program of forced labour colonies. Only after an attempt to eradicate the vestiges of "vice" through a stint in a colony could that subjectivity be assessed. Knowledge about derelicts in their current state was of secondary value. Instead, one should engage with the grander rationalization project of the wholesale elimination of vagabondage.

The functional character of the overwhelming bulk of information found in British Columbia's archives pertaining to unemployment and homelessness in the Great Depression means that the historian who searches these records for the words *derelict*, *hobo*, *tramp*, and *bindlestiff* does so in vain. It is not that these terms cannot be found, but rather that they served little purpose other than to add occasional colour to letters and policy papers organized around other, more powerful words. Instead, one encounters the "transient" as the ubiquitous category of relief provision, one that anchored the day-to-day practices of municipal and provincial administrations, private charity organizations, and other corporate enterprises, and of media outlets, both mass and marginal. Over the course of three years, tens of thousands of unattached homeless men, each with his own history, all tried first to fit themselves through a doorway marked "transient" in order to be considered for public or private aid, and this "population" served as the occasion for the generation of most of the extant information about the demographic features of this massive mobile army of tramps and other itinerants.

Yet if we step back from the logics of governmentality that organize the bulk of the extant evidence, and from Foucault's rather strict nominalism in this regard, we can more fully absorb the methodological wisdom to be found in Edmond Kelly's moralistic caution that "vagabondage is a veritable

University of Vice,” a long-standing set of “acquired habits” learned from and transmitted to others in a context where societal neglect meant little direct supervision. Seen in this light, the “transient” was but the most recent local administrative designation for ways of life that had been called many things since their emergence in North America in the 1870s. The explosion of industrial-capitalist growth, coupled with the equally dramatic wave of immigration that brought workers of every imaginable background to the continent, made for a truly polyglot force of young unskilled propertyless men for whom mobility and poverty represented “a virtual stage in the working-class life cycle,” to quote Todd DePastino’s *Citizen Hobo*.⁷

Those who wandered throughout North America in the first half of the twentieth century were a highly differentiated lot. The sizeable boom in immigration beginning in the 1890s brought workers of every imaginable background to the continent, creating a heterogeneous force of unskilled labour. Chicago was the “Main Stem” of an elaborate network of railways built by masses of itinerants, who then used the products of their labour to travel thousands of miles in search of work and sociability, if not political fellowship in the form of the Industrial Workers of the World, the International Brotherhood Welfare Association, and other itinerant-dominated organizations. In economic terms, the labour of itinerants in the forests and mines, on railways and farms, enabled the expansion of industrial capitalism, in terms of both territory colonized and value generated. Yet in the labour-intensive resource-extraction industries, they were all too easily replaced, if not pitted against one another, by bosses and union leaders seeking to exploit racial, national, and regional tensions. Politically, as rootless wanderers, they had few political rights to exercise (if any at all, as was the case for racial minorities such as African-Americans and Asian-Canadians, among others). Paradoxically, they could also become tools of ignorance and corruption — bussed in by political party bosses and told how to vote in return for money and drink — if not dangerously mobile bearers of radical ideologies. Morally suspect because of his tenuous grasp of the benefits of the Protestant work ethic and the unmentionable practices found in the jungles, the tramp was also an easy target for legal persecution and a “usual suspect” for a host of crimes.⁸ In short, the transient existed as a curious hybrid, fundamental to the growth of continental capitalism and a substantive threat to tear it apart from within.⁹ The death knell for this mobile workforce first sounded in Michigan in the early 1910s with the emergence of Fordism, which, in its idealized form, sought to mould workers into efficient and responsible breadwinners, willing to endure endless repetitive tasks and moral scrutiny in order to further the home-centred values of consumerism and domesticity. The mass migrations of the 1930s were something of a dramatic final act for migrant workingmen, appearing in “transient” dress in a “Romantic” attempt

to resurrect ways of life atrophied by the increasingly sedentary character of the mass-production age.¹⁰

In the British Columbian context, writers such as Agnes Laut and Andrew Roddan in the first half of the twentieth century and Mark Leier and Jack Scott in the latter half argued for the centrality of the mobile male wage worker to understanding the province's complicated economic and political history before the Second World War.¹¹ A fundamental necessity on Canada's furthest frontier, without which either capitalist development or state formation would have slowed to a halt, workers both skilled and unskilled made Vancouver part of the wider labour market for those not just to the east but to the south as well.¹² In the eyes of business leaders, government officials, and media magnates, the ubiquity of itinerant protest and the increasing power of the industrial union movement threatened to transform the province with a revolution at specific conjunctures such as in 1919.¹³ In the early 1920s, protests by jobless unskilled workingmen in Vancouver and elsewhere led to the Dominion government's first prominent financial contribution to the field of unemployment relief.¹⁴ Vagabondage thus had a history of its own that began before the mass appearance of "transient" as an administrative category in the early 1930s, and these traditions, as much as Depression-era government practice, contributed to making life on the road, in the jungles and in the cities. The "transient" belonged to the government, but "transients" were in some respects the same as the Industrial Workers of the World and the One Big Union had left them a decade earlier.

At the same time, the context of the early 1930s differed enough from the heyday of tramping culture in the 1910s that I want to avoid a portrait of Depression-era itinerants as following nostalgically in the footsteps of generations gone by. Indeed, I am hesitant to offer any portrait, given that the procedures with which data about transients was produced did not allow for accurate predictions concerning the size of the transient population. According to figures collected for Premier Simon Fraser Tolmie in April 1933, almost 98,000 people had registered for municipal and provincial relief in British Columbia since registration programs had begun in the autumn of 1930; over 52,000 of these were single jobless men, and at least 20,000 of these were considered transients.¹⁵ This number did not count those sent to federally run relief camps beginning in late 1932. Nor, obviously, did it include those who avoided registration during their stay in the province. Other estimates by figures such as Relief Officer Colonel H.W. Cooper frequently pegged the number of transient unemployed persons in Vancouver alone at between 10,000 and 12,000, equivalent to about 5 percent of the city's population in the early 1930s, following its merger with Point Grey and South Vancouver.

Based on the archival evidence, we can safely assume the continuous presence of itinerant single men numbering in the thousands in Vancouver, and in the tens of thousands within the province, from December 1929 until the close of 1932; the period of exception, if it exists, is the spring-to-autumn work season of 1930. Nor did the size of this population offer the only barrier to bureaucratic understanding: its spatial mobility, too, contributed to confusion by making it difficult to create the infrastructure necessary to sustain the administrative gaze. Periodically, authorities detailed policemen and Relief Department staff to monitor the human traffic at select points on the railway line. A July 1932 stakeout at the Port Mann and Port Coquitlam railway yards recorded 220 transients heading east and 90 moving west during a single day, while a contemporaneous report from Vancouver recorded 200 arrivals and 150 departures per day. This last report might have understated the traffic, however, as a different Relief Department employee observed 40 arrivals and 90 departures over the course of an hour and a half.¹⁶ Static figures produced from the sides of railway tracks could never hope to capture the shifting sands of experience of a profoundly mobile population: itinerants were rarely subject to the many technologies states had for seeing “transients” in comparison to other socially produced figures, whether marginal, in the case of urban characters such as the prostitute and the fairy, or normative, as with mass-production workers and soldiers.¹⁷

Nonetheless, there remain two sets of data generated by municipal employees that give some shape to basic demographic aspects of BC’s transient population, especially those defined as relevant to the ongoing intergovernmental contests over responsibility for relief. Both sets of data owe their existence to the Conservative provincial government, which required all BC municipalities to register the unemployed before receiving funds mandated by the federal Unemployment Relief Act of 1930.¹⁸ In the period from 1 October to 21 November 1930, 5,244 single men had certain personal information – their age, nationality, employment history, and residency – recorded by Vancouver’s Relief Department.¹⁹ The second registration program, another civic effort required by the provincial government, covered the period from 1 August 1931 to 30 June 1932, during which 9,472 single jobless men answered questions about their lives.²⁰

We should, however, approach the resulting statistics with caution, recognizing that everyone involved in the process of their generation – the enumerated, the enumerating, and their bosses – understood the foundational character of residency: it was used to organize one’s entire relationship with relief from start to finish. Also, our ability to learn from these figures is limited because of the form in which they exist; we have access only to final numbers, already divided according to residency, occupation, age, and other categories, and not to the individual responses that would enable a more

thorough disaggregated population. Finally, here too the inefficiencies of human endeavour cloud our perception; more than 10 percent of single men in the first cohort, for instance, declined to answer questions about residency, suggesting a rather lax supervision of the registration process itself.

Scholars have taken the existence of such statistics as evidence of what Foucault calls bio-power, a form of power exercised through the use of “population.” While Foucault’s work on the function of the author acts as an a priori critique of many of the truth-claims made about his arguments, I cannot help but view one fact as distilling something of the essence of his true being: on the same day that he completed corrections on the page proofs of *Discipline and Punish*, he also began writing a corrective of that book’s account of power that would, in revised form, see the light of day as “Right of Death and Power Over Life,” the final chapter in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*.²¹ There, in arguing that “the ancient right to *take* life or *let* live was replaced by a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death,” he adds to disciplinary power the “anatomy-politics of the human body,” the notion of regulatory or bio-power, “a bio-politics of the population.”²² Over the next five years, the notion that population as a category enabled the explosion of what he terms “governmentality” appeared frequently in Foucault’s work.²³ In his 1978 lectures, the category was used in his analysis of the apparatus of security and its governance of territory, with Foucault differentiating security techniques and targets from those of juridical and disciplinary mechanisms of power.²⁴ Population is largely a “political-statistical concept,” according to Bruce Curtis, the value of which lay in how the form of the category enabled both the localization of individuals in virtual time and space, and the abstraction of social relations from their real space-time context.²⁵ “Population is not an observable object, but a way of organizing social observations,” he argues in his work on the making of the Canadian census.²⁶ Noting that Foucault often deployed naturalistic depictions of population as rooted in biological facts, in addition to his “confused and incoherent” analyses of the state in relation to governmentality, Curtis deftly rescues the concept and devises a framework that underlines the manner in which census-taking shaped the Canadian social imaginary.²⁷

While I accept many of Curtis’s claims regarding the state’s investment in population-making processes, this particular case offers up its own critique of the now-sizeable historiography on governmentality, in that Vancouver officials, both elected and appointed, extensively employed a technology of power that might be called “governmentopathy.” We can reject Foucault’s functionalism and yet accept evidence regarding the intent at the root of specific knowledge-production and -circulation practices and projects. What, however, is to be done when statistics are collected to no apparent end? The two statistical populations available to us, in other words, were not thought valuable enough by city officials to employ to any end whatsoever, although

one was sent to provincial officials, who presumably put them to better use. As individual biographical fragments, this information was essential to relief administration on a case-by-case basis, but as portraits of the collective community of transients, they gathered dust in someone's office; one of the portraits, in fact, exists only in handwritten form, scribbled in a giant letterbook, suggesting a limited circulation, to say the least. It may well be that the numbers generated in these reports were used in face-to-face conversations or oral reports that figured in the workings of political rule in Vancouver. If so, evidence of this has yet to surface; there is no written reference to these statistics in extant archives of the Relief Department, save for the copies I have used. This case suggests that any conception of the social relations of knowledge production and its relation to state forms of power should include the inefficient, the illegible, and the uncalculated.

Despite this official failure to make functional this statistical data, we can extract from these numbers information about a diverse would-be proletariat of international origins, a body with a history. The figures pertaining to registrants' length of residence in Canada (tables 1 and 2), for instance, clearly indicate the profound impact of the Great War in disrupting the movement of wage workers from across the globe, but especially Europe, to North America. The sharp decline in the number of single jobless men who arrived in Canada ten to fifteen years before their registration sometime between late 1930 and early 1932 coincides with the dramatic decline in immigration to Canada during and immediately after the war. Donald Avery observes that the subsequent boom years for immigration, 1925 to 1930, brought to Canada more than 350,000 people from continental Europe at a time when large numbers of landed immigrants from Britain "abandoned" Canada and moved south in search of a better life.²⁸

Extending Avery's work, I would like to posit a generational divide, predicated as much on length of residence and work experience as on age, among the unskilled men in the jungles under examination. The first or older generation — those men of any country of origin (including Canada) who arrived in Canada before the war — is well known to us: driven by necessity, these millions brutally worked their way across the country and back, remaking whatever used to be thought of as "nature" by building mile after mile of transportation infrastructure and extracting tons of primary resources. Politically, the common labour of these nameless masses both allowed for the creation of immense profits and corporate power — the twentieth-century robber barons who greatly influenced federal immigration policy in the quest for lower wages and labour discipline — and, just as important, gave these workers reasons (although certainly not the only ones) to become the lifeblood of a host of industrial union and radical political movements ranging from the Western Federation of Miners to the Industrial Workers of the World.

TABLE 1 Length of Residence in Canada, First Survey

<i>Period of time in Canada</i>	<i>Number (N = 5,244)</i>	<i>% of total</i>
0 to 12 mos.	275	5.2
1 to 2 yrs.	367	7.0
2 to 3 yrs.	390	7.4
3 to 4 yrs.	304	5.8
4 to 5 yrs.	333	6.4
5 to 10 yrs.	515	9.8
10 to 15 yrs.	268	5.1
15 to 20 yrs.	664	12.7
20 to 25 yrs.	571	10.9
Over 25 yrs.	693	13.2
Not given	864	16.5

SOURCE: Vancouver City Archives, Vancouver Social Service Department Papers, series 451, box 107-F-1, Registration Book.

TABLE 2 Length of Residence in Canada, Second Survey

<i>Period of time in Canada</i>	<i>Number (N = 5,244)</i>	<i>% of total</i>
0 to 12 mos.	17	0.2
1 to 2 yrs.	247	2.6
2 to 3 yrs.	390	4.1
3 to 4 yrs.	363	3.8
4 to 5 yrs.	441	4.7
5 to 10 yrs.	1,044	11.0
10 to 15 yrs.	427	4.5
15 to 20 yrs.	1,170	12.4
20 to 25 yrs.	1,278	13.5
Over 25 yrs.	1,077	11.4
Born in Canada	3,018	31.8

SOURCE: Vancouver City Archives, City Clerks' Papers, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 3, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 25 July 1932.

The second generation, those who first entered Canada's unskilled labour markets in the 1920s, when such work became increasingly associated with what were then called "alien" or "foreign" ethnicities, experienced the full brunt of technological and social changes to common labour in the post-war era, when, as Cecilia Danysk demonstrates, even agricultural work was proletarianized.²⁹ This period also marked the general erosion of the foundational economic importance of men's unskilled physical labour in the face of the emergence of mass-production industries and Fordist modes of labour regulation. From a comparative standpoint, this smaller cohort proved unable to overcome the sizeable obstacles to organization in the wake of the repression of the 1919 labour revolt and the collapse of the One Big Union — moments in class struggle that belong to the first generation — until the early 1930s.³⁰

This portrait of two generations distinguished by their differing relationship to the first global war of the twentieth century can be extended through an examination of the age of single male registrants. Tables 3 and 4 indicate a clear numerical dominance of the second generation, men in their twenties, who were too young to participate in the war effort and who likely entered the labour market after the war's conclusion. By mid-decade, commentators would place much emphasis upon what struck them as the disturbingly large cohort of teenage males, those who never had a chance to enter the labour market before becoming unemployed.³¹ In the early 1930s, however, this group was insignificant, comparatively speaking. Instead, we are impressed with the sizeable number of single men who can be said to belong to the first, older generation. The substantial decline in the number of single men in their thirties compared to those a decade younger can largely be attributed to marriage, although here too the war no doubt played its part: in the second survey, 2,455 claimed to have served in either the British or Canadian armed forces, including the navy. Yet also remarkable is the absence of any consistent decline from the age of thirty to forty-five in the first survey, and to fifty-five in the second. Indeed, the number of registrants belonging to the first generation, men roughly forty years of age or older, ranged from at least 35 percent in the first survey to almost 45 percent in the second, suggesting a much older unemployed population than is typically found in the historiography. While the data do not allow for any direct correlation to be drawn between age and health, the second survey recorded the fitness of registrants, understood as the ability to perform the basic tasks associated with manual labour. A total of 7,402 single men (78.1%) were judged wholly fit. Officials declared 1,314 (13.9%) to be fit for light work only, 403 (4.3%) to be of "questionable" fitness, and 353 (3.7%) to be unfit altogether. We can assume that these latter groups included many older men whose bodies no longer met minimum standards of employment after decades of arduous physical labour.

Table 3 Age of Registrants, First Survey

<i>Age in years</i>	<i>Number (N = 5,244)</i>	<i>% of total</i>
17 to 19	257	4.9
20 to 24	891	17.0
25 to 29	971	18.5
30 to 34	501	9.6
35 to 39	470	9.0
40 to 44	520	9.9
45 to 49	411	7.8
50 to 54	331	6.3
55 to 59	286	5.5
60 to 64	216	4.1
65 to 69	75	1.4
70 and older	13	0.2
Not given	302	5.8

SOURCE: Vancouver City Archives, Vancouver Social Service Department Papers, series 451, box 107-F-1, Registration Book.

Table 4 Age of Registrants, Second Survey

<i>Age in years</i>	<i>Number (N = 9,472)</i>	<i>% of total</i>
16 to 19	611	6.5
20 to 24	1,594	16.8
25 to 29	1,314	13.9
30 to 34	930	9.8
35 to 39	794	8.4
40 to 44	814	8.6
45 to 49	919	9.7
50 to 54	894	9.4
55 to 59	605	6.4
60 to 64	519	5.5
65 to 69	352	3.7
70 and older	126	1.3

SOURCE: Vancouver City Archives, City Clerks' Papers, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 3, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 25 July 1932.

Finally, to this information about single men's age and length of residence in Canada, we can add data regarding their country of origin. Tables 5 and 6 paint a portrait of an overwhelmingly Anglo-Canadian population of increasing size – more than 70 percent of the single male registrants in the second survey declared Canadian, English, Irish, or Scottish as their nationality – although here the explicitly discriminatory elements of state relief policies certainly worked against the large-scale registration of those unable to pass for English-Canadian. Since migrants who had been in Canada for fewer than five years were vulnerable to deportation if they applied for public relief, statistics generated for the purposes of relief provision typically understated the presence of those denied the full benefits of citizenship.³² Chief Constable W.J. Bingham argued that “many foreign born workers are afraid to register for relief, owing to the false rumours circulated by the Communist Party, as to the policy of deportation of the Federal Government.”³³ Also, conflicts over responsibility for relief for Chinese and Japanese men meant that in the first survey, officials unofficially excluded them by counting their number as zero. Despite these obstacles, the surveys provide glimpses of a diverse international proletariat recruited from America, Europe, and the Far East. In a port city that doubled as a significant national railway terminus, the racial, ethnic, and national diversity of Vancouver's working class naturally owed much to global transportation networks and to the labour required to sustain them.

Unfortunately, the second registration campaign did not collect information regarding the occupational history of single men, meaning that the biggest gaps in our knowledge lie in the realm of work experience. True, the first survey recorded a considerable amount of occupational diversity, listing ninety-eight categories covering both skilled and unskilled work in blue-collar and white-collar sectors. Nonetheless, only twelve occupations represented at least 1 percent of the whole sample (see table 7). That more than 45 percent of single men were placed within the undifferentiated category of “labourer” speaks to the casual character of the market for unskilled labour. Table 7 is a veritable “who's who” of prominent skilled and unskilled male occupations, in both the blue- and white-collar fields. However, given the timing of the first survey, taken in October and November 1930, we can surmise that, along with the immediate collapse of the lumber industry, the effects of the economic depression in British Columbia were felt most immediately by those involved in industries dominated by what Andrea Graziosi calls “common labour,” such as construction and longshoring, where the actual skills and talents that men possessed matter little compared to the rough, rhythmic motions their bodies could be made to repeat day after day so that cargo and earth might be moved.³⁴ The numerical dominance of “labourer” is testament to the near-universalization of the market for unskilled casual work: from around the world, tens of thousands of men moved in and out of North American urban

Table 5 Nationality of Registrants, First Survey

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number (N = 4,663)</i>	<i>% of total</i>
Canada	1,160	24.8
England	946	20.3
Scotland	561	12.1
Finland	469	10.1
Sweden	343	7.4
Ireland	243	5.2
Norway	200	4.3
Yugoslavia	184	3.9
Poland	129	2.8
Denmark	101	2.2
United States	98	2.1
Russia	85	1.8
Italy	72	1.5
Holland	72	1.5

SOURCE: Vancouver City Archives, Vancouver Social Service Department Papers, series 451, box 107-F-1, Registration Book.

Table 6 Nationality of Registrants, Second Survey

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number (N = 8,810)</i>	<i>% of total</i>
Canada	3,222	36.6
England	1,911	21.7
Scotland	1,177	13.4
Finland	450	5.1
Ireland	416	4.7
Sweden	403	4.6
Norway	274	3.1
United States	237	2.7
Poland	207	2.3
Russia	134	1.5
Denmark	132	1.5
Yugoslavia	125	1.4
Italy	122	1.4

SOURCE: Vancouver City Archives, City Clerks' Papers, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 3, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 25 July 1932.

Table 7 Occupation of Registrants, First Survey

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number (N = 4,148)</i>	<i>% of total</i>
Labourer	2,318	55.9
Logger	731	17.6
Truck driver	333	8.0
Carpenter	167	4.0
Miner	103	2.5
Firefighter	92	2.2
Lumber worker	83	2.0
Painter	73	1.8
Cook	71	1.7
Office clerk	63	1.5
Farmer	62	1.5
Bookkeeper	52	1.3

SOURCE: Vancouver City Archives, Vancouver Social Service Department Papers, series 451, box 107-F-1, Registration Book.

centres like Vancouver, their mobility both enabled and made necessary by capital's insatiable demand for expendable sources of casual labour.

While we cannot draw direct connections among these different categories of information, we can observe in this statistical portrait the rough outlines of two generations among the single men who sought relief in Vancouver from 1930 to 1932. The first generation — those who, regardless of country of origin, entered Canada's labour markets before the war — was numerically smaller than the second generation and was probably perceived as comparatively Anglo-Canadian in custom if not appearance, given the sizeable number of second-generation migrants from continental Europe in the 1920s who arrived in the midst of nativist campaigns. The larger second generation entered a different set of labour markets in the period following the war and the Bolshevik revolution, given the evisceration of many of the itinerants' radical industrial organizations and political movements by the War Measures Act and the nation-wide Red Scare that grew up in reaction to the labour revolt of 1919.³⁵ In British Columbia, the jungles served as a social space outside the immediate control of authorities where, through the intermingling of generations, earlier itinerant forms of existence associated with pre-war labour markets and social movements were reactivated and reworked en masse. It was a type of social experiment conducted not by scientists but by the research subjects themselves, who developed their own words and systems for communicating their actions and who employed these procedures without reference to a centralizing authority.

The Demographics and Values of Hobohemia

We begin with a stanza from Martha Millet's 1936 poem, "Women of Spain," first published in the American Communist Party's *Daily Worker*:

From sacks of sand, sticks of chairs,
Chunks of wood, posts of beds, iron scraps
They erect barricades, packed close and firm;
Stones torn from mother grip of cobbled streets
To fortify the blast — stones hard and smooth
That have known the passionless tread of foot —
Now they shall know impassioned days.³⁶

Banging out the objects of the reconstruction with a waltz-like rhythm — barricades, barricades — only to abruptly slow the tempo, lingering over the investment of passion in the work of women, this stanza beautifully captures the dialectic of autonomous collective labour set against the background of fascist militarism. In these days of endlessly flowing pastiche — in which it is difficult to differentiate the Situationist concept of "détournement" from the commercial mantra of "reissue, repackage, repackage" — it is safe to venture that our brains are no longer hardwired in such a way as to allow our appreciation of the experience of illegal shelter construction.³⁷ The resultant production of turbulent shocks, tremendous pleasures, dizzying numbness, and gloomy boredom came, to be sure, with periodic bouts of malnourishment and fasting in Depression-era North America.³⁸ While fully cognizant of necessity's almost total determination of access to the materials from which the jungles were fashioned, I cannot help but see in these makeshift encampments something surplus to necessity, elements that signify not just a politics but an aesthetics that actualized the chaos of modernity and hinted at its temporary transcendence. Martha Millet's women would use the material foundations of their lives in order to protect the newly emerged Spanish republic against the forces of reaction; British Columbia's homeless took from the capitalist world around them enough to raise an island where they could experience "impassioned days." We will start with the shelters themselves, proceeding in turn to consider those who lived in them and how they survived.

Where else could the propertyless begin construction of a new social order than with the garbage of the old? It helped, no doubt, that they had founded one of the jungles at Vancouver's refuse dump. For Reverend Andrew Roddan of First United Church, whose mission throughout the summer of 1931 to provide food to homeless men en masse materially contributed to the spread of Hobohemia, the jungle became a powerful symbol of suffering in the advanced capitalist world. "When you think of a jungle," he writes on the second page of *God in the Jungles*, a book that solidified Roddan's public image

as the face of a renewed social gospel in Vancouver, “you imagine a dense tropical forest with heavy, tangled undergrowth, where the light of sun rarely penetrates and which is the haunt of wild beasts and savage men.” Those in Vancouver offered a “very different picture before the mind”:

They may be found in clumps of wild bushes or among the trees, on the side of a stream, by the side of the road, near the railroad tracks, or in a disused lumber camp or factory. They are to be found in Australia, India, Japan, and in Great Britain as well as in Canada and America. . . . This jungle is composed of crude shelters made out of old tins, boards, boxes, disused motorcars, anything and everything, gathered from the dump heap nearby and formed into a rough shelter into which crawl, not animals, but homeless men, without saying their prayers, feeling as the Psalmist felt when he said: “No man careth for my soul.” Their bellies slack and gnawing with hunger, they lie down and go to sleep, while the other half sleep in hotels and comfortable homes.³⁹

Along with imagery of the refuse that served as raw material for the homeless homebuilder, Roddan provides an index to the emotions stimulated by this spectacle. “A mental and moral revolt . . . made my heart sick,” he woefully exclaims; “I felt like crying out to high Heaven against this cond[ition],” which he labels a “breeding ground for Bolshevism.”⁴⁰ John Belshaw notes that Roddan’s social gospel was accompanied by a “stagy oratorical style” to market both himself and First United as the vanguard of charity work in Vancouver.⁴¹

The most detailed account of the “crude shelters” themselves is found in “Vancouver Jungles and Their Denizens,” written by Sydney Scott for the *Province* immediately following the destruction of the jungles in early September.⁴² Scott had been dispatched to spend a night in False Creek in a “haven of the hobo and the hapless,” which he characterized as “like a shelled dump in Flanders” dotted with “crazy junk-like shacks or miraculously-constructed huts.” There, amidst the “heterogeneous population,” he befriended three men — Bob, Frank, and Shorty — about to board trains for Montreal and the Maritimes. After they left, Scott took up with Mac and Red, and bunked down for the night in quarters that were “luxurious,” even “pretentious”; that Scott saw himself as a master of the condescending compliment oozes from every paragraph. The walls were papered with material he believed had been stripped from the walls of boxcars, and the floors covered with two carpets, “rose and grey, harmonizing with the walls.” With tongue firmly in cheek, Scott suggests that the ceiling was done “in what an architect might describe as ‘exposed beams, untreated,’” referencing lumber the builders had recovered from the city dump. The beds were forged from automobile springs, the “coverlets” from cloth sacks. Mac and Red had even added a sun porch complete with chesterfield and refrigerator, although

we can assume the latter was not functional. Other shelters, he noticed, had been fashioned from signboards: “one starts to read a banner about the advantages of ‘sunset’ smokes and is suddenly compelled to relapse into a panegyric on soap.” Our twosome had held a variety of waged positions, ranging from constructions jobs that earned them anywhere from eight to ten dollars per day — a very high wage rate in 1931 — to mowing lawns “to get a few coppers and something to eat.” Scott’s bunkmates “have learned to make something out of nothing,” he enthuses. “You can always do without tools if you haven’t got ‘em,” said Mac, whom Scott characterizes as “ingenious” and “self-reliant.”

If one prefers respectful but detached appreciation to all-knowing scorn or intense spiritual suffering, there is Special Constable Eric Hichens’s report of 23 July, written after he had been detailed to investigate the jungle on Harbour Board property after reports that nearby boxcars had been broken into and marmalade stolen. Having worked undercover on relief gangs in the winter of 1929–30 and attended meetings of jobless and Communist Party organizations, Hichens had spent considerable time with the downtown unemployed, watching with a trained eye for subversive activities:

The piece of land on which this camp is situated is a piece of reclaimed land, the property of the Harbour Board. In reclaiming such land, often all sorts of refuse is dumped for the base and a mere covering of earth on top. It was late but many of the shelters, tents and huts were occupied, some of the shelters are of wood, some of corrugated tin sheeting, mostly a mixture with thick paper as proofing material. The night was warm and dry, so I therefore saw things at their best, a small amount of rain would make the place a quagmire, drainage would be bad as it is very low lying. On a damp day the odours arising from the soil must be very offensive. Some of the men have a few blankets, others the majority were using brown paper for their beds. The interior of those shelters viewed, showed a very tidy and orderly condition, such cooking utensils as were in view, appeared clean. In and around were several camp fires. PRACTICALLY NO FOOD WAS IN VIEW. NO SPARE CLOTHING EITHER.

Some of the shelters are labelled, CITY HALL, Vancouver Hotel etc. The men have made every possible attempt to keep the place clean and orderly and it shows how they would look after proper accomm[o]dation if allotted to them. . . . No one having seen this self built camp, could fail to appreciate that if camp were erected in suitable places, the men left to a big degree to organize their own control, that the whole thing would be successful, that the lazy & undesirable elements would be weeded out steadily. . . . No resentment at our inspection was shown at any time, no known Communists were noted therein by me.⁴³

Finally, we have the 23 June report of Dr. J. W. McIntosh, the medical health officer for the city, who maintained that the shelters on land of the Great Northern Railway Company, made using “material picked up around them,” should be considered “generally clean and tidy but of course very primitive,” with most residents “careful about [the] disposal of sanitary waste to a distance from camp.” Some had even volunteered to “maintain sanitary conveniences if material was supplied.” All in all, these shelters were “as healthful as in camp life.” Nonetheless, McIntosh stressed that there were profound health risks at that location: the water in the adjacent False Creek contained “absolutely no growth of organic life,” which McIntosh traced to residual amounts of iron, tin, and other metals, the poisonous legacy of the industrial workplaces of the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

Despite the wide variety of purposes and politics that compelled our four commentators to write, their accounts provide an unknowing consensus on several issues. First, Vancouver’s urban jungles arose on tainted, malodorous dead land at “reclaimed” sites that could not be considered viable for continuous settlement. The homeless migrant took refuge on land already exhausted of its productive resources to the extent that business was no longer feasible, on and with the post-commodification waste products that they and others like them had generated under the sign of necessity: this was an all-too-easily completed equation, in which poisonous land, appropriated garbage, and homeless men formed the identical sides of an equilateral triangle labelled “capitalist detritus.” Second, there existed something of an ethos of neighbourhood improvement among squatters, based in the practical skills they possessed and a set of domestic standards devised by working-class men in predominantly homosocial contexts. The acquisition of couches, fridges, and the like point to a shared desire to develop the jungles beyond the “primitive” level initially observed by McIntosh and to stake an ongoing claim to space that differed from that of migrants who were in Vancouver temporarily, on their way to other destinations. Just as important, it appears that a jungle aesthetic developed over time, with the tongue-in-cheek street signs and old advertisements hinting at a well-developed satirical sensibility that mocked the original and authentic. Indeed, the bricolage style of jungle housing vividly sketched by Scott anticipates the late-twentieth-century emergence of neighbourhoods such as Yaletown.⁴⁵ Third, there is in (most of) these jungles a clear autonomy not just from accepted mores but from chains of authority. The jungle-building process involved hundreds of men labouring over the course of months before any unofficial sanction, in the form of Relief Officer Cooper’s visit in mid-June, could be granted. There is no record in civic archives of any jungle resident appealing to governments, private charities, or other community organizations for permission to or help with the construction. While hundreds would accept food from Roddan’s First United and other

sources, no campaign was waged to engage the citizenry in donating goods or labour to make the jungles a more palatable place to live.

While the residents of Hobohemia displayed a certain creativity with the materials at hand, they appear to have been even more creative in securing other, more distant resources. Faced with limited economic resources, Vancouver's squatters had little choice but to violate the law. Without a formal residence or property, homeless men defined vagrancy literally in a legal sense – it being one of the few crimes that required no overt act, the target of prosecution being a state of being and the lack of resources⁴⁶ – and depended on the discretion (if not the orders) of local law enforcement to avoid imprisonment. But many propertyless men also consciously departed from the script of legal authority through the acts that enabled their survival. For example, both Reverend Roddan and Constable Hichens observed that tramps at the GNR and Harbour Board sites had used corrugated metal of some kind in constructing makeshift shelters, and photos from the period confirm their statements. Colonel Williams and Superintendent Ken Burns were aware of the theft of railway car doors valued at nearly \$500, but these were too few in number to provide a roof for over two hundred men. Burns warned inhabitants that they would be removed from the property in the event of further thefts of railway property.⁴⁷ Where did the hoboes get their materials? Noted merchant George Buscombe believed he had the answer to this question when he awoke one morning to discover that one of his warehouses had vanished! The Union Street building had been “almost completely torn down by the unemployed”; all that remained was the cement foundation. As a result, the property was “to go to tax sale . . . unless the taxes are paid on the structure which has been stolen (the lot of course has not yet been stolen).” “Happening in the heart of the city it is almost incredible,” Buscombe observed, and he was right: this was not your stereotypical 1930s complete loss. It took a large-scale co-operative effort to dismantle the Union Street warehouse, which had been assessed at a value of \$3,500, and transport it (in two different directions) for almost ten city blocks. In response to a lawsuit initiated by Buscombe, the Police Department claimed that it had received not one report about the area during this period, a silence that hints at a certain irreverence when it came to property rights in the context of 1930s necessity.⁴⁸

With this brief account of the shelters complete, we turn to demographic matters. There is a single report from early November 1930 of a temporary jungle near the Coquitlam freight yards of the Canadian Pacific Railway, into which *Sun* reporter Sydney Williamson ventured, accompanied by Relief Committee Chair W.C. Atherton and Relief Officer H.W. Cooper as well as a *Sun* photographer. The resulting front-page story, “Jobless Pour Into Vancouver and City Pays to Feed Them,” contains some detail as to the backgrounds of migrants.⁴⁹ “Vancouver to drifters, or ‘hoboes,’ is like a flame to moths,”

it began, informing readers that forty to fifty “drifters” arrived in the city daily: “Most of them never saw Vancouver until recently.” Williamson characterized one particular itinerant as “a fine specimen of manhood, toughened by roughing it and sleeping out.” Having once worked as a machinist in Toronto, the man was “quite frank” in admitting that “[I] drank myself out of” a number of jobs: “Booze was my downfall, alright. But I haven’t touched a drop of liquor for eighteen months. I’ve had my lesson and I’m through with it for good.” We see here Williamson’s need to judge the character of his subjects: he noted that “his eyes were bright and clear and there was no trace of dissipation.” A Norwegian who had spent years in Saskatchewan, supporting himself through common labour, had travelled to Vancouver because, in his words, “I’d have frozen to death if I had to sleep out in prairie weather.” This man “had no particular trade and had never learned any” and “was content to turn to any kind of common labor he could get.” He was accompanied by a stonemason (since his ethnicity was not noted, we can assume he passed as Anglo-Canadian) who had lived in Vancouver in the first decade of the century before “hobo[ing] around the country . . . doing all kinds of odd jobs.” “Neither of these men seemed to be of the ‘lead-swingers’ class,” Williamson tentatively concludes. “They both seemed honest enough in their desire to work.”⁵⁰ The timing of the story — which appeared after concerns in British Columbia’s resource industries had halted work completely, following slow summers that had already seen unemployment and underemployment — suggests a pattern of jungle population growth roughly concomitant with regional economic factors rather than with national or international ones.⁵¹

Unfortunately, I have uncovered no references to jungles in the period between November 1930 and June 1931, when four distinct jungles appeared within Vancouver’s city limits, symbolically marking the creation of Hobohemia. Here, the combination of continually shrinking labour markets in the spring months, which typically meant the resumption of business and peak employment for unskilled men, and the Relief Department’s March 1931 decision to refuse to provide relief to anyone who could not demonstrate his or her continuous residence in the city for twelve months resulted in thousands unable to support themselves through the regular channels of work or public charity. In mid-June, Relief Officer Cooper estimated that Vancouver’s jungle population totalled three hundred.⁵²

Our first sustained glimpse inside the two jungles created that summer, one on the property of the Great Northern Railway (GNR) and the other under the Georgia St. Viaduct, is provided in Dr. McIntosh’s report.⁵³ In examining the jungles, McIntosh followed the path already charted by inspectors from the Department of Health and by Cooper himself. McIntosh claimed that the majority of the residents of the jungles he toured had arrived in Vancouver “from North and East” and were “fishermen, lumbermen and laborers.” While

his inspectors initially estimated that fewer than fifty inhabited the GNR jungle, the population had swelled by the time of McIntosh's arrival. Just that morning, in fact, approximately twenty-five took up residence; McIntosh presumed "that the radio and press notices were factors in turning them to that spot." The bulk of inhabitants were of Finnish, Swedish, and Norwegian descent, along with "three Chinese and some Old Country people." The doctor was less than charitable in his assessment of the residents of the Georgia St. Viaduct, which he divided into "two classes, one of men out of work and who want work" and "the other of apparent undesirables" or "parasites." The former, he believed, could be identified by their quest for "odd jobs," although he was clearly troubled by their stories. One resident told the doctor that he had managed to secure only "an hour's work from a garage near at hand" and that the garage owner had complained that "others he had hired there, refused to work more than one day." The latter group, referred to as "parasites," McIntosh described in terms of "their appearance, smell and the perfect litter of cast-away empty tins of canned heat used largely as an intoxicating beverage." The division thus drawn counterpoised economics and morality: some were defined by their willingness to work, while others sought an escape through intoxication. McIntosh's framework did not allow for the jungle inhabitant who sought both work and "canned heat," or who eschewed both labour and liquor. In his final assessment, while noting that "many are dependant [sic] upon First Church for food," McIntosh argued that "they are as well off there from the Health point of view, as if placed in rooming houses."⁵⁴ That McIntosh favourably compared the jungles to work camps and rooming houses provides some indication of the quality of living conditions that were typically the lot of workingmen.

The racial and ethnic diversity of Vancouver's jungles made them something of a "miniature League of Nations" in the eyes of Andrew Roddan, whose book adds to McIntosh's portrait.⁵⁵ He personally commiserated with a number of "Scotsmen" as they built their shacks. *God in the Jungles* contains a copy of a letter one tramp received from his mother, adding to the book's misery quotient: after commenting on the death of "Bob" (relation unknown), she wrote, "There is nothing but troubles and disappointment here below. We will, I trust, all meet again up Yonder where all is peace and joy," and ended the letter "With best love and wishes, from your old and lonely Mother."⁵⁶ One man from Aberdeen told Roddan that it was "the first time I have been in a place like this. . . . I would be ashamed to have my people know where I am today." Roddan found the Finns to be "instinctively clean in . . . habits and person," while the Germans, Norwegians, and Scandinavians provided examples of "some of the finest types of men we have in the Dominion of Canada." He was also surprised to discover that the hoboes, too, had their own "miniature Chinatown."⁵⁷

The most detailed records on jungle populations stem from the settlement established on property administered by the Harbour Board. On 20 July, Constable Waters informed the head of the board, Colonel R. D. Williams, and the board's commissioners that approximately 180 men lived in the makeshift shelters "on your property." "The men are reasonable," he wrote, "and I do not see much sign of the red element amongst them."⁵⁸ Three days later, Constable Hichens visited the site, observing that while "it was difficult to estimate the number of shelters and the population, I should say there are not less than 30 shelters of fair quality and 30 smaller and less efficient, some contain one man, some four or five, the total population would be about 200 to 300. No women were seen in the camp."⁵⁹ On instructions from Williams, Constable Waters collected information about residents' place of birth, the length of their residency in British Columbia, and their record of military service. Based on these lists, the Harbour Board settlement differed from the three other city jungles in several key respects. First, its population was by and large racially homogeneous, lacking the miniature "Chinatowns" that grew up around False Creek and the Georgia Street Viaduct. The one "coloured man" mentioned in Waters's reports departed after being "beaten up by some unknown men, for some offence which he had committed."⁶⁰ Second, British-born men tended to remain on Harbour Board property, while those of Eastern and Southern European descent were more likely to relocate, taking up residence in another jungle or hitting the road. Third, those men with a background of service in the British and Canadian militaries were more likely to remain at the waterfront site, where their service conveyed privileges, than were those without a military past.⁶¹

There remains one detailed report on jungle demography, courtesy of Relief Officer Cooper, who assembled his figures in September, just as city staff worked to burn the city's urban jungles to the ground. Near the Georgia Street Viaduct were some 250 men, the majority of them "over 40 years of age"; some lived in already established shacks, while others took shelter under the floor of an empty warehouse. Almost double this number resided at the Prior Street dump; Cooper believed that "a large percentage" of these men were of Swedish and Finnish origin, most of them loggers. "Among the group," he added, "are some first class working men. One, a Nova Scotian, left California in March last." Cooper found only a hundred in "odd shacks" on the Great Northern Railway Company's property; given that the public order to destroy the settlements had already been given, it is likely that many former squatters had walked the short distance to the train tracks and moved on ahead of the relief officer's inspection. At the Harbour Board site, some two hundred were present, "principally younger men, and generally speaking, of a good type," while an unknown number had taken up residence on the former Kitsilano Indian Reserve.⁶² Although acknowledging that the

Harbour Board commissioners had exerted a positive influence over their settlement, “the situation is most grave,” Cooper intoned, “as the condition of the ‘Jungles’ in particular, makes them a hot-bed for every form of disease, physical, moral and social.”⁶³ There is no archival document to suggest that this diagnosis was based on anything but Cooper’s two visits to the jungles.

According to estimates of traffic flows from the period, Vancouver’s itinerant population increased from fifty to seventy (with hundreds on the move) each day. One officer recorded his encounter with approximately seventy-five male itinerants on Powell Street from 4:25 to 5:00 a.m. on 3 September 1931. Quizzing them, the officer learned that most possessed a small stake ranging from two or three dollars to thirty. The itinerants explained that “a large number more will shortly be arriving, as conditions regarding work in the Prairies are poor and it is known that the unemployed are going to receive assistance in some form in B.C.”⁶⁴ However, it is likely that police-produced statistics did not include those who disembarked at the Port Moody and Port Mann stations precisely in order to escape detection in Vancouver.⁶⁵

With such a high rate of turnover and with a thousand still in residence after both the planned destruction of the jungles and the creation of provincially run relief camps had been announced, it is impossible to estimate either how many took part in the construction of the jungles or how many passed through the city but remained outside the settlements. The jungles were but one option among several for migrants — private missions reported close to maximum capacity during these months, as did the jails, and a bed at an unpleasant flophouse could be bought cheaply, if one could acquire the cash, either by working for a wage or by begging, scavenging, pawning, stealing, or other illicit activities. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to estimate the population of itinerants travelling through Vancouver that summer as approaching ten thousand. These rough figures provide some sense of the transient as a mass, ever-mobile presence whose very existence enacted the type of fundamental event that disrupted order and custom, and opened up space in which alternative, if not radical, practices could flourish and new waves of repression and rationalization could be unleashed.⁶⁶

How was this mass kept alive? Where did it secure sustenance? We will first consider sources of private charity. After his first visit to the jungles, Relief Officer Cooper defended the policy of refusing municipal relief to transients, maintaining that “if the city started to feed the 300 men living in the ‘jungles,’ it would have to feed 3000 before a week was out.”⁶⁷ At the City Council meeting on 25 June, Cooper sought to put a damper on the rumour that jungle residents relied on the dump as a source of food. “These men are living at present on contributions of food received from

the man they call the ‘preacher;” he reported, referring to Andrew Roddan. “Not in one instance did we hear that they were hungry. . . . None of those seen showed evidence of lack of nutrition.” Indeed, one man was said to have claimed that “he had never lived so well in his life, having had three chickens within the last week.”⁶⁸ One of the unintended consequences of Cooper’s disclaiming of municipal responsibility to feed or shelter those his Relief Department classified as transients was the solidification of the public image of Roddan’s First United as Vancouver’s primary welfare provider to the single homeless man. Because of the diligent efforts of First United’s phalanx of providers, in other words, substantial numbers of itinerants could remain in Vancouver, close to hiring halls and government offices, awaiting the resumption of work or the opening of the much-rumoured relief camps, if not other opportunities.

And to rely on First United for food meant relying on the volunteer women organized by Jeannie MacDuff, “The Pin-Up Girl for the Hungry and Homeless” who ran the relief kitchen and served 1,252 men in a single sitting in November 1930. *God in the Jungles* contains a photograph of that day: Jeannie is nowhere to be seen, while Roddan stands in front of the crowd.⁶⁹ Despite her never-ending struggle to secure enough food for the unemployed in the jungles, Jeannie recalled that she and the other women in the First United kitchen put “something personal [into] every bowl of soup we handed to a hungry man. We tried to make each man feel he was somebody pretty important.” Jeannie and her crew put more than sympathy into the food. “Their arms ached and their feet were tired and we took turns having a wee rest,” she reminisced, “but I never heard a complaint. The stove was hot and the sweat poured from our faces but it was as though we were all one big family.”⁷⁰ Miss H.A. Johnston of First United’s Secretarial Department maintained that “people responded splendidly to Mr. Roddan’s appeals over the radio, great quantities of food being received and the workers were proud and grateful to be able to participate in such a beneficent and Christ-like work.”⁷¹ According to session reports, these women provided 3,932 “relief meals” to homeless men in the period from 12 to 31 December 1930, and a total of 53,785 meals during 1931.⁷²

MacDuff and her staff do not appear among the many photographs in *God in the Jungles*. Instead, the book displays Roddan and male assistants doling out the food. Most of the photographs were taken by W.J. Moore, a professional recruited by Roddan to document the jungles and First United’s presence therein. Moore later described his visit to city archivist Major J.S. Matthews, recalling that “a girl, more correctly [a] young woman” appeared during one mealtime in an attempt to organize the men. She was, explained Moore, “undoubtedly of Communist theories, and angry,” and proceeded to call the residents “ugly names”:

In a shrill, strident voice she ejaculated “You call yourselves men; you stand for this and do nothing. Why don’t you fight [?] . . . You call yourselves human beings and starve while the bosses wax fat. Why do you stand for it? Why don’t you get a bit of Socialism in your miserable spirits?” It was a harsh bullying declamation of a wild impassioned young female. “Why, Jesus Christ was a socialist.”

Moore recounted that Roddan responded “in a low tone, ‘Yes, that’s true; the greatest Socialist the world ever knew.’” Did Roddan then tell the tramps to march to the banks and disrupt the moneylenders — an act with a 1930s feel to it — or did he preach submission?

But the men took no notice of the girl; they just looked at her; neither smiled nor scowled; just looked in stern silence. The Rev. Roddan stood nearby. Preparations were in progress to “dish up” . . . his presence controlled the situation. I doubt if there was another man in all Vancouver who could handle these men as the Rev. Roddan could. They respected him; they obeyed him. He explained quietly to the men that there was just so much food and no more; that no man should be allowed to go hungry if he could help it; that if there was any left over after each had had an equal share, they could come back, and finish what was left over. The men were very orderly. . . . As I watched, [I] thought to myself, “There’s an exhibition of real freemasonry.”⁷³

This passage makes clear that Roddan’s control over the means of provision enabled what Moore saw as a spectacle of obedience. Jungle inhabitants could take up the revolutionary call of this “girl” and reject Roddan’s ministering, or they could eat. Roddan was conscious of this power, which, we should remember, came to him only through the unpaid labours of Jeannie MacDuff and her volunteer army. On another occasion, Communists distributed leaflets in the jungles while Roddan prepared to distribute the day’s meal: “I stood in full view of the long line of men,” writes Roddan. “Putting one of the leaflets in my mouth, I said: ‘Look, fellows, you can’t eat that,’ and then holding a loaf of bread in my hand, I said: ‘But you can eat this, and while the others are doing all the talking, I will do the feeding, and we will work together for a solution of our problems.’”⁷⁴ The materialists had only ideas to offer, while the minister’s drawing card was mulligan stew: this was a tragic scene.

A different arrangement obtained for the smaller population in the Harbour Board jungle, where a public-private partnership carefully channelled commodities into the bellies of the homeless and where police supervision had been explicitly designed into the fabric of social relations. City archivist J.S. Matthews credited Colonel Williams as the “principal actor” in giving shape to

the waterfront project: "One wretched afternoon in the spring, the rain fell in torrents. . . . Col. R.D. Williams, a busy business man and administrator, one of the three harbour commissioners, rose from his polished desk in a sumptuously furnished office to witness the burst of the heavens, and reached for the window just in time to see the legs of a man disappearing under a pile of rails." Williams "called out to [the men], and finally enquired if any were returned soldiers." As it turned out, one of the men, by the name of Hilton, was a former bugler in the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Along with him were thirteen other men, two without boots, squatting underneath an improvised hut fashioned from discarded railway rails. "I pointed to those two wooden sheds," recalled Williams, "and told the bugler to take charge of the party" and to lead the others to an empty building. Immediately, Williams drew upon military traditions of authority to instill order in a group illegally occupying public land. "We had the usual sanitary arrangements of a military camp," Williams said. A policeman was sent to acquire shovels and disinfectant and "got the men to clean up and burn refuse around their shacks."⁷⁵ Here we see the textual traces of the elite authorship of the history; no record remains of the practices already devised by these squatters to deal with refuse and other matters commonplace in every other jungle for which there is evidence on the matter.

The colonel secured milk, tea, bread, fish, potatoes, and tobacco for the fourteen men, who in turn, he noted, pledged their gratitude. With this offering of sustenance, Williams's flock was destined to grow. "The fourteen men had no sooner moved out from the rail pile than more went under," he told Matthews, "and we had the whole situation duplicated again." At this point, some of Williams's "personal friends" became interested in his project, leading to more donations of food, clothing, and cigarettes. Both the Vancouver Club and the Terminal Club, gathering places for the city's elite, made a habit of delivering gallons of soup each morning, and local fishermen "always gave what they could spare." "We lined up all returned men for first choice as soon as the stuff arrived," Williams continued, "then the men who had registered [for government work relief] came next, and the rest followed. Every morning when the soup came down we lined them up in a ragged column on the board walk." We see in his description the assumption of authority in the choice of subject and object — "We lined them up" rather than "they lined up" — a phrasing indicative of Williams's penchant for military command. Problems arose, however, when some tramps began stealing the railway car doors from Canadian Pacific Railway grain cars, so the colonel ordered Constable Waters of the Vancouver Police Department to take "charge as a sort of majordomo, and to maintain law and order."⁷⁶ From this moment, Williams became an absentee landlord; Waters assumed the tasks of overseeing the administration of charity and the enforcement of proper values: in particular, ensuring that the men remained responsible and willing to work.⁷⁷

The manner of food provision designed by the colonel and implemented by Waters required a visible expression of gratitude from recipients. Each day, food and cigarettes arrived at the jungle, brought by Waters and on occasion by Williams and the Harbour Board commissioners. These goods were presented as gifts bestowed upon deserving men by their benefactors, and because they did not have to be given, they could just as easily be taken away. The control of food provision was important to this project; we can recall Constable Hichens's capitalized notation, "PRACTICALLY NO FOOD WAS IN VIEW. NO SPARE CLOTHING EITHER," in reference to the Harbour site, suggesting that the rations doled out were hardly extravagant.⁷⁸ Harbour superintendent Ken Burns made a point of informing socialite Mrs. Eric Hamber that her donation of boots would "be distributed most carefully."⁷⁹ Most residents probably knew enough to exhibit their appreciation when receiving their morning allotment of a bowl of soup, one-third of a loaf of bread, a piece of soap, and cigarettes. There was also a common-sense rationale for participating in the sustenance-for-loyalty exchange offered by Colonel Williams and Constable Waters, regardless of one's personal opinion about the legitimacy of their authority. Most of the hoboes in the other city jungles received one meal a day from First United Church; otherwise, they had to beg and scrounge for food, clothes and money, thus opening themselves up for criminal prosecution. Those in Williams's jungle were guaranteed a daily supply of food and cigarettes, and many were given new clothes. To remain there and to publicly conform to the rule of Williams's philanthropy relieved them, should they so choose, of the daily struggle to acquire the necessities of life.

As in these two jungles, the securing of subsistence for homeless men often depended upon acts of public deference. The significance of this lies in more than just the translation of Victorian-era assumptions about individual character flaws and the need to prevent social (if not racial) degeneration through improvident almsgiving into a ritual of provision designed to produce signs that the recipient was in fact deserving of assistance.⁸⁰ In addition, this ritual's "structure of feeling" involved emotional (if not libidinal) energies conferred upon the giver.⁸¹ In his account, J.S. Matthews found the deepest level of meaning in the subjectivity of elite philanthropists like Williams, what he called their "warm hearts on a wet day." Again and again, Matthews returned to a document signed by almost a hundred residents of the Harbour Board jungle. "One particularly gratifying thing," he wrote "was that at the conclusion the men presented the Harbour Commissioners with a rude testimonial, drawn up on a sheet of plain foolscap, and signed by approximately one hundred men, expressing their thanks and gratitude." Matthews thus underscored the subjective dimensions of the provision of aid — how it made men like himself feel about their position in the community.

The jungle, according to Matthews, was a “humanitarian movement of the highest order,” and it belonged to Vancouver’s rulers.⁸²

That the reliance of itinerants on elite philanthropy for food and shelter bound them to participate in displays of gratitude is clearly documented. That some took these goods and also worked to subvert the order in whose name they were granted relief, sometimes openly but more often covertly, helps us to understand the quest for self-determination embarked upon by many homeless men. Consider food provision on the Harbour Board property. While Williams instructed Waters to follow a hierarchical method of food distribution — military men first, registered men second, and then those who remained — Scott’s report in the *Vancouver Province* claimed that some of the men living under Williams’s patronage devised a different system. Newcomers received food on the basis of need in exchange for a monetary contribution where possible; priority was not given to those who had served in the military or who had applied for government relief schemes.⁸³ Not content with their daily allotment, some tramps broke into boxcars and appropriated shipments of food and cigarettes.

More to the point, itinerants relied on mutualist practices in order to secure and distribute food above and beyond the relations of provision forged by private charity providers. Visiting on the eve of their destruction, intrepid *Province* reporter Sydney Scott claimed that “the Vancouver ‘Jungles’ are not jungles at all, as the old-timers of the road know them. There is no law in them, no organization.” The basis for this opinion is unclear, as no interview subject made such a claim. At the same time, however, Scott also wrote:

In the typical smaller jungle, there is one law that must be obeyed — the law of sharing up. If you drop from the cars into one of them, you are sure of something to eat if anyone has it, and you are sure (or you will soon be made aware of it if you aren’t) that if you have a few coppers, they’ve got to go round the rest. . . . And if you find the jungle empty when, by compulsion or voluntarily, you stop off, foraging may reveal a cache. Take what you need and no more, and, if you can, add to it. That is another law.⁸⁴

This practice of “sharing up,” however, lacked an abstract concept of equality and the institutional supports to make uniform or to enforce any prosecutions or punishments, and there is no evidence that the practice was even partially understood as a law. But we can dissent from Scott’s characterization without jettisoning his invaluable recognition of the mutualist practices that existed in the jungles. In a similar vein, Andrew Roddan’s *God in the Jungles* provides a glimpse, however brief, of what he called the “spirit of comradeship” — the collectivist practices and values that sustained these homeless

communities.⁸⁵ Obviously impressed by the solidity of the jungle's communal values, he counterpoised this moral economy of jungle life with the acquisitive "greed" that spurred the laissez-faire capitalist economy.⁸⁶ Without much in the way of resources, tramps organized their settlements around the principles of co-operation, mutuality, and tolerance. When transients arrived, they were accepted with "no questions . . . asked." During discussions around the fires, information about one's past was not demanded, but given only "voluntarily, and so long as he plays the game he is allowed to stay." In addition to their "domestic" activities like cooking and cleaning, hoboes assisted each other in building makeshift shelters. The jungle was thus both a "refuge" and a place where homeless men shared their resources, creating a "common brotherhood" that was "forced . . . by stern necessity."⁸⁷ The jungles were thus wondrous examples of those collectivist values that society lacked. Roddan ended his book on precisely this note: "We have had an overflow of nationalism, commercialism, science, and education. Now the time has come for an overflow of compassion and goodwill. . . . An order in which the motive of service and mutual helpfulness will take the place of selfish, heartless, cruel competition which is so rampant in the world today."⁸⁸

Along with their humane organization of the day-to-day realities of living in the jungle, tramps also offered a different approach to life itself, according to Roddan. "There is a democracy in the jungle that is a stern reality. Here you will find democracy without the mock; where the men are all on the level."⁸⁹ Some transients, in fact, adopted a kind of anarchist view of the disciplines found in the world of wage labour. Roddan described these men as "individualists" who "refuse to submit to discipline, or training of any kind" and who adopted the road life as an alternative to their subjection:

The Bohemian instincts find expression in the life of these men, free to come, free to go, to work or wander, sleep or wake, calling [no] man their master, following th[ei]r own whims and fancies; they want to be free. Perhaps this is a revolt against the kind of life we are all living; where we have bound ourselves by customs, traditions, and habits that hamper life. Maybe the hobo is closer to nature and closer to truth than some of us are. Possessing nothing, he is monarch of all he surveys. . . . He is free, the master of his own life, to wander where he likes.⁹⁰

God in the Jungles thus offers a glimpse, albeit brief, of the freedom, however limited, that came from living outside the wage-labour nexus. This image, when coupled with Roddan's rough version of the labour theory of value and his dialectical approach to economic development and class formation — profit and poverty came from the same place — should have won him many converts within the city's unemployed organizations.⁹¹

Nor do we have to rely on Roddan and Scott: the extant writings of Canada's itinerants from this period are saturated, not sprinkled, with tales of collective mutuality in the distribution of food, drink, cigarettes, and other goods. As an organizing principle, reciprocity stood in direct contrast not only to the ethos of capital accumulation but also to the restrictive rules of public and private charities in the city. Stanley Hutcheson, who spent time in BC's jungles in 1932, believed that the principle of mutual assistance in the jungles was rooted in the material realities of the tramping life. Public and private charities never gave the individual enough sustenance. By combining their resources, hoboes could stretch their meagre allotment: "A man needed company at a time like this as we had to stick together to live."⁹² He recalled that in the jungles, for a small gift of vegetables, one could draw upon the services of lawyers, doctors, dentists, teachers, and barbers who were also on the bum.⁹³ Significantly, most of the accounts that mention food provision tell a similar story. One hobo would secure either food or money by begging, working, stealing, or other means. This stake would then be used to feed a group.⁹⁴ Tramps who preferred to travel and live in groups rather than alone were often spared from having to scramble for sustenance every day. Instead, they could relax and "live the life of Riley."⁹⁵ This hints at possibilities concerning a different understanding of time in Hobohemia, in that one searches without success for signs of the rationalized time and the division of work from leisure that characterized the Fordist world.

Of course, in order to collectively redistribute resources, one first had to have resources. Many tramps appear to have worked periodically, long enough to secure money to allow them to travel once again. During periods of unemployment, tramps hunted, fished, and otherwise scrounged for food. In his night in the jungle, Sydney Scott met "Shorty," who claimed to be able to recite every stopping place on the train route from Vancouver to Chatham, New Brunswick, and to discern "the most likely house to 'bum' a bit" at most of the divisional points.⁹⁶ Itinerants also illegally partook of local produce grown for market. Stanley Hutcheson begins his account of the Depression with a reminiscence about "grazing" for fresh lettuce, onions, and peas after a winter of eating canned goods.⁹⁷ Other forms of petty theft were common.⁹⁸ Hoboes also relied on civic relief; many towns gave scrip to transients to be redeemed at local grocery stores. Tramping often involved some measure of duplicity in order to secure resources. A writer identified only as "One of Them" described the "old ruse" whereby a tramp would offer a butcher his last nickel in exchange for a soup bone, hoping the butcher would feel a twinge of sympathy or guilt and provide a few choice cuts of meat.⁹⁹ Hutcheson describes one group in the 1932 Kamloops jungle that had managed to acquire skeleton keys. This enabled them to "weed" stores, taking the desired

items while leaving their empty boxes on the shelves.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, tramps depended upon such generosity from townsfolk, which, in some periods, proved invaluable to sustaining a jungle community. In this instance, orders were given that stores in Kamloops were to be exempt from weeding.¹⁰¹ In short, if we move beyond markets as the “idealisation or abstraction” of a set of liberal conceptual principles and focus instead on actual social relations of production, distribution, and consumption, we develop a better understanding not only of capitalism but also of where it was weakest.¹⁰²

Jungles offered not only food but also knowledge. With migrant labour widely accepted as a stage in the working-class man’s life cycle, a common experience in the lives of millions over decades, the oral transmission of practices from one generation to another was commonplace. While the prevailing wisdom in sociological studies holds that tramps did make some use of written symbols, from the available evidence, writing does not appear to have figured substantively in power relations in Canadian jungles.¹⁰³ There are, for instance, no examples of hoboes taking minutes of their meetings as a permanent record of the decisions they made. Nor have I uncovered cases where they invoked written authority in their relations with other tramps. Instead, information circulated without the benefit of being written down. “You could get all the news and information,” Hutcheson asserts, “even down to which town girls were available and which ones had V.D.”¹⁰⁴

One of the key scenes repeated in North American hobo writings is that of the circumstances of the memorable first train ride. The heightened emotional state of the archetypal first journey was vividly sketched by John Thompson in a letter to “Daddy” after his first journey from Vancouver to Alberta.¹⁰⁵ “That night I left you I’ll never forget, gee Dad you were swell.” His father’s advice on how to carry his kit-bag had worked particularly well. “Boy you know Dad that fitted just as slick as you could wish high upon your shoulders.” Waiting at the railway yard, standing out in the open like a couple of novices, John and his friend witnessed the train arriving. “We were half scared, excited & I don’t know what, as you can imagine.” Forty other tramps “came from the shadows” and boarded the boxcar, where they sat and waited “for the big Bull-Moose as they call it.” After they had reached Kamloops, “another big bum, a nice old fellow” shared his blankets with the young pair. Later, all the tramps, including one named “Gummy,” passed around food and other supplies. The collective redistribution of goods according to need, conducted with a relatively free and consensual exchange, had begun. Like the Swedish-American labor activist Joe Hill had several decades earlier, John took in the “wonderful” scenery around Yale, British Columbia. In several days, he would establish temporary residence in a jungle on the outskirts of Edmonton, before heading out to the prairies and what American muckraker Carey McWilliams called “factories in the fields.”¹⁰⁶

John's letter to his father is a wonderful account of how younger men — some of them boys — were helped to take up the transient life by more experienced veterans, including family members.¹⁰⁷ The enthusiastic tone of the letter suggests the type of experience that might have stayed with John for the rest of his life. Of course, not all young men were successfully incorporated into the community; one hobo recorded the story of a “chicken hearted” friend who abandoned his new-found experience of train-hopping, fearing arrest and motherly disapproval.¹⁰⁸ Much of society fretted about this specific relationship, that of the knowledgeable elder introducing impressionable young men to the rituals of road life. This type of bond amounted, in the lingo of social welfare experts, to the spread of pauperism pure and simple, and they were correct. Through such experience, inexperienced migrants learned about, and participated in, the social relations that belonged to tramping life. They also learned of how the inhabitants of the jungles interacted with the wider world. Often, this meant learning a different sense of justice and of value.

As we shall see in chapter 5, many municipal governments rose in a chorus of voices against itinerants. For instance, the mayor of Kamloops expressed his fears to Liberal leader T.D. Pattullo in April 1932. “The people of Kamloops,” he wrote, “are wondering just how long the Government of British Columbia is going to tolerate the dictation of foreign ‘bums’ and ‘hoboes.’” Some two hundred relief camp workers had descended on the city in protest against conditions. “The town is being over run by beggars and panhandlers,” Johnstone moaned, because the provincial government proved unable to prevent campers from leaving. “If this state of affairs continues throughout the summer, this means the men will undoubtedly ask for more and more, and the question is, Where is it all going to end?”¹⁰⁹ As a telling contrast, Stanley Hutcheson touches on the dependence of hoboes upon local communities in the dedication to his 1976 book, *Depression Stories*: “On behalf of all the unemployed of 1932, I would like to thank the citizens of Kamloops who are still around, for their patience and good fellowship, and a very special thank you to Jack Richardson, Mr. Wade, [Police] Chief Anderson and anyone else who assisted me in any way.”¹¹⁰ While many tramps may have had little respect for the sanctity of private property, this did not mean a callous disregard for others. They were, if anything, conscious of the benefits of preserving harmonious relations with townsfolk because of the parasitic character of jungle life. Dependent upon the redistribution through legal and illegal means of the value generated by capitalist social relations, jungle communities could not survive in an atmosphere of absolute hostility.

Obviously, aspects of tramping practice did work to inculcate a sense of social cleavage between jungle residents and authority figures. Itinerants were frequently removed from trains and searched by provincial police and

Mounties. Occasionally, these encounters meant violent beatings.¹¹¹ One jobless worker characterized the police as “degenerates”:

Such animals, who pay and at the behest of others, help to starve the unemployed workers by using the weight of their clubs on them when they demonstrate, certainly cannot be placed in the same class as the unemployed workers who provided the food they eat and the clothes they wear. This may be sedition but it is the truth.¹¹²

After his brief visit to Vancouver’s jungles, Sydney Scott claimed that the practice of police intervention helped to bring homeless men together: “Each little group of two or three kept to itself, not nearly as united as the curious city passers-by thought as they gazed at us. We were joined by a kindred bond of unwarranted trepidation only when a railway constable or city policeman ‘looked us over.’”¹¹³ The relationship was not always one of overt hostility; railroad “bulls” could prove good sources of information regarding departure times and destinations.¹¹⁴ Nonetheless, most of the time, avoidance proved to be the best strategy to escape being “molested by John Law.”¹¹⁵

Because the Harbour Board jungle is the only settlement for which there are records produced over several months, it will of necessity serve as our window into social relations on the ground, beyond the rhetoric of Roddan and Scott. Claimed for the city’s elite by local archivist J.S. Matthews, this group was considered a respectful and loyal conglomeration of homeless men in comparison to those at jungles without supervision. “They were a quiet, orderly lot,” Colonel Williams told Matthews. “One was a graduate of Cambridge University.” The men themselves “cleared out the ‘Reds’” by beating them up, Williams noted approvingly. Alderman Warner Loat also rejected the notion that the “jungleers” were anything but loyal, maintaining that they were “a body of well behaved, earnest men who desired nothing more than to be good citizens, support themselves, and find work, but who were penniless and unable to find work.”¹¹⁶ Cooper publicly argued that “although the men of the Harbour Board ‘Jungle’ were generally young, their behaviou[r] during their stay in the City has been greatly influenced by the generous attitude of the Harbour Commissioners.”¹¹⁷ From the beginning of his supervisory term, Constable Waters tasked himself with measuring the behaviour of the jungle’s inhabitants: his keywords were *loyalty*, *order*, and *gratitude*. In his first report, filed on 20 July, Waters hoped that by spending a few hours in the jungle each day, he could “create a friendly atmosphere.” On 27 July, he reported that the squatters “have conducted themselves in a very orderly manner.” They had “no complaints from the men, except want of work,” and they “greatly appreciated the gift” of fifty pounds of potatoes furnished by Sam McClay, one of the commissioners. Again, on 4 August, he noted that

“th[ese] many acts of kindness by the Commissioners and other Gentlemen, ha[ve] had a very wonderful effect on those men. . . . They seem very anxious to get out to work before the winter sets in [and] there has been no trouble of any kind amongst them.” One month later, the constable surmised that the beneficent generosity of the commissioners proved to jungle inhabitants that “many good people were willing to help them.”¹¹⁸

In his role as “majordomo,” Constable Waters was nominally in charge of welcoming new arrivals and introducing them to the rules, but because his time was limited (he spent on average three hours per day in the jungle), many hoboes took up occupation in the camp during his absence. In the early hours of 29 July, two policemen confronted six men who had occupied a boxcar. When asked to move, these men “became quite hostile and threatening.” G.W. Head, the superintendent of piers, observed that this “is the first time that we have found the men become hostile when told to get off the Dock property.” One day, Waters found it necessary to remove a thirteen-year-old because the jungle “was no place for a boy of his age,” and Sam McClay took one sixteen-year-old male to the YMCA for the same reason.¹¹⁹ In September, two women were forcibly evicted, and the constable also had to “warn two boys and one man off the property as the[y] were of [a] very degraded moral type.” Unlike the group of “Reds” who had been physically expelled on one occasion, these undesirables remained until Waters himself took action. The “jungleers” did not take the initiative to remove unsuitable newcomers themselves, nor did they inform Waters of the presence of new arrivals.¹²⁰ This points to tensions around the criteria for admission; some residents were more accepting of newcomers than were their overseers.

The character of the men who squatted on the waterfront was measured according to two scales: their pledging of gratitude for the gifts of food, clothing, and cigarettes, and their willingness to work if employment was available. Major Matthews’s document collection on the Harbour Board jungle contains no glowing success stories of homeless men who found jobs. One garage owner complained that men from the jungles would take casual employment but “refused to work more than one day” at a time.¹²¹ Despite his continual recitations of the men’s desire for waged employment, Waters’s reports came to exude a growing sense of ambivalence. In late July, despite a note that the men had “no complaints . . . except want of work,” the constable warned against a proposal to requisition tents from the Department of National Defence, reasoning that if the residents “were too comfortable they would not wish to leave.” He also noted that “about 6 reds all Russians and Finns” were living in the Harbour Board jungle: “Three of them were running about outside the office in bathing suits and when spoken to they said they would be as well off in jail.”¹²² In August, Waters again enthused that the men were “all very cheerful under the circumstances, and most anxious to get out to work.”

But by early September, less than a week before the destruction of the jungle, his resolve had weakened: "The men apparently are very anxious to get out to work but I am unable to vouch for this until work has been offered them, as I think the Red element in the City has been getting some propaganda amongst them, with regard to camps."¹²³ Waters was correct in this regard: one itinerant contributor to *The Worker* emphasized "the discussions that take place around the big fires" as "one of the most interesting features of jungle life" at the Harbour Board jungle. "Freedom of speech is plentiful in these gatherings," he noted, which for him meant that workers of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds freely expressed their contempt for the Bennett government. Although wary of the violent tactics advocated by some who thought they could "easily tie up this country in knots . . . by blowing up a few railway bridges," the writer was impressed by the strength of "Red sentiment."¹²⁴ The jungle constructed under Colonel Williams's patronage thus countenanced diverse political views, despite claims about the overwhelming gratitude and loyalty of its inhabitants.

Members of the Independent Labour Party, a group that would become a major force in the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Vancouver, strongly protested against the neglect on the part of city officials. Had the government fulfilled its constitutional responsibilities and cared for the destitute, Jessie Todd argued, there would have been no need for unemployed men to "live out of doors under conditions that are not fit for human beings."¹²⁵ Communists, too, attacked politicians for their obvious failure to provide for those in need. "As this is the busy Tourist season," wrote T. Griffin in *The Worker*, "thousands of well fed parasite[s] from the U.S. are able to take in the sight at the city dump, where hundreds of workers are gradually starving to death in the pitiful attempt to salvage an existence from the garbage." The only plight worse than living in the jungle, according to Griffin, was that of the women forced "to sell their bodies for the price of a bare existence, and to lose even the dignity of an animal."¹²⁶ Box Car Kelly, who wore proudly the label of Communist, maintained, "There is only one remedy . . . ORGANIZATION." Collective action would enable them to "ride the cushions," meaning that they would win enough money to pay for tickets.¹²⁷ Another Bolshevik wag labelled the jungles "samples of Bennett's 'Five Year Plan.'"¹²⁸ The solution, for Vancouver's leftists, was to organize. "If you want to get away from the Dump," Griffin admonished Vancouver's "docile" workers, "get out on the streets and demonstrate for immediate relief."¹²⁹

That summer, with the crisis intensifying, Communists began organizing in jungles along the CPR line from Vancouver to the interior of the province.¹³⁰ The effectiveness of this campaign is unclear. On 1 August 1931, more than two thousand people gathered at the Cambie Street parade ground in protest "against imperialist war" as well as Canadian policies regarding the

Soviet Union and the rules governing the administration of relief. When they tried to launch a parade, for which a permit had been denied by Chief Constable W.J. Bingham, the crowd was attacked by Vancouver police, including mounted constables armed with bullwhips. The riot was the fourth instance of street fighting that summer; thousands of workers had participated in Communist-organized mass demonstrations on 10 and 25 June, resulting in almost fifty arrests, and seven more were jailed following a protest on 4 July.¹³¹ On 1 August, instead of dispersing, hundreds grabbed stones, sticks, and even flower pots to defend themselves against attack and assert their right to freedom of assembly. Thirteen demonstrators were arrested; eight policemen required hospital treatment for their injuries. One reporter for the Communist *Unemployed Worker* conjured up a portrait of Chief Constable Bingham, decked out in plus-fours and a panama hat, directing "his plug-uglies deliberately to stir up a minor demonstration so that he can have the pleasure of seeing the workers clubbed." Tactically, Communists viewed the issues of free speech and assembly as central to the unemployed and union movements, and called for the formation of a "Workers' Defence Force" that would prevent police violence from threatening their parades. "Several thousand Vancouver workers insisted on having the same 'rights' as all the patriotic, religious, and 'respectable' bodies in town." To protect these rights, the reporter advised, demonstrators should, in future, arm themselves.¹³² One former soldier told city investigators that jungle residents were unsympathetic toward demonstrations, claiming that "as far as he knew, none had been taking part in them."¹³³ Nonetheless, one man arrested during the melee of 1 August gave the jungle as his address.¹³⁴

While hoboes on the road had reason to be wary of railroad inspectors, policemen, and local do-gooders, one could also envision the jungles as a place to escape from the oppressive realities of capitalism in crisis without taking up the revolutionary call. One author powerfully conveyed both his sense of disenfranchisement and his notion of a minimum standard of living at odds with the homily that the unemployed should passively accept charity:

Quite evidently there is no use for a penniless person in this land of opportunity; a person without work and money is considered an out-cast, no town or city wants him but he can usually get two meals per day and exist because even Canadians do not usually let dogs starve. When a person has lost all his money and cannot get work he can either take to the road and become a bum or stop in his home town and get a free bed and two meals a day from the city relief for which he has to do as many hours work per week. I estimate that this scheme breaks the spirit of the average man within a year; hence I chose the road. My spirit is by no means broken. I just feel angry and the harder Canada

kicks me the more I'll retaliate. I do not consider myself an ordinary "bum." If there is any work to be done I'll do it providing I receive what I consider a decent living wage. I will certainly not work for my board and I will not work for the pittance many are receiving today.¹³⁵

Jungle life provided an alternative mode of existence that allowed for this unnamed worker to refuse anything but "a decent living wage." The mutualist social relations also allowed him to maintain his "spirit." In other words, unemployment did not automatically lead to a diminishment of one's sense of self. Similarly, Stanley Hutcheson developed an argument that contrasted the freedom of the hobo life with the security of the post-war welfare state and found the latter wanting. The welfare state programs of the 1960s, such as unemployment insurance, in Hutcheson's mind, meant that "everyone is tied to a number and a category." Such a system threatened to turn the poor into "just robots." In the 1930s, however, hoboes such as Hutcheson had been free:

I could go where I wanted to, live as I wanted to, work if I wanted to, play around if I wanted to — because I was an individual with a name and I had a thousand personal friends who were all as free as I was. But with this freedom was also responsibility. As an individual I could do all the things stated, but it was up to me to fend for myself and maintain a standard of living. Therefore if I did not work I did not eat, and after going hungry for a few days, the responsibility to myself came in a real hurry. This type of freedom I had is almost unknown today.¹³⁶

In contrast to the welfare state, "no one bothered you" in the jungles.

Vancouver's jungles were destroyed in early September 1931 after two men in the Harbour Board jungle fell victim to typhoid.¹³⁷ After another tour, Medical Health Officer H.A. McDonald declared the jungles a threat to public health. "Grounds are filthy and covered with decaying garbage, with open toilets. Flies swarm over everything and then on all open food," he reported. Believing that most residents slept on the ground, McDonald declared, "They are sure to suffer from Bronchial and Rheumatic troubles."¹³⁸ After the destruction, Cooper estimated that at least two thousand homeless men were then in Vancouver, a number "augmented at the rate of 70 per day."¹³⁹ The jail, one reporter claimed, was overcrowded with those convicted on vagrancy charges.¹⁴⁰ The Relief Department issued 879 bed tickets to former residents of the jungles. Of these, 200 were assigned to the Emergency Refuge.¹⁴¹ Cooper suggested that "some of the Northern Europeans, especially the Finns, appeared at first to be suspicious" of the authorities, "but once their confidence was gained, they readily responded."¹⁴² On 3 September, the Board of Police Commissioners motioned to ask Attorney-General R.H. Pooley

to station provincial police officers along the border with Alberta “for the purpose of taking the drifters from the trains at that point, and sending them back.”¹⁴³ With the jungles temporarily gone, the Relief Department’s ability to function had been compromised. “The experience of two weeks,” Cooper reported on 21 September, by which point 2,500 transients had been added to the relief rolls, “has again demonstrated the impossibility of efficiently investigating the needs of the applicants,” pointing to the difficulties faced by anyone attempting to enumerate and regulate this mobile population.¹⁴⁴ That day, Cooper wrote to Chief Constable Bingham, notifying him that men were beginning to “reoccupy the ‘Jungles’” and asking his department to take action; squatters had already begun to reclaim the Great Northern Railway site, if not others.¹⁴⁵ By November, Alderman Atherton still felt cause to complain about transients, who were flocking to Vancouver at a rate of a hundred per day, he claimed.¹⁴⁶

Theorizing Hobohemia

For Chick’s benefit, Darby explained that this outfit had first been formed over twenty years ago, during the Sieges of Paris [in 1871], when manned balloons were often the only way to communicate in or out of the city. As the ordeal went on, it became clear to certain of these balloonists, observing from above and poised ever upon a cusp of mortal danger, how much the modern State depended for its survival on maintaining a condition of *permanent siege* — through the systematic encirclement of populations, the starvation of bodies and spirits, the relentless degradation of civility until citizen was turned against citizen, even to the point of committing atrocities like those of the infamous *petroleurs* of Paris. When the Sieges ended, these balloonists chose to fly on, free now of the political delusions that reigned more than ever on the ground, pledged solemnly only to one another, proceeding as if under a world-wide, never-ending state of siege.

Thomas Pynchon, *Against the Day*, 2006¹⁴⁷

The fact that it is in every way easier for most North Americans to imagine the complete and utter destruction of the planet we currently inhabit than to envision the end of the capitalist order to which the planet gave birth presents certain theoretical and methodological obstacles.¹⁴⁸ In order to explain the dynamics of non-capitalist, non-statist social practices in Depression-era hobo jungles, when the very subject belongs to the genres of nursery rhymes and science fiction, it seems necessary to ask in advance for the reader’s

“willing suspension of disbelief,” as Coleridge put it. My argument that British Columbia became home to a “homeland” for beggars is in part a nominalist, source-driven claim: everywhere I turned, archives offered me dusty examples of a multitude of ways of seeing the hobo jungle as an island unto itself, something simultaneously connected to *and* separate from “society,” whatever one took that to mean, and I will admit to remaining trapped within the logics of separation that it was my fortune to research. These visions were simply too powerful, with many of their authors positioned to effect concrete changes in the shape and character of itinerant life, for me to escape the foundations they erected. In this sense, hobo jungles are represented here as a distinct form of social organization because they were repeatedly made so in the early 1930s.

Nonetheless, my claim that the social organization of jungle life entailed the spatial localization of a fundamental break with contemporaneous capitalism and governmentality does not depend upon the existence of a shared subjectivity: that is, the thousands of participants involved in building and sustaining this homeland need not have universally or even widely believed that they had created in these spaces an alternative order to liberal-democratic capitalism to have actually done so. In fact, the absence of institutionalized mechanisms of collective consciousness- or identity-formation is one of the fundamental products of, and preconditions for, the jungle way of life. This suggests that the usual metrics of success applied to groups such as multinational corporations, political parties, charitable organizations, and trade unions, organized according to principles other than direct democracy, are of little use here.¹⁴⁹

In his now famous preface to *The Order of Things* (1966), Foucault seized upon Borges’s description of a system of classification regarding animals found in an imaginary “Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge” as raw material that he used to construct his archaeology of the human sciences. Here, against utopias, which “have no real locality,” Foucault conjured the figure of “heterotopias,” which “secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names. . . . Heterotopias (such as those to be found so often in Borges) desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences.”¹⁵⁰ The following year, in a lecture exploring the argument that “the present age may be the age of space” rather than time (in this context, a code word for Marxism), Foucault returned to this figure in a different form. Heterotopias now leaped from the page, as cemeteries and gardens, museums and festivals, sailing vessels and the colonies of the New World:

There are . . . probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places, actual places, places that are designed into the very institution

of society, which are sorts of actually realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within the culture are, at the same time, represented, contested and reversed, sorts of places that are outside all places, although they are actually localizable.¹⁵¹

The Foucault who promises to locate “actually realized utopias” can be placed in the same general lineage as the one a decade later who references “bodies and their pleasures,” “subjugated knowledges,” “limit-experiences,” and “counter discourses” as categories that somehow stand in opposition to elements of the workings of power. Because Foucault offered this concept before his ultra-leftist period of the early 1970s, it is marked as qualitatively different from the more familiar arguments of later years.¹⁵² Foucault’s brief comments not only point us toward some of the prominent discontinuities marked by jungle life but also allow for connections to be forged between the Foucauldian heterotopia and the Marxian realm of freedom.

British Columbia’s Hobohemia, as understood here, fits comfortably within this description of heterotopias as “places that are outside all places” and that gather together a host of discarded, disparate elements “within the culture” in ways that allow for contestation and reversal. Most historians would also accept a general view of hobo jungles as “designed into the very institution of society,” having recognized for decades the centrality of labour mobility to capitalist growth and state expansion, and the unofficial policies of the Dominion government and the railway companies to facilitate this mobility at certain times of the year.¹⁵³ More to the point, Vancouver’s relief officer, Colonel H.W. Cooper, initially considered the jungles not as the threat to social order they would later become but as something of a safety valve for the Relief Department. With Reverend Roddan’s First United providing food and counselling, and other private individuals doing their part, the municipality could avoid assuming financial and administrative responsibility for itinerants who chose the jungle over the mission. Yet to see our Hobohemia as the result of societal design is to actively restrain and interpretively displace the “sensuous human activity, [the] practice” that made these jungles, especially those within Vancouver’s city limits.¹⁵⁴ All but one of these settlements were forged in a situation of need, after “society” had denied thousands of transient men access to municipal relief programs, both public and private; the exception, we shall see, developed a more contradictory relationship with authorities. In claiming these spaces during the summer of 1931, homeless men of many races, ethnicities, birthplaces, and histories “designed” themselves their own heterotopias right in the heart of downtown Vancouver, islands of dispossessed collectivity amidst the stormy seas of possessive individualism that forced public recognition of the generalized spread

of homelessness. This, surely, should not be considered any part of the official design for urban living in Canada.

The first of Foucault's theses about heterotopias to consider is his division of these places into two forms: crisis heterotopias — "sacred or forbidden places" where we can find those "in a state of crisis with respect to society and the human milieu in which they live" — and heterotopias of deviation — places housing those "whose behaviour is deviant with respect to the mean or the required norm."¹⁵⁵ While his comment that "in our society, where leisure activity is the rule, idleness forms a kind of deviation" suggests that hobo jungles belong to the latter category, it is more productive to propose that jungles drew strength from global dynamics of crisis that effectively undermined, if not eradicated, many key economic and political means and norms. The Canada of 1945 was simply unimaginable in Canada, 1930. Rather than a clear division, I have instead found chaotic combinations and fragile unities. Foucault's claim that while each heterotopia "has a precise and specific operation within the society," this operation could change depending on the context (citing the cemetery as his example) aids our framing of Hobohemia, especially if we free our categories from an inhibiting functionalism.¹⁵⁶ Hobo jungles had long existed. But in the early 1930s, after a decade in which the continental labour market for the itinerant shrank in comparison to that for urbanized semi- and unskilled factory positions in mass production, jungles enabled the relatively rapid and widespread transmission of the practices of power-knowledge that had previously sustained a much larger community.

Most important for our purposes are Foucault's suggestive categorizations of space and time in these emplacements. Most Depression-era Vancouverites would have agreed with (if not themselves offered) the characterization of the hobo jungle as "connected with temporal discontinuities. . . . The heterotopia begins to function fully when men are in a kind of absolute break with their traditional time." While we need not see the jungles as invoking an "absolute break" with rationalized time, there is little doubt that the regularities of time-work discipline, even broadly conceived, did not obtain in these encampments. Indeed, this had long been identified as a central effect of unemployment more generally: being outside the realms of work and leisure, and thus forced to endure an unproductive and uncompensated life, jobless paupers, it was thought, lost the very sense of unthinking daily routine that bound these men to societal norms.¹⁵⁷ I have, in very tentative fashion, offered a few arguments as to how Hobohemia gave rise to alternate temporal rhythms and spatial dynamics.

Finally, Foucault's argument that heterotopias are endowed with the "ability to juxtapose in a single real place several emplacements that are incompatible in themselves" has proven invaluable, pointing to the overlapping of distinct social processes that emerged in the provisional absence of

the forces of capital logic and governmentality.¹⁵⁸ Foucault offers two lines of possible analysis of these juxtapositions: as “creating a space of illusion that denounces all real space, all real emplacements within which human life is partitioned off” or, as in the “heterotopia of compensation,” as “creating . . . a different real space as perfect, as meticulous, as well-arranged as ours is disorganized, badly arranged, and muddled.” In this regard, he cites Jesuit endeavours in South America as “marvellous, absolutely regulated colonies in which human perfection was effectively achieved.”¹⁵⁹ While Hobohemia was neither of these things — neither the denunciation of reality nor the search for meticulous perfection was required of inhabitants, although they were hardly prohibited — it embodied the localization of incompatible, even contradictory, social forces nevertheless. In the broadest of terms, Hobohemia introduced a division into the existing social formation (or society, if you prefer), with the resulting ensemble of social practices crystallizing in time and space an “actually realized” dialectical opposition to liberal-democratic capitalism on Canada’s “Left Coast.”

Here, it is appropriate to turn to Marx’s all-too-brief commentary on the “realm of freedom,” published in the third volume of *Capital*:

The realm of freedom really begins only where labour determined by necessity and external expediency ends; it lies by its very nature beyond the sphere of material production proper. Just as the savage must wrestle with nature to satisfy his needs, to maintain and reproduce his life, so must civilized man, and he must do so in all forms of society and under all possible modes of production. This realm of natural necessity expands with his development, because his needs do too; but the productive forces to satisfy these expand at the same time. Freedom, in this sphere, can consist only in this, that socialized man, the associated producers, govern the human metabolism with nature in a rational way, bringing it under their collective control instead of being dominated by it as a blind power; accomplishing it with the least expenditure of energy and in conditions most worthy and appropriate for their human nature. But this always remains a realm of necessity. The true realm of freedom, the development of human powers as an end in itself, begins beyond it, though it can only flourish with this realm of necessity as its basis. The reduction of the working day is the basic prerequisite.¹⁶⁰

There is considerable debate among Marxists and others as to whether the “realm of freedom” can exist under capitalism.¹⁶¹ Earlier in the same piece, Marx wrestled dialectically with how to map the act of grasping simultaneously how both the “material conditions” and the “social relations” of

capitalism were considered both the “prerequisites” of capitalism and “produced and reproduced by it.” If we adopt the same dialectic in approaching the “material conditions” and “social relations” of jungle life, we can imagine such a realm to be realized in Hobohemia. To the extent that jungles were diagnosed and treated as an alternative order in the discourses of politicians and bureaucrats, in mass media publications, and in the very practices of public and private relief provision, they became an “Other” in civilizational terms, possessing an entire way of life, including a language all their own.¹⁶² Yet Hobohemia itself – the idea of the jungles as a non-contiguous homeland attached to but still outside of capital logic and governmentality – exists only because, in this clearly delimited context, an alternative order did emerge. It was characterized by new configurations of time and space and a new mode of acquisition that defied possessive individualism.

The social practices with which hundreds of thousands of mobile men collectively seized space and secured sufficient food, shelter, and other resources in order to make it to the following day, and the effects of the mass adoption of this mode of acquisition, ran directly counter to the laws of capital logic. At the same time, the builders of BC’s hobo jungles obviously remained partially dependent upon capitalism to meet the daily demands of the realm of necessity, and it is not ironic but tragic that this realm of freedom took root in the soil of continuing exploitation. These jungles were not embedded in what Marx (and probably every other Marxist, anarchist, socialist, and so on) imagined as new-found freedoms in the realm of necessity but rather in a range of practices that parasitically drew value from the working world, which jungle inhabitants visited from time to time, in order to redistribute that value in a collective, non-exploitive fashion. Moreover, these social relations emerged without much in the way of the institutional supports and social sanctions central to the primitive accumulation of capital, and the scarcity of entitlements certainly limited what could be done in a generally hostile context.¹⁶³ As a homeland, then, Hobohemia had its distinct limits. Unable to sustain itself with production (autonomously organized or not), Hobohemia could only exist within a wider social formation that generated wealth sufficient to allow for its (often unlawful) redistribution by those at the bottom of the food chain, if they were not part of another chain altogether.

There remains one key element to be fleshed out. To fully understand how Hobohemia offered an alternative to capital logic and governmentality, we need to grapple with its existence as a homeland without a state – or, in simple terms, as a non-state space. In this regard, I have found most useful James Scott’s anarchist history of the Zomia region of southeast Asia, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, which offers an analytical framework for bringing into view those who have evaded or resisted state-making projects for centuries.¹⁶⁴ Because Scott’s argument is predicated upon the various agricultural and

spatial possibilities afforded by the largely rural context that he examines, it cannot easily be transferred to the ever-rationalizing twentieth-century North American city. Nonetheless, as Scott observes, “Civilizational discourses never entertain the possibility of people voluntarily going over to the barbarians,” and this is largely true for Canadian historiography.¹⁶⁵ The mobile residents of Hobohemia, whether consciously or not, left behind the liberal order and entered a space in which the rule of law and the free market rarely obtained. Just as important, the jungles also lacked the “material conditions” and “social relations” – to borrow Marx’s language – central to the modern state’s existence, let alone to its successful functioning. One could not make a state in Hobohemia, regardless of intent or ability, because social relations therein gave governmental projects little to latch onto to create a basis for one’s claims of continuous authority in these places. Indeed, one could not even stop one’s newly declared subjects from moving on to the next jungle. To rule over and thus regulate jungle life, there was but one option, and that was to eradicate each encampment until nothing remained but civilization, where no person would ever be compelled to inhabit a muddy trench or toil on an assembly line owing to forces beyond his or her control.

Does this sketch of Hobohemia confirm the belief that Utopia is indeed no place? There is no doubt that Hobohemia as seen here hardly resembles anyone’s idea of a promised land. Yet neither of these lines of reasoning is adequate to our present task. Hobohemia was indeed a homeland of non-capitalist, non-statist social practices generated by the residents themselves. The relationships of exchange were conducted face to face, without any institutions that could be considered a formalized capitalist market. Nor, despite the incursions of representatives of state authority, did residents create a miniature government of their own. Instead, they used state relief programs as one source of sustenance among many and invested in non-state social forms to organize a space in which they could survive. Released from the chains of continual wage work, many engaged in collective projects that minimized the necessary labour involved in procuring food, shelter, and other commodities and allowed for non-exploitive relationships to take root in soil owned and ruled by a host of absent others. In these ways, Hobohemia should be understood as a “realm of freedom” provisionally constructed by thousands of anonymous itinerants who parasitically drew from the accumulated surplus value possessed by others (and created by others still) to sustain a system in which the accumulation of surplus value was impossible.

The Crucifixion Machine and the Quest for Efficiency

THE RELIEF INDUSTRY, ADMINISTRATION

There are few better accounts with which to begin an assessment of municipal relief administration than that of an anonymous Depression-era employee of Vancouver's Relief Department. The recollection is drawn from an interview by Barry Broadfoot in the early 1970s and published in the classic *Ten Lost Years*:

It got so I hated those people coming to our office for relief. Really hated them, and I guess now I know it was the system I hated and not them, because they were just the end result of the system. I didn't mean the young men, or even the middle aged fellows who were single or who had left their families. It was the chaps my age, in a way, the ones without jobs, of course, who might have had a house and certainly a wife and kids. . . . It was the way these men had lost their spirit, almost their will to survive, and they'd come shuffling into that office and ask for something more and I'd sometimes scream at them, "Get the hell out of here. Go down to False Creek and drown yourself. There's the way, right down the hill, and now, beat it." They'd just stand there and take it and then say something like, "My kids need shoes to go to school," or "My wife has pleurisy and I can't get no doctor to come and see her," and you'd just have to grit your teeth and reach for a form. . . . I didn't like what was happening to me. In that office I could see the rottenness of the relief system, what it did to people, the graft, and oh yes, there was plenty of that, and the phoney contracts and the phoney people and especially the politicians. You know, there is something

about politics that brings out the very worst in people. . . . So I'd blow up at these people who would come in, and after, I'd apologize, and they would usually just look at me with those goddamned eyes they had. They didn't hate me. Can't even give them that much credit. I found myself turning into a hateful person, spiteful, taking it out on some person when it really couldn't have been his fault. Yelling at my wife, cuffing my kids, snarling at my neighbours, and why? Why? Because I knew that I was part of a system which was wrong, and it was turning me wrong, and to protect my wife and kids I had to keep going wrong, and more wrong, just like you can't be a little pregnant. . . . Not enough money. Too many people. A lot of that money going to the wrong people. Wrong people running the relief office. Forms so complicated you wouldn't believe, and you couldn't help the person fill them out — and to this day I'm convinced those forms were made so complicated that nobody could fill them out. I know I couldn't fill out three out of three correctly all the time. Getting deeper and deeper.¹

This reminiscence beautifully captures several registers of the Depression-era crisis. That the spending required to sustain the unemployed masses in Vancouver proved fertile field for corruption and maladministration is no great shock, at least not to twenty-first-century eyes, well accustomed as they are to revelations concerning what Gramsci called “bribery-corruption,” the path to power that lies somewhere beyond consent and coercion.² Nor is it surprising to learn of complicated forms and regulations that frustrated applicants' quests for assistance: in 1936, City Comptroller W. Wardhaugh admitted, “The City has now reached a stage where regulations have become so elaborate in their nature as to be almost impracticable.”³ But the most powerful effect conveyed by the speaker is the transformation visited upon him as a result of the gaze of the unemployed, “those goddamned eyes they had.” To earn one's living by being presented with a mask of subjection and a story of need — a ritual repeated many times a day, day after day, under the watchful eyes of efficiency experts — gradually disrupted this employee's very sense of self, an effect that moved from public to private spheres and back again, infecting his relations with others everywhere he went. The “system,” in this account, entailed suffering not just for the poor people forced to endure this bureaucratic process but also for the people charged with administering the process, those who had to “keep going wrong,” “getting deeper and deeper” into the rationalized life in order to survive.

With its tragic account of how modern forms of governance can poison social relationships, the story of this anonymous 1930s Relief Department employee would not have been out of place in Siegfried Kracauer's *The Salaried Masses*, the brilliant survey of the transformation of the world of white-collar

workers in late-1920s Berlin. Combining close attention to the effects of scientific management practices in the workplace with a sharp eye for signs of the attendant loss of community and the increased feelings of “homelessness” elsewhere, Kracauer’s name for this dramatic change was “rationalization,” the leading forces of which could be readily identified: “development towards the modern large-scale enterprise, with a simultaneous transformation of its organizational form; growth of the apparatus of distribution; expansion of social security and large associations regulating the collective life of numerous groups.”⁴

Kracauer’s description captures many of the key indices of change in Vancouver’s Relief Department in the early 1930s. The transient crisis and the firing of George Ireland guaranteed that fundamental changes to municipal relief provision would follow the street fights and boardroom battles of the first winter of the decade. Officials discarded the basic policies of Ireland’s paternal regime, which placed great value in Victorian-era traditions of voluntarism and religious mission work, in favour of a modern hierarchical bureaucratic system, under which department employees administered relief to recipients in a thoroughly standardized and rationalized fashion.⁵ This transition was both rapid and thorough, in that most of the personnel and policies in place in 1929 had been purged by 1932. Over these years, faced with a hitherto unseen mass demand for state resources, Vancouver’s Relief Department became a home for Fordist projects in relief governance that combined the modern practices of the scientific management movement with those of scientific charity provision, sometimes smoothly and sometimes with chaotic results.

One of the central targets of the postmodern critique of Marxist histories is the latter’s supposedly universal and necessary dependence on an ostensibly crude analytical framework of depths and disguises. Marxists, so the story goes, are obliged to approach evidence with a surface-depth model, whether ideological or psychological, in order to “reduce” (via their “shrill economic determinism”) historical subjects to class, because attention to surfaces alone, we all know, means admitting that the languages of class were rarely spoken, and those of status were even rarer.⁶ The traditional Marxian focus on class, as the main analytical factor to be mined in making history intelligible, has often led to an unsatisfying rejection of surface phenomena, for example, social practices, as ideological through and through and therefore not to be taken seriously. In the Canadian context, for instance, we have learned that “Marxist writers have often described the goals and ideals of various government programs as ‘mere rhetoric,’ as an ideological cover for the ‘real interests’ of the ruling class,” the implication being that Marxists must consider most history as “mere rhetoric” since the “actual rhetoric” has little do with class, at least as Marxists tend to understand it.⁷ In contrast,

Foucault offers a nominalist account of the techniques and technologies of power in the modern age, with a focus on surfaces without depths, effects without causes, and localities without universals. As he explained in early 1979, “instead of deducing concrete phenomena from universals, or instead of starting with universals as an obligatory grid of intelligibility for certain concrete practice, I would like to start with these concrete practices and, as it were, pass these universals through the grid of these practices.”⁸ Setting aside the abstractions evident in Marxism, Foucault claimed, enabled the emergence of more effective leftist frameworks for understanding the workings of power, a rationale invoked by Canadian acolytes.⁹

This position relies on problematic unspoken foundations – that governmentality and power-knowledge have little to do with the history of capitalism, save for instances of the factory as laboratory for disciplinary projects, and that discussions of these subjects will not benefit from the singular account of “government programs” offered by the likewise singular Marxist interpretive model. These underpinnings have needlessly narrowed the field of studies, neglecting already existing Marxist and quasi-Marxist knowledge and avoiding research agendas that would produce more.¹⁰ In reality, Foucauldian nominalism can be sustained only by taking up anti-nominalist positions in relation to capital logic, and to economic and social history more generally. For instance, in the Canadian context, we have the concept of the “mixed social economy” of public and private welfare measures that excludes substantive consideration of the private market, although with important exceptions.¹¹ Fortunately, long-standing research on Fordism’s history in North America and elsewhere allows us to set aside many of the strategic fragments of anti-Marxist anti-nominalism that permeate Foucault’s published and unpublished work, especially during the latter half of the 1970s, and to address the points of contact between social relations of production, distribution, and consumption, and relations of governance.

Obviously, the script of Fordist rationalization of Vancouver’s relief industry differed considerably from scientific management projects involving heavy industry. Yet the similarities to be observed at the level of day-to-day practice in the workplace are striking.¹² Vancouver officials struggled with the sizeable burden of administrative costs and, in response, devoted much time and effort to the fragmentation and isolation of numerous variables in the relief process. They had an eye to increasing the efficiency of administration and surveillance while lowering the overall cost to the municipality (other governments could worry about their own balance sheets). Each step in the process was tailored according to instrumental logics that officials believed would serve these sometimes contradictory interests – and this was the case for private charities as much as for public programs. Moreover, administrative abstractions played a vital role in the organization of relief on such a large

scale. By translating qualities into quantities, individual human needs into mass categories of provision, these abstractions allowed elected politicians and appointed bureaucrats to negotiate among themselves and to implement changes to relief policies in categorical terms: a change from grocery order to scrip, for instance, was implemented wholesale for hundreds if not thousands of jobless people and their dependants, regardless of the diverse needs and preferences of those placed into these groups. In a similar fashion, entire groups could be declared ineligible for civic relief. Finally, like offices across the country, the department's internal procedures also came under watchful regulation. With the help of auditors, officials took apart and reorganized the administrative practices employed during Ireland's long reign. The end result was an extensive network that allowed for the surveillance not just of relief recipients but also of the department's workforce. Gone was most of the employee's power of discretion: rationalized decision-making procedures ensured a standardized approach to each applicant. In the midst of a capitalist crisis, Vancouver's top political minds looked to business for new methods to organize the administration of relief to those already well versed in the abstract rhythms of capitalogic.

Yet this is also a story about transient effects: the developments surveyed here have as their absent cause the jungle building and other processes that allowed the unemployed to evade direct control, even in the forms practised in provincial work camps and private shelters. Because British Columbia, and Vancouver specifically, remained an inevitable destination for thousands of itinerants, despite municipal and provincial government campaigns for the RCMP and the railway companies to police the border and turn away transients, both the Relief Department and private charities saw their pre-Depression networks of relief provision rendered obsolete, incapable of processing mass demand in a proper fashion and necessitating the creation of new ones. These new networks, however, could not be said to adequately provide discipline for the thousands of transients, whether currently in the system or on the road, heading back to Hobohemia and temporary freedom from the market and the state. Not until the federalization of British Columbia's camp system in October 1932 would Vancouver's managers of relief provision believe that appropriate disciplinary measures could be taken against single unattached homeless men who sought food and shelter (although this same group eventually lost faith in this assessment). In this early period, the journey from itinerant to transient, whereby an unattached man became subject to administrative practices of relief provision, was as likely to prove destabilizing for the municipality as it was for applicants.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first details the widening financial and administrative crisis engendered by transients during Colonel H.W. Cooper's reign as relief officer. Gradually, civic officials found themselves

overwhelmed by the deluge and adopted two measures in hopes of relieving the burden: a lobby campaign to force provincial and federal assumption of responsibility for transients and a private initiative designed to increase the number of recipients who fit within that category of relief provision. The second section charts the beginnings of the transformation of Relief Department practices through scientific management, focusing on the centrality of administrative costs to the overall functioning of municipal relief administration. This chapter ends with a look at the intensification of the reorganization under Relief Officer W.R. Bone. Ironically, the greatest changes to follow from the transient crisis had no effect upon itinerant homeless men. In the summer of 1932, Bone introduced a standardized set of workplace procedures designed to allow for efficient administration and investigation of both family relief applicants and departmental employees. These groups, and not the much-feared transient, experienced the full effects of Relief Department rationalization, resulting in food riots, mass protests, and union strife. Even in the case of our anonymous bureaucrat, the acts whereby he abstracted and objectified the life stories of other people to produce case files in return for wages were at the same time acts calculated in advance to maximize his productivity through a regime of time-work discipline. And his memories of the thousands of eyes? Those he got for free, although he surely paid a large price.

“The Situation is Beyond Our Control”: Mass Need Meets Mass Administration

The thirty-first of December 1930 was William McQueen’s last day as city clerk of Vancouver. One of his final tasks was to wire the following motion, passed that afternoon by City Council, to Ottawa; given its contents, we might wonder if McQueen registered the experience as an unfortunate end to his career:

Whereas the unemployed situation in this City is of such magnitude that it is beyond the capacity of the City to make adequate provision for the men and women unemployed.

Whereas there are thousands of people in this City who are hungry and are in need of clothing and shelter.

And whereas there is in this Dominion enough of all these things that the unemployed need.

Be it therefore resolved that we wire the Prime Minister, the Right Hon. R.B. Bennett, informing him that the situation in Vancouver is beyond our control.¹³

The spirit of civic optimism vividly articulated at the January 1930 conference on unemployment turned out to be no match for the force of material circumstance in the form of an ever-growing population of jobless and homeless transients. In normal times, unemployment declined in the spring as the industries reliant on unskilled common labour such as logging and construction began their season. The spring of 1930 saw no such decline; many resource-based industries found it impossible to sell existing supply stocks, and unemployment and underemployment, as well as demand for municipal relief, increased across the province.¹⁴ In Vancouver, the itinerant presence only expanded with the passage of time.

This section sketches the financial and political dimensions of municipal relief provision, setting the stage for a look at the shifting meanings of “transient” as an administrative category. With Vancouver quickly regaining its decades-old reputation as a mecca for boxcar tourists and the Relief Department threatening to collapse under the cost of doing business, officials responded with a two-pronged strategy: they would seek to force the provincial and federal governments to assume responsibility for transient bodies and to remove them from urban centres, and they would expand the category itself, administratively ensnaring an increasing number of unattached men and creating new generations of “transients.” Taken together, these positions did not resolve the crisis, but they did shift the locus of governmental responsibility, raising new sets of administrative questions.

In April 1930, City Council passed a resolution asking for help from the provincial government on the basis of an estimate that 60 percent of relief cases had resided in Vancouver for less than six months.¹⁵ By June’s end, after Colonel H.W. Cooper had become the relief officer, the department had already consumed almost \$350,000 of its \$500,000 budget, and City Comptroller A.J. Pilkington estimated that an additional appropriation of at least \$250,000 was required to cover projected expenditures for the remaining six months.¹⁶ Officials complained to Premier Simon Fraser Tolmie that “this financial burden is far beyond what the City either can or should be called upon to assume.” Most of the problem, they felt, could be laid at the feet of transients: using statistics taken at the height of the influx in January 1930, they suggested that the “floating population” accounted for 80 percent of single cases and 30 percent of married cases. Hoping to prompt provincial action and to reduce their own budget, Vancouver officials ceased all relief programs for single men, transient and resident, on 10 May; married men who could not prove a continuous twelve-month residency lost their eligibility on 29 July.¹⁷ Civic officials opted to end relief for transients not because these people no longer required support but in defence of their argument about jurisdictional responsibility: these cases rightly belonged to other cities. Alderman Angus MacInnis criticized the policy as impractical, suggesting that officials could

not enforce the requirement of twelve months of continuous residence because “you’d have to bury them before a year was up.”¹⁸

Despite the policy shift, relief remained an open wound for the civic treasury. In October, Cooper announced, “The number of unemployed in the City today, cannot be less than 10,000.” Department officials observed a marked increase in applications from white-collar workers, a dangerous sign of things to come. By the third week of November, the department registered over 4,500 married men, 5,200 single men, and 144 women.¹⁹ Cooper maintained that these figures understated the extent of unemployment because groups like clerical workers, seamen, and union members tended to avoid state relief programs if they could.²⁰ The much-hoped-for abatement of relief spending was nowhere in sight, and the streets once again turned turbulent: December 1930 witnessed unemployed demonstrations led by the usual Communist organizers. The transient was at the centre of social disorder. In the early 1930s, the transient question always possessed a particular charge on the West Coast, subsuming other types of social conflict that wracked North America. Even the campaign to ban married women from wage work failed to gather much steam in Vancouver in this period: one Mrs. Fleming noticed that Alderman Atherton raised the issue at a City Council meeting but “did not get any support.” “Why don’t they wake up?” she asked, lamenting that public discourse about state expenditures somehow always managed to miss the point.²¹

Complaints about the cost of relief provision to transients often dominated the council’s agenda. Yet many of the budgetary issues that led to civic debt can be traced to the added expenses associated with work relief programs, enshrined as the preferred form of provision by the federal government in the Unemployment Relief Act of 1930, and not to the itinerant hordes. The act was “a measure bold in conception, yet simple in operation,” in Colonel Cooper’s judgment: “Its sponsors at least showed courage and initiative in this experiment.”²² His optimistic assessment is not shared by most historians, who instead point to the financial drain on municipal resources that the program entailed.²³ The act allotted \$20 million — \$16 million for work relief and \$4 million for direct relief — to be administered by local governments.²⁴ The federal share of work relief projects was limited to 25 percent; in order to qualify, municipalities were required to put up 50 percent of the cost, with a further 25 percent contributed by the Province. The cost of equipment and other materials as well as supervisory labour costs also belonged exclusively to cities. Cooper complimented the Unemployment Relief Act for “captur[ing] the imagination of the public.”²⁵ Its structure, nonetheless, made it an expensive proposition. Federal money was allotted on the basis of the ability of municipalities to fund their share of the project, not according to the extent of unemployment in that locality; cities with small budgets or large numbers of jobless found it difficult to raise the money to provide

enough work for all in need.²⁶ While work relief remained the ideal form of relief provision to able-bodied men because it provided the municipality with both economic and moral dividends, or so it was thought, federal regulations made it impractical to launch projects that would put even the majority of unemployed men in Vancouver to work.

Work relief cost municipalities more than direct relief for several reasons. Projects required gang bosses, supervisors, engineers, and the occasional architect. They also involved an abundance of machines, tools, and other materials. Often, these had to be purchased for the specific task at hand; road-building projects, for instance, could require a greater number of shovels than possessed by smaller municipalities, and the use of equipment on work relief projects contributed to its depreciation. These schemes also often involved extensive capital outlays. During the early 1930s, Vancouver involved hundreds of unemployed men, most of them married residents, in the construction of the Fraser Golf Course, a municipally owned enterprise in South Vancouver. Many politicians favoured this project because once completed, it would produce revenue. Yet for the unemployed to be able to finish the first nine holes so that the course could open, the municipality had to commit money to purchasing a large number of lots that remained in private hands. At a time when many businesses were forced to undertake retrenchment measures, government spending of this type inevitably ruffled feathers. Finally, because this type of program was predicated upon an exchange — relief in return for work — it appealed to those who hesitated to accept charity because of its association with dependence. Relief Officer Cooper noted a marked increase in the number of single men applying for relief after the department began a program requiring them to work one day per week for their relief. “These men would not accept relief unless they gave some return for it,” he explained.²⁷ This was the revenge of work discipline: more applicants came out of the woodwork to take advantage of the opportunity to work for relief, overturning accepted wisdom that work-test programs always reduced the number of applicants. In many ways, work relief projects had a disproportionate effect on civic resources compared to direct relief, so much so that Vancouver officials illegally diverted provincial relief funds to cover their own administrative spending on bylaw-mandated road work projects in 1933 and 1934.²⁸

Cooper eventually recognized that the policies laid out in the 1930 Unemployment Relief Act would not resolve the bulk of Vancouver’s difficulties because of the investment required of the municipality. The will to put transients to work was there, but the resources were not. Only one month after it was enacted by law, Cooper estimated that he needed an additional grant of \$127,000 to cover expenses on work relief projects.²⁹ Despite the lack of available funds, Cooper emphasized the moral and physical benefits accruing to those who required work of recipients: regardless of budgetary

constraints, married men should be obliged to work one day per week in return for their allotment of groceries in order to “prevent the deterioration inevitable to a long spell of idleness. A conscientious applicant would feel that he was in some measure earning his family’s food, and it would also serve to eliminate any who might attempt to impose upon the humanity of the taxpayers.”³⁰ Gangs of single men found themselves clearing driftwood from English Bay beach and cutting logs into firewood to be used to heat the houses of married relief cases. Recognizing the limited disciplinary reach of his department, Cooper hoped that private citizens would band together to provide programs for single transients in order “to make profitable their enforced idleness.”³¹ However, as noted, federal policy made it too expensive for the Relief Department to arrange for work for all male relief recipients, resident and transient. In future, Vancouver’s shrinking work relief budget would be largely reserved for male resident household heads and would be doled out not as a form of punishment but as a reward: in return for working, married men could earn an additional allowance. In this sense, Vancouver work relief projects in the mid-1930s acted as a bonus system analogous to Ford’s profit-sharing system for automobile workers.³²

With expenditures continuously on the rise, the Relief Department’s next significant policy shift was announced in March 1931, when Cooper’s staff cut loose 2,500 single men, with the rationale that they could not prove residence in Vancouver for a continuous twelve-month period.³³ That January, City Council had explored the possibility of establishing its own work camp for transient single men, only to realize the exorbitant cost of such a project.³⁴ As a consequence, the council, attempting to force the intervention of the provincial and federal governments, chose to reduce drastically the number of transients drawing from civic coffers. Still, this wave of cuts left Cooper with 1,800 single men still on the rolls, along with more than 3,200 family cases.³⁵ He did find a ray of sunshine, however, for the new residency qualification enabled staff to turn away the majority of new applicants; in the first week of March, only 24 applicants of a pool of 132 satisfied the domicile requirement. That month, the city also initiated court cases against clients suspected of fraud; three received suspended sentences and six landed in jail for periods ranging from fifteen days to six months.³⁶

The policy shift of March 1931 represented a concerted effort to force provincial and federal intervention. Yet both governments proved able to withstand civic intransigence, and as a result, the wholesale disqualification of thousands of single men served as a stimulus to radical political organizations and to independent transient initiatives to claim space within the city as their own. Representatives of the National Unemployed Workers’ Association met with the Relief and Employment Committee and held demonstrations resulting in mass arrests, while members of the Independent Labour Party

wrote letters.³⁷ “The Council when it embarked on this policy knew full well what it [was] doing,” cried one writer in the *Unemployed Worker*. “It knew when it cut these men off relief to ‘fend for themselves’ that they were condemning them to starvation, destitution and jail, to be at the mercy of the wolves.”³⁸ The combination of the mass purge of transients and new restrictive access guidelines forced thousands to seek food and shelter outside of established public charity networks. With the March policies, City Council had opted to attempt to restore the municipality’s fiscal health at the expense of subjecting thousands to relief discipline, gambling that the denial of civic relief to transient single men would cause them to go elsewhere. By June, with no improvement in unskilled labour markets in sight, four distinct jungles had sprung up within city limits.

In short, it took a year for Colonel Cooper to lose the war he had been hired to fight. By the summer of 1931, thousands of ungoverned transients had effectively claimed space of their own making, insinuating themselves within the cracks and crevices of the crisis-ridden liberal order and negotiating different paths to making a living on Vancouver’s streets. Alone, the Relief Department could no longer manage the transient crisis while also providing relief to other groups, especially married residents, who, as John Belshaw notes, had a measure of electoral power not possessed by transients.³⁹ Local politicians and civil servants would continue to look to intervention at the provincial and federal levels to remove transients from the streets and to prevent more from arriving. Even then, provincial labour camps would prove insufficient, as Vancouver would again be responsible for thousands of transient relief cases that September, when the jungles were razed to the ground, and again in January 1932, with the temporary collapse of the provincial relief camp system. The onset of spring brought the reinstatement of the ban on transients, but it remained tenuous, dependent upon conforming to changing provincial and federal regulations.⁴⁰

During this period, one key idea shaped the thoughts of civic leaders who exerted the greatest influence over policy: responsibility for the fiscal crisis and the occasional breaches of social order lay with single transient men, and without them, the Relief Department could meet the challenges posed by relief. In his final report, Cooper echoed this consensus. “Looking backwards,” he wrote, “we realize that the main difficulty . . . was that of the single men.”⁴¹ In one sense, this idea was from start to finish a fiction: married relief cases typically required a greater share of departmental resources due to the additional outlays to cover dependants, the more extensive forms of investigation, and the preferential treatment accorded them on municipal work relief projects. Nonetheless, the sheer size of the transient unemployment problem deservedly captured public attention in Vancouver in ways not seen in other major Canadian cities.⁴² The transient single man figured in

discussions of policy primarily as an obstacle, that which most impeded the efficient functioning of municipal relief provision. In such a context, Vancouver officials fought to create a segregated system of relief governmentality in which one's designated residence cut across every other social relationship, determining not just the amount but also the form of relief given and who picked up the bill. These policies would effect an increase in the number of transients in British Columbia and help to generalize the transient crisis outside of the city limits of Vancouver.

Throughout the 1930s, the Relief Department turned away "deserving" transient applicants — the most deserving of which we can imagine as Anglo-Canadian Protestant male household heads who had served in the military and voted for the right party — and expended resources instead on classically "undeserving" residents — single mothers with questionable morals, political dissidents, and so on — because policy accorded a higher value to entitlement claims based on residency than any other, including those based on race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, moral conduct, military service, and one's willingness to work. Simply put, the either/or pair of categories "resident" and "transient" was a fundamental administrative division made among applicants and the basis for their segregation into wholly different channels of relief provision: every other category in use in determining the type of relief was brought into service only after this initial division had been made.⁴³

In those periods when Vancouver was compelled to provide relief to transients, they received as a general rule a lesser amount of food and shelter for a shorter duration than that given residents, and this holds true for most types of relief classifications. The category of "transient" also possessed considerable naming power, sticking with recipients wherever they went. Once a transient, always a transient, and this was true for every type of client: no one could become a resident for the purposes of relief while in receipt of relief, whether from public or private charities, save for a change in marital status. A person on relief had to find continuous employment in Vancouver for twelve months in order to have it considered their domicile by the Relief Department. While the possibility remained that one might through deceit manufacture evidence of fictional roots in the community, in most cases, transients remained transients no matter how long their stay in Vancouver. Such a policy actually worked against a reduction of the relief rolls in one key respect: unwilling to lose their status, unemployed residents commonly refused jobs of a seasonal nature if it meant leaving the city. A stint in British Columbia's forests or Saskatchewan's fields that lasted two or three months might not be worth the loss of one's residency, particularly when said loss meant being ordered to a federal relief camp. The potential for this form of categorization to shape one's destiny on relief cannot be overstated.

Nonetheless, the category that fixed one's route through the Relief Department was itself in flux, made and remade through the dialectical interaction of this technology of municipal governance with outside movements and forces. Itinerants themselves — as masses of individuals making their own way through the streets and as organized groups brought together in meetings and demonstrations, parades and riots — certainly contributed to the making of the category that periodically governed their interaction with the market, and business groups, private welfare administrators, religious leaders, and others played key roles at specific junctures. The most significant structural changes to the administrative category of “transient” stemmed from the negotiation of intergovernmental agreements. On several occasions in the early 1930s, provincial and federal officials intervened to assume financial, if not administrative, responsibility for transient cases.

With each new program, a new birthday was born, marking the difference between resident and transient in the administration of a new relief program. For instance, for many transients, the key date was 1 May 1931. In July 1931, Premier Tolmie's Committee of the Executive Council on Unemployment Relief issued a circular that explained in detail the regulations governing its program for the registration and relief of unemployment. Only those registered would be eligible for provincial relief; although plans for labour camps had not yet been formalized, it was clear that this was the preferred solution to the transient problem, with registration as the first step to enacting a program. Regardless, the circular must have sent a chill through the hearts of relief officers across British Columbia: provincial policy, to take effect on 1 August, defined a “transient” as one “who has been less than three months in the place in which he makes his application.”⁴⁴ In practical terms, all those residing in Vancouver before 1 May would be considered residents and thus a municipal responsibility; those entering after that date became transients.⁴⁵ This stipulation clashed violently with the city's insistence on a domicile requirement of one year. Those who resided in Vancouver for a period greater than three months but fewer than twelve thus occupied a liminal position, a transient in the eyes of Vancouver but not in those of British Columbia.

Before the destruction of the jungles and the opening of the provincial labour camps, intergovernmental conflicts over the category of “transient” had the practical effect of limiting access to relief for thousands of single men who had previously earned their living with seasonal labour. The assumption of responsibility for transients by the provincial and federal governments, however, changed the calculus by enabling cities to rid themselves of jobless men of all kinds, not just those officially designated as transients. During his tenure, Relief Officer W.R. Bone established several regulations in aid of the city's quest for financial restraint that expanded the category of “transient” to include those it had previously excluded, such as the “unemployable.”

The establishment of provincial and federal relief camps removed able-bodied single transient men from the cities, while municipalities remained responsible for single jobless men considered to be unemployable because of physical or mental impairments.⁴⁶

Such cases had long represented an unjust financial drain in the minds of Vancouver's Relief Department officials. The story of "M-58," a single man classified as a Vancouver resident, conveyed what Colonel Cooper saw as the weakness of traditional forms of municipal governance of relief recipients. Born in Ontario in 1891, "M-58" arrived in Vancouver in April 1924, pitching a tent on the Kitsilano Indian Reserve. In February 1925, he fell ill and entered the Vancouver General Hospital, where he stayed as a municipal relief case for four years until being removed to the Marpole Home for Incurables. In June 1929, "M-58" left Marpole; he alternated between the hospital and civic relief until October 1931, when Cooper became aware of his case. In Cooper's mind, "M-58" belonged in the "transient" category, as "his domicile was attained solely by living in a tent upon the Indian Reserve," a questionable claim to residency. However, because of incompetence under Ireland's administration, the civic treasury had supported "M-58" for over six years, save for his stretch in Marpole, and Cooper could see no way out of this situation because "M-58" was a resident of Vancouver according to provincial regulations. By the time Cooper took an interest, "M-58" was living in the Central City Mission, spending most of the day in bed after being diagnosed with neurasthenia and refusing to eat unless food was "sent up to him." "The Department," Cooper gravely noted, "has no power whatsoever to exercise any form of control over him."⁴⁷ Under W.R. Bone, the Relief Department quietly adopted strategies designed to shed Vancouver of responsibility for all single adult men, regardless of residency regulations, thus creating a new generation of transients. First, Bone's staff reclassified hundreds of previously designated "unemployable" single men as fit to work — we do not know whether "M-58" was one of them — and thus now eligible to be sent to a provincial or federal relief camp. This process, two provincially appointed investigators observed, violated the spirit if not the letter of the agreement between the City and the federal government.⁴⁸

Another of Bone's classification shifts designed to limit civic responsibility involved young men who came of age during the 1930s. Men before the age of twenty-one received relief as dependants of their unemployed parents. Once they reached twenty-one, however, their relief identity changed: they became single male adults without a home, divorced from their family in both policy and practice. On occasion, a few would be assigned meal and bed tickets and allowed relief in the city, but they were more likely to be classified as employable single men without a permanent residence and ordered to a relief camp. Nor were these men — now considered transients by the Relief Department — guaranteed resident status in Vancouver once their stay

Table 8 Cost of Unemployment and Indigent Relief in Vancouver, 1927–38

<i>Year</i>	<i>Unemployment</i>	<i>Indigents</i>	<i>Administration</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Administration as % of total</i>
1927	41,184	184,077	32,025	257,286	12.4
1928	44,412	169,303	41,645	255,360	16.3
1929	87,003	205,089	58,278	350,370	16.6
1930	167,002	289,828	81,176	538,006	15.1
1931	239,229	326,776	152,660	718,665	21.2
1932	389,830	287,627	221,365	898,822	24.6
1933	672,777	202,210	203,430	1,078,417	18.9
1934	743,536	167,923	190,145	1,101,604	17.3
1935	863,117	147,229	171,648	1,181,994	14.5
1936	500,536	212,463	169,453	882,452	19.2
1937	423,201	225,285	165,822	814,308	20.4

NOTE: “Unemployment” refers to the money spent on “legitimate” residents of the city, while “Indigents” refers to that spent on transients.

SOURCE: Vancouver City Archives, Vancouver Social Service Department Papers, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, Memorandum re Cost of Unemployment and Indigent Relief, 1927 to 1938 Inclusive, May 1938.

in camp was at an end. This demographic group was in no sense homeless or transient save for the arbitrary divisions devised in policy and enforced in practice. Bone’s rationale was practical: men in camps fell under the purview of the federal government, while most of those outside of the camps were considered provincial charges.⁴⁹ With each such young man liberated from his family, Bone’s staff struck a blow for fiscal restraint, emancipating Vancouver from responsibility. In this way, a select group of municipal staff created hundreds of relief “transients,” people who, because of their decision to apply for municipal aid, administratively became outsiders, an unneeded presence in the city that many thought of as home, at least for now.

With such policies, Vancouver’s Relief Department created a new generation of transients. It did so, in fact, with every episodic explosion in the number of homeless single men taking up temporary residence in the downtown core. Nonetheless, the transients created through Bone’s administrative innovations were of a somewhat different character. Previously, as in the winter of 1929–30 and at the end of the summer of 1931, the Relief Department had employed the category to provide relief to thousands of new applicants. After the provincial and federal camps were created, however, administrators could much more easily label a person “transient” in full knowledge that another

government would assume physical custody and financial responsibility. In these instances, the Relief Department created transients by reclassifying men already in receipt of relief – young unemployed and old unemployable alike. These measures increased the financial burden on other governments, condemned thousands of unattached men to the relief camps, and provided the key impetus to the growth of unemployed political organizations. The transient crisis continued to shape politics in Vancouver, in part because of the Relief Department's role in manufacturing constituents for the relief movement. We now turn to another effect of the crisis, the scientific reorganization of the administrative practices through which municipal relief was provided to transients and residents alike.

Making a Modern Relief Department: Administrative and Disciplinary Imperatives

In multiplying violence through the mediation of the market, the bourgeois economy has also multiplied its things and its forces to the point where not merely kings or even the bourgeoisie are sufficient to administrate them: all human beings are needed. From the power of things they finally learn to forgo power.

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno,
*Dialectic of Enlightenment, 1947*⁵⁰

One of the strengths of the Frankfurt account of the emergence of rationalization is its emphasis on the transformation from the classical liberal era to the Fordist or “monopoly capitalist” era. We have already seen Kracauer’s deft analytical touch with what he calls “inconspicuous surface-level phenomenon,” from hair dyes to love letters, but Adorno was no slouch in this department either. Throughout his American work, one encounters countless vignettes of the decay and decomposition of the bourgeois individual and the free market era he embodied, and of the rise of the mass-administered world, in which no one person, not even Henry Ford, had the power of a king. In *Minima Moralia*, Adorno argues that evidence of this mostly dialectical transformation presented itself in a host of forms associated with what we would call “daily life”: the morals of fairy tales; public speaking drills in the classroom; the difference between walking and running; the “reversal of values” in “the realm of erotic qualities” as they pertained to the bourgeois man’s relations with his wife and his mistress; the not-unrelated matter of the changing function of the lie; the “nonchalant gestures” of teenagers on the streets; the experience of watching animals in city zoos; and, in an

achingly touching passage, the cruelty he witnessed and experienced as a school boy.⁵¹ And the effects of the commodity form were as seemingly universal as the form itself: avarice, luxury, masochism, tact, and even solidarity itself – all qualities rationalized and made functional for the new (and most likely last) world order.⁵² Most relevant for our purposes, Adorno argues that the generalization of the commodity form and the rationalization of social forces meant that Great Individuals were obliged to “forgo power” and experience these processes of objectification themselves. “It is the signature of our age,” he baldly claims, “that no-one, without exception, can now determine his own life within even a moderately comprehensible framework, as was possible earlier in the assessment of market relationships. In principle, everyone, however powerful, is an object.”⁵³ As we take up the issues associated with scientific management and the broader Fordist paradigm, it will, I hope, become clear that all involved with this history of abstract calculation and calculated abstractions ended up going “deeper and deeper” into a rationalized life.

To convey the often-staggering expenses associated with the management of relief, we begin with an economic table, produced in the course of a May 1938 audit of Relief Department expenditures over the previous decade (see table 8). The table recorded civic spending on unemployment and indigent cases, as well as on administration; I have added a column indicating the percentage of administration costs in relation to total spending. While the City had some success in arranging for other governments to assume financial responsibility for specific categories of recipient – transient families, for instance – the Relief Department remained on the hook for processing these individuals and beginning the case-file process. With the commencement of each new intergovernmental agreement, officials in Victoria and Ottawa promised subsidies to cover these activities, but these pledges were rarely fulfilled.⁵⁴ Consequently, administrative costs consumed a considerable portion of civic relief budgets. In the years 1929 to 1932, Vancouver spent \$513,479.32 on administrative costs, or 20.5 percent of its total spending, a truly striking amount equivalent to about 1,280,000 days’ worth of bed and meal tickets, enough to continuously sustain more than 3,500 transients for an entire year. The dramatic rise in administrative spending, in real terms and as a percentage of the total, served to underline the urgent need for managerial innovations. Interestingly, the figures suggest that the generalization of Fordist efficiency measures began to show positive results only when the department could take advantage of economies of scale: administrative costs in absolute terms and as a percentage of the whole declined in 1933, once total expenditures surpassed \$1 million, only to increase again (as a percentage, although not in absolute terms) in 1936, when expenditures dropped below this mark.

These statistics manifested in dollars and cents the sweeping transformation of the civic administration of relief. Following the departure of Ireland, authorities under Cooper and Bone gradually remade the Relief Department into one that could administer to and provide for mass numbers of relief cases, while other governments picked up a large portion of the bill. This rationalization process both already depended upon and further facilitated ways of thinking about the poor in terms of abstract categories — relief officers spoke of “single unemployment cases,” “married unemployment cases,” and “deportations” in their biweekly reports;⁵⁵ such categories owed more to administrative imperatives than to humanitarian or social work ideals. Faced with the never-ending influx of itinerants, mass need translated into mass administration, a new style of management to govern the vetting and surveillance of applicants, the provision of relief in commodity form, and the assessment of employees’ workplace performance.

Yet these statistics also serve as evidence of one of the key limits on this managerial transformation, that of the disciplinary imperative in regard to clients: that is, the desire to enact cost-cutting measures collided with the spending necessary to maintain and enhance the investigatory apparatus. Some politicians, for instance, came to criticize the punitive regulation of relief recipients as an unnecessary expenditure. In 1935, Alderman L. D. McDonald, a reformer and then-chair of the Relief and Employment Committee, criticized W.R. Bone’s emphasis on investigation and proposed dismantling the entire investigation section because of its lack of cost-efficiency. In 1934, according to McDonald, the Relief Department spent almost \$50,000 on investigations of married resident relief cases in order to recover just over \$2,000 from those who had abused the system, proving that only “a very, very small percentage of these unhappy victims are dishonest.” Instead, relief could be provided through the mail, he maintained, enabling a drastic reduction in costs and the “elimination of the present inhuman system of waiting in line at the Relief Office.”⁵⁶ Beyond the investigation section, other regulatory aspects of relief provision contributed to costs. During one of their regular audits of the department, accountants from Helliwell, Maclachlan & Co. concluded that the disciplinary aspects of relief provision limited the ability to effect cost-cutting measures:

The percentage cost of administering relief depends to a very large extent on the nature of relief granted. If relief consisted entirely of cash distributions, the cost of administration apart from investigation would probably be small. Relief given, however, consists of groceries, rent, fuel, cash, bed tickets, meal tickets, bread and milk tickets, etc. and the handling and recording of these items involves a great deal of work. Apart from routine reductions in staff which may be possible from time to time by reason of the fluctuating nature of relief, there are no economies we can suggest.⁵⁷

In most contexts, when faced with a choice between cost-savings and careful regulation, civic officials opted for the latter. Because of the additional expense entailed by disciplinary procedures that separated recipients from the free market, Cooper and Bone looked to rationalize these techniques as well. All told, the growing portion of the budget consumed by administrative costs signified the often-elaborate experiments in rationalization and discipline conducted by the Relief Department's senior staff.

The first component of this project, the eradication of traditional forms of managerial authority and the establishment and concentration of new relations organized at the top of the administrative system, is perhaps best symbolized by the two relief officers who followed in Ireland's footsteps, one a ball-and-chain disciplinarian and the other a white-collar manager. Colonel H. W. Cooper's pre-relief career took him across BC's carceral archipelago. After a long career of military service, he signed on as warden of the federal penitentiary in New Westminster. In 1928, he failed to win the job of Vancouver's chief constable. Subsequently, he held the relief officer position from May 1930 until June 1932, when he quit to become warden of Oakalla Provincial Penitentiary. Before he departed, Cooper secured the Relief Committee's assent to his preferred replacement, W.R. Bone, a previous managing editor of Victor Odlum's *Vancouver Star* and one of Cooper's key deputies, responsible for the operations side of departmental practice. Although different in their styles of management, both relief officers premised their authority upon strictly hierarchical flows of power-knowledge, centralized planning of relief policy and workplace procedures, and the blocking of outside actors — from the Communists to the Ku Klux Klan and everything in between — attempting to shape the process.

For instance, the Vancouver City Clerks' Papers contain many letters from individual relief recipients to their aldermen, appealing for their help with the Relief Department. Following the chain of custody, we see that in most cases, these politicians (or perhaps their minions) simply forwarded the information to the relief officer; only a few vigorously pursued better relief measures through bureaucratic channels beyond an initial letter. When informed of a complaint via an alderman, the relief officer referred the matter to the relevant section head, who in turn dispatched a visitor to produce a report on the case. A relief clerk read the case file and discerned the appropriate type and amount of relief in the circumstances. To complain and be heard thus entailed a repetition of the investigatory process rather than an adjustment based on current evidence or on new evidence alone: constituents who sought help from their elected representative were thus met with one of the "visitors," Relief Department staff members assigned to visit applicants' and recipients' homes, who asked the same set of invasive questions again, stimulating considerable anger and distrust as well as the common

assumption that complaints resulted in a more intensive form of investigation and thus a lower amount of relief.⁵⁸ Beyond a new investigation, relief recipients who were fortunate enough to have their case heard in a formal meeting of the Relief and Employment Committee usually left dissatisfied. An excerpt from the 18 May 1931 meeting recorded this process perfectly: "Several persons attended before the Committee with reference to relief of various kinds, including payment of their rents and were dealt with as the circumstances required, either by being told that nothing could be done for them in the way they desired, or by their cases being referred to the Chairman and the Relief Officer."⁵⁹ This charts the typical cycle of those who appeared before the committee: a request for aid, an unsatisfactory response by department officials after a second investigation, an appeal to higher authorities, a meeting with the councillors, and either a denial of what "they desired" or a referral back to the chair and the relief officer, who would then complete the circle by refusing the initial request.

In these ways, Relief Department procedures were generally well insulated against the intrusions of outsiders, allowing the relief officer considerable latitude in shaping internal practice. In one of his investigations of the department, auditor W.A. Tucker concluded that Bone relied on a "Board of Strategy" that consisted of a small group of influential aldermen and bureaucrats in charting policies and practices.⁶⁰ During the first half of the 1930s, most of the motions pertaining to relief policies ratified by City Council were taken word for word from memoranda written by the relief officer in concert with the chair of the Relief and Employment Committee and a select group of advisors. Not surprisingly, on the majority of occasions, City Council acted as a rubber stamp, deferring to the authority and discretion of the relief officer, upon whom elected officials depended since he was one of few people with complete knowledge of the many internal department policies never discussed in council chambers or the press, much less with relief recipients. In this sense, the basic procedures of a democratically controlled government agency existed in form but not in content. The archetypal hearing with the Relief and Employment Committee served as an empty ritual of authority, and it does not shock to learn that at least one of its meetings turned violent: in November 1932, Alderman W.H. Lembke was assaulted by one client who believed he was the victim of discrimination.⁶¹

The lack of substantive democratic (let alone direct) control over the management of the Relief Department did not mean, however, that outside forces did not influence municipal relief provision. On the local level, property owners and private charity administrators consistently advocated wholesale cuts in relief rates and the intensified monitoring of recipients. For example, in 1933, the Vancouver Council of Social Agencies offered to administer relief to family cases on behalf of the Relief Department. J. Howard T. Falk, the

organization's leader, argued that a more intensive form of investigation, although costly, would ultimately lead to lower disbursements to recipients and financial savings for the department.⁶² In the wake of Ireland's dismissal for corruption, ratepayers' groups called for economies in the provision and administration of relief. The Vancouver Central Ratepayers Association argued for the necessity of a "complete change . . . in the methods of administering relief": in particular, the "more careful scrutiny . . . in the case of applicants." The association singled out "transient applicants" as a particular problem and recommended that they be deported.⁶³

Ratepayers' organizations were particularly critical of the undeserving poor, whether transient or resident. In November 1931, officials from the Kitsilano Ratepayers Association met with Cooper shortly after making dramatic public charges that many resident relief cases "had accumulations of oatmeal, macaroni, potatoes, and tickets for bread and milk." With a more intensive series of investigations, they argued, the department could uncover these "accumulations" and reduce its expenditures accordingly.⁶⁴ This type of charge made sense only within a calculus of pauperism: the jobless were to exhaust *all* of their resources before they could receive charity from public and private organizations. In such a context, anyone assumed to have anything — even stockpiles of macaroni — was not deserving of relief. In response to the public charges of the Kitsilano Ratepayers, Cooper arranged to interview their source, a man who, when pressed, could produce no evidence in support of his claims: no names of people who hoarded goods and no other witnesses to this mass fraud. The source's caseworker (the man was without work) reported to Cooper that he "is in a highly strung state, and is perhaps more to be pitied than censured for his obviously ill considered public statements. He wished me to thank you [Cooper] for the visit made, and reiterated his former statement that he did not wish you to think him 'red'. His last words were, 'please give me work.'"⁶⁵ The falsity of the charges in this instance is of little significance: similar complaints about recipients and their ill-gotten "accumulations" were made in the early 1930s, but few offered actual names, suggesting that rumours about hoarding might have had more to do with fantasies about privileged poor people than with actual stocks of food and other goods.

As ratepayers' organizations became vocal outlets for charges of corruption and inefficient administration throughout the decade, on occasion they forced the Relief Committee or City Council itself to publicly ask the relief officer to inquire into a specific policy. In such cases, department officials successfully managed these groups, using subterfuge on occasion to undermine their efforts. In the summer of 1932, after another ratepayer outcry about inefficiency and incompetence, W.R. Bone agreed to allow three men from ratepayers' groups to have access to one hundred files of married unemployed

cases. The three would perform their own investigation (again, an example of complaints about the relief process leading to more investigations for recipients) after which their assessments would be compared to those of the department's own visitors: Bone ordered that most of the pertinent information be removed from the files, so as not to influence the outsiders as to the amount of relief accorded in each case. The ratepayers' representatives, each of whom was himself jobless, were nothing short of ruthless, scrutinizing these cases in a brutish fashion and noting every trace of a lifestyle marginally above that of pauper. Those with possessions that could be sold, they argued, should be required to sell them before even being considered eligible for aid: one man who had a hundred chickens, for example, should be forced to "turn them into a liquid asset."⁶⁶ Importantly, the character of the individual in question was irrelevant in making such recommendations: whether deserving or undeserving, recipients were expected to translate any saleable possessions into cash before accepting aid from the municipality.

One of the ratepayer investigators complained about a phenomenon he found disturbing: relief recipients who claimed knowledge of others who defrauded the system – as had the member of the Kitsilano Ratepayers Association – but who would not provide names when pressed. "Some example should be made with relief recipients making these statements," he maintained.⁶⁷ Gradually, the ratepayers' inquiry became enveloped in controversy. Another investigator tried to secure files on specific individuals outside of the hundred-file sample, based, he claimed, on information he had uncovered in the course of his enquiries. Department officials responded by raising the possibility that the man sought personal information for unseemly purposes, such as blackmail. Officials also circulated (if they did not start) rumours that two of the ratepayers openly sought permanent jobs in the department.⁶⁸ Mayor Taylor even commissioned trusted investigator Robert Mundy to use departmental resources to assemble a confidential report on one of the men.⁶⁹

On consideration of the correspondence, it seems clear that Relief Department officials schemed with ill intent to frustrate the property owner representatives who were investigating the hundred relief cases. Nonetheless, that such an investigation, which gave private citizens access to government-generated personal information and permission to use the same techniques to produce more of the same, took place at all suggests that the greater significance of this type of ritual enactment lay in its display value. Ratepayers' investigations of the Relief Department looked like democracy in action, even if most property owners were unsatisfied with the results. Other groups, however, found it difficult to obtain a proper hearing, let alone access to confidential information. Throughout the 1930s, a host of left-leaning reform-oriented organizations such as the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, the Local Council of Women, the Independent Labour

Party, and later, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation attempted to gain access to information about relief policy as a means to advance the genuine grievances of those they represented. On every occasion, the Relief and Employment Committee rejected their requests. This spoke to the privileges accorded property and mirrored the Kidd Commission's special access to the records of Premier Tolmie's provincial government.⁷⁰ Vancouver's leftist groups included ratepayers, of course, but these groups did not articulate the interests of property owners but the needs of those on relief. In the early 1930s, this position served as a de facto disqualification from the right of access.

In these ways, Relief Officers Cooper and Bone managed, for the first half of the 1930s, to keep at arm's length most outside groups that claimed an interest in reforming relief provision and to concentrate power over department policies and staff in the hands of a small "Board of Strategy." And this group presided over a gradual yet clearly noticeable expansion in the size of the Relief Department workforce and the scope of its duties in order to cope with the periodic explosions of applicants. In mid-October 1931, after the provincial government had already begun relocating transients from Vancouver to the camps in the interior, Cooper complained that the number of cases handled by the department had *risen* approximately 400 percent in a few months. On one day alone, 16 October, the staff "made contact" in some form with over 3,900 people.⁷¹ While many companies were laying off workers and some even shutting their doors, the Relief Department's business was thriving. "This job has grown so large that there will have to be a radical change in the system," Cooper maintained at a meeting of the Relief Committee in January 1932.⁷² As late as 1932, the Relief Department had but seventeen permanent staff members, along with thirteen temporary office positions, during an average month, even though it had not seen an average month in years.⁷³ By 1934, 160 employees were on the payroll, necessitating the opening of a second office, this one devoted exclusively to single men and located in Hamilton Hall.

Interestingly, one of the consequences of Ireland's firing and the new management regime was the erosion of women's positions as the primary investigatory and social work staff; under Ireland, four out of five investigators assigned to resident relief cases, then the largest section in the department, were female.⁷⁴ By 1934, women had become a minority in the department as a whole and were now confined largely to office work as stenographers, cashiers, and filing clerks. The handful of women who remained in the investigation section were marginalized in a relatively small and deeply gendered corner of the department: they were assigned to family unemployment cases in which the male head of the family was temporarily absent, as in the case of illness or prison. And unlike the 1920s, when they possessed considerable

autonomy, these women now worked under the tutelage of a male supervisor, John Cameron. More generally, women were subject to a policy of “first fired”; statistics for 1934 reveal a number of women “discharged” during periods of retrenchment or upon their marriage.⁷⁵ The expansion of the Relief Department occurred along with the masculinization of jobs with a modicum of influence over policy.

The dramatic expansion and training of the mostly new workforce was just one factor increasing the cost of doing business. More employees and longer hours meant increases in fuel and light costs, automobile maintenance charges, and other expenditures.⁷⁶ There were also the expenses associated with knowledge-production enterprises. In 1932, the Relief Department budgeted the cost of stationary, printing, and office supplies at \$1,750; the actual bill added up to a little more than \$9,500.⁷⁷ Bone complained frequently of the administrative spending associated with transient men, which by 1932 meant “the rental of a separate building, an extensive staff, and heavy maintenance cost,” including that of the production and monitoring of the bed and meal ticket system.⁷⁸ An elaborate set of written procedures had been designed to govern the labour-intensive custody of these tickets, which were assumed to be “an equivalent of cash” for administrative purposes. The tickets themselves were to be kept “in the hands” of the relief officer or his “duly appointed deputy.” The clerks who handled the tickets on a daily basis were obligated each day to maintain records of the disbursement process, to be “duly signed and countersigned” in order to allow for administrative control over their labours.⁷⁹ Such measures translated into sizeable administrative costs for Vancouver. Even in death, the transient could haunt the Relief Department, which was financially responsible for indigent burials and related administrative tasks and paperwork.

The costs of doing business encouraged the development of mass-purchasing practices by the Relief Department. In the summer of 1930, Alderman Harry DeGraves sent A. J. Pilkington, city comptroller, a copy of *The Purchasing Agent*, an American magazine edited by L. F. Boffey and whose function lay in publicizing “the need for business principles in government buying.” Traditionally, Boffey argued, government officials exhibited a general indifference to questions of cost and thus had much to learn from industry, which by definition, attempted to pay the lowest possible price for its materials.⁸⁰ Pilkington forwarded the magazine to W. A. Sheppard, the city’s purchasing agent, who responded with a memorandum on the cost savings that could be accrued with the adoption of a centralized system of purchasing. Bulk buying would reduce prices and attract a greater number of suppliers to bid for contracts. Nonetheless, Sheppard also observed a “resistance to standardization” on the part of many civil servants, who instead preferred “individual expression” in the form of department-level control over spending.⁸¹ Sheppard’s

response did not satisfy DeGraves, who, in December, joined forces with R.N. Fraser to pass a motion demanding that Sheppard report in detail on procurement practices in the Relief Department.⁸² While the department instituted some bulk-buying practices, officials believed that the savings to be effected in these areas paled compared to the economies that could be achieved through the investigation of relief recipients and the reorganization of the workplace.

Under Cooper and Bone, work in the Relief Department was divided into sections based on the type of cases handled: married unemployment, family unemployment, women's unemployment, single women's unemployment, single men's unemployment, and single sick.⁸³ Each section was subdivided further, complicating administrative matters immensely. In August 1933, for instance, City Council passed a motion that created six subcategories within the general field of "single unemployed women."⁸⁴ Given that the overwhelming majority of employees were recent hires, the specialization inherent in the division of casework labour functionally limited the knowledge of the new relief workers that was required to perform their tasks. Distinct from these case-based divisions in the department were the pension, medical, and investigation sections, within which lay a host of tasks associated with the processing of applicants already grouped within the former categories. Most central to the question of administration, the staff of the investigation section was responsible for all relief cases save for those where special circumstances, such as mental illness, necessitated the use of specially trained visitors.⁸⁵ It was the largest section, numbering thirty-four employees in 1934 – more than the entire staff complement in 1932. The largest subgroup comprised those labelled "routine visitors," responsible for questioning applicants as to the particulars of their situation. There were also "investigators," visitors assigned to troublesome cases such as those where fraud was suspected, and "file readers," who monitored the progress of each case file. Someone from this section was usually assigned to "warn" department employees assigned to work relief gangs, such as the landscaping projects connected with the municipal golf course.⁸⁶

Cooper's most significant administrative change to the work process lay in the separation of the tasks of investigating applicants from those of issuing grants, or in more abstract terms, the division of evidence production and evaluation.⁸⁷ Visitors were to meet with applicants and other relevant parties face to face and record clearly the facts of the case according to criteria established by a small coterie of management. They did not, however, make the final determination as to eligibility. In fact, their own opinions about the best ways to assess genuine need and to relieve it were extraneous to the process, save in the form of bias, which departmental procedures had been designed in advance to identify and remedy. Instead, the petitioner's fate was

calculated by a separate group of clerks under the direction of the heads of each case-based section. Generally, this section of the staff was shielded from direct contact with recipients. Instead, they relied on formulae set out by municipal and provincial governments, taking the information provided by visitors on standardized forms — information already purified of much of its subjective dimension — and translating it into commodities for the recipient to consume. Here I feel compelled to note that, yet again, the recipient could be asked to endure an additional round of investigation if a clerk decided that the visitor's initial report contained inadequate or inaccurate information. This division of labour made real the abstraction at the heart of relief policies: the calculation of the form and amount of relief had been wholly severed from the applicant's articulation of need. An assessment of the Relief Department by provincial officials singled out this separation of the tasks of investigation and calculation as of particular value to the effectiveness of the administrative machinery.⁸⁸

Finally, the latest in business machines helped to advance the rationalization process.⁸⁹ In August 1930, Cooper introduced a control card system and a new method of indexing relief cases that allowed employees to speed up the production of information vital to administration. Staff could, for instance, calculate the number of recipients who would be declared ineligible for municipal aid based on different cut-off dates for residency qualifications. The control card system also facilitated deportations by allowing officials to sort out which applicants had not resided in Canada for five years before their initial application.⁹⁰ Progress was slow, to be sure. In December 1930, W. Wardhaugh, one of the key bureaucrats in the comptroller's office, reported that the reorganization of the Relief Department would be finished only "whenever the present unemployment crisis is over."⁹¹ Yet there is evidence as to the effectiveness of this process. Helliwell, Maclachlan & Co. — the firm tasked with the investigation of George Ireland's corruption — conducted a series of audits over several years upon the request of City Council. Over a two-week period in October 1931, the accountants found "very considerable improvement" in the area of investigative record keeping. Also improved were the records governing disbursement, which the auditors believed were kept "up-to-date." Additional procedures had been adopted to improve the accounting and allow for accurate monthly audits. The firm offered a few suggestions as to the reorganization of staff duties in order to "cover work not being done or being done by the wrong people."⁹² While Cooper had, to a large extent, lost the war against the transient, giving up territory in the jungles and ultimately having to call for provincial intervention to save his department financially, he did manage to centralize considerable authority in the position of relief officer and to begin the reorganization of work processes. The fruits of these labours would pay dividends in the future.

**“Special Instructions to Visitors”:
The Codification of Abstraction**

Fifteen minutes for lunch, three minutes to go to the toilet, the Taylorized speed-up everywhere, reachunder, adjustwasher, screwdown bolt, shove in cotterpin, reachunder, adjustwasher, screwdown bolt, reachunderadjustscrewdownreachunderadjust, until every ounce of life was sucked off into production and at night the workmen went home gray shaking husks.

John Dos Passos, *The Big Money*, 1936⁹³

Despite the various intergovernmental attempts to segregate single male transients in camps and to remove from the municipality the financial burden of caring for transients who remained in Vancouver, the Relief Department remained the administrative focal point for the processing of applicants. In short, regardless of where they were located, transients managed to drain the resources of the city-state and became something of a periodically absent cause for the burgeoning of administrative projects launched by both public and private sectors of the relief industry. We must also recognize that state-building projects related to relief for single homeless men affected thousands of poor people classified as residents, although usually not in the same fashion. Commencing in the summer of 1932, W.R. Bone, the new relief officer, initiated a new rationalization campaign in the context of the transient crisis that had its greatest effect on Vancouver residents, especially married couples, whose lives would be carved up into new bits of abstract knowledge functional within the Relief Department’s pauper calculus. In a smaller way, the rationalization process also transformed the working lives of Relief Department employees, who found parallels between their work with relief recipients and the surveillance of their everyday work habits. Under the former newspaperman and his deputies, each step in the administrative and distributive process was isolated and reconstructed in order to facilitate the mass provision of relief in an atmosphere of frightened efficiency. The text that embodied this rationalization was entitled “Special Instructions to Visitors.”

We owe to the philosophic mode of presentation one of the most misunderstood aspects of Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: the argument that (to put it baldly) Enlightenment thinking was born at the mythic origins of prehistory and the conceptual logic that led to, and was embodied in, both Hitler and Hollywood.⁹⁴ That such a narrative holds little appeal as history is understandable. The processes of abstraction and objectification key to this type of rationalization project of course existed

well before the 1930s, having long become an indispensable element in any mode of rule:

Like the material tool which, as a thing, is held fast as that thing in different situations and thereby separates the world, as something chaotic, multiple, and disparate, from that which is known, single, and identical, so the concept is the idea-tool which fits into things at the very point from which one can take hold of them. Thought thus becomes illusory whenever it seeks to deny its function of separating, distancing, and objectifying.⁹⁵

At the same time, there is no denying that the real strength of the Frankfurt account lies in its emphasis on the profoundly economic character of the processes through which rationalization was generalized in the three decades between one world war and the next. As an incredibly efficient mode of wealth generation, Fordist forms of mass production and consumption fuelled the expansion of the Depression-era mixed social economy and the later welfare state. Indeed, without the long-term boom associated with Fordism in North America, most regulatory projects would have remained fantasies of power, unrealizable without the nurturing soil of surpluses churned out in assembly-line fashion. Just as important, the “idea-tools” of scientific management and corporate welfarism proved of value, with the circulatory flows of these already rationalized and easily abstractable bits of power-knowledge-profit rippling through already existing fields of administration and regulation, remoulding every context and creating a few new ones seemingly out of thin air. While the eighteenth century may have witnessed the “‘governmentalization’ of the state,” in Foucault’s words, the twentieth century was replete with the Fordization of governmentality, the commodification and rationalization of some of the key processes of rule, both private and public.⁹⁶ It is the history of this unstable process of change to which the “Special Instructions to Visitors” document belongs.

W.R. Bone assumed the position of relief officer in June 1932. Years later, auditor W.A. Tucker would conclude that the “dominating and decisive factor” in Bone’s hiring was Colonel Cooper’s recommendation; the Relief and Employment Committee did not seriously consider other applicants and failed even to conduct a basic assessment of Bone’s credentials for the position, which Tucker judged to be insufficient according to the employment standards established by the Brittain-Bengough-Winter report on municipal administration in 1929.⁹⁷ With the benefit of hindsight, Tucker argues that Bone’s hiring polarized the department; more experienced senior staff members were subsequently passed over, if not demoted, and replaced by those more amenable to Bone’s rationalization scheme, a process that fostered

considerable dissension in the ranks. Yet Bone's personal crisis extended beyond the walls of the Relief Department: like many homeless men, he found himself caught up in circumstances beyond his control. Not only had Premier Tolmie's work camps failed to halt the flow of transients across British Columbia, but municipalities throughout the province felt increasingly burdened by the periodic arrival of masses of demonstrators and their Communist organizers, who fled the relief camps and returned to the cities in search of a better deal. Transients thus continued to pose a substantial administrative problem for civic officials, despite the millions of dollars already spent on relief programs province wide.

Faced with this conjuncture of mass need, radical political campaigns, increasing financial constraints, and employee disenchantment, Bone opted to consolidate and extend the Taylorist processes of rationalization initiated in Cooper's reign, hoping to achieve efficiencies of administration and economies of scale by changing the ways in which his staff laboured to feed, clothe, and house the thousands of applicants who fit into an expanding number of relief categories. In so doing, Bone orchestrated changes to the investigatory process that had a much greater effect on the lives of family relief cases, whether resident or transient, than on the archetypal single homeless man. When itinerants turned to the state for assistance in this period, the end result could be forty cents' worth of bed and meal tickets, mission tickets worth about the same value, a spot in a provincial labour camp earning room and board and \$7.50 per month, or nothing at all. Because of Vancouver's centrality in the administrative process governing single transient men and its financial responsibility for administrative costs, its officials sought to use the missions and labour camps as a kind of carceral archipelago of subcontracted work-discipline, relying on both provincial and private relief institutions to assume the costs of and responsibility for weeding out the undeserving transient. This allowed officials to employ a minimal number of visitors for transients — as of January 1932, the Relief Department had only three investigators for the more than five thousand single transients then in receipt of temporary relief — and instead dedicate the bulk of the investigatory apparatus to family cases of all kinds, who received relief in the form of groceries, vouchers, and milk and bread tickets during the first half of the 1930s.⁹⁸ Under the new system, married unemployment cases were visited on average once every three months, save for those flagged as particularly troublesome.

That summer, as the key component of his rationalization campaign, Bone and his senior staff assembled a new system of forms to be used by visitors in producing now-standardized case files, the information in which would then be translated by clerks into a specific type and dollar value of relief. This campaign brought to an end the haphazard, improvisational character of the investigatory process, devised on the spot to deal with the

thousands of applicants who periodically flooded administrative channels, while also fixing a set of criteria with which employee efficiency standards would be measured. In Taylorist fashion, the new relief forms were accompanied by a written manual that explained each step in the process: “Special Instructions to Visitors,” authored by Robert B. C. Mundy under Bone’s direction.⁹⁹ A confidential memorandum to be returned if the employee left the department, “Special Instructions” combined all previous circulars regarding official procedures, weeding out the dross of obsolete regulations and reworking step by step each of the sixty sections that made up the visiting process to produce an omnibus codification of department procedures.¹⁰⁰ When officials sent around updated instructions, visitors were required to initial each circular.¹⁰¹

“Special Instructions” captured the process woven throughout Bone’s new management regime. Each day, the routing clerk detailed the cases to be completed by each visitor.¹⁰² In producing the case file, visitors had to write in ink; documents that were written in pencil or were otherwise illegible “will be rejected.” Bone also warned staff not to place files in a position where they could be read by applicants.¹⁰³ Each step in creating and completing a new file was to be performed in the same manner by each employee, and they were to repeat these tasks day after day: clerks would ideally receive completed files with the exact same kinds of information regardless of which visitor had produced them. Yet Mundy also voiced the fear that the administrative need for the investigation process to take a standardized form could result in a certain amount of inefficiency in the visitors’ assessments: because their work was routine, it could be done without much thought, resulting in a case file that lacked the special attention to detail necessary for the investigatory process to work adequately. “The danger of a printed form of report is that visitors may become ‘steriotype’ [*sic*] in the method of handling it,” he fretted. A “word of warning” was thus appropriate: “If you apply yourself intensively to the work, being guided by these instructions, it is felt that you will eliminate to a large extent those who are not entitled to relief, and expose those who have laid themselves liable to prosecution.”¹⁰⁴ The dangers of worker inattention, in this logic, lay not in needs that went unmet but in expenditures unnecessarily made. Mundy emphatically returned to this idea on several occasions: “Deal fairly but FIRMLY with clients, remembering that it is the duty of the Department to assist the destitute in the matter of shelter and sustenance only where and when it is necessary. In rendering your report think constructively for the client, but economically for the Department.”¹⁰⁵

This type of assessment was intertwined with the use of “pauperism” as a concept to govern entitlement: according to a 1932 provincial regulation implemented by the City of Vancouver, relief applicants were obligated to swear to the following:

I [name] of [residence] in the City of Vancouver, Province of British Columbia, do solemnly declare that my reason of application for registration under the scheme of the Provincial Government of British Columbia for the registration of unemployed, is, that I am destitute, being without the necessities of life, and that neither I nor any of my dependents have any financial resources whatsoever.¹⁰⁶

A penniless and propertyless pauper – this was the new model relief recipient, enshrined in policy and made viable through administration. “The onus of showing the need for assistance,” Cooper explained at the end of his tenure, “has been consistently placed upon the Applicant, thus encouraging him to continue to seek employment.”¹⁰⁷ In rationalizing the work process, Bone and Mundy planned based on the assumption that the relationship between department and recipient was likely to be adversarial if not antagonistic and thus required a staff practised in the arts of deception.¹⁰⁸ “Special Instructions” instructed visitors how to search for knowledge about potential resources in family relief cases, which translated into smaller dollar values in groceries or scrip for thousands of families. According to this pauper calculus, anything the recipient did to acquire goods or cash meant an automatic reduction in civic relief resources, already widely considered inadequate. In the struggle simply to access municipal relief and maintain it, recipients were encouraged to appear as paupers, without any resources whatsoever. It is not that the system did not implicitly encourage self-help measures or other creative strategies, but rather that it also encouraged applicants to keep quiet about them. In this way, assumptions about the necessity of deception permeated both sides of the relief relationship.

In this light, “Special Instructions” offered tips as to how to extract information. Section 3, “Boats or Cars,” listed the information the department expected visitors to extract: the make and model of the car and its sale value; the amount of payments for gas, insurance, license fees, and other overhead costs, and who made these payments; and the uses the client made of the car. Mundy also instructed visitors to take readings of the speedometer on each visit. “Generally speaking,” he explained, “a relief case running a car is not destitute,” and great care had to be taken in order to prevent exploitation. Visitors were to record a similar amount of detail for clients who owned real estate, who purchased household commodities via instalment plans, who maintained gardens or a small amount of livestock, and who had other alternate avenues of support. This type of information was not accorded any moral value in the investigatory process – there was no connection between these facts and social work service, for instance – but rather an economic value, used in the calculation of the amount of relief to which family cases were entitled.

Obviously, some issues were more delicate than others and required special techniques on the part of the visitor. Section 1, entitled “Social State,” was most important of all, referring to the character of relations between a man and a woman — and only a single man and a single woman — who lived together. To be classified as a married couple, clients needed a marriage certificate. When applicants could not produce one, visitors collected information as to the particulars of the ceremony and the woman’s maiden name and then made inquiries, which could involve transatlantic communications. Visitors generated a greater amount of paperwork for unmarried clients who lived together. Here, the Relief Department sought information as to the length of the “union,” the “exact parentage” of any children, and the existence of legal reasons preventing the couple from marrying. “The subject is to be approached delicately but definitely,” Mundy noted, adding a recommendation that it be “dealt with towards the end of your visit for obvious reasons.” The department’s unofficial position stressed the maintenance of family units, even those without proper legal or religious sanction, rather than the dissolution of partnerships.

Along with caution, visitors had recourse to the arts of deceit. “Getting information re bank accounts is an art,” Mundy explained, given that the department had no legal right to demand access to an applicant’s bank records. Nor could relief be denied if the applicant refused, although some on City Council tried to reverse this policy.¹⁰⁹ Nor would banks allow relief officials access to private bank accounts without written permission from the applicant. With these obstacles, securing banking information was an art indeed. In “Special Instructions,” Mundy suggested that visitors initially “intimate that such information can be got at quite readily.” They were not to lie, as that would violate the rules. Rather, through indirect subterfuge, clients could be encouraged to believe that officials had the legal right of inquiry, making the paperwork appear to be a procedural formality. Mundy also recommended leaving the question of bank accounts to the end of the interview; one can only imagine how brutal the last fifteen minutes of the visit was for all involved. Visitors were warned not to “come out with the direct question,” as the applicant would likely respond in the negative. Instead, Mundy advised that visitors first study the account of earnings over the past six years and then ask the client “what has been done with the money”: “If he appears to have been infrugal [*sic*] with his money chide him in a kindly way, enquiring if he has nothing to show out of his earnings. Has he never tried to save? Put him on the defensive and he may let out the very information you want to slip out.” Failing that, visitors were to ask the applicant to sign “a blanket order on all chartered banks in Canada,” again inferring that this information could be easily accessed. Trickery would also be useful in determining the applicant’s stores of food, clothing, and fuel. Again, the

Relief Department had no legal right to search a residence. Mundy suggested, “A nicely put request will get you to the basement, larder and closet.” If this failed, one could compliment the applicant on the interior of their home, hoping they would open up cupboards and doors, thus revealing their existing stores of food. Here, too, we see the pauper calculus: Mundy noted that the applicant might not be in “necessitous circumstances” if supplies of food and fuel could be found. The search could also reveal the presence of boarders, the income from whom could also invalidate their claim of need.

“Visitors must be ever on the alert for information leading to evidence of obtaining any kind of relief by false representation,” Mundy cautioned. Most procedures outlined in “Special Instructions” made sense only if one assumed a priori that the applicant would be prone to fabrication. Consider section 7, “Dependents”: “Enquire carefully into the number of dependents,” Mundy lectured, “bearing in mind that experience has taught us that there have been many cases of fraud in this respect. Children have been produced, belonging to others, to cover false statements made by the applicants.” He also explained that for the purposes of relief, the department assumed the complete financial dependence of children – that the entirety of a child’s earnings would go to the household budget. “What the dependents actually pay into their parents is negligible compared with *actual* earnings,” he stressed. “It is the latter that the Department is interested in” (emphasis in original). Mundy wove a familial politics throughout the “Special Instructions.” All applicants were interrogated about support from relatives; in cases where relatives did not provide assistance, the applicant had to provide reasons for this failure. The Relief Department rigorously applied the standards of the Parent’s Maintenance Act, which obliged the young to supplement the income of their elders where possible. In the department’s eyes, some children, far from being suffering helpless waifs, actively chose to deny their parents money, if in fact those were their real parents.

Attempts by clients to manipulate the system took place in every aspect of relief provision, Mundy warned. A lengthy section of the document addressed the possibility of landlord-tenant collusion – the department did not cover rent except in cases where tenants were threatened with eviction, giving rise to staged evictions – and recommended the “utmost caution.” Also included in the manual was a detailed explanation of the regulations governing deportation: the Immigration Act was required reading in the Relief Department. Domicile could be proven through a record of work, the documented birth of children in the city, or the purchase or rental of a home. However, visitors were also told to ask for a passport and, if applicable, naturalization papers. The department employed three separate forms for deportation proceedings, depending on whether the applicant was to be returned to Great Britain, the United States, or elsewhere. Visitors were

also to be on the lookout for signs of immorality. Empty bottles and glasses could be evidence of excessive alcohol consumption, if not bootlegging. Were the living conditions “sanitary and fit for the needs of the family”? Was the “demeanour” of the applicant appropriate, or did it justify “suspicion as to moral conditions?” Did applicants demonstrate that they were “industrious and eager for work,” or did they appear “lazy and content to ‘let George do it’”? These questions sought to produce functional knowledge in order to allow staff to attempt to correct the future behaviour of recipients: none of the extant evidence suggests that these moral assessments were brought to bear in clerical calculations of the form and amount of relief accorded to family cases. Instead, such information figured in questions of eligibility, suggesting a certain fragmentation in the Relief Department’s roles in moral and economic types of regulation.

“Special Instructions” also stressed the necessity of devoting continual care to each case file in order for the facts therein to be of value to relief clerks. Section 14 provided guidelines for establishing the all-important “signals” for each file. Signals could be attached for a host of reasons. Some noted an administrative change of little significance. If two single people on relief married each other, the visitor “signalled” the combination of their files into one joint application, for instance. Others, however, signified important changes such as a reduction or cessation of relief. Signals could also be used by clerks and section heads in cases where existing resources prompted suspicions of a secret source of income, such as clients with furniture in storage or in “great excess of requirements,” or those with an “undue surplus of food or fuel”: thus warned, visitors were to conduct a follow-up visit. Most signals concerned character flaws and possible duplicity on the part of the recipient and thus served as an order for the visitor to investigate further: those who lived in an “irregular social state,” those without proper naturalization papers (a mandatory signal “in all cases of foreign speaking applicants”), those suspected of bootlegging or fraudulently obtaining relief, even those in possession of a liquor permit – all could receive a bureaucratic notation for special attention. In total, there were eighteen circumstances in which signals could be attached, as well as the blanket category “for any reason not enumerated above.” Signals often led to “Supplemental Reports,” explained in section 30. Visitors filled out these reports in eleven possible circumstances, in addition to the catch-all “if otherwise necessary.” Again, officials desired a clear understanding of the existence of assets such as real estate, stocks, bonds, cars, boats, and even airplanes. Clients who did or could receive help from relatives meant additional paperwork, as did those with an “irregular” marital status and those suspected of involvement in bootlegging or other immoral acts.

Finally, visitors were tasked with corroborating all statements concerning previous employment and earnings, as well as other economic information,

requiring considerable time on the phone and the occasional follow-up trip. File readers were tasked with ensuring that the new information produced by visitors aligned with that found in previous reports; any discrepancies were signalled, necessitating yet another round of visiting.¹¹⁰ In short, visitors produced a significant amount of paperwork for each family relief case they processed. Yet their role was that of information gatherer, and it ended there; others were to assess the form and amount of relief given. In instructing visitors and other investigators, Bone's officialdom placed considerable emphasis on suppressing unnecessary opinions. "There has been a growing practice with certain staff members, in making entries in records, to comment on clients in a personal manner," Bone observed in a separate memorandum. "A straightforward statement of any incident is essential, but supplementary remarks of a derogatory nature are uncalled for."¹¹¹ "Do not indulge in recommendations in your reports," Mundy lectured. "Report facts as you find them, so that the other sections may be guided as to requirements."¹¹²

The abstraction process thus began with the work of visitors, who met face to face with unemployed men and women, and sifted through their personal stories in order to generate on standard forms facts that were meaningful within the pauper calculus that governed municipal relief provision. It continued in the work of clerks, charged with calculating the type and value of relief to be exchanged for these facts. Clerks ascertained the differences between two married unemployment cases by employing factors such as previous earnings, the possibility of help from relatives, and existing stores of fuel, food, and clothing. At the end of the process, the individuality of each case file became numerical, given a cash value so that it could then be turned into groceries, scrip, and milk and bread tickets. Through these acts of abstraction, visitors and clerks translated the particularities of the family life histories of tens of thousands of relief recipients into extra rations of milk, vegetables, and meat.

The provision of written instructions to workers was one of the key instructional practices of scientific management.¹¹³ In this case, Mundy's omnibus collection of regulations represented the first significant result of Relief Officer Bone's drive to rationalize each step in the relief provision process. The system of signals and supplemental reports allowed for both tracking recipients and punishing them for a host of economic and moral offences. Equally important, it created, for section heads and others, units of the labour process that could be isolated and measured, and techniques to do so. In every successful application for municipal relief, poor families had their lives translated into textual fragments and assigned a certain monetary value. The visitors and clerks who facilitated this exchange also suffered from the abstractions they created, which were also designed to be functional in the internal field of work-discipline.

We have seen that Cooper devoted much energy to the reorganization of labour relations in hopes of providing economical and efficient administration. Assigned to the Relief Department in May 1930 as part of the investigation into Ireland's misconduct, auditor W.A. Tucker met Cooper shortly after the latter's appointment. Cooper quizzed Tucker on the character of the staff. When he replied that those who remained after the scandal were good workers, Cooper strongly voiced his disagreement and informed Tucker that he "already had them under observation." Moreover, to ensure the efficiency of his network of spies, Cooper had "a second line of 'operatives' observing the first line of operatives."¹¹⁴ Of course, surveillance was nothing new to the Relief Department, having been used against radicals who attempted to organize work relief gangs in the winter of 1929. In the past, however, the managerial gaze had been focused on the recipients of relief; under Cooper, it was also trained inward on the staff. As a further measure, Cooper made a public show of firings, letting go many of Ireland's employees after his appointment as relief officer and conducting periodic purges of the remaining ranks in the quest to instill discipline. A.J. Maccabe, the department's senior clerk, was terminated on the grounds that he hid from Cooper administrative errors made by the staff. Maccabe's termination generated such controversy that it was the subject of a hearing before City Council.¹¹⁵ "He carried a sense of resentment over things that don't matter," Cooper claimed. "I couldn't efficiently operate that department with him."¹¹⁶ Eventually, after a show trial dominated by Cooper, both the Relief Committee and City Council voted to authorize Cooper's actions; Maccabe was given a job in another department.¹¹⁷

This network of informant-based knowledge expanded over the two years of Cooper's tenure as relief officer; Bone, upon his assumption of the position, reorganized the network as a management tool in his battle to rationalize the department, unveiling an authoritarian managerial ethos that expressed itself in stark dichotomies. "The present Relief Department problem," Tucker lamented in one of his reports, "has apparently resolved itself into a matter of being *for the Relief Officer* or *against him*. . . . It almost appears that it is no longer considered the right thing to dare to express an opinion that is not in agreement with the higher officials."¹¹⁸ In terms of personnel, Bone's most significant change was the promotion of Robert Bailey, who took over from Robert Mundy as head of the married unemployment section in early 1933, although his unofficial duties made him the *de facto* gang boss on the paper trail. When he was hired as a visitor by the department in 1930, Bailey possessed considerable experience in the field of investigations, having worked in that capacity for the Canadian Pacific Railway and for the office of Alberta's Attorney-General.¹¹⁹ His most important task as Bone's deputy was the administration of what Alderman L.D. McDonald called the "Crucifixion Machine," the disciplinary apparatus targeted at the staff. As Cooper

had done before him, Bailey ran a collection of “operatives” who spied upon the activities of the staff.¹²⁰ At the request of W.R. Bone, Mayor L.D. Taylor, and several aldermen, Bailey created a file system detailing the efficiency ratings of employees as well as information concerning their off-duty hours, such as whether they drank alcohol. These files were kept in Bone’s safe.¹²¹ In 1935, during the Kerr Inquiry, Bailey was questioned about the network of operatives and scoffed at the idea that anything was amiss. “If there [are] any stool pigeons in that Department they are only *so called* by crooks and *shyster lawyers*.”¹²² Whatever name one chooses, their role was that of spy: they were assigned to secretly report on the activities of staff members. This, according to Tucker, fostered among workers a climate of “unrest, uneasiness, and uncertainty as to their future.”¹²³

The effects of this management style were exacerbated by employment conditions. Most visitors had been hired as “special office help” rather than “permanent staff,” meaning they could be fired without recourse to the protections afforded unionized staff in the Civic Employees Federation. This, needless to say, made it difficult to resist changes to the work process. In August 1932, the investigation department itself was reorganized; visitors would no longer have the ability to make decisions about which cases to investigate. Instead, their daily workload would be plotted by one of Bailey’s trusted staff members. This, it was believed, would “considerably increase the efficiency of the Investigation Dept.”¹²⁴ One later report on departmental efficiency calculated that the average visitor in the married unemployment section administered an average of four and a half cases per day, a number judged to be insufficient by Bailey and Bone.¹²⁵ To increase productivity, they devised a series of punishments: dozens of employees were demoted, suspended, fired, and subjected to a host of petty humiliations. In one month alone, Bailey suspended two visitors for ten days and two more for five days, both without pay.¹²⁶ At one point, he organized classes for those staff members accused of inefficiency, which they were compelled to attend without pay until they could demonstrate to him their fitness for the job. One worker was suspended when he refused to attend the school without pay. The school was terminated only when an auditor could find no legal authority to deny workers wages for their hours of attendance.¹²⁷ One visitor, G.B. Smith, complained that he and his colleagues “were being driven at too *rapid a pace* to fulfill their proper functions.” Smith, of course, was suspended and given one month to improve his efficiency or he would be asked to resign. Smith refused, telling a co-worker that “he was not entering into any competition.” Somehow, this remark made its way to the ears of an operative, and Smith was suspended once again.¹²⁸

The network of informants served what Bone and the “Board of Strategy” saw as the interests of efficiency, although the disenchantment it provoked

may well have decreased productivity. No doubt, the fact that Bailey assigned one worker to be responsible for opening the staff's incoming mail seemed an offensively paternal practice.¹²⁹ Another clerk, who wanted letters of reference from Bone, informed him of the jokes some employees had told about the physical assault by a client of Alderman Lembke during a November 1932 Relief and Employment Committee meeting.¹³⁰ These so-called operatives were also tasked with spying on workers outside of the departmental offices. Upon hearing that a few staff members frequented the Abbotsford and Invermary beer parlours in the afternoon, Bailey dispatched one of his minions, who reported via telephone on the presence of a visitor; the culprit was suspended for one month, despite having an efficiency record that ranged from 98.9 to 100 percent.¹³¹ The informer spent a considerable amount of time in beer halls and alleyways, talking to bootleggers in order to secure dirt about employees. He was even granted a weekly allowance to cover his liquid expenses.¹³² Bailey's operatives also ventured out into the wider community in a hunt for corruption. For instance, several visited the Anchor Hotel and attempted to exchange meal tickets for beer. Others went to department stores in an attempt to get cigarettes and other banned items in return for grocery scrip.

Paul McD. Kerr, who headed the 1935 municipal enquiry into relief practices that became known by his name, disparaged "such 'dime-novel' practices," all the while absolving Bone of any responsibility for the actions of Bailey, who was seen as something of a rogue operative.¹³³ Yet the extant records reveal a relief officer who, through Bailey and other section heads, intentionally used the operatives to create an atmosphere of frightened efficiency. The reports of W.A. Tucker clearly document a pattern of discrimination: the favourites of Bone, Bailey, and those on the "Board of Strategy" rarely suffered disciplinary measures for their inefficiency, mistakes, or alcohol consumption during working hours, while others felt the full brunt of the "Crucifixion Machine."¹³⁴ John Cameron, for example, the head of the family unemployment section, was said to frequent the office while intoxicated, using "violent and obscene language," but he was exempted from punishment.¹³⁵ One worker said of himself that he "was not enough of a stool pigeon to succeed" in the department.¹³⁶ Those who advocated better treatment of the unemployed also seem to have suffered. Miss A. McGeer, for instance, was considered by Tucker to have "no peer in handling a problem case, both with sympathy and intellect." Under Bone, however, she was unofficially demoted, "relegated to dishing out clothes."¹³⁷

Bone's investment in operatives paid dividends when, in late 1933, it enabled him to move against employees contemplating joining the Civic Employees Federation. Mayor Taylor and several aldermen had made it known that they did not want the union to take root in the department, prompting

Bailey to send two operatives to its first meeting. Several days later, Bone fired his first shot across the bow of any would-be unionists. While maintaining that they had the legal right to unionize, Bone stressed that joining the Civic Employees Federation “would have no effect upon their status in the Department.”¹³⁸ They could join the union, but labour relations would remain as they were: the union would have no voice in disciplinary matters. Over the next two months, Bone personally interviewed each staff member who attended union meetings, making it clear that he had received written reports conveying their every word; many subsequently retracted their support for the union. One staff member testified before Paul McD. Kerr that Bone “didn’t say so in exact words, but he intimated that he did not think we had been loyal to him in going down there, and he made it very plain that those who did join the association would not meet with his favour.” The “Crucifixion Machine” had been turned loose on the union.¹³⁹ One worker was fired for telling others that Bone had given his approval to post an advertisement for the next union meeting, which, from the available information, appears to have been true.¹⁴⁰ Another was cautioned against participating in meetings of an unnamed political organization on the grounds that “it was placing the Department in an invidious situation.” Bone recorded that the worker “apparently resented” this warning as an infringement on her freedom of association. He subsequently asked the section heads to investigate the political activities of all staff members.¹⁴¹

Departmental morale was not the only problem uncovered by Tucker in the course of his audits. He also documented a host of patronage hires and suspect contracts with large milk- and bread-producing concerns that cost the City of Vancouver thousands of dollars. On the other end of the scale, some recipients had free rein to break the rules, receiving special treatment because they were protected by influential politicians. Yet among these departmental problems, the question of labour relations in the Relief Department stands out as particularly significant: those charged with producing the information necessary to reasonably determine that relief clients subscribed to the work ethic found their own dedication to the job questioned, the suspicious stance with which they were to treat their clients now applied to them.¹⁴² One visitor issued an elegant plea to W.R. Bone, asking him to rein in Bailey for the good of the department:

I am asking you to consider whether it is desirable in the interests of real efficiency that the employee who has worked with zeal and loyalty, as none can deny I have, should have his reputation placed at the mercy of this machine. Its effect is disastrous to those it humiliates – and however good your staff may be it is bound to humiliate someone at every turn of its wheel.¹⁴³

While the power relationship that differentiated investigator and investigated was ever present, in one sense they were bound together by a shared identity.

In March 1931, Colonel Cooper wrote a memorandum to express his exasperation with the “number of delegations visiting the Relief Office with requests tantamount to a blanket order” for aid. “It appears to have been forgotten that it is not the function of any Government to provide employment,” he observed. His department would only consider “each case upon its individual merits.”¹⁴⁴ Similarly, in response to a June 1932 request from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners that standard rates be given to all recipients, the Relief and Employment Committee maintained that “relief must be given on the basis of the actual need of each case and that no flat scale of money payment per day can be adopted.”¹⁴⁵ Such generalizations were convenient in the face of organized demonstrators and unruly crowds, but that did not make them accurate. In many of their daily actions, relief officers dealt in masses. People with needs were translated into categories and allotted a standardized amount of goods and services. The particulars of one’s situation — how one became jobless and poor — left little impression upon the metastasizing relief system. Nor did the individual expression of need translate directly into the satisfaction of those needs. Much of the expansion of the municipal state — measured in dollar figures, bodies employed, and cases processed — can be traced to the introduction of the ideals of scientific management and to the resolute determination of relief officers and politicians alike to discipline the unemployed and possibly even to make them work for their relief. All of this could happen because of the overwhelming force of mass need as it emerged in the early 1930s. This state edifice of economic and moral discipline was built on the backs of single transient men.

The Racket in Tickets and the Traffic in Lives

THE RELIEF INDUSTRY, CONSUMPTION

Gerald Gratton McGeer delivered his inaugural address as mayor of the City of Vancouver on the second day of 1935. “Mammon was the first order of business,” notes McGeer’s biographer, David Ricardo Williams, who details his subject’s critique of the parasitic relationship of financiers to the body politic.¹ “We meet under conditions that are serious and grave,” McGeer began his address. “Destitution, idleness and perplexing confusion appear upon every hand.” He thundered on: “In the recent election, I assured the electors of this city that I would endeavour to place the wages of men above the wages of money. I assured the electors that the needs of humanity would be placed before the privileges of Money Power.”²

Money Power — in 1935, this idea possessed much political capital in western Canada. It helped McGeer become mayor, brought Social Credit to power in Alberta, and inspired a host of small groups and smaller sects such as the Canadian Fascisti, whose program was not unlike McGeer’s own.³ And as for William Aberhart and others, McGeer’s battle with the bondholders was as much a spiritual crusade as a financial one.⁴ As he explained at his inauguration:

Our duty to city, citizens and taxpayers is no less imperative than is our duty to those who have invested in interest bearing bonds issued in former times of prosperous optimism. In performing your plain duty to all classes and interests, you should recognize that there is no law, rule of practice, doctrine of economy or principle of social justice under

which the rights of one class may be allowed to destroy the wellbeing of any other. There certainly is no duty upon any form of Democratic government to submit a Christian community to impotent bankruptcy in a vain attempt to satisfy the insatiable and unwise exactions of money lenders and money changers.⁵

In such passages, McGeer's account of the banking and credit system commingled with phraseology plucked from the age-old reservoir of Christian anti-Semitism to produce a right-wing populist critique of "Money Power" as unproductive and parasitical, destructive rather than productive of value. In this way, McGeer's politics overlapped with fascist ideas gaining currency in Europe, where intellectuals like Henri De Man defended "the people" against the "hypercapitalism" of high finance.⁶ McGeer's immediate solution to the problem? Highlighting the \$28 million the municipality had already paid in debt and sinking fund charges since 1929, he asked the City's bondholders to agree to a 50 percent reduction in the interest rates on their debt.

This aspect of the McGeer politic is well known, but his second order of business that day – an attack on those on relief – has received less attention from scholars. True, McGeer's demagogic tendencies in regard to Communist movements are legend.⁷ But at his January inauguration, McGeer said little about Communism and instead cast his critical eye upon the poor, offering the claim that municipal relief spending weakened the community's health. How did he make his case? Vancouver had spent approximately \$4.5 million on unemployment relief since 1929, and the Province and the Dominion had contributed almost \$5 million in the same period, according to McGeer. Just as with spending to "sate" finance capital, monetary resources directed to the poor were akin to matter disappearing into a black hole. "Nothing in the way of work or service has been received from this huge expenditure of public money," McGeer asserted.⁸ In his calculus, relief spending and debt fund charges belonged to the same general category of unproductive expenditures presently "gnawing into the very soul of our community as a character destroying evil that is re-acting upon our social structure and economic life like a malignant cancerous growth." Under his leadership, relief spending would be transformed from wasteful to productive: "Those on unemployment relief who can work should be compelled to give fair and adequate service for all sums which they receive."⁹ Many unemployed were good people, capable of salvation. Regardless, their dependence on civic relief remained entangled with the profits of banks, sharing the blame for Vancouver's financial crisis.

Nine and a half million dollars in relief spending, and nothing in return! In his rush to condemn those parasitically attached to the civic treasury, McGeer's passionate rhetoric rang hollow. In exchange for relief, thousands of jobless British Columbians paid with the only currency available to them,

their labour. Workers on civic relief found themselves scattered throughout the Lower Mainland, at golf courses in South Vancouver, on the campus of the University of British Columbia, and at public parks such as Little Mountain, Lynn Valley, and Stanley Park. Some even found themselves looking down over Vancouver from the ski hills to the north. Mostly, unemployed men – residents and transients, married and single – were on the roads and under them, performing thousands of feet of road and sewer construction and maintenance. By any reasonable definition, this was not nothing. Moving from production to consumption, McGeer erred in suggesting that this princely sum had found its way into the pockets of relief recipients. Consider the Relief Department's redemption accounts for the two weeks preceding McGeer's inaugural address. During this period, accountants disbursed the sum of \$55,804.93, not including wages and salaries of department employees, and rarely a nickel to a single relief recipient. Woodward's Department Store received the largest amount: \$13,582.47, or 24 percent of the total expenditure. Other large department stores and groceries accounted for a further 17 percent of the total: Spencer's finished in second place with \$2,594.55, followed by OK Stores with \$2,061.17, B&K Economy with \$1,905.02, Willbees with \$1,179.52, London Grocery with \$1,027.76, and the Hudson's Bay Company with \$587.84. Bakeries also lined up for relief "bread," with firms like Robertson Bakeries receiving over \$500, but their receipts paled in comparison to those of dairies, which milked the city of more than \$6,000: the largest recipient, Associated Dairies, collected \$3,389.15, and the next three (Crystal Dairy, Turner's Dairy, and Empress Dairies) added a further \$2,577.99, to total more than 10 percent of Relief Department spending. Providing fuel for the impoverished also meant money to burn: the figures for Amey Coal (\$417.90), Arrow Coal (\$253.65), and Star Coal (\$413.15) compared with those for Powell Wood (\$97.50) and the Vancouver Woodyard (\$48.75) suggest that Vancouver's poor heated their houses more with coal than with wood. Finally, a host of cafés redeemed thousands of meal tickets valued at twenty cents per man for two meals per day: the Busy Bee earned \$144.54, the Log Cabin \$108.06, the Oyster Bay \$163.35, and the Wonder Lunch \$175.97, with the largest cheque going to the White Lunch for \$485.10. Scholars of the Great Depression have shied away from entrepreneurial success stories. This is not surprising: to the extent that most Canadian historians are uncomfortable with Marxist interpretations of their history, there remains something unsettling about discussing profits against the backdrop of widespread poverty, as if to do so would mean to adopt against one's will a dialectical understanding of the two. This is not a sizeable problem, since we do not want for business hagiographies generally. Nonetheless, the reluctance to address profits translates into portraits of an undivided community in which all Canadians shared a common national experience of the economic crisis, in a fashion similar to

rhetoric found in the historiography of the wars. To quote Jean Barman on British Columbia, “While some individuals suffered more than others, the Depression affected everyone. Almost all wages were cut. Even companies that managed to survive relatively intact were forced to retrench, *at the least to forego profits.*”¹⁰ While this interpretation may have the ring of common sense given the collapse of Canadian export markets and the oft-mentioned stories of investor suicides, it is a misleading caricature that obscures basic economic processes in effect during the 1930s (and other times of crisis). The crisis of capitalism did not mean its absence or lack; mass poverty did not mean (indeed, has yet ever to mean) an end to profits.

This chapter is organized around aspects of the relief industry pertaining to the basic consumption practices of unattached homeless men. The journey from jungle to city and from itinerant to transient taken by thousands ended in two places: the first was the rooming house, equipped with bed and meal tickets for the week; the second, the mission, also came with tickets for meals and beds, along with an investigation of one’s character by a professional social worker and educational (and entertaining) programming in the form of lectures and sermons. While the former arrangement lacked the explicitly regulatory apparatus of the latter, both types of relief exchange took shape according to the principle of “less eligibility”: tickets served to discipline recipients, in this logic, by removing them from the free market for goods and services, a punishment in itself, and in so doing, providing incentive to find either employment or another, perhaps illicit, source of support. Every ticket used, then, signified what Kracauer called “inconspicuous surface-level expressions,” the actual happening of social relations, in this case a rationalized relationship among people and commodities. When seen dialectically, this enactment of social relations brought together what Foucault terms “governmentality,” in the form of the practices or “dispositif” of moral regulation, and what, borrowing from the Frankfurt School, we call “capital logic,” in the form of economic regulation (the identitarian objectification of the recipient) and economic exchange (the material substance of exploitation).¹¹ The latter extends the analytical reach of the former and remedies some of the worst effects of academic anti-Marxism, both by allowing us to draw analytical connections between the economic and the moral (and political), while affirming the irreducibility of both as understood within a dialectical framework, and by enabling us to see beyond the boundaries of market-based economic life. In our case, Frankfurt writings on rationalization suggest the mutual entanglement of the moral and the economic, and of power and exploitation, in the relief industry through which the most basic of goods were provided. Unlike the mutualist exchanges we observed in the jungle, to provide charity was to do business, meaning that the social relations of production, distribution, and consumption that we try to contain within the category of “the

economy” were used out of necessity in order to provide goods and services to the jobless transient. We can, in short, happily agree with the premises that Parliament and its institutions are juridically autonomous from capital and that modern power effects cannot best be described with an economic vocabulary — two of the now-ritualized claims of both liberal and Foucauldian anti-Marxism — without having to assert that the Canadian liberal-democratic state exists somewhere in a netherworld beyond capitalist social relations.

In Vancouver’s submission to the provincial government’s Select Committee on Provincial Finances in 1932, City Comptroller A.J. Pilkington and City Clerk (and future mayor) Charles Jones characterized “municipal corporations” as “mere instrumentalities of the state for the more convenient administration of local government.”¹² Mass unemployment meant mass need, a tremendous upsurge in demands on the state to furnish food, shelter, clothing, and other commodities for use by the jobless. To provide these goods in an economical, efficient manner, the City of Vancouver — itself an incorporated body — devised “instrumentalities of the state” in the form of contractual arrangements with privately owned businesses that provided food, shelter, clothing, fuel, transportation, and a host of other goods, as well as, on occasion, moral instruction to unemployed men and women. These economic agreements were products of the free market: neither government nor business had been compelled to participate by the force of law or the threat of violence.¹³ However, the unemployed — the third party in the equation — cannot be considered free in their interactions because bed and meal tickets, grocery scrip, and other forms of relief provision bound them to both state and corporation. Thousands of transients who lost their jobs during the 1930s also lost the right to choose where they ate and slept. To recognize this is to recognize that complaints about the “culture of dependency” that the poor are said to inhabit are wholly misdirected: throughout the decade, many government relief policies increased the dependence of the poor on the state. In 1936, in the wake of the Kerr Inquiry into the conditions of municipal relief in Vancouver, City Comptroller W. Wardhaugh made a desperate plea for the preservation of the scrip system for family cases and the bed and meal ticket system for single men, both of which entailed “almost impracticable” regulations that greatly increased the cost of relief administration. Despite this considerable burden, however, the regulatory principle enacted in these administrative forms was worth the effort. Cash relief would be seen “as being in the nature of a pension,” he claimed, eroding the work ethic while also undermining the Relief Department’s ability to regulate poor people’s spending.¹⁴ Instead, the municipality should dictate where transients ate and slept, denying them the right to freely engage with the market however they saw fit.

The resulting contractual relationships entailed a host of similarities in the methods of relief provision used by both private firms such as restaurants

and rooming houses and private charities like the Emergency Refuge. The specific form of the relief exchange meant that institutions like the Refuge and the Central City Mission ceased acting as charity providers in the traditional sense and became corporations, all the while maintaining a charitable ethos. Their market was that of the basic needs of single transient men, services that also allowed them to organize educational and spiritual programs. Private charities provided consumers with beds and meals, for which they received a flat rate from one or more governmental agencies. There is, seen in this light, little charity in these acts. Moreover, once capitalized, the “instrumentalities” of private relief provision could, as we shall see, extract a surplus from the unemployed. What the Emergency Refuge and the Central City Mission did was identical in many respects to what the Anchor Hotel and the Ferry Café did. Obviously, there were significant differences between private industry and private charities that shaped the relief experience. Missions largely catered to a captive audience of single men assigned specifically to their institution. This would become one of the key complaints of rooming-house operators, who organized to challenge what they saw as state intervention that skewed the market in favour of charities. Also different was the ideological atmosphere found within these spaces, in that hotels did not have the same investigatory apparatus. True, some landlords took the initiative to inform the Relief Department of suspected irregularities regarding their guests, yet the vast majority of hotel managers did not participate in the surveillance process, a fact suggestive of the power of market-based demand in shaping relief provision. While meal tickets were attached to a specific restaurant, bed tickets could be freely exchanged at any establishment that would honour them, save for cases assigned to specific private missions for the purpose of investigation. Single transients could, within this small corner of the world, influence the market for housing, avoiding, if not boycotting, rooming houses they disliked. Alternatively, they could offer the ticket to another person in exchange for something, beg for money, or head to Stanley Park for a night outdoors. This freedom, limited though it was, meant that hotel and rooming house operators had to cater to the tastes of single transients or face empty rooms. Nonetheless, these differences should not blind us to the identity between private charities and the hotels and restaurants that catered to transient men.

Outside the confines of waged employment, the jobless found themselves looking in at the market, wanting freedom to determine their own patterns of consumption. One writer wryly noted that lunch at the Refuge “consisted of four slices of white bread sparingly spread with jam and wrapped in bags bearing the slogan, ‘Get it at Woodward’s,’” the department store owned by one of the Refuge’s financial backers.¹⁵ Such a meal, in this logic, could only embody capitalist rule. The bitter irony was that working-class consumption

in more prosperous times had enabled the growth of Vancouver, the proceeds of which were now denied to them. One radical articulated his anger at the spectacle of relief programs, in which transient workers could be consumers, but not citizens:

They live in Vancouver hotels and rooming-houses, eat in Vancouver restaurants and wear clothes and shoes bought in Vancouver stores. But they could not get relief from the city because they did not belong here; they were floaters, drifters; they had no permanent homes, did not pay any taxes to the city coffers, so the city fathers refused to assess the good taxpayers to feed them.¹⁶

It is true, as this writer observed, that the Relief Department looked to effect economies in the administration process, targeting transients in the process. Nonetheless, the City of Vancouver also pursued policies to enhance its practices of knowledge gathering and discipline that added to the expense of relief. This reminds us that the contractual arrangement at the heart of the system of bed and meal tickets was always a matter of power.

The Role of Cafés in the Relief Industry: Meal Tickets

“In this country we do not die of starvation, we live it,” wrote Dorothy Livesay during her time in Third Period Montreal, hoping to caution Canadians against becoming numb to the horror of untold thousands living day to day with hunger in what we now call a post-scarcity society. The pangs of mass need stimulated in times of peace, not war, and in the presence of sufficient resources, not their absence, can be read not only as evidence of ongoing exploitation but also as a systemic component of the history of Canadian capitalistic, something inevitably lived when access to food is not a basic entitlement because of its commodified form.¹⁷ Nonetheless, in the context under examination, I believe that the jungles largely accomplished this feat, making sustenance more or less immediately accessible to homeless men able to travel outside of Vancouver (and sometimes within its boundaries, as we have seen). By guaranteeing a meal to anyone who arrived to eat it, the homeland of the homeless offered a temporary place of escape, and thus a measure of autonomy, from the entanglements of the enclosed relief market for food. And within the cities, begging served a similar function, in that cash allowed itinerants to periodically live outside of public and private institutional channels of relief provision. As a result, the use of meal tickets, which necessarily entailed enduring the administrative process of becoming a “transient” and receiving food and shelter through a government-administered unfree market,

occurred within a matrix of possibilities, including free market and non-market options, depending on one's location.

Our point of entry into this portion of the relief industry is Mr. S. Marriomatis, sole owner and proprietor of the Paris Café, who in February 1931 expressed his gratitude to the Relief and Employment Committee “for your issuing of Civic Relief meal tickets” for his restaurant. The decision to place the Paris Café on the list of approved establishments, he reassured them, would produce concrete economic benefits, not just for him personally but for the broader community. The guarantee of a regular clientele — bums in seats, as it were — would enable Marriomatis to schedule regular shifts, as opposed to reduced hours, for his staff and to supplement them “from the unemployed ranks.” Moreover, Marriomatis claimed that the cost-certainty that came with being on the approved list would also allow him to “offer more assistance than formerly in the way of free meals to certain unfortunates claiming that they were unable to obtain assistance from the City.”¹⁸ More work and more charity — both flowed from the contractual guarantee that his establishment would provide meals to single homeless men. To comprehend how exactly serving poor men with meal tickets translated into Marriomatis giving charity to those refused public relief, we must consider three models of the relief exchange embodied in the abstraction of the meal ticket.

In the first model, the value of the meal ticket (an amount determined in advance by the Relief Department) is equal to the price of the food paid by Marriomatis in the marketplace. In this scenario, the unemployed transient receives the full value of his ticket in food, and as a consequence, Marriomatis loses money on each transaction because of his responsibility for the additional expenses of wages for cook and wait staff and of overhead items such as plates, glasses, and cutlery, as well as any charges on property, whether in the form of rent or mortgage payments, and on capital, in the form of interest. Under such conditions, Marriomatis could rightly be considered a philanthropist, taking a loss so that transients could be well nourished and the state's financial health bettered.

There exist, however, too many letters from restaurant owners (and their lawyers) asking to be granted relief business to believe that every proprietor expected to lose money by catering to the transient homeless. Indeed, that the owner of the Log Cabin Café had been willing to pay “secret commissions” to Relief Officer Ireland in order to corner the market on relief meals indicates, at the very least, the potential for profit-making.¹⁹ More to the point, this type of loss-taking does not accurately characterize the capital logic at work at the Paris Café, in which serving civic-funded meals was twinned with giving charity to those without state aid. This leads us to the second model, in which the value of the meal ticket covers both the cost of food and a roughly proportional amount of charges for labour, materials, property, and capital

referenced above. The unemployed man, in other words, does not receive the ticket's full value in food. In this scenario, relief provision is something of a zero-sum exchange for Marriomatis, allowing him to continue to provide meals and cover basic expenditures, but not to accumulate profit. In neither of these models of the exchange would the decision to allocate to Marriomatis a share of relief business provide him with resources in order to "offer more assistance" to those not in receipt of municipal aid.

To be able to divert some of his surplus resources into charitable acts, Marriomatis first needed to generate a surplus by translating a portion of some meal tickets into profit, our third model. We can thus embrace Marriomatis's pledge to provide charity — he could, after all, simply pocket the profit — while also recognizing that he could personally distribute food to the needy only because he owned a restaurant that profited from providing meals to the homeless. Paying attention to the profits to be made with meal tickets can shed light on the social relationships of mass provision, under which restaurants became instruments of relief: sites where food could be secured, prepared, and served en masse for the thousands of men who ate thousands of meals in the downtown core each and every day. This program could be implemented only because of the relations of private property, wage labour, and discipline that already sustained the service industries.²⁰ The only substantive difference between relief meals and regular meals was that the relief customer paid with a fixed-rate meal ticket rather than money, a difference that mattered more to the customer than to restaurant owners and their employees.

Implicit in the ticket system was the principle of "less eligibility," a principle fundamental to the administration of public and private relief programs across Canada, as James Struthers explains in the still-foundational *No Fault of Their Own*.²¹ In this context, the disincentive that accompanied the state provision of meals was found in the method for financing the exchange, a process that separated transients from the free market. Through a number of contractual arrangements, the Relief Department organized an unfree market of consumption within which meal tickets circulated by the thousands, all designed to facilitate the purposeful regulation of relief recipients. Given a ticket that allowed them access to a specially approved menu at restaurants rather than cash — which, as a universally accepted abstraction of value, would have allowed them access to a much wider range of goods and services and of relief providers — unattached homeless men would eat in restaurants that were owned by non-Asians and that employed non-Asian wait staff. Over this period, faced with concerted calls for a free market in relief meals from those who owned the restaurants as well as those who ate the food, policy makers arrived at an informal preference for larger restaurants that employed Fordist economies of scale in food production, hoping to prop up the viability of the unfree market in meal tickets.

How did the meal ticket system work? Following policies largely devised by the relief officer in conjunction with the Relief and Employment Committee, W.A. Sheppard, the city's purchasing agent, issued formal public tenders for relief meals. He vetted applications and chose a specific number of establishments – again, following the guidance, both formal and informal, of the Relief and Employment Committee, especially its then-secret policy preventing Asian-owned establishments from being placed on the approved list. Each café approved by Sheppard was accorded a fixed number of meal tickets per day. Books of meal tickets were printed and distributed to the jobless, who exchanged them for food. Until December 1930, both restaurants and rooming houses received payment in advance; beginning in 1931, they were required to submit the tickets to the Relief Department for auditing before payment.²² Because Ireland had received “commissions,” considerable public scrutiny attended the selection process. In a City Council meeting in early November 1930, Alderman J.J. McRae aired the complaints of several restaurant owners who felt shut out from what a reporter called the “meal ticket business.” “Certain officials direct the ticket holders to certain restaurants,” McRae maintained. “If we allow this sort of thing to continue again, we're liable to get into very serious trouble.” Taking the opportunity to address matters of costs, Alderman H.J. DeGraves claimed that the Relief Department spent about \$2,500 per week on meal tickets, “and it's time the public knew it.”²³

In January 1932, Colonel Cooper defended the system for regulating ticket distribution while also asserting that Relief Department officials had no direct control over the process:

The selection of the cafes, and the number allotted to each, is determined entirely by the Purchasing Agent, who judges the capacity of the restaurant, and also its ability to supply suitable meals. . . . The approval of cafes is a heavy responsibility, and a source of worry to the Purchasing Agent. The experience of the Department is that it is receiving every co-operation from the Purchasing Agent, and that this official is rendering efficient service in this matter.²⁴

In this description produced for public consumption, Cooper shaded the truth considerably, having neglected to mention the considerable guidance provided the purchasing agent by the Relief and Employment Committee in matters such as the informal blacklist that prevented Asian-owned restaurant owners from receiving Relief Department business. When questioned about the matter by City Council in the summer of 1932, Sheppard replied that “whenever the question of giving meal business to Chinese or Japanese restaurants [came up], discussion by the [Relief and Employment] Committee has always been unofficially inferred they be not considered.”²⁵

Indeed, evidence suggests that Asian restaurant owners knew of the policy. In January 1931, Lee Kepment submitted a tender from a group of Chinese-owned restaurants with facilities to serve up to eight thousand meals per day.²⁶ “I feel that in fairness to our community it should be remembered that we are tax payers in the City, that we pay the same license fees as other Restaurants, and that there is no reason for rejecting our tenders on account of any race prejudice that may exist in some restaurants,” Kepment explained. He also noted that while Asians were currently denied business, the majority of café owners presently on the approved list were foreign born.²⁷ Kepment was unsuccessful in his bid, which is not surprising given the uphill battle he faced. Indeed, unaware of the informal racial restrictions governing meal tickets, many white Vancouverites demanded that the Relief Department follow a policy of racial preference. Alfred J. Bland insisted to Alderman Atherton that his committee allot meal tickets only to those restaurants that “employ WHITE cooks and helpers”: “As it is the city sends men to be fed by restaurant owners who strenuously refuse to employ white men, and yet it is the whites who are their source of income – directly or indirectly.”²⁸ One restaurant owner, Mattias Nordin of the Scandia Café, campaigned for business on the basis that he employed only “100% white help.”²⁹ Eventually, in April 1933, the Special Committee struck to deal with the governance of meal tickets motioned that “during such time as the City of Vancouver is in control of relief meal tickets, none of this business be given to Chinese restaurants.”³⁰ The racial blacklist had finally become a matter of public record: the relief industry was clearly not meant for everyone. That a special committee of council had to be struck in order to arrive at an official public policy speaks not only to the significance of food as one of the key sites for racial politics in Vancouver but also to the ongoing involvement of a host of elected and appointed officials in matters of state publicly presented as business done by bureaucrats.³¹

Nor was the meal ticket system free from the influence of patronage. In November 1933, Mayor L.D. Taylor recommended that the Garbo Café, run by one of his friends, be added to the approved list.³² Some owners wrote to their aldermen in search of help: “faced with bankruptcy,” the Whittier’s owner asked his alderman to “use your influence.”³³ In fact, W.A. Sheppard eventually complained to Mayor Taylor that such routine interference had made it “increasingly difficult to satisfy Café owners as to why further consideration cannot be given.” Some of those not added to the list asserted their “moral right” as taxpayers to receive civic business, Sheppard explained, while others “solicit outside influence”: “Lawyers and building managers intercede, personal friends, fraternal societies, and Consuls demand consideration.”³⁴ The owners of the Hembygden, Scandia, and Viking Cafés raised the issue of influence in a collective letter written to City Council to protest the decision to drop them from the approved list. “Any business that we have had in the

past we had to fight for very hard," they explained, "and any business that was given us we had to fight for very desperately to hold." While their establishments sat empty, relief recipients waited in line on the street in order to get into one of the approved cafés, many of which had landed contracts through the intercession of others.³⁵

Of course, transients could be fed by means other than meal tickets issued on private restaurants. On several occasions during this period, the idea of a municipally owned and operated restaurant where transients could be centralized, monitored, and fed en masse received a public airing, including by the relief officer himself in September 1931.³⁶ The Socialist Party of Canada, for instance, saw a municipal dining hall as an opportunity to provide relief "without profit to private enterprise."³⁷ Harry Kydd of Kydd Bros. Hardware believed that municipal soup kitchens could help to limit the illicit traffic in meal tickets.³⁸ One widow with three children believed that a municipally run restaurant would make for better working conditions for white women than those she experienced in the private sector. Because she could not raise her family on her mothers' pension alone, Mrs. Bourque "travelled all over the city" in search of work without luck. She eventually registered with the Employment Service of Canada, and officials dispatched her to wash dishes at the Trocadero Café. She stayed but one day and was not hired back — a good thing, in her mind, given working conditions at the Trocadero: "We white people have to put up with it, dirt and filth and inconvenience, one has to work under in such a place."³⁹ Others saw in the municipal hall a chance not for work but for profit. T. Fancett offered to personally run a civic dining hall for unemployed men, believing that he could reduce operating expenditures to "close to half the cost of sending them to restaurants."⁴⁰ John L. Lewis, speaking for both himself and his wife, made a similar offer, pledging to "save the City a great amount of money & give most efficient service & satisfaction to everybody."⁴¹

Others, however, strongly dissented from any project that would see the municipality (or any other level of government) enter a field dominated by private enterprise. Ian Shaw, a lawyer representing a number of restaurant owners, articulated his clients' concern with plans for a dining hall, arguing that this would "not in the long run be beneficial to the City as a whole and will certainly work to their prejudice." One owner had invested over \$130,000 in his business and had a monthly payroll of \$10,000; to deprive him of relief business could lead to more unemployment. In essence, Shaw argued that it was unfair for these establishments to have to compete with a government-run hall.⁴² Although frequently discussed, the idea for a municipal restaurant was never realized, largely because City Council feared the necessary capital costs, which would be borne by Vancouver alone since the provincial and federal governments had declined to assist in this matter. While many agreed that such an establishment would probably allow the city to reduce costs in

the long term, without the requisite starting capital, no such savings could be made. Instead, the City devised policies that sought to reduce costs at the point of consumption.

In February 1931, City Council struck a committee composed of Aldermen Atherton and Bennett, City Comptroller A.J. Pilkington, W.A. Sheppard, the city's purchasing agent, and the city's medical health officer, Dr. F.W. McIntosh, to consider revisions to the ticket system. With Atherton, Bennett, and Pilkington among the strongest proponents of economy and efficiency in relief provision, it was something of a foregone conclusion that transient men would be tightening their belts. In their first report, the committee concluded that meals could be provided for much less than fifty cents per day per man, the current value. Instead, they proposed the issuance of tenders at the rate of thirty-five cents per day, hoping to reduce this figure in future.⁴³ Two months later, the committee concluded that tickets valued at thirty cents per day would provide "a reasonable and sufficient menu" for single transients.⁴⁴ With the assumption of financial responsibility by the Tolmie government in the autumn of 1931, however, provincial administrators pegged the combined value of bed and meal tickets for transients at forty cents; any additional money for these cases would have to come from the municipality. In response, the Relief Department initially chose to divide the amount equally into two twenty-cent tickets.⁴⁵ In June 1932, the purchasing department called for tenders to provide relief meals at a rate of twenty-two cents per day, seven cents for breakfast and fifteen cents for dinner.⁴⁶ Over the course of sixteen months, the cash value of meal tickets depreciated 56 percent.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the declining value of meal tickets resulted in meals of inferior quality. In his tender, the manager of Bell's Café pledged to provide transients with four ounces of meat and six ounces of vegetables with each dinner, portions admittedly smaller than those available for customers who paid with cash.⁴⁷ In the Wonder Lunch's bid to provide meals at the twenty-two-cent rate, owner F.F. Kennedy "respectfully" suggested that twenty-five cents per day would provide transients with "a more reasonable breakfast." "Having been in the business of supplying cheap meals to the working classes for the past twenty-five years," he wrote, "I feel that 25 cents per day is a minimum requirement and at that figure only leaves a small profit for the caterer."⁴⁸ These examples hint at the limits faced by managers in seeking to make relief business profitable.

The sympathies of others lay not with café owners but with the jobless. A writer for the *Unemployed Worker* lamented the plight of one man who sold his meal ticket to secure currency with which to purchase groceries. Caught by the Relief Department, he was labelled a "grafter" and barred from relief. The reporter argued that the value of the meal ticket when illegally exchanged for cash was greater than its value when used according to regulations: "It is

well known that one can sell a meal ticket at half its supposed value, take the money and buy grub in a store, and have far more to eat than what he can get with meal ticket in any of the slop joints after the mulligan vendor gets his profit which must be large enough for the city council's racketeers to get their 'cut.'"⁴⁹ J.H. Fitzer, an unemployed man, claimed that in one café, "they were unfortunate to have to tolerate dead flies dropping into their food" during mealtimes.⁵⁰ Another jobless man wrote to Mayor Taylor to "heartily denounce" the reduction in the amount of food served in restaurants despite the considerable reduction in the wholesale prices for food. "Let the tickets be used anywhere," he enthused, "and the unemployed be the Judges of a meal."⁵¹

Nonetheless, the assumption that restaurant owners lost money and that the unemployed saw their portions shrink each and every time the City reduced the rates prevents us from seeing the dynamic processes at work in the relief industry. Some cafés clearly depended upon meal tickets to stay in business: one man noted that at one meal in the Winnipeg Café, he alone paid cash for his dinner; the rest used tickets.⁵² The guarantee of relief business probably aided managers in the bulk purchasing of food and other economies of scale, allowing for cheaper per-meal costs. Yet for this strategy to be effective, owners needed to ensure that relief business was in fact guaranteed: to stay on the approved list, these establishments had to redeem the bulk of issued tickets, meaning that owners depended to some extent on the willingness of transients to return twice a day, day after day, to receive the city's patronage. Transients willing to discard their meal tickets and search for sustenance elsewhere could seriously diminish the daily cash flow and long-term viability of downtown cafés, and so too could the organization of the jobless. The United Front of Ex-Servicemen, for instance, fought for and won improvements to food provision. In December 1932, it launched complaints against the Winnipeg and Vancouver Cafés for the poor quality of food and against the American Café for the size of portions. The Relief Department agreed to drop the Winnipeg Café from the approved list at year's end, and the American's owner made improvements.⁵³ Other groups targeted specific restaurants with a form of direct action. In December 1933, eighteen members of the Communist-led Single Unemployed Protective Association received jail sentences after eating at the Waldorf Café without money to pay for their meal. Fred Grange, the secretary of the association, maintained that its members had "no alternative than the course they took."⁵⁴ In these ways, the need to provide meals to transients limited the cost-cutting measures available to restaurant owners in serving this clientele.

Faced with these contextual factors, some owners chose to make up for decreasing returns by attempting to increase the efficiency and intensify the exploitation of wait staff labour. We can assume that waitresses at cafés dependent upon meal tickets had lower take-home incomes than those at

other establishments because of the presumed lack of tips from those on relief. Many also experienced an intensification of the work process. Singling out the National Café on West Pender, one Communist noted the physically harmful effects of this escalation: “Those whose job it is to clear the tables have actually to run with their arms full of dishes. It can be plainly seen that there is some slave driver behind some partition spying on them through some peep hole, who continually hold[s] the threat of instant dismissal with all it means over their heads.”⁵⁵ And others hinted at different forms of exploitation. In a letter to the *Vancouver Sun* in the context of a debate over the possible ban on the hiring of white women by Chinese restaurant owners, “Brother” suggested that “nine times out of ten, a white woman would rather work for a Chinaman as a waitress than for some of the other café owners, who curse them, strike them and demand special privileges of them if given a chance to work.” The latter fate befell his sister, he lamented.⁵⁶ In such a context, waitresses conducted organizing drives that led to a series of strikes, including a 1933 job action at the Blue Goose Café and a larger campaign affecting the Deutschland, Melrose, Only Fish, and Trocadero restaurants in 1936.⁵⁷ Thus, the effects of changing civic policies regarding meal tickets on social relations in restaurants extended well beyond the relief recipient.

In fact, many conflicts concerning meal tickets focused upon the tickets themselves — that is, on the form of relief rather than its amount. Many transients, it seems, experienced the system as a source of pain. John Ahern used the opinion pages of the *Vancouver Sun* to question the necessity to “compel a man to eat at some place, when he would rather eat at another.” Assessing the harmful effects of the program, he singled out the distances transients travelled to eat at the restaurant to which they had been assigned: “In the case of young men the exercise may be beneficial, but with the old and elderly, whose underpinning is wobbly and whose peregrinations have to be assisted by a stick, or two sticks, or crutches, it is — to use no harsher term — a hardship.”⁵⁸ In making this complaint, Ahern was not alone. In November 1930, almost fifty residents of the Anchor Hotel on Columbia Street signed a petition for Alderman Atherton. In the 1930s, establishments like the Anchor — a cheap downtown hotel catering to older single or separated men whose past had seen long stretches of unskilled manual work — swelled with men who were legally classified as single transient men but who lived outside of the relief camp system. “We are all old and infirm,” the forty-six petitioners explained, hoping that Atherton would intervene on their behalf and secure them a guarantee of meal tickets for the Ferry Café, as other restaurants were too far away for them to walk.⁵⁹ Some sought other kinds of consumptive flexibility. J.S. wrote to the *Sun* to propose that transients be allowed to purchase tobacco with meal tickets. His rationale took into account climatic conditions: the rain made it impossible for him to scavenge discarded butts from the sidewalks

and streets. “The Carnegie library cannot hold us all, nor half of us, and the pool rooms simply won’t have us, for which no one could justly blame them, and it is under such circumstances that the weather takes a hand and puts an end to our sidewalk salvage operations,” he explained, maintaining that a change in policy “would be hailed in much the same spirit as would a raise in wages.”⁶⁰ In many cases, transients sought change to the forms of relief provision in order to secure a greater measure of autonomy in making purchases.

For others still, tickets embodied the state’s power to coercively dictate aspects of the lives of the unemployed, such as where they ate and slept. Communists consistently attacked the ticket system for such reasons, and they were not alone. The Vancouver Direct Relief Association (VDRA), formed after the destruction of the jungles, issued a series of demands in December 1931 that echoed those of Communist organizations. The VDRA called for bed and meal tickets that could be redeemed at any establishment and opposed any act of “coercion” to force the unemployed into private shelters. It also asked that hotels, rooming houses, and other establishments that housed transients be compelled to follow civic health and fire laws.⁶¹ That month, the VDRA secured a meeting with the Relief and Employment Committee, sending Percy Bengough and Colin McDonald — secretary and president of the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, respectively, and the city’s most prominent union figures — to request that meal tickets be redeemable at all restaurants. Turning down the unionists, the committee argued that such a policy “leads to abuse of the system.”⁶² In January 1932, at a public meeting attended by three hundred people, the VDRA extended its demands, calling for a public inquiry into “the administration of Relief Funds to Charitable and Religious institutions.” Unlike the investigations instigated by ratepayers’ organizations in the name of the rights of property, the VDRA moved to have their inquiry conducted by those groups that it believed represented the poor: delegates from the VDRA, the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, the All-Canadian Congress of Labour, the Independent Labour Party, the National Unemployed Workers’ Association, and the Rooming House and Café Owners Association were to be allowed the same type of access to civic records that had been granted associations of property owners. Based on extant records, this endeavour appears to have been the first example in Vancouver of a programmatic united front on relief policies for both transients and residents to include every group on the left — “Stalinists,” “social fascists,” and “labour bureaucrats,” to use their own terms for each other — and even an association of property owners. But while ratepayers’ organizations had been granted access to the private records of those on relief, Cooper refused the VDRA’s request without explanation: it is unknown whether he objected in principle to these groups having the same access to confidential government records as ratepayers’ groups or he feared what they would unearth and make public.⁶³

Throughout his tenure as relief officer, Cooper repeatedly rejected outright the idea that unemployed men should receive cash, instead arguing that the maximum social benefit could be secured through economies of scale. Cafés required a “reasonable number” of meal tickets in order to make the business worthwhile, he believed, and from an administrative perspective, it was cheaper for the department to have tickets printed with the names of cafés rather than to print blank tickets and stamp the names of restaurants on each one as they were redeemed. To allow transient men to choose where they ate would, Cooper argued, “increase the administration costs.”⁶⁴ W.A. Sheppard already felt overburdened by the work of the approval process. In December 1931, he complained of having on his desk approximately forty applications for the meal ticket business: “To give every restaurant business would demoralize the Relief Department and add considerabl[y] to the administration and checking of tickets.”⁶⁵ This position prevailed after Cooper’s departure. In September 1932, a special committee consisting of four aldermen and W.A. Sheppard concluded that “it would be advisable to limit this business to the larger cafés who by reason of the volume of their business and the larger attendant buying power were able to furnish the most satisfactory meals.”⁶⁶

The Relief Department under W.R. Bone attempted to effect more economies of scale: eventually, only larger restaurants judged able to produce substantial numbers of transient meals would retain the City’s business. In September 1932, officials removed eight restaurants from the approved list, leaving twenty-one establishments. At that time, approximately three thousand men received meal tickets at a weekly value of \$1.75, or twenty-five cents per day. Cafes that fed a hundred relief cases per week thus took in about \$750 per month.⁶⁷ Officials argued that only the larger establishments could implement economies of scale and provide meals of sufficient quality.⁶⁸ Later that month, the City refused the applications of three more cafés on the grounds that the list was already too large to be carefully monitored. City bureaucrats also warned restaurant owners who accepted “foreign” tickets — those designated for use in other cafés — that these would no longer be redeemed.⁶⁹ The Relief Department issued a circular to restaurants on the approved list, reminding each “of your contract and its penalties in this regard.”⁷⁰ The owner of the Luxury Café felt the force of this policy when he attempted to redeem tickets upon which he stamped the name of his restaurant over the names of establishments printed on them by the Relief Department.⁷¹ This decision affected relief customers as well. One man claimed that he had been cut off and made to reapply for relief when he refused to accept tickets for the Newport Café, which was too far from his hotel to walk.⁷² Two transients accused of misusing meal tickets at the Palace and King’s Cafés saw their relief suspended for one day “as a penalty.”⁷³

The concerns of Cooper and Bone surrounding the cost of administering the meal ticket system help us to comprehend conflicts over the financial dimension of the regulatory measures woven into relief provision. Providing relief in cash rather than tickets would have been more cost-efficient for the City: the elaborate accounting practices; the ticket printing, distribution, and redemption procedures; and the ongoing monitoring of cafés would have been rendered obsolete. Nor would civic officials have had to engage with methods to effect economies of scale: each restaurant would live or die, financially speaking, according to its ability to put bums in seats. Just as important, though, with cash in their pockets — even in such small amounts — transients would have had the choice to spend it on meals or on other commodities. Thus, while cost-efficiency techniques yielded wholesale reductions to the amount spent on meals for transients, the disciplinary framework of relief provision meant increased costs for the city and less freedom for the poor. In this instance, officials devised policies to maximize the delivery of relief services for a minimum per meal cost, but only if these methods allowed for departmental regulation of recipients.

None of this is to suggest that a surplus was generated each time a relief recipient sat down to eat a meal. The Paris Café's story was one of success, but other establishments were not as fortunate. Moreover, the types of social relations through which meals were produced meant that the rate of profit could be contested through working-class organization, as with the organizing campaigns of Vancouver waitresses. Nonetheless, just as with cash transactions, with each meal ticket lay the possibility of profit. In a January 1932 memorandum, Cooper opposed calls to switch to a blank ticket system that would give transient men the right to choose which restaurant to patronize. "Such a method," he explained, would lead to the flourishing of "new cafés" looking to secure a share of relief business, helping to perpetuate the system: "It would naturally be in the interests of these café owners to do as much business as possible, and it would not be to their advantage to see the number of relief clients diminish. In other words, there would be an encouragement to a tendency towards making relief an industry."⁷⁴ According to Cooper's pre-Keynesian logic, there was no relief industry because there was no free market: state regulation of economic activity, in other words, meant the absence of capitalist forms of exchange. From our contemporary standpoint, accustomed as we are to (disappearing) Keynesian forms of government intervention, Cooper appears Cassandra-like: the relief industry had already arrived.

The Push for “Fair Competition”: Bed Tickets

A November 1930 report filed by a city investigator detailed to the Hotel Stanley offers a tragic portrait of unemployed men without prospects, slowly sinking into new depths of impoverishment. The top floor of the Stanley housed a conglomeration of Swedish and Finnish loggers, most of whom had been without work for six months or more and were in debt to the landlord in the range of \$60 to \$75. “Most of them started long ago to sell their clothes at ridiculously low prices,” the investigator observed. “Money for food is hard to obtain now. Some men have been going without food for two days or more. They are in an hopeless condition and expect to be turned out on the street any day.” The landlord claimed that without paying customers, “it is absolutely impossible for him to carry on like this any longer” and pledged his willingness to house the men at a weekly rate of two dollars if only the Relief Department would agree to pay.⁷⁵ Three years later, Donald Campbell, a Health Department inspector, estimated that although half of the licensed rooming houses were under new ownership, conditions had not improved: “I found many place[s] filthy, poor plumbing, water pressure to[o] low, toilets not flushed, sleeping in basements, over crowding, place infested with bed bugs & other verm[i]n, mattresses on beds not fit for a dog to sleep on.”⁷⁶

This anecdotal evidence helps us to understand some of the appeal of the jungles; the rough conditions in these self-fashioned communities do not seem greatly inferior to life at the Hotel Stanley and other establishments. However, archival records offer what initially appears to be a paradox: while more documentation exists about the inadequate if not slovenly conditions in rooming houses than about terrible food and service in restaurants, the sources also make clear that the issue of shelter, and not food, proved more fertile ground for the creation of cross-class alliances among owners, transients, and radical political groups. While both café owners and transient eaters called for the value of meal tickets to be raised, they rarely did so jointly as part of a concerted campaign. The struggle over shelter in the early years of the 1930s, however, led to the emergence of a common political program. This difference can be traced to the different economic relationships engendered by the relief policies of both municipal and provincial governments.

While many administrative aspects of the bed ticket system existed within the same bureaucratic network as those of meal tickets, we can detect several key differences. First, bed tickets came in two kinds: a general ticket, which allowed those in possession to spend a night at any hotel or rooming house that would accept them, and a mission ticket, which directed the transient to a specific mission such as the Central City Mission or the Emergency Refuge, where they would be both fed and housed. Unlike meal tickets, then, which substituted the judgment of Relief Department authorities for that

of the recipient, general bed tickets ensured transients a relative measure of autonomy in the marketplace and thus a greater ability to influence the economic fortunes of individual establishments. Second, meal tickets were largely the preserve of transient single men, although a small percentage of resident single women also received them. Family relief cases, however, whether resident or transient, received food in the form of groceries and, later, scrip. Consequently, restaurant owners and grocery merchants interacted with different sections of the Relief Department and articulated very different economic interests, and I have found no evidence indicating that these two groups sought to collectively press their demands during this period. In contrast, the question of shelter prompted several organizations to launch concerted lobbying campaigns, such as the attempt to win shelter allowances by the Vancouver Real Estate Exchange, a professional body dedicated to increasing both the value and the power of property rights. More to the point, many hotels provided shelter to transients of all kinds: single men, single women, and families. The instruments of relief were different – bed tickets or rent allowances – but the proprietors the same, thus facilitating a collective campaign. These differences in the forms of food and shelter provision meant that the latter provided a context more conducive to alliances between transients and hotel managers.

As with meal tickets, bed tickets declined in market value in the early thirties. By April 1931, their worth had been reduced to twenty-five cents per night from fifty cents in the fall of 1929.⁷⁷ In October of that year, Cooper initiated a further reduction to twenty cents per night in order to allot twenty cents per day for food under the municipality's agreement with the Province.⁷⁸ In response to complaints from the British Columbia Hotels Association, Cooper maintained that the Relief Department was "only acting as an agent for the Government," which, he explained, capped relief to single transients at forty cents per day.⁷⁹ Yet this was misleading, as Cooper well knew: the province capped its own contribution at forty cents, but the municipality could increase the value of bed and meal tickets according to the will of City Council. While the council did, on occasion, vote to commit additional spending for resident relief cases, it repeatedly refused to do so in the case of transients. In less than two years, the value of meal tickets declined 60 percent.

Despite falling prices, however, Vancouver never wanted for entrepreneurs seeking a share of its shelter business. In December 1932, the owner of The Litimer on East Hastings Street lobbied the Relief Department to designate his entire building as a relief hotel, since relief recipients already occupied fourteen out of twenty suites.⁸⁰ One man believed that he could effect economies of scale in shelter, proposing to house two hundred men, two per room, at a rate of \$1.20 per week per man, or \$480.00 per week, slightly less than the rate of twenty cents per day.⁸¹ George Poke's scheme showed more ambition:

with a budget of \$13,000 to \$15,000, Vancouver could build its own shelter for five to six hundred men, who would be charged eighty cents per week. Before them lay an “appertunity for higher moral and spirtual idials,” Poke argued. All the situation required was the “right leadership who have a heart for betterment of humanity,” as well as Poke’s managerial talents.⁸² In a similar vein, E. Odlum, president of the Mercantile Mortgage Company, offered to loan one of his firm’s unused buildings to the City at no charge. A former laundry, the property could house between thirty and fifty; the Relief Department would need to provide mattresses, blankets, stoves, and bathroom facilities. “The cost would be trifling,” Odlum asserted, “compared with renting a lot of rooms and more real comfort could be had at less cost to the city.”⁸³ His offer was not without strings: in return, he expected to have his property taxes waived.⁸⁴ One group authored a petition against Odlum’s scheme, which died in the conceptual stage.⁸⁵ As with relief meals, relief beds were seen as valuable commodities that provided the opportunity for grand humanitarian endeavours or for simple accumulation.

Following the destruction of the jungles, many in business with the City came to criticize the economics of policies that allowed the Relief Department to discipline transients and keep them under surveillance. These entrepreneurs argued that the use of private charities to house, feed, and monitor the jobless undermined one of the key pillars of the capitalist marketplace: the level playing field. In December 1931, the Rooming House and Café Owners Association began a campaign against the policies governing bed and meal tickets with a meeting with City Council’s Finance Committee. The association estimated that its members paid \$200,000 in rents and taxes, and \$10,000 in license fees, not to mention employing over 1,200 people, and could thus claim an entitlement to civic business. The most substantial objection lay in what these entrepreneurs saw as the preferential treatment accorded charitable establishments such as the Emergency Refuge and the Central City Mission.⁸⁶ Relief Officers Cooper and Bone consistently used private charities to extend the regulatory reach of the department in regard to transients. Such a policy “constitutes unfair competition,” argued the association, because these charities had been exempted from the customary licences and taxes paid by businesses. What’s more, private charities also received operating grants from government bodies. Taken together, these policies subsidized the cost of doing business, thus giving lie to the idea of a level playing field.⁸⁷ Added to this were measures that guaranteed the mission customers: transients thought to be work-shy or radicals – usually some combination of both – were denied the choice that came with bed tickets and were obligated instead to receive aid at a private mission, where they would be investigated. Such actions, in denying transients choice, also deprived rooming-house owners of their clientele, undermining the free market.⁸⁸ “The essence of business is fair

competition,” they reminded Vancouver’s politicians, maintaining that the single transient man “should be allowed to get the best value at any licensed Café or Rooming House which he may choose.”⁸⁹ While pledging his willingness to meet with the organization, Atherton scoffed at the argument about the privileges accorded to private charities, which had “no foundation in fact.”⁹⁰ With this response, Atherton was not denying that missions were not guaranteed clients — a widely accepted fact — but rather that this did not represent an unjustifiable violation of the free market.

In March 1933, this group of entrepreneurs, gathered together under the name of the Lodging and Restaurant Keepers’ Association, put forth a new program, hoping to win for resident families a dramatic increase in shelter allowances from a maximum of five dollars per month to ten dollars for husband and wife plus one dollar for each child to a maximum of fifteen dollars.⁹¹ Despite claiming to represent restaurant owners, the association focused its efforts on the question of shelter, demanding both a sizeable increase in municipal spending and the guarantee of a free market by ending the special arrangements with private charities. That April, the association again attacked missions, which they believed to be “operated for profit, bonused by the Government & exempt from licenses & taxes. We demand that these places be given no more privileges than Rooming House operators.” H.B. Hungerford, secretary of the association, sharply criticized the Salvation Army as well as the Young Men’s Christian Association and its counterpart for women. “These so called charitable institutions are operated under the guise of religion,” he wrote, “& not only get a better scale for their shelter but are also allowed to be on the streets,” holding “Pot Days” to solicit funds with permission from the city. Hungerford also savaged flophouses like the Central City Mission and the Emergency Refuge as both “a public menace” and “unfit for human habitation.” The treatment accorded these institutions by governments added up to “unfair competition.”⁹² Finally, Hungerford ridiculed the council’s plan to encourage the destitute to seek odd jobs in order to secure money for the rent as “quite improbable”: “the Government has all ready confirmed the idea in the minds of the majority of these men that complete maintenance is gratuitously given to destitutes.”⁹³ The council’s refusal to pay a standard shelter allowance for married and family unemployment cases led the association in June 1933 to threaten to evict all tenants in these relief categories who did not have a minimum allowance of ten dollars per month.

From the outset, Colonel Cooper had no sympathy for the rooming-house owners. He even had the temerity to argue that in finally issuing bed tickets to the residents of the jungles, his department had in reality given “more clients . . . to rooming house keepers.”⁹⁴ It was in the interest of owners, he argued, “to maintain a large clientele,” implying that their arguments in support of increased shelter allowances could be disqualified by the quest

for profits.⁹⁵ Several times, Cooper observed what he believed to be a pattern: some recently arrived transients “of a certain northern European nationality” requested from the department bed tickets for specific hotels. “It was obvious,” he concluded, “that these men had some inducement to come to Vancouver and proceed to these boarding houses.” Instead, Cooper detailed them to the Refuge, and their numbers decreased, in one case by 90 percent, he claimed.⁹⁶ He emphasized that it was “essential” that business owners who encouraged the unemployed to come to Vancouver “not profit as a result.”⁹⁷ Other city officials rejected the argument about free competition, maintaining that organizations like the Central City Mission did not compete with rooming houses because the former accepted those turned away by the latter.⁹⁸ The City’s chief sanitary inspector enthused about the Mission and the Refuge. “The best of food is provided and the sleeping, living and recreation facilities are good,” he wrote, “and occupants of these places are very well cared for.” He wrote off complaints as “fancied grievances.”⁹⁹

Bettina Bradbury, David Bright, John Manley, and others have explored Communist attempts to attract the jobless by organizing around immediate economic demands.¹⁰⁰ These kinds of demands dovetailed with an increasingly jaundiced view of relief accommodations and camps. The Working Class Ex-Servicemen’s League was particularly vocal in consistently demanding that no former soldiers “be sent to camps of any kind, Refuges or Missions.”¹⁰¹ Those who served in the military “made it possible that our civilization might endure.” Consequently, the country owed them “more than a bed in Refuge or Mission,” especially since their business would be welcomed by rooming-house operators.¹⁰² Interestingly, the *Unemployed Worker* contains little criticism of specific hotels. Although one April 1932 issue warned the jobless to avoid staying at the Clayton Rooms and the Margarett Rooms because the managers were members of the special police force that helped to suppress unemployed demonstrations, this type of commentary was rare.¹⁰³ Compared to the regular complaints issued about meals, bed tickets received little criticism in the radical press, probably because the majority of transient single men could choose where to sleep. True, this type of relief still allowed city officials to track their movements, nor would all hotels accept tickets, which were inferior to cash in several respects. Yet Communists clearly recognized the value in being able, within limits, to choose one’s residence and directed the bulk of their criticisms of shelter policies at private charities like the Emergency Refuge and the Central City Mission. One radical suggested that the \$4,500 worth of unused meal and bed tickets issued for the Refuge symbolized the number of unemployed men who preferred the streets. “The policy of sending workers (many of whom have lived in the city for years) to the Refuge,” he argued, “is deliberately intended to force them into Prison Camps to work for their board, or get them off relief entirely.”¹⁰⁴ It is to these two private institutions that we now turn.

Private Missions: Unintentional Surpluses and Unwanted Competition

To read even a single issue of the *Unemployed Worker* is to understand that many itinerant men considered private missions something akin to the bottom of the barrel. Communists hated the downtown missions. While they held out a measure of hope that a better arrangement could be won from governments, which were at least theoretically subject to the will of the people, private missions would never be redeemed. “By holding a crust of bread in front of the starving workers the missions force the unemployed to listen to their propaganda and prevent them from attending unemployed meetings,” argued one radical. “Their last pennies are extracted for lousy beds. Thus does capitalism in the name of religion exploit the workers.”¹⁰⁵ Another Communist condemned “the clergy, social vultures of the vilest and most despicable type,” for the “poisonous ideological influence” that sought to “educate the militancy out of” workers.¹⁰⁶ Many clergymen were also accused of being hopelessly corrupt: “seeing the picking of the ‘mission’ graft,” these mission leaders “want to get their hooks into the pork barrel a la Rev. Ireland.”¹⁰⁷ Communists thus interpreted the missions in terms of the ideological (“poisoning” the mind) and the material (“extracting” a surplus). This section explores the relationship between private missions and the Relief Department, and between the missions and other charitable organizations in Vancouver. It also details the critique that Communists and others issued of mission policies, whether of the “poisoning” or “extracting” variety.

During his tenure as relief officer, Colonel Cooper relied heavily on private missions because they furthered the regulatory designs of the Relief Department regarding the investigation and control of transient workers and were cost-effective in doing so, thus helping to relieve some of the workload of administering relief to thousands of people, resident and transient, in Vancouver. Indeed, the creation of a workable, separate relief system for unattached transient men that, because of its distinct administrative and provisional forms, could be financed by other levels of government would never have come to fruition without the missions, which ended up, through no fault of their own, the front-line sites of transient regulation within the city limits. Without the ability to send designated applicants to a privately owned and administered enclosed location where their character could be critically assessed — sorting out the resolutely lazy, degenerate, disgruntled, and discontented from those with a genuine entitlement to state aid — the Relief Department would have had to acquire, plan, and staff facilities of their own to effect such a division among a seemingly endless population of applicants. This would have involved dramatic expenditures to cover the associated labour costs, if not capital costs, as well as the interest on the money, which would have had to be secured through a new bank loan. The limited evidence

on Vancouver's missions suggests that this quasi-privatization of aspects of relief provision to transients – welcomed by the leading ideologues of the Vancouver Welfare Federation, the local variant of the Community Chest – changed the day-to-day practices of mission life in ways that undermined, rather than facilitated, the Christian ethos of many institutions.

The founders of the Central City Mission explicitly designed it to be a Christian organization, dedicated to providing an evangelical atmosphere for down-and-outs in search of salvation. The Emergency Refuge and the Ex-Servicemen's Billets lacked this religious spirit: run by former military officers and the city's leading industrialists, these institutions offered a more disciplinarian ambiance. The different character of mission programming, however, should not obscure the fundamental transformation of the economic structures of these institutions during the early 1930s. The specific contractual relationships set out by the City of Vancouver remade the missions – already corporations under the tenets of the Societies Act – into service-sector enterprises in competition with restaurant owners and rooming-house operators for the right to provide food and shelter to homeless transient men. Because these organizations now housed social relations that, in the private sector, owed their very substance to the drive to accumulate surpluses, they ceased operating as humanitarian endeavours in the accepted sense. Instead, these groups received money from the various levels of government, to be translated into commodities and dispensed to the jobless and homeless. While remaining charitable in ethos – religious and educational sermons and strict character evaluations continued to be in force – private institutions no longer gave of their own resources. They remained “charities,” but the name no longer required of them acts of giving.

To begin to remedy this blind spot concerning the continuing processes of accumulation, we commence our investigation with the Emergency Refuge, the private charity created as an expression of the philanthropic spirit of W.C. Woodward, the son of Charles, the owner of Woodward's Department Store, a Vancouver institution.¹⁰⁸ In November 1930, W.C. launched a shelter for single transient men, who, in light of the street battles of the previous winter, had come to be considered a substantial threat to social order.¹⁰⁹ Having solicited his friends to capitalize the endeavour, Woodward and his Refuge served at its peak fourteen hundred meals per day and provided beds for seven hundred. Since the Refuge extended the reach of the civic relief system with its own investigators and record-keeping services, Relief Officer Cooper arranged a cheap rate with the Refuge: \$1.75 per man per week with each person to be given two meals per day.¹¹⁰ This cheap price meant that the Refuge had to keep per unit costs low in order to sustain operations, and officials more than achieved this aim. James Thomson, a Tory patronage appointment to the provincial liquor board, related the Refuge's success to Premier Simon Fraser

Tolmie: "On this agreement with the City, they ran for two months, and at the end of the period they found they *had made* \$2,000.00 – or \$1,000.00 per month. This money is in a fund, in case the operation should again be needed. This will give you some idea what thorough organization and efficiency will do."¹¹¹ In providing meals and beds to several thousand men over the course of two months, the Refuge accumulated value equivalent to 1,142.8 man-weeks of relief. I do not mean to suggest that Woodward and his colleagues set out to make money by providing relief to transients but rather that they simply couldn't help themselves: in organizing the Refuge according to the business principles that struck them as common sense, they created the conditions in which surpluses were made through the thousands of relief exchanges that took place each and every day.

Vancouver was home to almost twenty private charitable institutions devoted to itinerant unemployed men, half of them exclusively religious in orientation.¹¹² Unfortunately, archival documentation is non-existent for most of these organizations, and such records as do survive indicate that most had little effect on relief provision because of their small scale. One April 1930 report explains that most missions quickly used up their small allocation of beds and referred the bulk of single transients who requested aid to the Relief Department instead. While these institutions contributed to the relief effort, their limited resources meant that any substantial increase in the number of jobless applicants had to be shouldered by the Relief Department.¹¹³ A few locations, however, did service substantial numbers. As of August 1930, the Central City Mission and the Salvation Army each housed approximately 200 men per night.¹¹⁴ In November 1930, the Ex-Servicemen's Billets run by the Canadian Legion served food to an average 180 men.¹¹⁵ By March 1931, Legion officials estimated that they had served 500 ex-servicemen daily since November for a total of 60,000 meals.¹¹⁶ The destruction of the jungles in September 1931 forced the Relief Department to reverse its March policy that had removed transient men from the relief rolls and once again open its doors to single men. By the third week in September, the department had issued bed and meal tickets to 2,500 single male transients, although the Tolmie government promised to reimburse the city for the cost.¹¹⁷ Faced with the necessity of once again administering to thousands of transients, Cooper toyed with the idea of abolishing the ticket system and instead devising "some central system" for feeding and housing transients, but this did not come to fruition.¹¹⁸ Instead, he opted to rely on the missions, especially the Central City Mission and the Emergency Refuge; each transient case dispatched to the missions was valued at forty cents per day for food and shelter, the same as was accorded to restaurants and rooming houses.

From the standpoint of civic administration, the missions had advantages beyond the purely pecuniary. Logging companies provided the bulk

of funding for the Scandinavian Mission, an offshoot of the United Church, which fed on average two hundred men per night in the winter of 1930–31. The Scandinavian Mission conducted evening classes “for the study of English and good citizenship” for its members, mostly Swedes and Finns. “We believe,” one lumber company official wrote, “that this has had a very important bearing in offsetting the spirit of Communism which has been spreading quite seriously among the unemployed.”¹¹⁹ Cooper’s favourite, the Emergency Refuge, supplied 4,578 beds and 19,130 meals in September 1931, and 5,370 beds and 22,972 meals in October 1931, mostly to men made homeless after the clearance of the jungles.¹²⁰ The relief officer used the Refuge “as a means of testing these men.” His logic was simple: those suspected of shirking would no doubt prefer work to a stay at the Refuge. In this way, the Refuge, with its investigatory procedures, had been of “assistance in reducing the cost to the taxpayer.”¹²¹

Cooper also looked to the Refuge to discipline those who fell through the cracks of the relief camp system. The Tolmie government had pledged to create camps for those itinerants who entered British Columbia after the registration scheme closed in the summer of 1931, but this promise went unfulfilled due to the financial crisis that followed quickly on the opening of the camps, as detailed in the next chapter. Cooper proposed to put this group to work, housing them in the Refuge until the Tolmie government lived up to its pledge and arguing that, with a plan of work and strict supervision by Refuge employees, “there would be little inducement for the unemployed of other Provinces to flock to Vancouver.”¹²² Yet the Refuge also reduced the cost of relief because many transients simply refused to use bed and meal tickets issued there. One correspondent for the *Unemployed Worker* named “Shorty” observed that upon entering the Refuge, an official collected his book of weekly bed and meal tickets and issued him a separate ticket to be punched each day. “Many workers who get that ticket eat there only once,” claimed Shorty, and yet the Refuge could redeem the entire book of tickets: “it seems obvious that the grafter that runs the place is doing fairly well.”¹²³ The available evidence allows us to confirm Shorty’s description of the process, if not the accusations of graft: in January 1932, Refuge organizers sent the Relief Department cheques totalling \$4,587.80, representing beds and meals allotted by the City to transient men but not redeemed. This figure represented almost 11,500 man-days of relief since the destruction of the jungles in September.¹²⁴ In the first two weeks of August 1932, 4,315 bed tickets were issued on the Refuge but only 2,140, just under 50 percent, were redeemed.¹²⁵ Given a choice between a mission and the street, hundreds of unemployed men hit the pavement.

Relief Department officials thus intended their use of private charities like the Refuge to reduce relief costs and protect against what they saw as the exploitation of municipal resources by transients. At the same time, these

explicitly stated goals meant that some transients were less likely to avail themselves of government aid precisely because they took offence at the suggestion that their character could be improved through a short stint under such punitive circumstances. Allotted tickets for the Mission, one unemployed man, F.H. Richardson, complained to A.E. Tutte, the head of the single men's section. Tutte, however, refused his request for tickets for rooming houses on the grounds of moral improvement: according to Richardson, Tutte told him that "there w[ere] worse things than the do[se] of lice I would get at the Mission. That the men who were given their preference of eating places [were] probably full of venereal or some other contag[i]ous disease."¹²⁶

This type of reasoning — that the government should use the opportunity provided by poverty in order to intervene and improve the moral health of transients — occasionally led to violations of the law. In February 1932, the Working-Class Ex-Servicemen's League joined forces with the Anti-Vaccination and Medical Freedom League to combat the policy of compulsory vaccination at the Ex-Servicemen's Billets. "Advantage has been taken of the plight of many ex-servicemen who are forced, through unemployment, to live in Government billets," these groups proclaimed. "These men have been confronted with the alternative GET VACCINATED OR GET OUT and, consequently, a number of them are without food or shelter," having been turfed from the Billets despite the fact that they had registered as "conscientious objectors" under the law governing inoculation. In correspondence with Ada Muir of the Anti-Vaccination League, H.E. Young, the provincial health officer, rejected this charge outright; no provincial relief agency required the unemployed to be vaccinated. Muir responded with proof in the form of the Billets' regulations: on 9 February, Major J.G. Fordham, in charge of the Ex-Servicemen's Billets, had posted the new rule requiring all to be vaccinated. Over the next two days, a number of those refusing the compulsory program were removed from the Billets. When they took their case to the Relief Department, they were told to return and consent to inoculation if they wanted government relief. "Thus you will see," Muir pointed out, "that these men were forced into starvation while violating no law."¹²⁷

The Billets also had a compulsory bathing policy that rankled many. In the *Unemployed Worker*, a writer who signed as "A Canadian" condemned the Billets for the poor quality of service, including bad food in small portions, often with only one slice of bread per sitting. This "Canadian" also criticized the policy regarding baths:

The bath is a little two by four place. Compelled to bath here, the men are herded in large numbers like cattle. If you do not go you are hauled up in front of the All-Highest for censure or probably expulsion. Class-conscious workers are almost afraid to express their opinions

on account of the place being a regular nest of stool-pigeons who are always ready to run to the office with any information that they think will get them in good. . . . If that is a sample of the democracy we fought for, it is time, and past time, that we had a change.¹²⁸

“Of what value is the conscientious objectors law on our Statue Books?” asked Ada Muir, if the administrators of private charities could use government money to fund coercive programs that violated statutory law.¹²⁹ The reliance of the poor on charity entailed the removal of many of the basic rights and protections afforded citizens. Indeed, in some cases, private charities also served as substandard alternatives to municipal aid: many transients with military backgrounds were automatically denied bed and meal tickets and were detailed automatically to the Ex-Servicemen’s Billets. Less than a week before Remembrance Day, a writer calling himself “Veteran” wrote to the *Vancouver Sun* to speak out against the “public shame and injustice” embodied in the Billets. Many returned soldiers, he argued, already “suffer the effect of nervous exhaustion due in great measure to their war service, now aggravated by under nutrition. They are literally walking the streets of Vancouver starving.” That the Legion should feel it necessary to begin a soup kitchen, he argued, was “a public shame and injustice” because it meant that former soldiers were denied civic relief and treated as second-class citizens. “Apparently,” “Veteran” wrote, “Kipling’s words are still very true: ‘It’s Tommy this and Tommy that, and Tommy get behind; but ’tis Tommy to the front, Sir, when there’s trouble in the wind.’”¹³⁰ In these respects, to be detailed to the missions was to be separated from the rest of the transients on relief and subjected to a host of coercive forms of regulation. For this reason, a number of groups such as the New Era League and the Socialist Party of Canada opposed private charities because they were removed from any type of democratic control; these groups argued that governments should assume sole responsibility for the provision of relief.¹³¹

The *Unemployed Worker* published numerous complaints about the quality of food and shelter at private missions. One reporter recounted the rotten fish, stale bread, and lack of blankets on offer at the Ex-Servicemen’s Billets.¹³² Stuck with tickets for the Refuge, an unemployed man named “Red” complained that “Belly Robber Millar is serving rotten fish again.”¹³³ One group of jobless men claimed that the Refuge “constitute[s] a menace to the health of the workers of the whole City. Over one hundred men are sleeping on the floor and benches at this joint.” They suggested that civic officials inspect the Refuge at midnight in order to see its real conditions.¹³⁴ During one of Cooper’s visits to the Refuge, a handful of residents criticized the food and staged a walkout.¹³⁵ One Communist claimed that “Holy Willy,” the “Jesus Jazzer” at the Refuge, forced some workers to sleep on the floor even though

some of the beds remained empty.¹³⁶ When R.J. Lecky, the official responsible for administration at the Refuge, asked for volunteers to decorate the place for Christmas, one worker retorted that “decorating the tables with something to eat would be more in order.”¹³⁷

Communists called for the Emergency Refuge to be abandoned altogether, but the request “caused some indignation among the Aldermen, most of whom agreed that such places shoul[d] be encouraged,” according to one radical.¹³⁸ They also complained about the connections between private charities and the Relief Department, with the former helping the latter enforce policies regarding the relief camps. One veteran protested the decision to force dozens of Billets residents to choose between forced labour and starvation: “There was no alternative for them; they either went to the camps or were thrown out on the streets to go where they liked, so they nearly all chose the lesser evil by going out.”¹³⁹ In April 1932, the Refuge had instituted a work test, requiring two days of work per week in return for “slopjoint meals and flop.”¹⁴⁰ Shortly thereafter, about a hundred residents launched a strike against the work test. One week later, a worker who refused to clean up the garbage in the alley behind the Refuge discovered he was to be denied meals in the future.¹⁴¹ In January 1933, sixty workers living at the Emergency Refuge called for its abolition, and the right to eat and sleep where they chose.¹⁴² Perhaps the best indication of discontent came in a July 1932 letter to Mayor L.D. Taylor: despite having called Vancouver home for forty-one years, F. Good asked Taylor if he could arrange for him to be sent to a relief camp, which he imagined to be preferable to being “an inmate at the Refuge.”¹⁴³

Critics of the mission system often highlighted what they saw as the possibilities for graft and other forms of corruption. One radical wryly noted, “Someone’s palm must be greased, for the dumps that give the smallest quantity and rottenest quality get the most of the City Relief trade.”¹⁴⁴ In October 1932, R.J. Lecky informed Relief Officer Bone of a change in the policies of the Refuge: his organization would no longer return the money allotted it for beds and meals that went unredeemed by single transients. Instead, the business leaders who funded the Refuge had decided to use these funds “to finance our clothing department.”¹⁴⁵ One can only imagine the reaction of relief officials had an overcompensated relief recipient done the same. Many radicals saw little difference between this type of charitable operation and second-hand clothing stores run for profit. “If a destitute person goes into the above-mentioned place to get a pair of worn shoes or a piece of clothing he will find himself in just a common second-hand store, because anything he wants costs money,” explained R.R.W. “The City Mission makes hundreds of dollars yearly from these donations. And there is no open information how much of that income might ‘slip’ into the pockets of people directly connected with that holy roller business under the name of Christian charity.”¹⁴⁶ W.R. Bone

sent one of his investigators to the clothing store run by First United Church. "No person I saw during about half an hour's stay got anything for which they did not pay something," the employee reported, assessing prices there as the same as could be found in a typical second-hand store.¹⁴⁷ A correspondent for the *Unemployed Worker* reported that Reverend Roddan gave him an undershirt and an overcoat as well as a pair of socks. Roddan then declared their value to be worth \$1.25, and asked the man to work for ten hours as payment; the correspondent refused the clothing because of what he saw as scab wages.¹⁴⁸

It is nonetheless important to emphasize that the provision of relief through an unequal exchange did not necessarily involve corrupt or otherwise dubious practices. Indeed, for some private charities, the possibility of generating income was woven into the basic services they provided. No other institution symbolized this identity of private charity with private enterprise more than the Central City Mission. The Mission was officially run by Central City Mission (CCM) Limited, a joint-stock corporation whose shares were owned by many of Vancouver's leading entrepreneurs such as grocery magnate and one-time mayor W.H. Malkin. In 1930, CCM Ltd. became a member of the Vancouver Welfare Federation under the direction of J. Howard T. Falk: as a result, the Mission lost the ability to organize its own public campaign for funds and other types of support. Each year, the federation made its annual appeal in the name of all affiliated charities and divided the proceeds as its board of directors saw fit. The Mission provided two types of beds and meals: those purchased by the transient and those designated as "free," for which the Mission received payment from a government or private agency. In 1931, CCM Ltd. received grants of \$2,000 from the City, \$2,500 from the Province, and \$2,513.23 from the Vancouver Welfare Federation, as well as private donations of \$173.56. During the course of the year, CCM Ltd. provided 13,986 free beds, 35,826 free meals, 13,540 free refreshments, and 18,250 baths to those living in the jungles. The total cost of this endeavour was \$8,091.19, which meant a loss of \$904.38.¹⁴⁹ By examining the relationship between the Central City Mission and the Vancouver Welfare Federation (VWF), and by following the trail of money and tickets, we can learn much as to the economic transformation of private missions through civic policies on relief provision to transients.

As a member of the federation, the Central City Mission keenly felt the influence of the modernizing (and centralizing) campaign led by Falk. F. Ivor Jackson, a long-time bureaucrat with the federation, remembered Falk for his innovative ideas: "Mr. Falk brought with him a philosophy of administration and financing of social welfare and to him, the planned development of the service was equal, if not of greater importance, than orderly financing."¹⁵⁰ At the VWF's first annual meeting, much was made of the adoption of "business methods" of administration such as the proper professional accounting of funds and procedures to ensure "that the expenditures shall bring an

adequate return in services rendered.”¹⁵¹ The v w f’s bylaws emphasized the goal of “promoting efficiency and economy of administration in the charities and benevolences of the city as a whole.”¹⁵² One 1931 pamphlet, *If You Were Face to Face*, sought to legitimate the federation’s work by referencing its modern “business methods”:

The Welfare Federation represents to the citizens of Vancouver the best method of dealing with the problem of organized charity, assuring, as it does, adequate support for organizations without resort to uneconomical methods, relief to the public, to a great degree, from constant calls for aid; and, generally, placing the organized charity work of the city on a sound and business-like basis.¹⁵³

In practical terms, this meant the elimination of what were classified as duplicate services in regard to fundraising and welfare provision. This reorganization of private charity, it was believed, would have positive effects on those desiring to contribute because it would remove the element of compulsion. Charity would be truly genuine because it would be freely given:

Conscience alone can be the guide to giving. There is not one of us who would not, any day in the year, forego an expenditure on some personal pleasure or luxury if he were brought face to face with distress, and had to choose between the alternatives of making the sacrifice to relieve the distress of indulging himself in the purchase of the luxury or pleasure.¹⁵⁴

With these ideas, the federation sought to place private charities, including missions for transient men, on a professional and “scientific” footing.

One of Falk’s key innovations was the creation of a meal and bed ticket system that paralleled that of the Relief Department. The federation intended its ticket system to be used by businesses and other community groups desirous of giving aid but wary of the possible consequences of putting cash in the hands of the poor.¹⁵⁵ Begging led to moral blight because of the absence of controls over the spending of money, the v w f argued. To give money meant freedom for the beggar once the exchange was completed: only tickets would allow for some measure of discipline to be exerted over the jobless. In this endeavour, the federation found much public support. Solicitor Hamilton Read, for example, agreed with the principle of denying homeless men the ability to choose that came with cash. “Not a day goes by without many applications being made to many business men by men asking for money ‘for a meal, not had a bite since yesterday’ & so forth,” he recounted. Giving money meant that Read could not ensure that those who received it spent the cash on necessities

alone. As a solution, he asked to purchase ten dollars worth of meal tickets from the Relief Department, which he could then distribute instead of cash. "I would then feel that no question could arise as to men being fed."¹⁵⁶

Echoing Read's logic, the federation's 1931 pamphlet, *Sure! I'll Share*, proclaimed, "The Panhandler and House-to-House Beggar Must Go."¹⁵⁷ Private acts of charity, it explained, actually worsened the condition of the poor: "Panhandlers last winter were making as much as seven dollars a day and spending it on alcohol whilst the children of decent Vancouver people were near starvation." Through their support of the business plan of the federation, "citizens" could help "to stop this travesty of charity," although it was not clear how the provision of tickets rather than cash to transients would prevent children from starving.¹⁵⁸ The ticket system would also encourage initiative, they believed: transients would receive tickets that could be exchanged for three days of meals and shelter, after which they would be denied any further support from the federation and its member agencies.¹⁵⁹ This would eliminate "professional begging" and "safeguard" those who purchased tickets to give to those in need.¹⁶⁰ While "conscience alone" was to guide the conduct of citizens, the unemployed would be governed by a system of bed and meal tickets that removed them from the free market for goods and services for three days, only to then force them back into the labour market. What would happen to transients after this period — how they would support themselves in a context of mass unemployment — was not explained in any of the federation's literature.

In addition to its ticket system, the federation sought to rationalize charity through the centralization of its provision in the hands of professionals. Proper record-keeping procedures would be employed, duplication would be eliminated, and funding would be under the purview of a small contingent of experts. This process, however, brought the officials of the *VWF* into conflict not just with transients but also with its member institutions. The Central City Mission accepted the federation's proposal and agreed to honour its tickets along with those of the municipality and the province, but some directors of the Mission were initially wary of this agreement. One emphasized that the primary goal of the Central City Mission was "to take care of men who wanted to get into a Christian atmosphere." The *VWF* ticket system, however, meant that they would have to accept transients who disdained their religious mission. "It was never intended that the Mission should be a clearing house for the unemployed," he lamented.¹⁶¹ The erosion of the founding purpose of *CCM Ltd.* had begun. In June 1931, the Welfare Federation again approached the Mission with a new plan. It sought to reserve 195 beds in the Mission each night for one year for a sum of \$10,500, or just under fifteen cents per bed per night, which was less than 60 percent of the value of civic bed tickets. The *CCM*'s directors were not impressed with this offer because it would reduce

them to a service provider under the control of the v w f. Instead, they proposed that they would reserve 195 beds to be given to those in possession of tickets, whether municipal or private, to be valued at the rate of 22.5 cents per night.¹⁶² As of December 1931, CCM Ltd. was running at full capacity, feeding and housing clients on municipal relief as well as those referred by the Vancouver Welfare Federation.¹⁶³

In 1932, the federation cut its administrative grant to CCM Ltd. from just over \$2,500 to \$1,000. Moreover, the money came with strings attached: it had to be spent on a social worker, who required the “concurrence” of the v w f to be hired.¹⁶⁴ Mission directors also agreed to provide beds and meals for those in receipt of v w f tickets, up to a total value of \$4,000. This policy was thought to “eliminate as far as possible the opportunity for trafficking.”¹⁶⁵ One of the key responsibilities of T. C. Colwell, the appointed Mission social worker, was to encourage frequent users of v w f tickets to “become self supporting or at least no longer dependent upon private charity.” Those flagged as repeat offenders were to be denied meals and beds unless Colwell gave his approval.¹⁶⁶

By April 1932, the v w f had distributed 1,274 ticket books, largely to firms in the downtown area. However, J. Howard T. Falk soon came to believe that the lax administration methods employed by the Mission vitiated the policy intent behind the v w f’s ticket system. Falk observed that Mission officials notified homeless men as to which businesses possessed federation tickets: transients flocked to a firm until it ceased to issue tickets, and then moved to the next company.¹⁶⁷ These repeated requests “imposed” upon those businesses willing to purchase tickets. Falk also cited evidence that at least eleven homeless men had used tickets for a period ranging from one to four months, thus violating the federation’s three-day policy.¹⁶⁸ This, to Falk, signified the serious need for the Mission’s social worker, T. C. Colwell, to take action. Accepting Falk’s assessment of the situation, the v w f’s executive committee passed a motion complaining that “the Central City Mission has made no appreciable effort to cooperate with the Vancouver Welfare Federation in the matter of the use of this ticket system and its main purpose, that of the elimination of pan-handlers, but, rather, have [sic] allowed it to become a nuisance to business firms.”¹⁶⁹ Falk warned Colwell that his inefficient methods of administration encouraged pauperism. Men seeking to avoid labour camps and those kicked out of the Refuge because they would not participate in work relief programs at substandard wages resorted to the Central City Mission. The Mission’s failure to perform adequate investigations of these men weakened municipal relief programs, Falk charged.¹⁷⁰

The Mission’s board of directors did not take such criticism lightly. President W. E. Pinchin maintained that the v w f’s charges were “unfair,” and he asserted the Mission’s “autonomy.” Manager George Watson highlighted the

contradictions within the VWF ticket policy, purportedly designed to prevent panhandling. The strict regulation that barred transients from receiving aid after three days forced them to return to begging on the street, thus intensifying the problem the ticket system had been created to prevent. Watson also stressed the practical limits upon the investigation process: with approximately two hundred men seeking aid on a daily basis, it was impossible for one social worker to adequately monitor the lot. They also complained that the VWF had not honoured its obligations to the Mission, having reneged on pledges of payment on at least one occasion.¹⁷¹

The conflict between the federation and the Mission reminds us that whatever the intent of charity providers regarding discipline, these aims could be frustrated by shoddy administrative practices. The federation's drive to rationalize relief provision in private missions was thus only partially complete. This conflict also hints at the economic dimension of private charity: Mission directors felt that they could not satisfy the federation's program because of their own reliance on tickets to keep their organization afloat. According to one inquiry, the Central City Mission was "faced with an operating loss" if they could not fill 80 percent of the beds on a monthly basis.¹⁷² Each transient the Mission serviced, whether on municipal or private tickets, meant revenue. As a private corporation, CCM Ltd. had little choice but to violate the federation's policies in order to maintain a steady flow of income and stave off bankruptcy, thus allowing their Christian mission to continue.

The Central City Mission had a considerable monthly overhead. Its financial statement for April 1932 indicated monthly salaries of \$175 for Watson; \$175 for T. C. Colwell, the Mission's social worker; and \$190.17 for office staff.¹⁷³ The organization also had a mortgage of \$35,000, which required minimum monthly payments of \$200.¹⁷⁴ In addition, the Mission was subject to the normal fluctuations of the transient market due to Relief Department policies. Each summer, when transients were cut from the relief rolls, the CCM usually had a full house, supported by federation tickets and by requiring payment from transients. In the winter, however, when a greater number of transients could collect bed tickets redeemable at hotels throughout the downtown core, CCM had beds to spare.¹⁷⁵ The fortunes of its religious and educational programming also rose and fell with the rules governing relief provision. In the summer of 1931, the Mission gave free meal tickets to all who attended its gospel meetings. Eventually, because of the "need for stringent economy," this policy was terminated, at which point the average attendance at gospel meetings dropped from eighty to twenty.¹⁷⁶ The Mission's capital costs alone obliged it to seek clients. Taking one reporter on a tour, George Watson characterized the Mission as "not quite 'Hotel Vancouver' perhaps . . . but we do the best we can to keep things nice, altho' you can't force cleanliness on folks!"¹⁷⁷ Trying to keep them clean, however, propelled the Mission into

debt. In August 1931, just as Vancouver's urban jungles housed what would be their largest population, J.W. McIntosh, the city's medical health officer, and Joseph Hynes, a city inspector, surveyed conditions at the Mission and recommended the cleaning of all mattresses and bedding as well as the installation of a better ventilation system and fumigation facilities. The bill for this work was estimated at between \$1,200 and \$1,300.¹⁷⁸ In February 1932, facing a financial crisis, CCM Ltd. asked the City of Vancouver to assume financial responsibility for the cost of the fumigator.¹⁷⁹

In his appeal to civic officials, George Watson explained that the value of the Central City Mission lay in its ability to "instill cheer and brightness" in the lives of unemployed men. Their gospel meetings averaged between 200 and 250 participants and were effective in "improving the morals of the men." "There seems to be a new era of sunshine and gladness springing up," Watson enthused.¹⁸⁰ He also observed that the Mission helped the Relief Department enact its policies. With a wide open door, the Mission would minister aid to almost anyone. Thus, according to Watson, the City could deny relief to transient men whom it considered unfit in the knowledge that they would receive some measure of aid from the Mission. This portrait, offered by City Council for public consumption, was inaccurate in that the Mission had on occasion denied relief to those without tickets or money. "If the Mission had money to enable it to operate wholly without charge, it would no doubt be glad to do so," explained President Pinchin, "but, in order to get in enough money to keep the doors open and carry on its work, the Mission is obliged to make a small charge for meals and beds."¹⁸¹ Watson also claimed that the Mission was deserving of support because the group had committed to "help the city in its efforts to send men to camp, by refusing assistance to men whom we know have refused to go to camps when requested to do so by the City Relief Officer."¹⁸² Indeed, later in the decade, Chief Constable John Cameron wrote to thank George Watson "for his assistance, in a quiet way, in connection with the 'Red' situation in the City."¹⁸³ Taken together, this information suggests that the Mission often acted in concert with the Relief Department not only by extending private aid, in some cases, to those denied public relief but also by denying the same aid to specific individuals in order to strengthen policies regarding work relief programs.

In Watson's characterization of the Mission's financial straits, he noted that his organization honoured bed and meal tickets from the Vancouver Welfare Federation at full value. Thus, Watson explained, the Mission could not generate funds through this activity because of the low rate paid by the VWF: "we cannot consider them as revenue bearing."¹⁸⁴ In addition, the value of municipal tickets declined from \$1.75 to \$1.40 per week, making these less likely to produce revenue for CCM Ltd. Finally, Watson assured city officials that "the shareholders are receiving nothing in the way of dividends and

it is not thought that any dividends will be earned for some considerable time.”¹⁸⁵ Alderman R.N. Fraser and Dr. J.W. McIntosh, the city’s medical health officer, recommended that the Finance Committee endorse the grant to CCM Ltd. to cover the cost of the fumigator, noting that the group “gives services to certain classes in the community, which it would be difficult to replace without the expenditure of a considerable sum of money on the part of the City.”¹⁸⁶

The fumigator issue opened wounds within CCM Ltd.’s board of directors. P.G. Drost launched a blistering attack on its policies, accusing his fellow directors of relinquishing the organization’s true goal of Christian mission work, which had “taken second place to making money.”¹⁸⁷ In one sense, Drost’s assessment was accurate: the policies of the Relief Department and the Vancouver Welfare Federation meant, in practice, that Mission workers were periodically required to turn away destitute transients who sought out the Mission for its Christian programs in order to feed and house those with tickets. Drost took his case to City Council, warning them that they “should not now use the money of over-burdened tax-payers to construct a sterilizing plant in the premises of a joint stock company.” By budgeting money for “construction work in the premises of an incorporated company,” the City would set “a dangerous precedent,” Drost argued, as rooming houses “in competition” with the Mission would no doubt ask for similar kinds of support.¹⁸⁸ Drost’s argument had a precedent; the council had earlier refused the request of the Canadian Legion for a donation of \$100 to allow the Legion to fix the plumbing in the Ex-Servicemen’s Billets for precisely this reason.¹⁸⁹ Precedent, however, took second place to the fact that the Central City Mission saved the Relief Department money: the City of Vancouver paid for CCM Ltd.’s new fumigator.

This act was the beginning of a pattern of government intervention in favour of the Mission and of public controversy about such actions. In November 1933, the Mission was charged under a civic bylaw for operating a rooming house without a licence, although the charge was withdrawn after W.E. Pinchin, president of CCM Ltd., pleaded with city officials.¹⁹⁰ The financial arrangements that sustained the Central City Mission continued to come under fire at the decade’s end. Alex Fordyce, a representative of the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, inquired into the circumstances at the newly renamed Abbott House as part of his city-wide investigation of charitable institutions. By cross-checking the books of Abbott House with those of the City, Fordyce discovered that the former had used a portion of its municipal grant to pay its municipal property taxes. This was, in Fordyce’s opinion, a “very unethical way of conducting their business.”¹⁹¹

The overwhelming majority of what must have been millions of charitable acts by individuals throughout the Great Depression decade are destined to remain beyond the view of the historian. There is, however, extant evidence pointing to private schemes organized along fraternal lines by religious groups, racial and ethnic organizations, and others to care for their own independent of the state. Unions, for instance, often chose to redistribute work among their members, reducing their weekly hours rather than allowing layoffs and weakening the local. In 1931, the International Typographic Union (ITU) in Vancouver distributed \$1919 in cash and 2,486 days of work, valued at \$21,052.09, to their members, while the Pressmen, a smaller union, distributed 386 days of work, worth \$2,953, and \$1,720.25 in cash.¹⁹² Such generosity did not always benefit the recipient; the Relief Department refused members of the ITU municipal relief on the basis that the union ran its own program.¹⁹³ Nonetheless, the generosity of these two unions is quite remarkable: over \$27,000 worth of relief measures distributed over the course of a single year.

What makes this more remarkable is the fact that this amount far surpassed the contributions of Vancouver's private charities like the Central City Mission. While the unions received nothing monetary in return for their acts — although the ITU used its program to lobby for the City's printing contract — governments accorded charities substantial financial support. The resources that mission managers bestowed upon the poor, in other words, were paid for largely by the state. In administering aid through the missions, these philanthropists did not give of their personal wealth, as did the printers and pressmen, although this is not to suggest that they did not donate money to worthy causes. In the overwhelming majority of relief transactions in the period under study, private missions took the money of governments to provide meals and beds to transients. So too did entrepreneurs like café owners and rooming-house operators. The difference between these two groups thus became primarily ideological: assured of a clientele, charities co-operated with civic officials in investigating homeless men, while entrepreneurs, having to compete for their business, did not. The relief industry thus blurred the divisions between public and private, and between charity and industry.

The activities of privately owned service providers were organized around a system of unequal exchange. They took the money given to them by governments and in return gave beds and meals to transients. This did not always mean surpluses — the extraction of value by receiving more from the government to provide goods than the value of the goods they provided — although in some cases it certainly did. In all cases, however, the exchange was unequal in character. Homeless transients did not freely give their consent to this type of social relationship, and civic officials never asked for it. Economically, the inequality of exchange already existed in the capitalist social relations through which governments chose to administer aid to homeless

men. Without this inequality, neither businesses nor charities could afford to be cost-effective. In 1931, the same year that the ITU and Pressmen provided over \$27,000 in relief to their members, the Central City Mission Ltd. received just over \$7,000 from the municipal and provincial governments, the Vancouver Welfare Federation, and private donations. In return, it provided beds, meals, and baths to homeless transients, finishing the year approximately \$900 in the red.¹⁹⁴ In short, through the unequal exchange of relief, CCM Ltd. made enough to cover the costs of food and other related items, to pay the salaries of its employees, and to cover most its mortgage payments that year. Because of the Mission's status as a property-owning corporation, its board of directors exhibited grave concerns over the bottom line. If they did not, their dream of a Christian mission for down-and-out men would sink too far into debt to be redeemed. Hundreds of businesses across North America could not withstand the financial pressures of the economic crisis. Central City Mission Ltd. would not be one of them.

Also notable about this process is the extent to which the relief industry resembled the workings of the wider Fordist social formation then emerging. "As in production so in distribution, combination and consolidations are the rule," suggested Socialist Party writer John Sidaway in 1930, noting that "department and chain stores have banished the corner grocer."¹⁹⁵ So too did economies of scale shape the provision of relief. City officials opted to exclude a number of smaller cafés and give their business to larger restaurants, arguing that only large firms with substantial purchasing power would provide an adequate diet. Fordist principles were also present in the Relief Department's use of private charities to further its reach into the lives of an increasing number of jobless transients. Groups like the Vancouver Welfare Federation oversaw the rationalization of the provision process in the private sphere, mirroring the Relief Department's own internal reorganization. The only element of Fordism absent from the relief industry — that of the \$7.00 day — was that which homeless transients would have appreciated the most.¹⁹⁶

“Work Without Wages,” or, Paving the Way for Economic Development

THE RELIEF INDUSTRY, PRODUCTION

Few Utopian fantasies are quite so practical and potentially revolutionary in their effects as the demand for full employment, for if there is any program that could not be realized without transforming the system beyond recognition and which would at once usher in a society structurally distinct from this one in every conceivable way, from the psychological to the sociological, from the cultural to the political, it would be the demand for universal full employment in all the countries of the globe, full employment at a living wage. As all the economic apologists for the system today have tirelessly instructed us, capitalism cannot flourish under full employment; it requires a reserve army of the unemployed in order to function. This first monkey wrench would be compounded by the universality of the requirement, inasmuch as capitalism also requires a frontier and the possibility of perpetual expansion in order to go on existing and to sustain its inner dynamic. But at this point the Utopianism of the demand becomes circular, for it is also clear, not only that the establishment of full employment would transform the system, but also that the system would already have to have been transformed, in advance, in order for full employment to be established. I would not call this a vicious circle, exactly; but it certainly reveals the space of a Utopian leap, between our empirical present and the Utopian arrangements of this imaginary future.

Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, 2005¹

On Halloween 1931, Nelson businessman Charles F. McHardy lectured Premier Simon Fraser Tolmie on the state of his province's roads. "Good roads mean more to us in dollars and cents than tariffs, or inter-Empire trade": McHardy based this bold declaration on his personal observations of daily life in the hinterland. "We travel the roads daily," he wrote, "and are paying a terrific price for damages as a result of accidents and a still larger price in unwarranted and unfair wear and tear. On top of this, the loss we sustain, owing to the fact that tourists will only travel over our roads once, and will, if possible, keep their friends from coming even once, is a very serious matter." In McHardy's analysis, the terrible condition of British Columbia's roads served as an obstacle to, rather than a conduit for, economic development. As long as transportation remained difficult and dangerous, he argued, the Depression would continue.²

With this account of BC's prospects, McHardy found a compatriot in engineer Pat Philip. Philip valued the highways of British Columbia as an asset worth \$67 million at the end of 1932. Unfortunately, the policy of "so-called retrenchment" then pursued, including the suspension of basic road maintenance, meant "a heavy loss to the Government through deterioration." Philip maintained that in calculating the balance sheet, the debit column had to include the subsequent "loss of revenue from the tourist traffic and the economic loss suffered by the people, which are incalculable." While "fully in sympathy with the policy of reducing expense to the minimum," Philip remained firm in his belief that cutting spending on road maintenance was short-sighted, damaging future economic development.³

Of the plethora of commentators on the deterioration of BC's roads, Pat Philip occupied a unique position, since he spent his days working as chief engineer of Tolmie's Department of Public Works: as such, he was also the Deputy Minister of Public Works. From the onset of the provincial government's relief camp scheme, Philip's responsibilities included the planning and supervision of all work relief projects. His was a Fordist vision that embraced the potential for expansion-oriented relief projects to generate value and end the downturn sooner. A camp located adjacent to a major highway, he explained to the premier, "can be used to the best advantage in connection with construction, re-construction and repairs to the road." Beyond the developmental promise of road work, Philip offered a simple economic rationale: this type of endeavour, which entailed the bulk of common labour being performed under conditions of relief, would ultimately prove cheaper for the government than the postponement of all projects until after the recovery, when regular wage rates would be the norm. "The cost to the Government, using unemployed labour," Philip observed, "will amount to approximately \$40.00 per month per man inclusive of materials, etc." However, "under normal conditions, the same work would cost the Government \$100.00 per month per man." Ever the engineer, Philip dismissed the popular perception of unemployed labour as low

in value; he estimated a loss of efficiency in his relief camps of only 30 per cent. “Even with this allowance,” he noted, “you will see that there is a vast saving to the Government by now taking advantage of the surplus labour available.”⁴

These were not the arguments of a man chiefly concerned with how best to implement humanitarian schemes. Philip did not explain how a greater rate of exploitation than that of “free” labourers would benefit the transient. There was, in fact, no contemplation of any of the character-based issues we associate with moral regulation, such as indolence and illicit sexual activity, in his administrative correspondence. Nor did Philip seek to understand the future dreams of camp residents with an eye to facilitating their dreams through government programs. Instead, Philip posed a question of property allocation: how could the government best “take advantage” of this surplus labour? Through their collective work in isolated settings, the labour of jobless men would be objectified, used to create and develop property owned by the Province. For Philip and many others, production, not regulation, formed the crux of the camp system, although to stimulate the former required the latter. Private property lay at the heart of this civilizing project, and the quest for development drew attention to the end result – the road or the sewer, the park or the golf course – and not to the exploitive social relations that produced them.⁵ Such relief schemes had a barbaric character, “taking advantage” of misery and suffering – intensifying them, in fact – to produce property and increase its value.⁶

One of the elements of work relief that most interested me as I set out for the archives arose from a passage in Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* on the “gentle art of punishment” as applied to prisoners:

Public works meant two things: the collective interest in the punishment of the condemned man and the visible, verifiable character of the punishment. Thus the convict pays twice: by the labour he provides and by the signs that he produces. At the heart of society, on the public squares or highways, the convict is a focus for profit and signification. Visibly, he is serving everyone; but, at the same time, he lets slip into the minds of all the crime-punishment sign: a secondary, purely moral, but much more real utility.⁷

Fascinated by the notion of the forced labourer “paying twice,” although wary of Foucault’s all-too-neat distinction between “labour” and “signs” in light of the arguments of Vološinov and others for a social interpretation of linguistic signs and their production, I set out in search of evidence of the public signs of work relief but found few that fit with this analysis.⁸ In contrast to Foucault’s example – and to the present day, when federal billboards publicly proclaim the benefits of state spending on infrastructure projects – politicians in 1930s British Columbia do not appear to have made an attempt to display

work relief projects in this manner. Still, questions stuck in my mind: Could BC's Depression-era relief workers be said to have paid twice? For that matter, were these payments always made?

That Foucault's analytical language characterized the workings of power almost exclusively in terms predicated upon its success, purging this history of elements that cannot be subsumed by a functionalist interpretation, is clearly visible in this brief account of public works. Not only did their labour "serve everyone" – a pre-Marxist understanding of "society" as a singular entity similar to the "somatic singularity" that is the modern subject⁹ – but the signs they produced also had a singular, automatically legible meaning: such an approach teaches us something about the intentions of policy-makers but little about the larger world beyond their calculated scheming. Just as important for our purposes, Foucault interprets the visibility of public works as evidence of the successful workings of disciplinary power because he relies on an extremely narrow, almost purely technical definition of productive relations, analytically separate from relations of signification, discipline, and security.¹⁰ And with this definition of the economic comes the assertion of the greater "utility" of the moral, an argument with which we must agree given that the utility of the economic lacks any significance. Indeed, a careful reading makes clear that Foucault had no concept of economic power or subjectivity: the self is fashioned in the web of techniques of juridical and disciplinary relations, especially the latter.¹¹ In practical terms, this framework depicts questions about workers' control and the moral regulation associated with Fordism as matters related primarily to disciplinary power.

The first variant of this argument appears in *History of Madness*, in the discussion of the so-called Great Confinement. Here, Foucault takes pains to differentiate the economic from the moral in his analysis of Houses of Confinement, although he also makes clear that he considers these categories to be qualitatively different. Similar to the account in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault stresses that administrators intended the labour of the unemployed and others to "serve the interests and the prosperity of all."¹² Nonetheless, he concludes that these projects failed to lower prices and in fact created unemployment and unrest, suggesting that their real utility lay elsewhere: "What to modern eyes appears as a clumsy dialectic between prices and production took its real significance from an ethical consciousness of work, where the complexities of economic mechanisms were less important than the assertion of a value."¹³ As idleness came to be considered "the supreme form of revolt" in the classical age, the mad no longer represented a boundary figure that marked an "elsewhere" but were now ensnared with the poor in Houses of Confinement. In this way, institutional confinement and compulsory labour, whether productive or not, represents "an astonishing synthesis between moral obligations and social laws," and herein lies the "ethical consciousness of labour" to

which he attributes primary importance.¹⁴ Foucault thus measures the relative weight of economics and ethics according to what we might term their lasting historical significance, an argument that can be embraced because of its empirical foundations: it allows, at least theoretically, for variations in the relative significance according to context.

Nonetheless, despite his dramatic shifts from the experiential paradigm employed in *History of Madness* through the archaeological studies of the late 1960s and the genealogical interpretations of the 1970s, Foucault never found a context in which what he understood as the moral or ethical failed to be of greater significance than that of the economic, hinting at the debilitating limitations of his technical definition of production. The account of the workplace in *Discipline and Punish* differs from earlier writings in that it asserts connections between categories he initially treated as separate:

This political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination; but, on the other hand, its constitution as labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection (in which need is also a political instrument meticulously prepared, calculated and used); the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body.¹⁵

Again, we see the descriptive language predicated upon the success of power relations – subjection is already systematic before capitalist labour power can come to exist, and need is a sign that the irresistible panopticon is already in our heads – and the functionalist reduction of history to utility. Just as important, Foucault interprets workplace rules and regulations “as an internal part of the production machinery and as a specific mechanism in the disciplinary power,” making clear his conceptual division of production from power and the reduction of the former to a mechanistic process largely free from any meaningful conflict.¹⁶ His framework, in short, expands the category of disciplinary power until it threatens to subsume every act in the workplace, making it difficult, if not impossible, to comprehend the complicated history of Depression-era relief programs.

Over the past decade, Canadian historians have turned to the ever-increasing body of work on state formation and moral regulation to explain nation-building on the West Coast.¹⁷ Relief programs in general, others have observed, acted to create “the poor” as objects of discourse, while attempting to instill forms of subjectivity suitable to public order and the Protestant work ethic.¹⁸ Nonetheless, while the coercive dimension of relief camps is clearly visible, the archival remnants of Tolmie’s government are striking precisely

for the absence of much discussion concerning the reformatory potential of this massive undertaking. As with Pat Philip, commentators on the camp system lingered over their economic aspects and often neglected the moral dimensions so often stressed in accounts of work relief. To be sure, the vision of economic development offered by Premier Tolmie and cabinet members such as Minister of Public Works R. W. Bruhn was modest.¹⁹ In their glowing future, logging, mining, and tourism would solidify the foundation of provincial prosperity. Just as the *Vancouver Sun* had gloried in the possibilities of never-ending growth in the autumn of 1929, Tolmie's leadership council believed in the power of BC's natural resources. The camps, in their ideal form, would build roads to open up the province; this modernizing project would provide the infrastructure necessary to move BC's resource commodities out to foreign markets and to bring in a certain class of foreign consumer. The Liberals, for their part, offered two primary lines of criticism of the Tory relief camps. First, they demanded that the Province's relief spending be administered in a more business-like fashion: government could learn much from industry. Second, Liberals vowed to increase the Province's return on its investment. Throughout the 1932 investigation into the camp system, Liberals advocated that the jobless be put to work more efficiently. Party-based political differences thus spoke to a conflict about the nature of future economic development, Tolmie's time-honoured road-building strategy, and T.D. Pattullo's more modern notion of Fordism via the channels of state intervention.

Just as important, the provincial camp system arose upon a foundation of commodities. Since the turn of the twentieth century, British Columbians had been able to head to skid row and learn of the mysteries of the commodity form. The Socialist Party of Canada, whether E. T. Kingsley's first generation or William Pritchard's second, is the best-known propaganda group dedicated to instructing workers — and anyone else who would listen — on the secret workings of capital.²⁰ Party members, as well as a host of other soap-box socialists, offered up the labour theory of value as an economic and moral conception of how commodities were produced and exchanged and how value was created. Its moral resonance lies in one simple idea: each individual thing produced under capitalism contains within it a measure of surplus value. Commodities, in this view, are material embodiments of exploitation. To look at the camps from this soap box is to recognize that every item used to care for unemployed men — to transport, house, feed, and clothe them in bush camps — contained remnants of their exploitation and the exploitation of others in the world of waged work. The economic dimension of relief provision in BC's work camps thus undermines the traditional separation of business and government. Tolmie's Tories created an industry.

Along with the economic vision invested in the camps and the foundation of commodities that enabled their creation, historians must begin to

come to terms with the “work” aspect of work relief. After reading details of a “strike” at the provincial relief camp at Allco in a February 1932 edition of the *Vancouver Sun*, an official of the federal Department of Labour wrote authorities in the provincial Department of Public Works, seeking information. This type of request was standard practice: the Department of Labour had gathered data on strikes and lockouts for government publications such as the monthly *Labour Gazette* and the yearly *Labour Organization in Canada* since the early 1900s.²¹ After an exchange of letters, both bureaucrats decided that disputes would only be officially classified as “strikes” if the labourers involved received wages: protests involving relief workers were therefore not “strikes” per se.²² While superficially an administrative matter governing which department of the state was to collect information, there was a much more significant issue at stake. By reaffirming the distinction between work relief and wage labour, this decision masked the similarity between these two forms of economic activity. If we stand back from the traditional connotations associated with “relief,” we see that this system of state paternalism did not fundamentally differ from wage work in many respects.²³

Work relief produced a central contradiction: the unemployed worker who, in order to receive aid, worked for a living by satisfying a labour-based requirement. Works projects, we have been told so often that surely it must be true, were “boondoggles” that resulted in little of value. Delving beneath the rhetoric, a few commentators, notably Patrick Brennan and Bill Waiser, have unearthed the remaining traces of this labour in examples such as Saskatoon’s Broadway Bridge and Canada’s system of national parks.²⁴ By and large, however, the labour of the Depression-era unemployed — the property they created and the value they added — remains hidden from history. This chapter aims to recover long-forgotten tales of production by the unemployed, the “work without wages” of BC’s relief camp residents.

In November 1930, one Communist detected a shift in elite thinking away from attacking the economic factors that led to mass joblessness and toward explicitly coercive strategies designed to separate and control the jobless. “They have given up all attempts at doing away with unemployment and concentrate on doing away with the unemployed,” argued this radical. To illustrate his argument, he highlighted the wide-ranging discussions around “the setting up of debt slave camps in the woods, the finding of work at starvation pay ‘beyond the city limits,’ the cutting of wood (for board) in Allouette Park and the many schemes concocted in the festering heads of the class enemies of the working class.”²⁵ Another jobless man wrote to the *Unemployed Worker* from one of the camps, wryly noting that “one thing we have to be thankful for” was the fact that “our’ roads are being built so cheaply.”²⁶ The dilemma of identification posed by this writer is significant: could the unemployed feel that the roads they built belong to them? And if they did, were they labouring under an illusion?

The Depression's First Relief Camp

In the midst of hard times, corporate executives faced two options: contracting their businesses in order to cut costs or expanding their efforts with hopes of increasing market share. Municipal leaders in Victoria opted for the latter, engaging in a host of camp-based initiatives that can serve as a microcosm of the economics of work relief. In October 1930, Victoria's chief engineer approached the Public Works Committee of City Council with a plan to construct a relief camp at the Goldstream Authority (now a provincial park). Unemployed men would cut cordwood from felled logs at a rate of two dollars per cord, minus one dollar per day for food. In agreement, the committee voted to allot \$3,000 for the construction of a camp for single men, who would be protected under the Workmen's Compensation Act, rare for relief projects.²⁷ All governments that sought to engage the unemployed in productive labour in locations outside the city core found themselves faced with a host of choices. Consider the issue of shelter. Should they rent facilities from the private sector? Should they purchase an existing camp? Or should one be built from the bottom up as an exercise in state formation? Other issues raised a similar range of questions. Should the government employ its own staffers, or should they rely on the existing management personnel of private camps? What work would the unemployed do, and from where would the tools and other equipment be secured? How would the men be transported to the camp, and how would they be fed? In these ways, the governance of work relief involved forms of economic decision-making, from the mundane to the expensive, that challenge our categorical distinctions between the capitalist market and the liberal-democratic state.

Three days after designating \$3,000 for a relief camp, the Public Works Committee heard from a Mr. Barnard, who owned a bush camp on Waugh Creek. The city engineer declared the asking price of \$1,000 a bargain; eventually, Barnard accepted \$900, including the camp's stoves and heaters.²⁸ To actually put the unemployed to work required more spending. The committee agreed to pay \$613 for saws; a cook was hired, and the jobless would be charged one dollar per day for their food.²⁹ Beyond the necessary financial outlay, launching a relief camp necessitated consideration of a range of labour-related issues. From the outset, Victoria's unemployed men petitioned for a higher rate of pay and more days of work each month.³⁰ In return, the chief engineer complained about their efficiency; the jobless at Waugh Creek averaged four-fifths of a cord per day, meaning a wage of \$1.60, less the dollar charged for food, which left them with sixty cents for each day on rotation. Nor could all of Victoria's unemployed be sent to camp. On 1 December, the city's relief officer reported that 25 percent of the 229 men who had registered were unfit, some of them "for work of any kind."³¹

In 1930, the argument for the temporary nature of the downward swing still held some currency. Rather than limit spending on work relief programs in anticipation of a deeper crisis, Victoria's City Council opted to expand its work relief operations. Having already bought one camp, the City diversified its portfolio by constructing yet another, this one at Thetis Lake. The final bill amounted to more than \$3,200, including \$350 on tools to be used by a rotating shift of fifty men transported daily from Victoria to cut cordwood.³² Victoria also spent additional funds on the Waugh Creek camp, and the expansion of relief projects made it necessary to hire an assistant for the chief engineer. By the end of 1930, Victoria had spent over \$5,000 above and beyond the relief wages paid to the jobless; in the asset column were two camps and a store of two thousand cords of wood. Not surprising given the expansionary program, the supply of capital soon became a concern, prompting the council to bring the product to market. In January 1931, Victoria began receiving tenders for the hauling of the wood and issued a call for tenders to purchase it.³³ Like hundreds of other businesses, however, the council lacked buyers for its goods, and to add insult to injury, the company contracted to transport the wood would receive \$3.50 per cord, a high price, and could not begin until March because of the poor condition of the roads. Eventually, the City of Victoria unloaded the wood at a loss, accepting an offer for eight hundred cords at seventy-five cents per cord. Waugh Creek ceased operations despite the clamour for work, and single men were relocated to Thetis Lake, where they worked for the rate of a dollar per day plus food.³⁴

In early April, the Public Works Committee met to allot the \$25,000 they would receive under the federal Unemployment Relief Act. At the same meeting, Kroeger, Hetherington, Franklin, and Bertucci of the newly formed Workers' Alliance — a non-sectarian association involving the unemployed and employed alike — appeared in hopes of negotiating a better deal. That some men had been dropped from the rotation following the closure of Waugh Creek was a key source of complaint; relief recipients had lost their work relief jobs and were once more plunged into unemployment. For those who remained, conditions were still inadequate. Married men received a mere six days of work each month, and single men were now "compelled to work for \$1 per day." In response, the Public Works Committee pled poverty: they could put more men to work only if they received a substantial sum from the provincial government, but they could not consider raising the rate of relief. Two weeks later, the committee changed the payment system for single men refused entry to the camp and kept in the city to work on the Macdonald Estate: this group now received meal and bed tickets instead of cash. As well, the City brought to an end all projects that assigned "unfit men" to light work in Victoria's parks; these workers were denied further aid.³⁵

In part, Victoria officials cut the relief payroll because they already had plans for the money to be received from the Unemployment Relief Act. In early May, the committee once again commissioned the construction of a relief camp, this one to house one hundred men at Sooke Lake, where they would cut cordwood. Having unsuccessfully lobbied for better treatment, the Workers' Alliance set out to organize the project workers, and within a month, most relief workers were willing to strike, demanding to be paid "standard wages" of four dollars per day. They also wanted to be charged for food at cost rather than a dollar per day.³⁶ In the ensuing conflict over Victoria's work camps, the debate over the *meaning* of work relief turned on its *value*. Hans Kroeger, secretary of the Alliance, argued that the jobless were not, in reality, jobless at all. "The work to be done at Sooke is necessary work," he explained, "which, if there were no unemployed, would have to be done in any case and paid for at a standard rate of wages." Mayor Anscomb disagreed, maintaining that the "work was not a necessity and was only started as a relief measure." While willing "to give an appreciative ear in complaints of the genuine unemployed," City Council would "not stand for discontent fanned by agitators."³⁷

Anscomb's remark points to another dimension of the conflict: the investigation of this jobless labour force. Victoria had already initiated deportation proceedings against several radicals among the unemployed.³⁸ Tolmie's government, too, had received information from a spy in the Alliance. These agitators, reported the undercover operative, threatened "the welfare of not only Victoria (nearest home) but dominion and empire."³⁹ Meanwhile, members of the Workers' Alliance voted to join the new Communist-created umbrella organization, the National Unemployed Workers' Association.⁴⁰ Eventually, tensions at the Sooke Lake relief camp broke, apparently after the arrival of a new batch of applicants. In September, the committee denied requests from residents for better wages and a half-holiday on Saturday, and established a new policy: anyone "discharged from a job for 'loafing'" would be suspended from relief work for a period of two weeks.⁴¹ In an echo of the events in Vancouver with which we began, the organized unemployed of Victoria met with a blanket refusal every time they presented collective demands. Instead, they would now be given smaller amounts of relief, and they would have to work harder to get it.

From civic officials' pleas of financial hardship and their business-like approach to relief, to the disenchantment with work relief projects and the organization of a protest movement, these events have a familiar ring to them. And as before, the political analysis offered by the movement that emerged, the Workers' Alliance, centred on the identity between the work relief experience and that of wage workers. Tasks previously done under conditions of free wage labour were now accomplished under a charitable, and thus voluntary,

program: municipalities did not have to spend money on these projects but did so to care for the poor without the degrading conditions of direct relief. But to receive relief, many impoverished workers had to be subjected to the extraconstitutional burden of compulsory manual work. With the distinction between “free” and “relief” labour, these men were superexploited, living somewhere between wage and chattel slavery as “involuntary philanthropists” who gave while they received.⁴²

Few municipal governments enacted programs as ambitious as that of Victoria. And in the face of the financial crisis that consumed municipal governments throughout 1932, most were forced to cut back on, if not eliminate entirely, their use of work relief. Nonetheless, the reality of these camps is clear. For the course of fifteen months — the camps were finally shut down in January 1932 — the City of Victoria was a minor player in BC’s lumber industry. Because its operations were conducted as work relief, as opposed to the customary conditions of waged work, the government benefited from its use of compulsory labour at sweated rates to get wood to market. This exploitation of unfree labour formed a basic component of the capital logic that governed provincial Depression-era work camps.

Municipal Campaigns for Labour Camps

While the relief program of the City of Victoria looked keenly ambitious from an entrepreneurial standpoint, its choice to try to sell cordwood was hardly propitious. The collapse of world markets undermined logging more than most sectors; the more wood they gathered for market, the less its potential price. For most municipalities, however, the key difficulty with the work relief projects mandated by the Unemployment and Relief Act of 1930 and the Unemployment and Farm Relief Act of 1931 lay in the capital outlays required to launch them, particularly those involving the spatial confinement of the unemployed outside the cities. The political will to devise a carceral archipelago of forced labour was certainly there, but the cash was harder to come by. The provincial relief camps attempted to meet, at least in part, the repeated calls of municipal governments for both economic development and social order through a powerful, spatially oriented strategy. In this way, the unemployment figures of the cities would be reduced by relocating the unemployed themselves.

If labour camps were to be the solution to the transient problem, it would make fiscal sense for those who already owned camps to branch out into this line of business. On 29 October 1930, Relief Officer Cooper, along with Mayor Malkin and a handful of aldermen, met with a delegation from the BC Loggers’ Association at the latter’s request. In a memo to Alderman Atherton a

few days later, Cooper noted that “bad market conditions” would soon add to the seven thousand lumber workers already jobless. The association’s representatives, led by those from the Abernethy Lougheed Logging Company, offered to “accommodate these men in the Camps” under the arrangement that Vancouver would contribute money toward feeding the jobless loggers, while the industrialists would provide “sleeping accommodation free” to the municipality. “A salient point of the proposal,” Cooper pointed out to Atherton, “is that the men should sign acknowledgements for the amount expended, which would be collected by the Loggers’ Association from their pay, when conditions are again normal.” In short, as part of a relief program, unemployed men would be charged not just for food but also for the use of a bunk in a bunkhouse that would have otherwise remained empty, and then would have to work off their incurred debt once market conditions indicated the resumption of activities: not for nothing had British Columbia earned the nickname “The Company Province.” Cooper and the City’s other elected officials believed that they lacked sufficient funds to devote at the outset of the project and encouraged the association to present its plan to the Province.⁴³ Meanwhile, several representatives of the United and Anglican churches expressed their concern that the plan entailed “comparative idleness” for the unemployed because it contained no work-related component.⁴⁴

Substantial controversy erupted when knowledge of the offer became public: the Abernethy Lougheed Logging Company was partly owned by Nels Lougheed, a long-time Tory MLA and a current cabinet minister of Tolmie’s government. With a political firestorm spreading, Lougheed contacted Cooper via telephone to clarify matters, after which Cooper wrote a curious memorandum to Atherton, which, in today’s terms, resembles a non-denial denial:

The suggestion that the Abernethy Lougheed Co. be paid \$1.00 per day for boarding single men, did not originate with the Company. During the discussion between representatives of the City and the Company as to how best to utilize the vacant camps for relief purposes, a tentative suggestion was made by the Company’s representatives that the City pay \$1.00 towards the \$1.50 per day which is the approximate cost of feeding the men under usual conditions.⁴⁵

Alderman Angus MacInnis loudly denounced the plan at the 3 November meeting of City Council. Observing that no actual logger had been consulted, MacInnis highlighted the Loggers’ Association’s long opposition to industrial unionism, which had led the association to maintain what MacInnis claimed was “the most efficient blacklist of any organization on this continent.” Instead, “the loggers should get assistance the same as all other workers,” he demanded. Most council members ignored MacInnis and passed

a motion that civic representatives should express their support for the plan in the upcoming meeting with the provincial government.⁴⁶ On 11 November, Mayor Malkin offered to purchase bedding to be used by Abernethy Loughheed as an incentive for the Province to adopt the plan.⁴⁷

Nonetheless, MacInnis did not stand alone in opposition to the camps. “Not a ‘Bum’” wrote to the *Vancouver Sun* to complain of the association’s logic. He noted that an association member had declared that the lumber workers to be housed in the camps “are not bums. They have too much pride to appeal for aid from the city.” The disgruntled worker went on: “This appears to be a direct slap to all who register for relief work. It is a fine state of affairs we have arrived at when a man who registers for work is branded as a ‘bum.’”⁴⁸ The most detailed critique of the plan appeared in the *Unemployed Worker* under the title “Back to the Woods”:

The Lumber Bosses of the province intend taking advantage of the plight of the thousands of idle loggers in order that in the future they will be able to exploit them even more savagely than heretofore. This gang of industrial pirates have presented to the civic and provincial authorities a scheme which in its viciousness beats anything yet launched. They want to get the jobless loggers out in their logging camps to be fed until the camps open up (whenever that will be). The money is to be advanced by the government and charged against the loggers, to be paid back by them when they start work. This scheme is along the same line as the Belgian bosses, through King Leopold, put over in the Belgian Congo, which was, and is a world scandal. Or like the debt system of slavery in the British African possessions and India. The lumber barons want a tighter grip on their slaves and this is why they are trying to introduce the peonage system in the woods. . . . The introduction of such a system will mean that the loggers will be bound to the bosses by the debts contracted and be in an even more helpless condition than before. This is the most brazen attempt yet made to prevent workers leaving the job when conditions become rotten.⁴⁹

The global analysis in this Communist critique captured the plan’s most notable feature: its quasi-legal binding of loggers to logging companies in a manner calculated to ensure their future dependence and thus their availability for work. Just as meal and bed tickets issued for the Central City Mission or the Emergency Refuge separated homeless transients from the free market and subjected them to forms of discipline, the scheme of the Loggers’ Association would deny to lumber workers the right to apply for government relief or even to remain in Vancouver. Instead, relief would become a loan, although without the contractual protections usually afforded in such an arrangement.

In other words, this was not relief at all but rather unfree labour-in-waiting, a form of “peonage” made possible by the economic crisis.

Not surprisingly, the loudest municipal campaign for relief camps was Vancouver’s. While lobbying the province to endorse the plan of the Loggers’ Association, the Relief and Employment Committee simultaneously discussed a proposal for a “concentration camp” to be set up in the Exhibition buildings in Hastings Park.⁵⁰ The cost to house a thousand men for five months was estimated at \$10,000, exclusive of food, in addition to the \$7,000 start-up expenses. Some residents worried that council members had not thought through the ramifications of creating a camp on the Exhibition grounds. Although then a luggage salesman, Mr. F. Leighton Thomas had had some experience with disciplinary projects; besides having worked as an inspector on the Canadian Pacific Railway, Thomas claimed to have participated in British campaigns in Afghanistan, Alexandria, and Burma. While believing the idea of labour camps to be “an admirable one,” Thomas felt obliged to draw attention to their history in Vancouver, building his narrative around “the tremendous difference in morale of the unemployed today, and the men (largely Veterans of the Great War) who were formerly in camp at Hastings Park” in 1922:

The unemployed of today are largely made up of the scum of Europe, wholly undisciplined, and almost entirely under the influence of these Communistic Leaders, and if you put a thousand men in camp there, I am perfectly certain that unless they are under the strictest discipline and controlled by an adequate Police Force, then you are going to have trouble galore.

Thomas advocated using RCMP officers to control the population, because “the scarlet coat and the gun on a North West Constable has more effect, on these scum of European hoboos, than twenty City Constables (no matter how good they may be) would have.” If the council failed to take adequate measures, “the City may wake up to find the whole of their Exhibition Building in ashes.”⁵¹ But even before the mayor received this dire warning, support for a civic camp had met with practical limits, related not to fears of destruction but to financing.⁵² Civic leaders once again turned to their brethren. In January 1931, City Council sent a group to the capital to meet with Tolmie’s Unemployment Committee. The message was a simple one: “single men could be maintained in camps or central stations at considerably less cost” than the current arrangements of bed and meal tickets. Delegates stressed the necessity of a “substantial initial outlay” in order to reconfigure “certain public buildings . . . as central stations for the unemployed single men.” Additionally, the representatives argued that the lion’s share of financial responsibility should rightly be assumed by the other governments because the camps would be

used to house transients from across Canada.⁵³ The politicians left Victoria optimistic that Tolmie would fund Vancouver's camps.

At the council meeting on 14 January, Atherton formally proposed the creation of a civic-run camp and won a majority, despite opposition to the scheme.⁵⁴ City architect Arthur Bird submitted a plan for three bunkhouses, each with room for 320 men, who would be stacked on raised platforms in sleeping berths thirty inches wide, at an estimated total cost of \$17,000. The building would be situated at the northwest corner of Doman Road and 58 Avenue in the recently absorbed former municipality of South Vancouver, which was regarded as a working-class district. Officials planned to charge the construction costs to their direct relief accounts, of which the municipality's share was 25 percent. Deputy Provincial Secretary Pat Walker, however, declared that the full cost of construction would be borne by Vancouver.⁵⁵ The Relief and Employment Committee was dismayed, to say the least: "The City has no intention of building a camp and bearing the entire expense," its members proclaimed.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, many Vancouver residents lacked enthusiasm for the project. Jeanette George, for example, criticized the lack of public consultation: ratepayers should be allowed to air their opinions about "whether they want a large camp of unemployed men dumped in their midst," since a thousand transient men would "constitute a real danger" in a community without adequate lighting and police patrols.⁵⁷ Other groups sounded a similar note.⁵⁸ The Collingwood branch of the Canadian Legion wrote to protest the camp's location in a working-class neighbourhood. "Not wishing to dampen Alderman Atherton's humanitarian suggestion," these veterans wryly wrote, "we respectfully suggest that a site should be chosen in the vast open spaces of Point Grey or Shaughnessy," both exclusive environs of the wealthy.⁵⁹ With the provincial government refusing to assume financial responsibility for Vancouver's proposed camp, City Council responded by terminating its support for many jobless transients in March 1931.⁶⁰

Vancouver was not alone in its complaints about congregations of transients. By the spring of 1931, the size of the itinerant population had increased to the extent that cities such as Kamloops could reasonably claim to be the temporary home of more than a thousand tramps, who built and sustained jungles just beyond the city's edge. Many British Columbians feared that the growth of the jungles dotting the landscape close to railway lines facilitated the mass communication of tramping values. Only state intervention, it seemed, could prevent the spreading of jungle characteristics such as indolence, immorality, and contempt for constituted authority. The year 1931 thus brought with it the solidification of the hobo figure as the greatest threat to social harmony and to the public purse.⁶¹ "Rid us of this hobo army, and we can take care of our own" — this would serve as the rallying point for municipalities.

The City Council of Kamloops began debate on “the drifter problem” on 21 May. A week earlier, one alderman had mentioned a report of three hundred “box car tourists” on a train passing through Ashcroft. Transients numbered “almost as many [as the] people in that town,” he fretted.⁶² On 19 May, the front page of the *Kamloops Sentinel* screamed, “Hoboes on Loose; Citizens Assaulted.” Near the jungle on the south side of the Thompson River, Harry Turner of the Kamloops Lumber Company had been confronted by a man “evidently under the influence of liquor,” Turner stated in an interview. A fight ensued, with two tramps arrested, while another group of tramps were “drunk and lying around on the ground.” Even worse, they became “mutinous and refused to obey the constables” who ordered that they move to the other side of the river. Eventually, a “ringleader” and five others were arrested. “The residents are often bothered in the night by vagrants wandering from house to house,” Turner bemoaned.⁶³ Some aldermen shared Turner’s concern for the absence of work discipline, telling stories of drifters refusing jobs in town because the “terms” were “too low.” Farm work, in particular, found few takers.⁶⁴

With these events in mind, the Kamloops council adopted a resolution to open a soup kitchen, under police control, in the local arena; the City of Vernon had already decided on a similar course. While the council authorized some money for this purpose, members argued that the lion’s share of funding would have to come from individual “citizens” so that the “expense to the taxpayers should not be great.” More to the point, by starting a soup kitchen, the council believed it could eventually rid Kamloops of transients altogether. After registering, tramps would receive two meals a day for two days at the arena, after which police would require them to leave the area. But the kitchen project would work, councillors agreed, only if tramps had no other local sources of support, and thus residents were asked to stop giving meals to men approaching them at home. Nor were they to give cash to “drifters on the street, as so much of this goes into the liquor store.” In theory, tramps would receive aid only through the municipal program and only under police supervision, after which they would be forced to move on. Alongside its coverage of the council meeting, the *Kamloops Sentinel* offered an editorial on the city as “a hospitable city” for tourists. Ten days later, a hobo from the Kamloops jungle saved a young boy from drowning in the Thompson.⁶⁵

The Kamloops kitchen initially served from fifty to sixty tramps, who received soup, porridge, bread with jam, and tea. Mayor Moffat himself was “impressed by the gratitude of men eating there,” estimating that only 5 percent of drifters were genuine “malcontents.” Their character, however, mattered not at all in questions of access: deserving and undeserving alike would be cut off after two days. Citizens were again warned against giving money to tramps, so as to “eliminate begging”: those desirous of contributing

were to give to local merchants or Police Chief Anderson, so that it could be distributed by the police only to those transients who registered.⁶⁶ The tone of the *Kamloops Sentinel* during these initial days was optimistic. “Many of the men are well educated,” read one article. “They are appreciative of what is being done.” Meanwhile, the Anglican Synod of Kootenay adopted a hard line on the enforcement of vagrancy statutes, calling for the creation of labour camps:

It is hoped that by the setting up of such camps, men who are in their present plight of idleness and unrest through a chain of unfortunate circumstances would find a way out, and that as prosperity returns these fellows will return to their ordinary occupations, their morale undamaged. On the other hand, the idle, shiftless fellows, who refuse work under almost any and all conditions, will find their plight so unpalatable that they will move out of the country. . . . The thought of marshalling the army of unemployed into camps and putting them to work may be repugnant to many persons. It is a measure of compulsion whose justification is necessity.⁶⁷

To lend credence to their campaign for relief camps, H.C. Calder was dispatched to take a census of the jungle, promising him “police protection if necessary.” Meanwhile, the shine had gone from Mayor Moffat’s initially positive view of soup kitchen attendees; in an interview, he now “deplored” the fact that many of them “could not speak a word of English,” and, as had his Vancouver compatriots, he called for police to be stationed at the Alberta border to prevent transients from entering. A *Sentinel* writer strongly commended Vernon’s policy of requiring work of all who received aid, he explained “the longer a man is out of work the more he forgets how to work.” “The better food he gets and the more idle he continues the more he succumbs to pernicious propaganda. . . . Vernon is not to become a Mecca for tourists who desire neither to labor nor to go hungry.”⁶⁸

By the end of June, the Kamloops soup kitchen was feeding an average of two hundred men per day, most of them “foreigners.” The *Sentinel* reprinted a story from the *Vernon News* that inquired of readers, “Would we be a nation of tramps?” Unless the Dominion government intervened to prevent mobility, the answer would be “yes.” Transients, the writer suggested, were taking advantage of local charity networks to fund their expedition to “see the country” and thus “tend to destroy the good old-fashioned virtues of honesty and independence.”⁶⁹ Throughout the summer, this increase in transient numbers was repeated in small towns throughout the interior of BC, in the Crow’snest Pass region, and on Vancouver Island. While none would rival Kamloops as a centre of jungle construction, all traced their financial problems to the presence of transients, outsiders who unjustly drained resources from civic coffers.

G.A.B. MacDonald, reeve of Penticton, asked for the “movement of transients riding free on railways to be curtailed.” Fearing that “young men and young women seek adventure through this means to their detriment,” MacDonald believed that “such transients are not beneficial to selves or municipalities.”⁷⁰ The mayor of Nelson, J.P. Morgan, brought attention to the 150 “transients at present camped on lakeshore who daily canvass [the] city for money and food.” In his estimation, only the creation of “labor camps in country districts” would help to “relieve [the] situation and . . . would stop educating [the] unemployed into hoboism.”⁷¹ As the financial burdens on municipalities increased, many sought to expand the category of “transient.” At a meeting of the Union of BC Municipalities, a motion was passed asking Tolmie’s officials to classify as resident those who had “resided continuously in a municipality for one year and who previous to taking up such residence [were] not destitute nor sufferin[g] from disability.”⁷² All others would be considered transients for relief purposes.

It is striking that in their comments, community leaders in Kamloops, Vernon, and Vancouver did not typically subscribe to the view of transient unemployed men as immoral and indolent individuals. In fact, City Fathers often stressed the genuine suffering experienced by the jobless, at least the Anglo-Canadian jobless, and their willingness to work. In other words, work camps were not to be created for the sole purpose of punishing the lazy and undeserving; all transients, deserving and undeserving, were to be interned in order to remove the burden from the municipalities, figuratively and literally. In the intervention of the Province and the Dominion lay the salvation of the cities.

Economic Development and the Crisis of the Tolmie Government

Premier Tolmie and his cabinet responded to municipal demands for the segregation of transients with a program designed primarily to stimulate development of the province’s economic infrastructure, and others shared in this vision of growth through relief. The residents of Port Renfrew, for instance, sought road development on the stretch of Vancouver Island from Jordan River to Bamfield in order to “open a large section of country rich in minerals[,] timber and farming land and facilitate the marketing of forty percent of British Columbia’s fresh salmon.”⁷³ Organized through the Department of Public Works under Minister R.W. Bruhn and Deputy Minister Pat Philip, the camps were to effect the type of economic transformation envisioned in Port Renfrew and elsewhere through the use of the physical labour of unemployed men. In business, however, timing is everything. Within two months of their opening in September

1931, the camps had become holding tanks for the idle jobless due to the combination of the gold standard crisis and the subsequent parsimony of the federal government. Before entering the camps themselves, we will examine the economic context in which they were born and subsequently malnourished.

In early 1931, Tolmie lamented that his government had “never needed markets as badly as we do today.” Provincial revenues from timber and mining had declined substantially “as a result of the bad business conditions existing world wide.”⁷⁴ One Communist dryly noted, “Everybody’s getting laid off except the stools and the cops.”⁷⁵ With conditions worsening and municipalities crying out for “relief from relief,” Tolmie met with his minister of Public Works, R.W. Bruhn, who declared that he needed \$4 million for road development, the bulk of which would have to be secured through an additional bank loan.⁷⁶ Tolmie agreed that the time was propitious for such a program: as he explained to Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, depressed conditions allowed for construction projects to be carried on at a substantially cheaper cost than had been possible in recent memory. Given that he saw “no sign of improvement in conditions as far as labour is concerned for 1931,” Tolmie asserted that “it will be necessary for us to provide work for the people; I do not know of any more useful way than in improving our roads and bridges.”⁷⁷

Despite the size of the loan requested by Bruhn, Tolmie expressed his confidence to his Finance Minister, J.W. Jones: “We know that Bruhn will get full value for every dollar expended.” An extensive program of road works made good economic sense. “We have a good province,” he wrote, “and I think it would be better for the Province and the Government to speculate a little on the future rather than to cut off this road work too abruptly.”⁷⁸ Like Tolmie, R.W. Bruhn believed in the applicability of business principles to the management of government. The *Salmon Arm Observer*, the newspaper of record in Bruhn’s riding, suggested that he was “free from the taint of ‘politician.’” Instead, he endeavoured to organize government “as a business institution which should be maintained as such.”⁷⁹ The key, as Tolmie had hinted, lay in the transformation of rocks and gravel into roads. In August 1930, Pat Philip, chief engineer and deputy minister of Public Works, filed a detailed list of projects that could be accomplished through the adoption of a camp system.⁸⁰ By using Bruhn’s Department of Public Works to extend and improve transportation networks, mining, logging, and other industries could get their natural resources to market faster. The resulting increase in revenue meant an increase in taxes paid to the government, helping the latter to recoup its initial outlay on the camps. Just as important, Bruhn believed that relief projects could be initiated at below the so-called Fair Wage rate of four dollars per day.⁸¹

In June 1931, Tolmie and other cabinet members met with the Dominion Minister of Labour, Gideon Robertson, then touring western Canada to assess conditions.⁸² The premier stressed both the economic development that work relief would stimulate and the need to separate transients from the rest of the population. The relief camps would bring economic dividends, Tolmie argued, acquainting Robertson with the plan devised by the BC Loggers' Association the previous year. The "rather stagnant condition of the lumber market" meant that the transportation infrastructure had fallen into neglect. In order to facilitate growth in the lumber industry, roads needed to be built. Because the logging proprietors already operated camps, start-up costs would be minimal. Most of all, Tolmie stressed the necessity of separating the jobless from the city. "Those who know the young logger," he explained, "fear that these fellows, accustomed to dangerous work in the woods, and possessing many adventurous spirits among them, will not stand for much hardship in the city and if relief is not provided for them, will promptly help themselves." Tolmie cited the strike conducted by the Workers' Alliance in Victoria as evidence of the need for immediate action: "This is the sort of spirit that prevails among them. They would rather 'bum' than work."⁸³ Robertson readily embraced the idea that transients threatened order.⁸⁴ Bruhn later testified during the Unemployment Inquiry of April 1932 that Robertson pushed the Province to move with great speed in camp construction and shared responsibility for the ensuing expenses.⁸⁵

In August, H.H. Stevens, British Columbia's senior parliamentarian in Ottawa, met with Tolmie's cabinet. The Province estimated that over the course of the subsequent year (until 31 July 1932), British Columbia would be home to approximately thirty thousand municipal resident relief cases and fifteen thousand provincial resident and transient cases. Such a massive undertaking, Tolmie estimated, would require just over \$41 million.⁸⁶ Stevens gave the cabinet verbal authority to construct camps, with arrangements to be negotiated later.⁸⁷ Provincial officials continued to talk with Robertson while establishing the first camps. In the third week of September, the Province submitted proposals for camps valued at \$6,675,000.⁸⁸ Tolmie had tightened the budget somewhat: the bill for both work and direct relief programs was estimated at a little more than \$40 million. Gideon Robertson agreed that his government would pay 50 percent of the total costs, although he later claimed that he had not authorized Tolmie's estimated figure.⁸⁹ Also in dispute is whether Robertson understood Tolmie's plan to use the camps to house both transient and resident men, as the federal minister later claimed to be surprised to learn that resident unemployed cases would also receive aid through the camp system.

To this point, there had been no overwhelming signs of the chaos to come. The turning point came on 21 September, when Britain abandoned the

gold standard. This policy led to talk of retrenchment in Ottawa — a “complete rearrangement of plans for [the] future”; it also made it more difficult for Tolmie’s government to secure financing without help from the federal government.⁹⁰ In mid-October, R. B. Bennett cabled BC’s Finance Minister, J. W. Jones, warning him that “conditions require most rigid economy in expenditures.” Bennett argued that direct relief spending provided aid to four times as many jobless people as did work relief.⁹¹ On a visit to Calgary, Tolmie wired Deputy Minister of Public Works Pat Philip, recommending that any construction of new camps be halted: “Looks like severe curtailment appropriation from Ottawa end may be expected.”⁹² In order to meet expenditures, Deputy Minister of Finance E. D. Solomon estimated the need for help from the federal government at a further \$7 million.⁹³ The resulting provincial debt was impressive: over \$140 million at the end of September 1931, increasing to an estimated \$154 million by the end of March 1932. The interest charges alone totalled \$7 million. By late October, it was clear in Victoria that the administration would have to depend upon federal loans. “It will take all our borrowing authorities to carry unemployment relief payrolls for [the] next ten days,” noted one assessment. “Impossible to carry on after November fifteenth without Dominion loan.”⁹⁴

In late October, Finance Minister J. W. Jones headed east to secure financing for the loans the Province required to cope with the unemployment crisis. From Toronto, he wired Tolmie with news of his situation: “Bank and financial syndicates much worried over reports [of] our relief expenditures. Our credit seriously affected.”⁹⁵ According to one banker, “there appears to be quite a bit of gossip going around in financial circles in the East regarding the Province.” The government’s road program was being described as “extravagant” with “extremely expensive highways . . . that can serve practically no population and open up no agricultural territory.”⁹⁶ Jones received “a hot welcome” in Ottawa and confessed to Tolmie that “the criticism has been all I can stand.” Negotiating with H. H. Stevens and Gideon Robertson because of Bennett’s illness, Jones received notification that the federal appropriation for relief was to be slashed. “You can see that our programme has been butchered,” Jones wrote, observing the impact of the gold standard crisis: the Province would have to “turn many of the work camps into soup kitchens.” Jones faced a litany of complaints: high wages paid to camp carpenters, extravagant expenditures in camp construction, faulty accounting procedures, and delays in submitting provincial vouchers. Most of all, the province stood accused of providing relief to people not in genuine need. Jones attempted to persuade Robertson and Stevens of the short-sightedness of their position, emphasizing “the Communistic propaganda being carried on,” but to no avail. The federal representatives stressed financial exigencies and said that “the municipalities must assume much more of the burden than what they have shown any indication of doing.”⁹⁷

On Halloween 1931, the Tolmie government received the biggest scare of all. Despite Jones's efforts in eastern Canada, the Dominion government would provide only \$3.5 million for work relief in BC's unorganized districts, and \$2.8 million in its municipalities. Jones advised his deputy to get the word out: work on the camps was to "close down . . . immediately."⁹⁸ Up to that point, Tolmie later suggested, "a lot of very valuable work" had been done by the unemployed. "There was no extravagance," he claimed, "and work was executed at a low unit rate as the Engineers' reports will verify."⁹⁹ According to estimates issued on the same day, in the six weeks previous, the Province had spent over \$2.2 million in outlays to unemployed workers, camp contractors, land owners, logging companies, and merchants, and this flurry of economic activity represented just the beginning. A memorandum for the premier revealed the Province's need to spend substantial amounts simply to keep the relief system alive. Work projects were no longer possible. Instead, the camps became holding pens for unemployed men, who would be maintained as direct relief recipients; the cost was \$300,000 per month for ten thousand men.¹⁰⁰

In mid-November, Pat Philip reported on his department's accomplishments. The provincial government had under its purview 210 work camps, all of them in full compliance with the standards set out in the provincial Health Act. Financial exigencies, however, required that 111 "semi-permanent camps" be closed down, displacing about eight thousand men, most of them provincial residents sent to the camps in place of regular public works projects. Eighty-two camps remained open (with 17 in reserve), housing five thousand transients.¹⁰¹ Tolmie confessed to Bennett that the province had erred in "allow[ing] too many in the camps." But to be fair, Tolmie suggested, "it was almost impossible to keep these men out of the camps. Everybody demanded a job."¹⁰² Finance Minister J.W. Jones offered a similar interpretation to E.B. Ryckman, the federal acting minister of Finance, observing "a tendency on the part of individuals who, while idle, were not necessarily destitute, taking advantage of the unemployment relief programme."¹⁰³

Because of the termination of the production side to the camps, we can only partially reconstruct the vision of development possessed by Tolmie, Bruhn, Philip, and others. Some groups argued for projects that would facilitate the growth of agricultural pursuits. Tories in the Salmon Arm district demanded that funds be channelled from roadwork to irrigation projects "for the fruit lands."¹⁰⁴ The available evidence, however, suggests a primary focus on roads to facilitate logging and mining, as well as tourism. In late November 1931, as conflicts between federal Tories and provincial Liberals intensified, Tolmie defended the economic vision of his government at the annual meeting of the BC Conservative Association. "We found that while the traffic on our main highways had been rapidly increasing," he explained, "the roads

had not been maintained in proportion with the development of the traffic.” Under the auspices of the Department of Public Works, roads were improved in a way that provided “profitable employment for a number of idle men.” “Excellent work was performed,” enthused the premier. “These roads will pay for themselves as years go on.”¹⁰⁵ As chief engineer, Pat Philip had assembled an ambitious program of road construction, designed to open new areas of the province and to shorten already existing routes. The Hope-Princeton project, for example, would decrease the trip from Nelson to Vancouver by ninety-nine miles. Philip estimated that shorter trips would reduce the “running expenses” of drivers by \$50,000 per year.¹⁰⁶

A number of business groups attempted to exert influence over Philip’s road program. J. B. Knowles, president of the Kelowna Retail Merchants Association, wrote Finance Minister Jones to request that work on local roads be shut down in order to shift resources to the Naramata road project connecting the region with the United States.¹⁰⁷ S. G. Blaylock, head of the Consolidated Mining & Smelter Company in Trail, believed that the building of a road in mining country between Rossland and Nelson would “have a wonderful effect” on the economy.¹⁰⁸ With the Dominion’s assumption of a share of financial responsibility came partial control of the designation and selection of projects. Public Works Minister R. W. Bruhn agreed with Tolmie that many of the problems with the camp system lay with the “Dominion Government in laying down certain roads on which this work should be carried out.” This interference, Bruhn estimated, cost the federal government at least \$1 million dollars.¹⁰⁹

Along with working on roads, the jobless laboured on tourist-related projects, clearing land and constructing parks. Nels Lougheed pushed for the development of a provincial park at Garibaldi, arguing that “a park near to Vancouver, with its large centre of population and its numerous outside visitors, might be made to contribute a considerable amount of revenue in repayment for expenditures in opening up and development.”¹¹⁰ One government official suggested that the business community’s opposition to work-relief spending — exemplified by the 1932 Kidd Commission report — was ill-founded. “The tourist trade runs exclusively on roads and demands roads comparative to its own,” he explained.¹¹¹ Although the Department of Public Works brought projects to a halt in November 1931, several undertakings were attempted during 1932 to clear land and begin the road that eventually led to the resort of Whistler. Tolmie also believed that provincially owned camps could, once the economic crisis passed, be “rented for summer tourist accommodation.”¹¹² J. W. Jones would later tell a representative of Woody Gundy Inc. that the deficits accumulated by British Columbia were not “operating deficits but expenditures in the main from which we have a real live and valuable asset.”¹¹³

Critics of the Tory camp system rarely discussed this vision of economic development. Instead, the relentless talk of a “wild orgy of expenditure” focused attention on spending estimates, which themselves were suspect.¹¹⁴ In November 1931, the *Sun* estimated the cost to that point of \$1.5 million; R.W. Bruhn and J.W. Jones both rejected this figure and claimed a bill in the area of \$500,000. Liberal Leader of the Opposition Duff Pattullo wrote to Victor Odlum, publisher of the *Star*, to ask how his paper devised its estimate, which was also \$1.5 million. Odlum responded: “The estimates have been all the way from two million dollars down to . . . five hundred thousand. . . . The figure of one million five hundred thousands, which was used by the *Star* on a certain occasion, was picked up from the Vancouver Sun. We used it because it was not extreme in either direction and seemed to be a fair average of the estimates that had come in.”¹¹⁵ As of 20 March 1932, British Columbia spent \$2,986,081.68 on work relief projects throughout the province. To that date, the cost of construction and materials for permanent, temporary, and rented camps was calculated at \$667,631, just over 22 percent of the total.¹¹⁶

The scholarly consensus around the characterization of Premier Tolmie’s camps as an “orgy of expenditure” is overwhelming.¹¹⁷ We would do well, however, to remember the sources for the image of corruption. Duff Pattullo and his colleagues ravenously devoured any story about Tory excesses, no matter how unreliable the source. Nor were federal Tories, who publicized similar stories, wholly disinterested parties. Relations between national and provincial wings of the party were often tense; the former believed that the latter had done little to aid Bennett’s 1930 federal campaign.¹¹⁸ Moreover, federal cabinet members, especially Minister of Labour Gideon Robertson, found it convenient to lay the blame for the crisis on their provincial counterparts. In addition, the equation of work relief projects with Tory corruption fails to do justice to the continuing access of Liberals to the trough: both parties sought to gorge themselves on government appropriations for relief. Indeed, the fracturing of the Conservative Party into four separate entities in 1932 and 1933 stemmed in part from the premier’s inability to effectively play the time-honoured partisan game of rewarding friends and punishing enemies.¹¹⁹

There were, inevitably, numerous complaints about favouritism under the Tories. A certain D.T. Scott assailed Tolmie for “handing out the wealth of the country to your capitalist friends.”¹²⁰ At the same time, Tolmie’s government witnessed a steady supply of missives complaining about the lack of patronage. Attorney-General Pooley informed the premier that he received “letters in continuously – and I have had two this morning – in which most of the complaints, it would appear, centre round the Public Works Department and the Deputy Minister.”¹²¹ To the best that can be determined, Philip’s managerial ethos played the most significant role in selecting the type of projects and the organization of work: his primary focus, however, lay in the

technical aspects of project planning, with an eye to developing the provincial infrastructure rather than strengthening the Conservative Party. The demands of local party organizations increased when it became clear that relief camps were in the offing. At least one constituency association publicly requested that Tories be given preference, prompting a rebuke.¹²²

At the same time, those camp projects selected by the Dominion appear to have relied upon the networks organized by previous Liberal administrations, both federal and provincial. Surveying the situation, Tory organizer Frank MacKenzie reported that because federal officials did not consult with the Province before initiating projects, “superintendents, assistant superintendents, bridge superintendents, bridge crews, gatemen, patrolmen, road foremen, timekeepers, caterpillar operators, cooks, etc. were practically what were left on those jobs when the Liberal Governments went out.” In MacKenzie’s opinion, far too many “key positions” were “held by those of the Liberal faith, – giving the Opposition an advantage that rightly belonged to us.”¹²³ John McBride informed Tolmie that “an old-time Liberal healer” ran the relief program in Dewdney.¹²⁴ C.E. Barry, secretary of the Fraser Canyon Conservative Association, complained about the lack of co-operation from project superintendents and road engineers in their district: these “strangers” were hired from “outside our district” for administrative positions that should have been selected locally. “Apparently,” he lamented, “anyone that is a real Conservative is like a bad cheque on road work here.” Moreover, the supplying of the project was “all done through Liberal stores.” “Is this a Liberal or a Conservative Government?” Barry wondered.¹²⁵ Six months later, complaints continued to pour in. A certain Mr. MacArthur of Abbotsford enquired of the premier if “some plan [could] be worked out so that the Liberal Councillmen and Reeves do not Hog these funds for their friend[s] as it has been in the past?”¹²⁶ On the issues of patronage, D.T. Scott wrote, “I have only to listen to the Liberals to know just what the Tories are, and to the Tories to know what the Liberals are.”¹²⁷

While the Tories proved unable to eliminate the vestiges of Liberal privilege, they certainly attempted to arrange for key contracts to supply the camps to go to Conservatives. Tolmie later claimed that his officials strove to purchase items wholesale as much as possible. At the same time, some merchants received orders at the wholesale price plus 10 percent. The premier rationalized this decision to give “a reasonable profit” to these “taxpayers and citizens” by arguing that many merchants had gone into debt because they extended credit to the unemployed. Without a profit, a contract to provide goods for the relief camps was of no value to merchants; refusing to subsidize these businesses would have resulted in supply problems.¹²⁸ Public Works officials also divided their purchases of low-grade lumber among mills, hoping that the department’s policy would allow these firms to cut the price

on their high-grade wood and thus find a market.¹²⁹ Pat Philip later testified before the Select Committee on Unemployment that he was approached by the Associated Timber Exporters, the leaders of which were Tories, with an offer to provide all the lumber for the camps from existing stores: Philip refused because “purchasing lumber in stock . . . wasn’t going to help the unemployment situation to a great extent at that time.”¹³⁰

The provisioning of the camps became a much sought-after source of money. MLA Dr. C.M. Kingston complained that the supplies for camps in his riding “are being purchased outside the District.” This, Kingston argued, was a missed opportunity for Tolmie’s government. “I think I can safely say there is not a wish to exploit the Government and I think the Government will suffer very little, if at all, economically, but on the other hand, will gain substantially in a political way by placing all the business possible with local merchants.”¹³¹ One Liberal charged that the firm of W.A. MacKenzie, a Tory MLA, raked in a profit of 10 percent on its deals to supply relief camps in the Squamish area.¹³² Of course, the wheels of the patronage machine did not always run smoothly. Ed Bush, president of the Dewdney Conservative Association, asked Tolmie to personally intervene in his five-month dispute with the Department of Finance. Bush had sold \$584.75 worth of lumber to camps in Yale in mid-September 1931. “We were told by the Engineers that this was a National Emergency and I felt that it [was] up to me to do my bit,” explained Bush. Thus, the lumber was sold at cost, plus a “handling charge,” resulting in a margin of \$400. To realize this profit, however, he had to receive his price, and this proved difficult. Estimating that he had spent \$397.10 on long distance telephone calls and trips to Victoria to plead with department officials, Bush begged Tolmie to help him finally be paid.¹³³

Attracting much public attention, talk of patronage usually turned to calls for increased economy and efficiency, with camp residents experiencing the greatest effects of this particular way of framing the economics of relief provision. In late February 1932, faced with mass evacuations from the camps and a Communist-led movement thousands strong, as well as very public denunciations of the “orgy of expenditures” by opposition politicians and Vancouver’s corporate media, the Tories agreed to strike a Select Committee to inquire into the camps. Chaired by Tory MLA H. Despard Twigg, the Select Committee, in early April, exonerated Tolmie and the Department of Public Works. Tolmie defended his government’s spending, which he claimed was brought about by other forces: “The pressure therefor, on the part of the public, including Municipal authorities, the Police, and the Press, was unanimous, and the need for immediate action in that regard was of the most urgent nature.”¹³⁴ The removal of radicals from urban areas and the infrastructure development programs that put money in the pockets of local businesses, they believed, offered a solution to the transient crisis.

To protect their credibility, Tories went on the offensive against Harold Brown, the current president of the Vancouver Board of Trade. In a speech to the Vancouver Real Estate Exchange, Brown maintained that the hearings of the Select Committee had become “a spectacle of shameless evasion and distortion of the truth.” Brown had “sat in on some of the sessions” and was shocked at what he saw. “If any one told the truth, he would have been crucified.” After reading an account of Brown’s speech, the Select Committee asked him to testify. One of the commissioners asked Brown which sessions he had attended. “That is a misrepresentation,” he responded. “My expression was that I had listened in to the Committee, and I meant generally, in a sort of radio sense.”¹³⁵ Asked about the “shameless evasion and distortion,” he responded that “there is a slight misunderstanding” regarding his comment. Asked if specific officials, such as Pat Philip, were lying, Brown stated, “No; I wouldn’t say that for a moment. It is not a question of detail, but you have not developed the situation yet, and the detail is known by the people who are in the actual operation. I am representing a formidable element of the people of the business world.”¹³⁶ In the end, Brown refused to name one witness he believed had lied.

The case of Harold Brown represented an extreme version of the popular attitude toward Tolmie’s camp program. The premier even received a medalion made of leather, handcrafted by a member of the Ku Klux Klan, as an award for his “non-service” to British Columbians. The Klansman charged the administration with financial corruption and dismissed the Select Committee’s report as “just so much hooley.”¹³⁷ Nonetheless, critics of the camp system consistently understated the importance of relief programs as a means to stifle radicalism. The Tory vision combined a program of economic development and ideological reformation through forced labour with a spatial strategy of political rule, identifying and isolating radicals in bush camps. This interpretation was challenged by Duff Pattullo’s Liberals, who pledged to reorganize work relief projects along more labour-intensive lines.

The legislature was thus treated to debates about what could be expected and what could be extracted from the jobless. What obligations best suited the unemployed? What form of work discipline would see the best return for the state? For British Columbia Liberals, the work relief issue was of fundamental importance to the province’s future. For Pattullo, in fact, it embodied the struggle between conflicting social formations. In a November 1931 speech, Pattullo attacked Tolmie’s administration for supposedly offering to provide work for every jobless man, just as had Bennett and other politicians across Canada. Pattullo believed that such a program “would mean that the Government must control the means of employment and thus it would mean the nationalisation of industry and that would mean the Russian system.” He maintained, “I am not ready to surrender the marvelous substance we have in our Anglo-Saxon system for the nationalisation of industry.”¹³⁸ The Liberal

leader made this claim repeatedly: the pledge to provide work relief for every unemployed man meant Communism.¹³⁹ In an August 1932 letter to a person who suggested that he needed to be friendlier to the business community, Pattullo proudly defended his record as their champion. "I have many times publicly stated that I was out to aid the business and industrial interests of this Province, and I doubt whether there is any other man in the Province," he proclaimed, "who did more than I did last year in tempering public opinion to a basis of sanity. A year ago public opinion was very much more radical than it is today, and at no less than eighty public meetings I attacked the whole question, including the situation in Russia."¹⁴⁰ He also sniped that Tolmie's government "should have foreseen the unemployment situation," a universal criticism of opposition politicians throughout North America.¹⁴¹ In general, Pattullo advocated a different form of state spending: public works projects that paid wages rather than relief. Even with the greater expense, infrastructure work done under normal conditions would, he argued, bring a greater return for the state.

The key to measuring the productivity of the unemployed lies in the rate of exploitation. Most accounts suggest that the productivity of men on relief work gangs paled in comparison to that of their comrades who received wages for similar tasks. Yet so, too, did their wages. Of the almost \$2.2 million spent on road construction between 1 January and 31 October 1931, more than \$1.4 million, or 66 percent of the total, took the form of wages.¹⁴² In the initial period of work in the camps, September and October 1931, the total cost per man per hour of employment was sixty-five cents.¹⁴³ Philip and his corps of engineers expected an efficiency rate of 50 percent from the unemployed and were pleasantly surprised to see rates of between 60 and 80 percent on various projects.¹⁴⁴ Even with the lower rate of 60 percent, the return to the province was not substantially less than if projects had paid wages.¹⁴⁵ During the Select Committee hearings, several Liberal MLAs, including George Pearson, the future minister of Labour, grilled Philip about the rate of production. They argued that with a higher rate of pay, the efficiency of the unemployed would have increased substantially. Philip rejected this notion because it occluded one of the primary purposes of the camps: work in an isolated setting. "It wasn't a question of efficiency," he maintained. "It was a question of getting these men to work."¹⁴⁶ On this occasion, the partisan debate between Tories and Liberals was not that of Victorian traditionalists and modern reformers. Instead, Tories argued that the nature of the financial crisis and the need to isolate transients constrained the ability of the governmental infrastructure to extract labour-power from those without jobs. Liberals, however, offered an alternative understanding that insisted the unemployed work harder and receive more. But by the time of the hearings of the Select Committee in March 1932, the biggest obstacle to efficiency of production and economy of administration had become those forced to call the camps home.

***This Modern and Civilised Slavery: Communist
Organizing in the Camps***

Spring on the slopes that ripple and gleam in the sun,
And birds that voice the surprise of the new-born flowers
Beholding the wonder of skies and the pure white silence of clouds,
And below, in the harbor, a lean greyhound of the sea —
A battleship, bristling with murderous guns!

Who is the enemy? Why this menace of war and of death?

And Canada answered, her words embittered and shamed:
'My sons have dared, on the soil that brought them to birth,
To ask for the freedom to work and to earn, by their toil,
Bread for their children and wives. And this is the crime
That has called the lean war-dog to crouch at my door.'

A.M. Stephen, "Starve Quietly, My Sons!" 1 May 1932¹⁴⁷

According to a joint report drafted by four police constables who attended the 27 September 1931 meeting at the Avenue Theatre on Main Street, the opening speaker was "a foreigner, name unknown, 5'7", dark, thickset."¹⁴⁸ This was probably J. Brodsky, an organizer for the Vancouver branch of the Canadian Labour Defence League, who began the gathering of the National Unemployed Workers' Association (NUWA) with a call for a "united militaristic front to convict camps" and encouraged everyone to attend the meeting with Colonel Cooper at the Relief Department scheduled for the following morning. Tom Ewen spoke next — for sixty-five minutes, according to the wearied constables — and condemned the relief camps as well as the deportation policies of the Bennett government. Ewen proposed, and those in attendance eagerly passed, motions condemning sections 41 and 42 of the Immigration Act and section 98 of the Criminal Code.¹⁴⁹ Next to speak was Jack Cunningham, just out of Oakalla Penitentiary after serving six months for sedition; he would be back in prison within a week, arrested on charges of inciting to riot. Finally, Mrs. Tom Bradley spoke, a "firebrand type," according to the constables; she called for the movement to "organize women and children and get them out into the streets and fight." The meeting ended with the singing of "The Red Flag."¹⁵⁰

At 8:30 the next morning, approximately six hundred collected on the street outside the Relief Department office at the corner of Cambie and Pender Streets. The group elected three men — Brodsky, Vandritin, and Andrews — to present their demands to Colonel Cooper.¹⁵¹ The creation of the camps,

they argued, expressed “the obvious intention of the authorities to compel us by a threat of starvation to accept work under such slavish terms.”¹⁵² The delegation issued a twelve-point platform that would “appl[y] to all workers, irrespective of race, creed or color; and to all unable to earn a living.” As they had in the past, these representatives of radical reconstruction demanded an “equal amount of relief” for all single workers, whether resident or transient. The first demand of the NUWA delegation, the reinstatement of all declared ineligible for aid because they refused to enter a relief camp, had become a fundamental precondition to any political discussion of the future. In order to truly consent to any government relief program, workers had to be assured of viable alternatives. The ninth demand articulated this with great firmness: “The action of workers entering those camps shall be considered as entirely voluntary, and no discrimination shall be exercised against those who refuse to go.”¹⁵³

In fact, many protesters seem not to have opposed the idea of work camps in principle. In late August, a NUWA gathering went on record in opposition to the jobless being sent to camps “unless on the basis of agreement between the Government and the organized workers, employed and unemployed.”¹⁵⁴ And the NUWA continued to espouse this position after the camps opened, objecting to the substandard wages offered for work and not the camps themselves. In the initial stage of construction, wage rates were determined by marital status: married men received \$2.80 per day and single men \$2.00; eighty cents per day was deducted for board. Opposed to these rates, the six hundred protesters offered instead to sign on for work relief under the right conditions: “No worker will go out to camp unless on the basis of a specified agreement between the workers and the Government, said agreement to be on the basis of a standard scale of hours and wages, namely, five days to constitute a working week, four dollars to be a day’s pay at seven hours per day.”¹⁵⁵

The NUWA delegation also rejected the possibilities of military or semi-military rule, foreshadowing what was to come, and demanded that the rights of freedom of speech, assembly, and organization be “recognised in all camps. In addition, delegates called for bedding to be provided free, for other basic supplies to be provided at cost, and for “constant, competent, and sufficient medical supervision.” Finally, the delegation demanded that access to this program be guaranteed “to all workers, irrespective of race, creed or color; and to all unable to earn a living.” Such a program took the core elements developed in the winter of 1929–30 and added demands specific to the realities of late summer 1931.¹⁵⁶ The NUWA combined attention to the economic dimension — the demonstrable fact of exploitation — with a detailed exploration of the coercive aspect of political rule — the fact of oppression.

Cooper responded to the delegation’s program by claiming that the Relief Department was “simply that of Agent of the Provincial Government” and

that W.A. McKenzie, chair of the provincial Committee of the Executive Council on Unemployment Relief, the ultimate regulatory body, had instructed the Relief Department to discontinue relief to those “who refuse to go to camp.” Taken narrowly, this statement had an element of truth, but the unspoken reality was that Vancouver’s government freely chose to deny relief to these men. True, McKenzie declared that the province would not fund relief for those who refused the order for camp. But no provincial policy obligated the Relief Department to do the same until January 1932, when, after persistent lobbying by civic politicians, the Province ruled that those who did not “avail themselves of the opportunity of going to camp” were to be declared ineligible for relief in the municipalities.¹⁵⁷ In September 1931, cities still had the power, albeit one bounded by financial exigencies, to provide relief to transients.

The relief officer also positioned himself as the one who determined the value of unemployed lives in another sense. The question posed by the unemployed delegation, he explained, “narrows down solely to a change in the locality where relief is provided”: “It is obviously an improvement for [the] unemployed to received three meals a day under conditions such as exist at the Allco camp, rather than to remain in the City on the present basis.”¹⁵⁸ We might note, however, that jobless men might have viewed the camps in varying ways as entailing more than just a change in “locality”: some may have preferred the camps because they would be able to work for their relief at higher rates than that allotted them with bed and meal tickets, while others may have objected to what they viewed as forced labour. No doubt more reasons on both sides were assessed. Nonetheless, the choice was not theirs to make, nor was the issue theirs to name.

Two days after meeting with Cooper, a massive crowd of between two and three thousand assembled on East Hastings Street, again at the invitation of NUWA organizers. Demonstrators were dispersed by police, only to re-form at the Powell Street parade ground. After a few speeches, the meeting ended of its own accord.¹⁵⁹ The headline of the 3 October 1931 edition of the *Unemployed Worker* read “WAGES – NIL!” Beneath it was a cartoon depicting workers being trucked to the camp in Allco, while policemen lined the streets to ensure their orderly progress. The article accompanying this picture addressed the question of coercion, referencing the “protection” provided by the police as well as the broader context of economic deprivation and human need. Cast off by the Relief Department and thrown out of the missions and refuges, many saw no option but to resort to this “particular form of slavery.”¹⁶⁰ This view of the coercive intent behind the relief camps only intensified when three miners were shot dead in Estevan, Saskatchewan, on 29 September, one day after the protest at the Relief Office. The stark headline in the *Unemployed Worker* declared, “WORKERS SHOTTO MAINTAIN PROFITS.”¹⁶¹

Originally offered as part of the Loggers' Association's plan, Allco was a "feeder" or distribution camp where workers were initially taken before being dispersed to other locations. Beginning in September, more than ten thousand men found themselves herded into trucks and deposited at Allco for processing and a physical assessment. Once declared fit, they were sent to camps based on the demand for labour on each project.¹⁶² Allco also functioned as a depot for unemployed men considered to be "in an emaciated condition," who were maintained there until fit for manual work.¹⁶³ One of the initial unfortunates sent to Allco described it as an "old deserted logging camp entirely in the wilderness."¹⁶⁴ This feeling of isolation was a standard trope in writing from the camps that was published in the *Unemployed Worker*, as were complaints about basic living conditions: one writer reported that "the toilets and washrooms are not fit even for the use of pigs," adding, "This place with its dirt and scrap piles which breed thousands of flies to torture us has an outlook of a great city dumping ground, with our camp upon it, like the former Vancouver harbor jungle." While urging workers to organize, he also advised others to avoid the camps altogether if possible because residents were subject to the "ruthless mercy of the boss." He concluded, "Let our slogan for the coming winter be: A general strike of the workers in relief camps all over BC followed by a hunger march into the nearest town."¹⁶⁵

Owned by the Abernethy Lougheed Logging Company Ltd., Allco had been rented for \$625.00 per month. An eighty-eight-building structure, the camp housed 350 men, with bunkhouses, wash-houses, a laundry house, and a dining hall. Most lived in bunkhouses with eight beds.¹⁶⁶ The company provided beds, sheets, and stoves; arranged for a supply of water; and covered insurance costs.¹⁶⁷ One bureaucrat argued that the lease arrangement was "in the interests of the Tax payers": to build a camp of this size would, according to estimates, cost more than \$13,000. In addition, Allco was "practically isolated," which was ideal for "housing this class of men."¹⁶⁸ Defending his government against conflict-of-interest charges involving Nels Lougheed, Tolmie argued that Allco could immediately house the bulk of transient men in "the most economical way."¹⁶⁹

According to Tolmie, one of the key reasons for the high cost of camp construction was the NUWA's campaign against what they called "slave camps." In June 1931, Tolmie pleaded his case to H.H. Stevens. "Things are becoming very acute," he cautioned, "and we do not desire to give these men a chance to riot and have to call out the militia, but would prefer to give them reasonable relief work where they can be comfortable, reasonably well fed and give them some cash."¹⁷⁰ The premier also conveyed to the prime minister his grave concern about the rising tide of radicalism.¹⁷¹ In a February 1932 letter to Conservative members of Parliament and other notables, Tolmie stressed the importance of context in understanding his government's actions during the summer of 1931.

Municipalities had faced a “grave situation” and insisted that the province intervene. In Vancouver, parades and meetings of the unemployed served as proof of “a distinctly communistic spirit.” Chief Constable W.J. Bingham had feared “wholesale damage to property,” but City Council had balked at the expense of building its own camp. Minister of Labour Gideon Robertson had concurred with the assessment offered by western politicians and supported the program to remove the transient unemployed from the cities.¹⁷²

“Possibly there was a little too much shown” in the construction of the camps, Tolmie allowed in a letter to Bennett, “but this is hardly surprising in view of the urgency of the situation.” Repeatedly, he stressed that radical propaganda set limits on his government:

No doubt we could have built cheaper camps but they would not have complied with the Health regulations of the Province. Remember that the unemployed, especially the Communists, were using the expression “prison camps.” They were enlisting public sympathy when they stated the Government was preparing camps not fit to live in.¹⁷³

During Philip’s testimony before the Select Committee, Liberal A. M. Manson suggested that money could have been saved by erecting temporary camps. Philip disagreed, arguing that the “propaganda” of the National Unemployed Workers’ Association about the “slave camps” required the province to build permanent camps, since such structures were required under the Health Act. “These men were very critical as to the accommodations we were going to provide,” Philip maintained. The camps already in existence were simply “not sufficient to carry out a siege of unemployment such as we have had.”¹⁷⁴ This was one of the consequences of the gold standard crisis: governments took on an increasing debt burden in order to spend money on projects intended as an antidote to radicalism. At year’s end, Tolmie cabled Leon Ladner, a long-time Tory M P (defeated by Angus MacInnis in 1930) and his primary conduit to Bennett: “Banks will not advance a dollar for unemployment relief. Won’t even carry direct relief. Vancouver demanding three or four thousands men be removed to camps at once. Impossible to do this unless finances forthcoming. Desire avoid any possibility riots which beginning to threaten.”¹⁷⁵ The desire of provincial politicians to suppress radicalism, then, both necessitated and legitimated the expense of the camp system.

But if Communist organizing indirectly led to the adoption of a minimum standard for camp conditions, as implied by Tolmie and others, it could not close the camps themselves. For six months following the destruction of the jungles in early September 1931, Communists called for all recipients of relief to reject the camps and instead to maintain the unity of unemployed workers in the cities. One undercover constable suggested that, on occasion,

some Communists characterized those who went to camp as scabs.¹⁷⁶ In general, NUWA organizers emphasized the fight “for immediate emergency relief in town, and for wee[k]ly cash relief administered by the unemployed themselves that will enable them to live in comfort and decency whether employed or unemployed.”¹⁷⁷ “DEMAND RELIEF IN TOWN! DEMAND CASH RELIEF! FIGHT FOR NON-CONTRIBUTORY UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE!” one headline in the *Unemployed Worker* exclaimed.¹⁷⁸ Consistent with the Communist platform of two years earlier, this appeal stressed workers’ entitlement to a standard of living that, in economic and cultural terms, greatly differed from that provided for by public and private charity. Workers could only control their standard of living through collective action, which would enable them to administer relief based on their own notions of “comfort and decency.” Finally, the struggle against impoverishment could best be organized by rejecting the camp system and its separation of unemployed workers in the camps from their brethren in the cities. As late as February 1932, Communists maintained that the situation demanded that “unemployed workers should not only refuse to go to the camp. They should stay in MASS [at] the Relief Office, and refuse to be cut off.”¹⁷⁹

While Communist propaganda on the camps was rarely mentioned in the jungles, it is clear that Communists’ demands would have also benefited those who sought to live temporarily outside of liberal-capitalist social relations. As already discussed, access to cash relief in itself enabled mass participation in jungle-building because of the well-nigh universal recognition of money as the medium through which the value of goods could be abstracted and made equal (or identical) and thus exchangeable. Cash could purchase the would-be transient a measure of autonomy and freedom in comparison to those fed and housed with tickets or through their own exploited labour in the camps because it allowed them direct access to the capitalist marketplace. Yet cash could also purchase autonomy from this market: the voluntary collective management of resources manifested in the groups that inhabited the jungles offered the option of almost complete withdrawal to those willing to live in this manner.

Groups ranging across the political spectrum joined Communists in their criticism of the relief camp scheme. The Independent Labour Party passed a motion opposing “prison camps for unemployed workers” at a mass meeting that June.¹⁸⁰ The members of Vancouver Branch No. 19 of the Canadian Legion lamented the fact that one of their brethren, who had lived in the city for thirteen years and was “well known and highly respected,” had been ordered to camp.¹⁸¹ The most dedicated opponents of relief camps were, not surprisingly, those who were sent to them. On 13 January 1932, fifty spots for single men opened up in the camps; Cooper later admitted that “of the 161 questioned, only nine accepted, and two of this number changed their

mind.”¹⁸² In the first two weeks of March 1932, 323 men were “warned” but only 157 were reported.¹⁸³

One of the ironies of the camp system lay in the composition of its population. When the Department of Public Works ceased work-based operations in November 1931, they also began removing those considered residents from the camps and returning them to the municipality from whence they came. As a consequence, while many transients sought to avoid being sent to camp, many residents criticized the fact that labour camps were now reserved for itinerants. Public Works Minister R.W. Bruhn warned Premier Tolmie that “to discharge [residents] in favour of transients and others would be political suicide, as well as unfair.”¹⁸⁴ W.S. Simpson of Sweetwater conveyed to Tolmie his “indignation” over the government’s relief policies: “Alien single men getting relief, British single men refused.” This type of favouritism toward transients amounted to little more than “a crying shame” in Simpson’s mind: “Conditions in Russia compared to conditions here, in favour of Russia.”¹⁸⁵ That transients protested in large numbers served only to heighten conflicts over entitlement to relief. Repeatedly, the same complaint was made: residents were denied places in the camps so that transients, including those involved in revolutionary plots against the government, could be housed in comfort.

Initially, the battle for cash relief in the cities as an alternative to the camp system was strongest, not surprisingly, in the cities, directed by unemployed workers who had not yet been sent to the camps. While camp activists did raise the larger questions surrounding unemployment in the pages of the Communist press, most of the initial organizing work focused on improving living conditions. In October 1931, food costs averaged 60.5 cents per man per day for 140 camps, an extremely small amount compared with the Loggers’ Association’s estimate of \$1.50 per day. Overhead costs for the same period came to 26.6 cents per man per day. Since every “inmate” saw 85 cents deducted daily from his pay, the province lost 2.1 cents per man per day on the basic costs of labour reproduction. After work was halted in November, however, the province dramatically reduced its costs to 29.5 cents for food and 11.5 cents for overhead per man per day.¹⁸⁶

Along with reductions to the per unit cost, the Department of Public Works looked to increase its revenue. One resident of a camp near Squamish pointed out the high cost of goods in the government store: a blanket that cost \$2.00 in town was priced at \$5.25 and a \$5.00 rain slicker cost \$8.00.¹⁸⁷ Blankets cost \$10.00 at the camp in the Boston Bar region.¹⁸⁸ One man who had resided for thirty-two days in a camp near Jones Hill complained of having “often done hardest manual labor in mud and rain, with insufficient clothing.” He added, “As wages for those 32 days being out I got a pair of rubbers, a thin blanket, a pair of socks, and two pieces of soap, for which I still owe \$3.45 to the camp bosses.” His message was simple, if graphic: “If it keeps going on like

that we will spend here a very 'soft' winter, after which we will be entirely nude."¹⁸⁹ The Unemployed Association of Prince Rupert launched a protest against the deduction of 85 cents per day for board, and prepared a petition to "run their own cookhouse from beginning to end."¹⁹⁰ The group, most of whose members resided in the Cloyah Bay relief camp, continued to protest the quality of the food, even after changes to the menu: "It is believed that the penitentiary ration would compare favourably."¹⁹¹

In December 1931, workers in a camp on the outskirts of Kamloops formed a council and won improvements in the form of mattresses and tobacco.¹⁹² A worker in the Jones Creek camp enthused, "We now have a camp committee, and are bettering things as we go."¹⁹³ In the Rock Bay camp, a Communist reported that attempts to organize were proceeding slowly because his brethren were "an indifferent lot."¹⁹⁴ Workers in "Prison Camp" No. 4 at Hope initially had difficulty persuading the foreman to secure more and better food, prompting "some of the boys [to] get disgusted and throw a few dishes around the dining room." Within a couple of weeks, an organization had been formed. "The work has been done quietly and efficiently," one activist noted, "so that none of the delegates have been discriminated against."¹⁹⁵ The local committee strategized that it would form the backbone of the NUWA's drive against sweated wages. Democratic to the core, at least in theory, the committee was described by one member as "a Camp Committee, elected by the workers in camp, and responsible to them, whose function it is to mobilise the discontent and give it direction."¹⁹⁶

Despite the establishment of rudimentary organizations, early struggles for better living conditions appear to have been disjointed and scattered, the result of the standard department practice of transferring radicals and troublemakers. This was particularly evident in Allco, where protests over basic amenities often led to those identified as "agitators" being shipped to a remote location in the dead of winter. After one particularly bitter strike, an inmate wrote to the *Unemployed Worker* suggesting that this tactic on the part of camp supervisors would come back to haunt them: "The authorities succeeded temporarily in breaking the workers up and transferring them to other camps. The struggle has been transferred also."¹⁹⁷ While there was some truth to this assessment, relocation meant that workers had to rebuild their committees, a time-consuming process that had to be done covertly for fear of discrimination.

To this point, radicals still saw the struggle against relief camps as best fought outside the camps themselves. In late December 1931, Communist organizations such as the National Unemployed Workers' Association, the Workers' Ex-Servicemen's League, the Workers' Unity League, and the Women's Labour League began planning for a Hunger March to Victoria involving workers from across the province to be held on 4 February 1932.

“The attitude of the workers in the Prison Camps, who are now becoming openly rebellious,” explained one *Unemployed Worker* reporter, “should act as a warning to the authorities. The more economising and suppressive they become, the greater will be the reaction of the workers.”¹⁹⁸ The march was rescheduled for 22 February because the legislature would not be in session on the original date.¹⁹⁹ This move was an incredible stroke of luck for organizers, as it was revealed in early February that the Province planned changes to its policies. R. W. Bruhn announced that camp residents would now have to work 120 hours every month in order to receive their “allowance,” which was to be reduced to \$7.50 per month. In an attempt to quell outrage at the drastic reduction in the value accorded to work on relief projects, Bruhn framed the decision in terms of state paternalism rather than the logic of capital and labour. “It should be clearly understood that we are not paying wages in our road camps,” Bruhn stated. “We are only giving relief to destitute men.”²⁰⁰ Pat Philip explained the system to a bureaucrat with the federal Department of Labour: the province supplied jobless men in the camps with room, board, and \$7.50 per month, and “in return for the foregoing the recipient is expected to perform a ‘work test.’”²⁰¹ While Bruhn represented the \$7.50 as “an allowance for luxuries,” this pittance was insufficient to allow the destitute to purchase clothing, blankets, and other necessities, now considered by the provincial government “luxuries” and thus a matter of choice for the jobless.²⁰² One irate worker in the McBride camp noted the irony: “Signs everywhere advocated cleanliness, but no soap was provided.” The seventy inmates at McBride organized a committee to raise the question of soap and other amenities. After two weeks, they had won free soap and blankets, and improvements to the amount and quality of food.²⁰³

The significant shift in policy to the exchange of 120 hours of work per month for \$7.50 per week prompted men in camps to organize more than ever before against the deterioration of relief. Within several days of notification, three hundred relief workers at Allco elected a committee of eight to present their rejection of the new system and launched a two-day strike, refusing to commence road work.²⁰⁴ As provincial police travelled from camp to camp, at times choosing to evict those who refused to work, some strikers opted to leave of their own accord and seek food and shelter elsewhere. The *Unemployed Worker* reported, “Prison camps have been deserted by the workers . . . in order to expose their hostility to the camp system, and their determination to secure adequate cash relief.”²⁰⁵ Approximately one hundred relief workers building the Hope-Princeton highway left camp and proceeded to Princeton, where they managed to secure direct relief from the municipality. Of “this army of homeless, penniless men,” sixty hopped a freight train to Vancouver, according to the *Nelson News*, while forty remained on “the streets of Princeton, uncertain of their plans.”²⁰⁶ According to a correspondent with the *Vancouver*

Province, the “orderly” nature of the protest could not conceal the threat that lay beneath the surface: “The men have been entirely orderly and there has been no disturbance. Strong sentiments, however, approaching Communism have been voiced. The Red element appears to be strong. A good majority of the men are transients and a considerable proportion foreigners.”²⁰⁷ This description brands radicalism as a “foreign” doctrine, one not related to conditions in the camps but emanating from abroad.

That the announcement of the reduction in relief came in the middle of winter, dramatizing the need for suitable clothes and thus the inadequacy of the \$7.50 “allowance,” helped to extend the strike campaign widely across the camp system. Early one morning at “Relief Camp Canoe,” one worker reported, “The big boss put his head into the bunk-house door and hollered, ‘all right.’ Not a man turned out.” According to the worker, the foreman could not comprehend why “we wouldn’t go out in two feet of snow with a pick and shovel pounding away in frozen ground at the rate of \$7.50 – with soup and two meals a day.”²⁰⁸ Refusing to work for less than the old rate for single transients of \$2.00 per day, the strikers decided to send five delegates on the road to the other “prison camps” at Sorrento and Tappen, both on Shuswap Lake. One radical in Camp No. 4 at Hope, where workers had been on strike against the rate of \$7.50 per month for several weeks, lamented the fact that the official in charge had ordered that “no supplies are to be given from the store.” He also mused that workers expected the camp “to be shut down, and all the radicals fired from Camps 7 and 9.”²⁰⁹ These collective walkouts signalled the beginnings of the great migration of more than one thousand inmates to Vancouver. In less than six months after the inception of the camps, Communists had brought about a mass movement that brought together thousands of camp residents and jobless itinerants in the cities to fight under the same banner.

“Idle All Along the Line”: Mass Need and the Hunger March

Under the menace of its own disintegration, the proletariat cannot permit the transformation of an increasing section of the workers into chronically unemployed paupers, living off the slops of a crumbling society. *The right to employment* is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. . . . This right today is being shorn from him at every step. Against unemployment, “structural” as well as “conjunctural,” the time is ripe to advance along with the slogan of public works.

Leon Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International, 1938*²¹⁰

The six thousand demonstrators congregating in Vancouver during the last week in February 1932 were represented by Wilberforce Cooper, rector of the parish of St. James, who was asked to “interpret the Hunger March to the City Council” in his own words. This group, he gravely noted, “represent[ed] a far larger number of workless and hungry and ill-clad up and down the Province.” The question, ultimately, was one of entitlement. “I believe that their demands are fundamentally right,” intoned Wilberforce Cooper. “Hungry, they look daily (as I do) at vast stores of food. They are conscious (as I am) that, seemingly, large sums have been employed to relieve this situation: yet, so largely, results do not arrive.”²¹¹

The marchers offered proposals for economic reform coupled with demands for political freedom: their banners cried out for the rights of freedom of speech and assembly, a program of emergency works over the winter to provide them with a “stake” to seek employment in spring, and, most of all, unemployment insurance. As the rector explained, “these ‘Marchers’ demand such a revision of the Governmental handling of economic conditions as shall ensure for them and their families the work and the means of living to which, as citizens, they have a right.” Nor did he see a need for police repression of their demonstrations. “I admired the steadiness, orderliness and quiet determination of Monday’s parade,” he noted. The crisis called for the nation’s rulers to abandon the old ways and recognize the revolutionary import of the times:

I believe that radical re-construction of the social order is utterly essential: moreover, where I live in the East end of this city, I am always aware of the gathering momentum of human opinion that is determined upon and making for radical change. They are not out for blood. Most of them are sick of it. They want justice and decent living conditions.²¹²

The Hunger March represented the first concrete and workable attempt at a united front by Vancouver’s Communist organizers during the 1930s. In most respects, this front was purely discursive, in that it existed in various textual appeals but not beyond them; few political groups considered the Communist-led movement as anything but suspect, even if transients themselves were worthy of a substantive measure of sympathy. The party’s sectarianism, too, earned it little trust from other leftists. At the same time, united fronts were few, in large part because Communist groups were almost alone in the field: they exerted a singular domination of the leadership of unemployed transient organizations in the two and a half years following the market crash because the competition was next to nil. Unity was possible only if diversity already existed, and this would not happen until after the Hunger

March, when organizations of poor residents sprang up in large numbers. Another obstacle to unity lay in the parliamentary focus of the city's socialist organizations, which offered few immediate gains for the unemployed and fewer for transients: Vancouver's non-Communist left could not claim to have consistently defended the right of transients to receive the same treatment as residents.

Yet Communists held out hope that collective action could win the bulk of workers to their agenda: this was, in the practice of the day, a united front from below, although one of necessity. To this effect, they organized camp residents and transient homeless men en masse, as well as a sizeable number of residents, around a single overarching demand: the dismantling of the relief industry as it currently existed. Their immediate program, as constructed frequently over the course of these three years, would have remade Vancouver into the type of utopia articulated by Fredric Jameson at the outset of this chapter: steady work at union rates and the rights of assembly, speech, and organization fully enshrined; bed and meal tickets abolished and the missions and refuges emptied; and gatherings held and parades launched without interference, while police constables walked the streets with orders to protect the rights of tenants against those with property. Any radical would likely have welcomed the realization of just one of these demands.

Since early September 1931, Communists had appealed to the public directly on the issue of camps. "This is an attempt to drive us into prison camps, and we appeal for your help," pled one radical.²¹³ On occasion, Communists attempted to provide an ideological framework for the unity of distinct groups in opposition to the economics of the camp system. Like other groups, NUWA organizers hit on the cost argument. One inmate noticed that some of the cabin doors used in the camps were manufactured in Washington. "The patriotic providers of prison camps," he suggested, "appear to be unable even to provide them from 'our' national resources."²¹⁴ "The money has been spent on costly but jerry-built camps, with neither sufficient accommodation for the number of men placed in them, nor the most elementary facilities," argued another radical. "The grafting contractors have been rewarded by their friends, and got away with the swag, and the camps are exposed more clearly than ever as Prison Camps."²¹⁵ In fact, Communists offered up an argument for the unity of most socio-economic groups against the camps. This was perhaps best expressed in "Higher Mathematics for the Unemployed," an article in the 5 March 1932 edition of the *Unemployed Worker*.²¹⁶ The mathematical paradigm was suitable given the centrality of value calculations to every problem.

The first problem outlined in "Higher Mathematics" relied on skills of subtraction. The author explained that according to a recent provincial report (the source for these figures remains unknown), the government spent \$3.5 million on seven thousand transients in October and November,

or approximately \$500 per transient. Yet provincial officials also boasted of limiting the amount spent to maintain transients to twenty-six cents per day, or \$15.60 per month. "Where did the other \$484.40 go?" asked the writer. "Who got it?" Although the numbers were wrong, the deductive rationale was sound: to provide relief, governments contracted with the business community, meaning that a portion of the funds designated for the jobless became profits in the pockets of patronage beneficiaries and others. A similar logic could be found in other problems. The second question noted that the provincial government purchased wood from the Abernethy Lougheed Logging Company at a rate of \$7.50 per cord, wood that "the Allco slaves had to cut gratis. Better wood could have been bought from the small farmers around Allco at less price, and all ready cut," leading to the question at hand: "Why did they buy from Lougheed, and how much did the government save by doing so? Try and work this out by Algebra." The third question related to the government's purchase of meat and fruit, much of it rotten, "from the millionaire wholesalers at a fancy price," while "small farmers" were forced to sell their produce cheaply in order to pay their taxes: "How will the farmers in that locality pay their taxes and continue to exist[?] To work out this problem, use common sense."²¹⁷

In each of these examples, the value that accrued to large companies came at the expense of the jobless and other economic sections of the community. Communists were not alone in offering this type of interpretation of the relief industry; similar equations appeared in the ideas of owners and managers of Vancouver establishments that catered to the transient unemployed. "Higher Mathematics" included a problem rooted in the observation that camps had been established around logging and mining towns, "in localities where hotel keepers and boarding house keepers are fast going broke for lack of customers." We have already seen the lobbying efforts of some of Vancouver's restaurant owners and rooming-house operators to increase the scale of relief and to change its form from tickets to cash. For instance, E.A. Gillingwater, owner of the Whittier Park Café, asked to be put on the approved list of relief restaurants, arguing that he faced bankruptcy "owing to all single men being sent to camps."²¹⁸ Despite the Third Period scorn for all forms of class collaboration, Vancouver's Communists suggested that the camps undermined the economic stability of petty entrepreneurs. "Can anyone tell us why some people are paid as high as \$5,000 per year for helping the small business men to go on the bum faster than they need to?" the mathematician asked. "To work out this problem use the support of the small business men."²¹⁹

The final problem focused on the spending statistics on matters of discipline: "For killing the workers of other countries the soldiers are paid \$1.10 a day, with board and good clothes thrown in. For building roads and highways the workers are paid 27 c per day, rotten food, and compelled to furnish their

own clothes out of the 27 c per. Guess who the employer is?" Communists and other radicals had long argued that despite their reluctance to spend money on the jobless, governments rarely balked at spending more on police forces during moments of crisis attributed to crowds of jobless men. As they put it in another context, "they pay the policeman 150 dollars per month to club and arrest the unemployed workers for refusing to work 20 months for the same amount of money."²²⁰ The author of "Higher Mathematics" used the pedagogical format playfully in order to make a serious argument for a united front, bringing together a wide range of immediate class interests in a single complex equation that both revealed and disproved the value of the economics of the relief camps. That the unity it imagined existed primarily on the page does not diminish its power.

On 22 February, the NUWA organized a parade of several thousand people, after which a delegation led by Arthur "Slim" Evans met with the Relief and Employment Committee.²²¹ While the challenge posed by the movement of necessity involved grand concepts, Slim Evans went into the meeting with a mandate to discuss a detailed list of concrete demands. The first demand extended beyond the reach of municipal and provincial officials: a program of non-contributory unemployment insurance, valued at twenty-five dollars per week and to be given "without discrimination against race, creed or color." In the interim, the City was to hire married men to work four days per week at four dollars for every seven-hour day, with "single unemployed workers, male and female, with dependents to receive the same benefits." The single jobless without dependants would receive three days of work per week at the same rate, or the equivalent in cash relief. The NUWA thus proposed an immediate program that required single transients without dependants to work 84 hours per month for wages of \$48.00, while the provincial government offered \$7.50 and board for 120 hours of labour: the disparity between these two visions of the value of the labour of transients was stark.

Like most political groups in Vancouver, the Hunger Marchers called for public works to relieve unemployment. Yet here, too, Hunger Marchers articulated a singular vision, placing emphasis on the construction of hospitals, nurseries, playgrounds, and parks "to be built in working-class districts." The delegation also wanted the municipality to legislate a ban on evictions for non-payment of rent or taxes, on bank foreclosures, and on the termination of water, gas, or light services by utility companies. Moreover, interest payments on municipal bonds were to be stopped "until the needs of the unemployed are met." Many of the demands made by the Hunger Marchers would have cost little to nothing. The repeal of vagrancy laws and section 98 of the Criminal Code, a ban on deportations for becoming a public charge and for political activities, and the release of "class-war prisoners": each of these would, in fact, have shrunk the state, saving money in the process.²²²

By a vote of three to two, the Relief and Employment Committee agreed to recommend to City Council that an emergency meeting be called in order to consider the Hunger Marchers' platform. They also promised fifteen hundred bed and meal tickets to the demonstrators as a "special concession and not to be repeated after today."²²³ What followed is all too familiar. The City Council meeting began with a report of the Relief and Employment Committee. Then, Aldermen Dean and Miller proposed that "demands 2-12 inclusive, of the Hunger Marchers' Association be not entertained." The motion was carried, after an amendment to consider each demand separately failed.²²⁴ Hundreds of Marchers then left for Victoria and a meeting with members of the provincial cabinet. Once again, the components of their multi-dimensional program were declared obviated by financial exigencies and an uncooperative federal government, if they were considered at all.

Returning to Vancouver, the jobless protesters found a municipal government determined to follow the January 1932 provincial declaration that those who refused the order for camp would be denied relief in the cities. On 1 March, organizers asked to send a delegation to the City Council meeting on 3 March, a day for which they had received permits for a meeting at Victory Square and a parade. They did not receive an answer until the day of the meeting and were turned down, but NUWA organizers chose to continue with the planned parade and meeting. As the crowd began to disperse, a delegation attempted to enter the building to again request a hearing. "This was the excuse for the police, who were held in readiness, to attack the workers with unprecedented brutality," read the account in the *Unemployed Worker*. The result was "the most savage and unprovoked attack upon the workers in the experience of unemployed demonstrations in Vancouver." One radical counted twenty-two mounted constables from the city and fourteen from the RCMP, in addition to regular city constables:

The mounties galloped along the sidewalks, heedless of many women and children. ONE WOMAN WITH A BABY IN HER ARMS WAS RID-DEN DOWN. It is not to be expected that the workers would allow themselves to be beaten up without resistance. While many workers were injured, the police did not escape entirely. Three workers and two policemen were removed to hospital. . . . There was no riot, there was no disturbance, until the police charged into the crowd, and by their open brutality carried out the policy of the City Council in forcing starvation upon the unemployed. The City Council must accept responsibility for the slaughter of Thursday. The sadist methods of Edgett, the ex-mountie, and Murdock, the ex-flatfoot, are the methods approved and endorsed by the Council in dealing with the demands of the thousands of unemployed in the City.²²⁵

Arthur Evans argued that violence could have been avoided: had the council “agreed to meet the committee from the unemployed none of the workers, men, women or children would have been slugged or battered up by the Police.” He added, “Had the communication come from some Prince of Siam or other exalted carrion, the City Council would have fallen over themselves and would have met with them within an hour’s notice and wined and feted puppets of that ilk.” Nor would parades cease: “Workers are not going to peaceably starve to death amidst plenty.”²²⁶

To complete the pattern begun in the winter of 1929, the police riot of 3 March 1932 was officially legitimated. A delegation of Hunger Marchers attempted to be heard at the 5 March meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners. Arthur Evans’s letter was read aloud, as was a letter from a prominent merchant. Then the appointed commissioners, led by W.C. Atherton, former alderman and chair of the Relief and Employment Committee, used procedural methods to frustrate the will of the mayor. According to the minutes, “At this juncture a delegation from the ‘Unemployed Workers’ made application to address the Board, and, upon motion, it was decided unanimously that they be not heard.” Mayor L.D. Taylor, who was chairing the meeting, then “produced a copy of a Communist Party periodical” — the 5 March issue of the *Unemployed Worker*, which contained an the account of the riot as well as “‘Higher Mathematics’ Problems for the Unemployed” — and “was prepared to read from it.”

Objection was taken to this, and it was moved by Coms. Atherton, seconded by Coms. Reid, “that this publication be not read.” The Chairman refused to put the motion before the meeting, and Coms. Delbridge was appointed Chairman for the purpose of putting the motion. Upon the motion be put by Coms. Delbridge it was declared carried.

Further discussion arose on the business for which the meeting was called, upon which Coms. Delbridge moved, “That the discussion being carried on at this meeting is not in the best interests of law enforcement, and that no more of this discussion be heard.”

This resolution was seconded by Coms. De Wolfe, and upon the Chairman refusing to put the motion before the meeting, Coms. Atherton was appointed Chairman. Upon Coms. Atherton putting the motion, it was declared carried.

In connection with the Unemployed situation in the City at the present time, Coms. Atherton stated, although we have to cope with the situation, it is really a Government matter as they have pledged themselves to look after the single men. He therefore moved “That we take the matter up with the Provincial and Federal Governments, asking them to look after these men who are raising disturbances in the City of Vancouver.”

Mayor Taylor “voiced his protest against the manner in which the members had received his views, and declared they were antagonistic to him.” He then turned on Chief Constable C. E. Edgett, accusing him of corruption by “showing partiality in raiding Chinese gambling houses.”²²⁷ There would be no forum for the jobless here.

With the Hunger March riot, Communists, and the single unemployed transients generally, lost the battle for the city. One writer attempted to capture the looming importance of coercion faced by the movement upon returning to the camps:

They have the blood of the workers on their hands. Concessions will be made, as they have been made in the past, piecemeal and by degrees, increasing with the militancy of the workers and the strength of their organisation. At the same time, they will use force, not only to avoid making concessions, but to conceal the fact that they are compelled to make them. They will try to intimidate and divide the workers, along with the provincial and federal governments, and the brute force they command. They cannot succeed.²²⁸

Yet the march did not mark an end to organizing. More than thirty delegates from various camps arranged to meet in Ashcroft in March and forged a “campaign for extending organization and struggle,” while also managing to have food and shelter provided gratis by the municipality.²²⁹ Near the end of March, workers left the camps near Ashcroft and secured five days’ worth of relief from local authorities. Their solidarity held strong, and in a unanimous vote, the group took out membership in the NUWA. Seven workers in Ashcroft were eventually arrested, although a collective protest managed to get the charges dropped. Other activists were moved from Ashcroft to Camp No. 38, near Lytton, and promptly began their strike again, winning a regular tobacco ration and an additional meal every day as concessions, although they continued the fight against the monthly rate of \$7.50.²³⁰

More than a single cause of discontent, “\$7.50” was a symbol with which many grievances were conveyed. Throughout the period from the introduction of the allowance in February 1932 until the province relinquished control of the camps to federal officials in August 1933, many strikes were fought with demands for a higher rate of relief at the forefront. Workers at Camp 43 in Spuzzum, for instance, mobilized against the rate reduction in the spring of 1932, as did inmates at outposts near Beaumont Creek, Cedarvale, Prince Rupert, Stewart, and Usk that summer.²³¹ The largest protest concerning \$7.50 involved approximately seven hundred men who left the camps in May 1932 and made their way to Vancouver, less than three months after the Hunger March. Mayor Johnston of Kamloops took a hard-line approach to the bands of travelling

strikers, “urg[ing] citizens not to give meals or money to men who won’t get into work camps. They have proved themselves undesirables.”²³² Demanding work at the rate of fifty cents per hour, hundreds of camp residents were joined by hundreds more local supporters while a committee met with Vancouver’s Mayor Taylor. Taylor claimed that the responsibility for feeding and housing the protesters now lay with the Province. Faced with mass pressure, and wanting to avoid the escalation of collective action, Public Works Minister Bruhn guaranteed the protesters bed and meal tickets for two days on the condition that they then leave the city, prior to the “mass demonstration before the American Consulate in protest against the impending execution of seven negroes convicted of killing a white woman.”²³³ With aid running out, small groups began the journey back to the camps, hoping that they would not be turned away by foremen holding grudges against radicals. Many still refused to return to the camps; their places were taken by other unemployed men cut off the relief rolls.²³⁴

The immediate failure of the Hunger March marked, in one sense, both the end of the movement begun on the streets in December 1929 and the beginning of a new movement, one with a greater diversity of constituencies and an even sharper conception of the exploitation at the heart of the relief industry. In the years that followed, activists who dedicated themselves to organizing the relief industry would lead many successful campaigns. The Block Committees and Neighbourhood Councils would assert their organizational strength in ongoing battles with the Relief Department. Even the camps saw a measure of self-determination on the part of the unemployed. In the end, the Tolmie government proved incapable of withstanding either the Liberal onslaught at the legislature or the organizing work of Communists within relief camps. Because some camp foremen had received their jobs through patronage networks, many lacked experienced with the requirements of enforcing discipline. Sydney Hutcheson saw these men as ineffectual, suggesting that new foremen were routinely “broken in” by workers who controlled the pace of their work on roads through repeated slowdowns.²³⁵ In other instances, workers and camp bosses co-operated to some extent; while the relationship was sometimes strained, grievances could be expressed and remedied within the framework established on the ground. On occasion, a strike would result in smaller changes, such as with food. Some officials in the Department of National Defence believed that the new regime of discipline in DND-run camps was much needed because it would stamp out workers’ control:

In many cases a committee of the men has taken over the management of the camps, and the camp superintendent has not been able to function. This situation has been allowed to exist by the Provincial authorities and by the Fordham Commission but cannot be condoned when camps are taken over by the Department of National Defence.²³⁶

Within one year of the Hunger March, unemployed committees had asserted de facto control over a sizeable number of provincial relief camps. Along with successes for the Communists, the period after the march witnessed the founding of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, which in Vancouver had its strong roots in the ideological soil of the Socialist Party of Canada. This had a profound effect, reinvigorating both labourist and social-democratic tendencies and realigning the political sphere.

The camp system grew out of a confluence of forces — the dramatic expansion of jungles throughout the province, the mass demonstrations and clashes with police in Vancouver that summer, the increasing financial strains upon the municipalities, and the vision of economic development possessed by officials like Pat Philip. Tolmie's cabinet arrived at a spatial strategy designed to bring about the isolation and containment of unemployed transient men in part because of economic considerations. With labour camps, the province could “take advantage” of the savings incurred on work relief projects to facilitate the infrastructure necessary for capitalist growth. The control enabled by isolation and by working and living patterns similar to those in logging camps would obviate the need to investigate character and reform morals. The solution to the Depression thus lay in involving the unemployed in market relations of an unfree character. Herded into the camps and denied other forms of relief, isolated from the population at large, and paid a substandard wage, camp residents were removed from the cities and from the free market for labour.

With unemployment rates reaching upwards of 50 percent in industries such as logging and construction, many transients refused to see their poverty as pathology. For them, unemployment was not a personal failing but a structural problem emanating from a system organized to produce profit, not to meet human need. To fashion a public program capable of creating the moment of solidarity, however brief, embodied in the Hunger March, these radicals drew from their Marxist epistemology a way of understanding the economic relationships involved in the provision of food and shelter. And their movement met with arguments, voiced by those with political authority, which possessed a similarly economic character. The context of mass need — of the tens of thousands of transients who passed through Vancouver during the early years of the Great Depression — made many into materialists. Especially after the gold standard crisis, city councillors and Communists alike framed the question of state control of the unemployed in terms of finances, institutions, and labour. Given the particular context, it is no surprise that economics determined much of the shape and size of the institutions and practices of state rule. The camps thus serve as evidence of the limits of the capitalist system in crisis — the boundaries formed by market exchanges — while the Hunger Marchers testified to a system that lay beyond these limits.



CONCLUSION

Vancouver, “The Mecca of the Surplus”

Fitter, happier, more productive,
comfortable,
not drinking too much,
regular exercise at the gym
(3 days a week),
getting on better with your associate employee contemporaries,
at ease,
eating well
(no more microwave dinners and saturated fats) . . .
healthier and more productive
a pig in a cage on antibiotics.

“Fitter Happier,” Radiohead, 1997¹

We start from negation, from dissonance. The dissonance can take many shapes. An inarticulate mumble of discontent, tears of frustration, a scream of rage, a confident roar. An unease, a confusion, a longing, a critical vibration.

**John Holloway, *Change the World
Without Taking Power*, 2002²**

Radiohead's "Fitter Happier," a post-Fordist equivalent of Edvard Munch's modernist *The Scream*, addresses the experience of alienation, the sense that all avenues of escape are closing in. Frederick Winslow Taylor's dictum about the "one right way" to organize the production of goods was taken up by Henry Ford and extended into other realms: consumption patterns, living arrangements, and American values. With Ford, the control verged on total: he was employer and investigator, efficiency expert, defender of the family, and visionary of the "American Plan." Add to this mix a hitherto unrecognized explosion of state formation and public-private regulatory programs in the 1930s, and it is all too easy to argue that North America became home to the "one right way" for everyone — an ultimately exploitive prescription for worker productivity, now cunningly disguised as personal fulfilment.

To the many symbols of Fordist practice in North America, we can add at least two drawn from British Columbia's past, circa 1931: labour camps and bed and meal tickets. Neither of these was unique to this time and place, yet in this context, each became a powerful mass instrument of Fordism via the provision of relief to transient single men. This particular group of jobless people — archetypes of the Great Depression — found themselves fed and clothed, sheltered, and worked literally en masse: files, tickets, and camps enabled and facilitated this process. The economic crisis occasioned state intervention hitherto unseen in Canada save in times of war. As a microcosm of this national and international trend, Vancouver's Relief Department became a hotbed of state formation. In this case, we have compelling evidence for the importance of modern business practices and valuations to these fundamental changes. Also compelling is the evidence of the extent to which this mass phenomenon was experienced as a new form of economic exploitation by substantial numbers of single male transients. Some have argued that state provision of relief was, by definition, humanitarian in nature.³ In Gramscian terms, this notion has the feel of common sense. To give the homeless a place to sleep, however temporary, could be nothing if not a charitable act. As such, relief is saturated with the associations of use value: the provision of goods and services is determined by human need rather than market mechanisms. Yet the archives suggest a different portrait, one of exchange value and of exploitation. In the magisterial 1981 work *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, G.E.M. de Ste. Croix argues for the utility of Marxism to the study of worlds outside of the classical labour relation of modern capitalist development. Class, de Ste. Croix persuasively explains, is best understood as "the collective social expression of the fact of exploitation": "The most significant distinguishing feature of each social formation, each 'mode of production,' is not so much *how the bulk of the labour of production is done*, as *how the dominant propertied classes, controlling the conditions of production, ensure the extraction of the surplus* which makes their own leisured existence possible."⁴

This notion brings into relief the exploitive nature of the exchange values generated through the unequal and unfree social relations of relief provision in Vancouver. De Ste. Croix's work also reminds us that it is in the detail that we find the "fact of exploitation" and the fact of its absence.

Needless to say, there were none of Radiohead's "associate employee contemporaries" in Hobohemia. While far from harmonious, jungle life was predicated upon mutuality and reciprocity in the distribution of food, drink, cigarettes, and other goods. Extant evidence suggests that tramps in the jungles sustained each other through begging, foraging, stealing, and collecting relief from government and private charities. The resources thus attained were distributed among their fellow tramps in the recognition that, perhaps tomorrow, someone else would rustle up food and other necessities. Jungle life does not appear to have been labour intensive. The monetary value of these commodities was of little relevance, and the exchange was usually conducted face to face, without recourse to a medium such as money. The organization of the means of life was thus immediate and relatively consensual, a direct contrast not only to the ethos of capital accumulation but also to the restrictive regulations of state and private charities.

While the obvious importance of the decade's revolutionary struggles elsewhere around the globe – from the City of Vancouver to Vancouver Island, taking the long route – would normally betoken a humble, modest stance (if not one of skepticism or outright disbelief) about the significance of these events, we can nonetheless appreciate the very real rupture founded in the rubble of the world economy at this particular juncture of time and space. In Hobohemia, thousands of itinerant men from around the world changed that world without taking power, without living under a state, without institutionalized obstacles to residency – indeed, without formalized relations of authority. In fact, Hobohemia was a homeland without juridical borders and without a fixed location: it was as mobile as the men whose labour created it. Nor could any government that existed in Canada at that time stamp out this island archipelago; the non-contiguous character of this homeland was a physical manifestation of "the art of not being governed," as James Scott argues, a tactic of state evasion and state prevention.⁵ Yet this archipelagic utopia could exist all too easily because of its parasitic dependence on those who created value.

When tramps left Hobohemia and made their way to the cities, they left behind this way of struggle and were often obliged to feel the full effect of the transient label.⁶ For thousands of single men, being a transient meant becoming a client of the relief industry, a complex and ever-expanding set of social relations. Each introduction to the relief industry began with a story about one's life. This information was translated by investigators and visitors into knowledge designed to be functional for clerks: that is, to allow them

to judge the worthiness of the applicant and the type of relief they should receive. This system of knowledge production translated the poor into faceless textual objects, stripped of all traces of individuality, in order to rationalize and standardize treatment, the nature of which was determined by a small clique consisting of the relief officer, powerful politicians on the Relief and Employment Committee, and top-level financial bureaucrats. Mass need in Vancouver meant mass administration, the reliance on the management methods of modern businesses. This new managerial style was designed to assuage the financial concerns of governments while also providing a sound basis for the investigatory and disciplinary aspects of relief provision. The personalized relations of road life gave way to the alienation of abstraction.

The reorganization of the workplace in the Relief Department was extensive: a new card-control system was employed; the tasks of investigation and adjudication were separated, with new procedures formalized for both; and dozens of new staff members were hired and trained. “Special Instructions to Visitors” embodied this process of rationalization. Every step in the investigation process was itemized, complete with written instructions, in order to ensure both economy in expenditure and efficiency of investigation. The Relief Department staff – those who laboured so that the poor could be fed, clothed, and housed – had their own experience with scientific management. Visitors found themselves singled out for efficiency tests: speed-ups of the investigation process were accompanied by a network of office spies detailed to collect information about co-workers for the “Crucifixion Machine,” a host of punitive sanctions for those judged inefficient. The jobless were objectified: their life story was fragmented into pieces of administrative knowledge, each with a market value in bed and meal tickets. Nor was the objectification process confined to the Relief Department. Hundreds of Vancouver residents put pen to paper in order to convey the threat posed by transients and the need to subject them to stringent forms of discipline – economic, political, and moral. The value of transients, in this sense, lay in their functionality as evidence of the need for new policies of coercion and control.

One alderman on the Kamloops City Council labelled Vancouver the “mecca of the surplus,” an appellation with several relevant meanings.⁷ Not only were the jobless “surplus” workers, those not currently needed by Canada’s industrialists, but they also embodied the term: with each bed and meal ticket in civic cafés and rooming houses, with each order for lumber or mattresses for the relief camps lay the possibility of profit. That big government is big business is not news. As we watch the American empire expand anew, the blurring of public and private in the highest realms of the military-industrial-entertainment complex is so extensive that it usually seems impossible to imagine life in North America ending up any other way. Stories about the power of firms like Bechtel, Halliburton, and Lockheed Martin

encourage us to revel in the common-sense obliteration of the distinction between state and private enterprise. As one commentator put it, men like Dick Cheney should be thanked: their naked accumulation of power “finally show[ed] us how to play the game!”⁸ The economics of relief in Depression-era British Columbia was considerably more modest, yet its character was much the same. The relief industry was shot through with capitalist social relations.

Canadians will never know exact figures about the amount of government appropriations for relief that ended up not in the bellies or on the backs of the poor but in the pockets of the not-poor. Because most of the money that governments spent on the relief industry had to be borrowed from financial institutions, interest charges shaved off a percentage of departmental funds. In August 1932, city councillors Dean and Deptford, the latter a member of the Independent Labour Party, criticized the policies of financial institutions in regard to relief loans. The Dominion government advanced funds to Canadian chartered banks at 3 percent interest to guarantee the issuance of municipal securities. Banks, however, loaned the municipalities money at rates of between 5.5 and 7 percent.⁹ In March 1933, a majority of Vancouver City Council carried a motion that the federal government “collect as a special tax for Unemployment Relief purposes” the interest charges on government bonds in excess of 2 percent.¹⁰ To be sure, the amount of interest paid was insignificant when compared to the portion of relief budgets consumed by administrative costs, 20.5 percent (or just over \$500,000) in Vancouver in the years 1929 to 1932. Much of this spending was necessitated by the use of instruments of control. The processing of bed and meal tickets involved a host of workers in a complex set of workplace procedures that would be superfluous under a cash-based system. A portion of each relief dollar was also absorbed by private industry, which contracted with the municipal and provincial governments to provide goods and services to those on relief. Farmers produced, truckers transported, and merchants sold food. Waitresses and cooks received wages (and waitress union leaders, their dues), and some owners made profits. In short, the forms of relief provision – wholly political in character as elements of state rule – allowed for jobless transients to be exploited economically.

Within these confines, the tramp’s freedom to consume was largely abrogated through the use of bed and meal tickets as well as through private charities like the Emergency Refuge and the Central City Mission. Each form of relief provision freely linked governments with private corporations. Yet these contractual agreements stipulated processes that limited the relief recipient’s choices. They received tickets allotted to restaurants of the Relief and Employment Committee’s choosing, and many were detailed to the private missions each night. They received no money, which meant they had to depend upon begging and private charities for clothing and other items. Archival evidence, much of it produced by jobless activists, suggests that the most hated feature

of the relief industry in Vancouver was its missions. While Communists and others objected to the investigatory procedures and disciplinary atmosphere in those institutions, entrepreneurs challenged what they saw as the preferential treatment accorded to private charities. Exempted from the regular licence fees and taxes, missions were also guaranteed a constant stream of clients. Restaurant owners and rooming-house operators organized a trade association in order to sound the alarm against “unfair competition” and raise the banner of freedom of choice for the unemployed.

In September 1931, just as Vancouver’s jungles were razed to the ground, the provincial government of Premier Simon Fraser Tolmie opened labour camps for unemployed and destitute men. Over thirteen thousand passed through a camp in the span of two months, until a financial crisis necessitated the halting of all works projects and the dismissal of eight thousand provincial residents. Thousands more would make a camp their temporary home over the course of the next year. The shared vision of Premier Tolmie, Minister of Public Works R.W. Bruhn, and Chief Engineer Pat Philip called for the utilization of unemployed labour to develop the transportation infrastructure: what could be more Fordist than the politics of roads? The camp system also spoke to the need for a spatial strategy, one that considered the containment of jobless transients and their controlled dispersal to work camps as a necessity to restore order and rescue the municipalities. Work relief produced one of the decade’s central contradictions: the unemployed worker who worked for a living, but for relief rather than wages. While the efficiency of camp workers was less than that expected of the average wage worker, so too was their pay. Just as administrative measures assumed their essential dishonesty and meal and bed tickets sought to control their consumption, so too were jobless transients unfree in their work.

As a “mecca of the surplus,” Vancouver was home to a radical movement of considerable size and import. The Communist challenge to the relief industry does not fit well into the dichotomous construct of the Victorian notion of poverty as a failing of individual character and the modern, Fordist understanding of poverty as a structural phenomenon. Beginning in the winter of 1929–30, jobless transients piled into Communist-run groups by the hundreds. Thousands more would take part in demonstrations over the course of the ensuing three years. The Relief Department was a frequent target of unemployed protesters, largely because each policy shift seemed to signify a worsening of treatment. James Overton persuasively argues in his study of 1930s Newfoundland that financial crises often resulted in government policies that increased distress and stimulated protest rather than securing social order.¹¹

This was also the case in Vancouver and throughout the province, especially with the relief camps constructed by all three levels of government.

As their primary agitational demand, Communists fought for the union wage as the minimum standard of living for all workers. Often, these radicals offered to work for these wages, but they also believed that everyone, whether on work relief projects or not, was entitled to the same minimum. These Marxists also offered the most consistent argument for the equality of resident and transient, and rejected most of the gendered, racialized, and ethnic categories employed by public and private charity organizations. The only substantive difference in treatment in the Communist-run relief industry is that of breadwinner status, although here too, Communists operated with a broad definition that included female household heads and single men and women who supported family members. Communists also wanted cash, a demand shared by many unemployed people. Cash meant freedom to engage with the market on equal terms with the employed consumer. Finally, they organized against work relief performed at substandard rates, crystallizing their campaign in the Hunger March of February 1932. Throughout this period, their movement fought street battles with the forces of law and order. Their continuous agitation for the rights of freedom of speech and assembly, and the abrogation of laws that allowed for the deportation of radicals and those on relief signalled their recognition that the battle for the union standard of living would fail without thousands of workers on the street in support of the movement.

This book owes much to critical histories of Fordism, the dominant social formation in twentieth-century North America. Most of all, this project took its form from the nature of the archival evidence. The lives of jobless transients in Vancouver were shaped by the specific forms of relief provision — we know this because of the thousands of documents that express this conflictual process. In other words, we can better understand the economic aspects of state formation during the Great Depression because thousands of people — jobless transients and administrators, politicians and citizens — have already taken the time to analyze them for us. We need not blindly follow their directions, enshrining their words in the form of hagiography. But in order to assess the value of these voices, we must first hear them.

NOTES

Archives frequently cited are identified by the following abbreviations:

BCA	British Columbia Archives
BPC	VCA, Vancouver Board of Police Commissioners Papers
CC	VCA, City Clerks' Papers
CCM	VCA, Add. Mss. 576, Central City Mission
FS	VCA, Financial Services Paper
JWJ	BCA, J. W. Jones Papers
MO	VCA, Papers of the Mayor's Office
PW	City of Victoria Archives, CRS 28, Public Works Committee Records
SFT	UBCSC, Premier Simon Fraser Tolmie Papers
TDP	BCA, Add. Mss. 3, Thomas Dufferin Pattullo Papers
UBCSC	University of British Columbia, Special Collections
UW2	VCA, Add. Mss. 849-2, United Way of the Lower Mainland Papers
VCA	Vancouver City Archives
VPD	VCA, Vancouver Police Department Papers
VSS	VCA, Vancouver Social Service Department Papers

Preface

- 1 Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life*, 199–200. I have relied on Gerhard Richter's translation of the title. See *Thought-Images: Frankfurt School Writers' Reflections from Damaged Life*.
- 2 On the different ways of seeing the homeless, the radical Marxist professor Bill Livant has quipped: "A liberal sees a beggar on the street and says the system is not working. A Marxist sees a beggar on the street and says it is." Quoted in Bertell Ollman, *How 2 Take an Exam . . . And Remake the World*, 95.
- 3 Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 199–200. Invaluable works on Adorno and the utopian include Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic*; Shane Gunster, *Capitalizing on Culture: Critical Theory for Cultural Studies*; and David Jenemann, *Adorno in America*.
- 4 Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 22.

Introduction: From Fordlandia to Hobomia

- 1 Charles Baudelaire, quoted in Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 445.
- 2 Henry Ford and Samuel Crowther, *Today and Tomorrow*, 224.
- 3 Benjamin B. Lovett, "Good Morning": *Music, Calls, and Directions for Old-Time Dancing as Revived by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford*, 3.
- 4 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 125–26.
- 5 David Montgomery, "White Shirts and Superior Intelligence."
- 6 John Dos Passos, *The Big Money*, 48. Dos Passos wrote *The Big Money* in 1936 as the third novel of a trilogy. The three books were published together in 1938 by Harcourt Brace under the title *U.S.A.*
- 7 *Modern Times*, directed by Charlie Chaplin (1936); David Gartman, "1950s' Fins and the Triumph of Fantastic Styling"; Dan Graham, "Homes for America," *Arts Magazine*, December 1966–January 1967. Thanks to Mike Bodnar for bringing Graham to my attention.
- 8 See Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and Modernization of Germany*, and Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*.
- 9 Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City*.
- 10 On totality, see Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, 17–102. This concept, as Jameson uses it, bears no resemblance to the postmodern critique of Marxism's supposed "totalization" of history.
- 11 August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*, 3–33.
- 12 Grandin, *Fordlandia*, 356.
- 13 On self-undermining utopias, see Karla Schultz's fascinating article, "Utopias from Hell: Brecht's *Mahagonny* and Adorno's *Treasure of Indian Joe*."
- 14 Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History."
- 15 Ruth Roach Pierson, "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Canadian Women's History," 89–93. I will be forever grateful to Nancy Forestell for bringing this to my attention.
- 16 The self-congratulatory tone of much of this historiography is observed, for example, in Bryan D. Palmer, "Of Silences and Trenches: A Dissident View of Granatstein's Meaning."
- 17 F.R. Ankersmit, "Historiography and Postmodernism."
- 18 I have poached the concept of "Theoryworld" from Susan Buck-Morss. See *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left*, 8.
- 19 Todd DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*, 69–70.
- 20 Frank Tobias Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880–1930*, 176 (my emphasis).
- 21 There are also parallels with the alternative unionism and unemployed activism of the decade. The American historiography on this subject is extensive; excellent places to start are Staughton Lynd, ed., "*We Are All Leaders*": *The Alternative Unionism of the Early 1930s*, and James J. Lorence, *Organizing the Unemployed: Community and Union Activists in the Industrial Heartland*.
- 22 My understanding of primitive accumulation, both under capitalism and in the hobo jungles, has been greatly influenced by Stephen Hymer, "Robinson Crusoe and the Secret of Primitive Accumulation," and Bryan D. Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860–1914*, 3–18, and "Social Formation and Class Formation in North America, 1800–1900."
- 23 Connell's critique of Althusserian and post-Althusserian practice and of the various forms of reproduction theory, written in the late 1970s and 1980s, form the background for many of his influential socialist feminist arguments in *Gender and Power* (1987). Given E.P. Thompson's similar positions on structuralism as well as

his suggestive comments on women's history during the same period, I believe that this is one of the more significant "missed articulations" (the term is Douglas Kellner's) of the twentieth century, and we are all the poorer for it. Despite this demonstrable fact, we will be closer to understanding Thompson's oeuvre once we connect it to Connell. See R. W. Connell, *Which Way Is Up? Essays on Class, Sex and Culture*, and *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*.

- 24 Let me here both apologize and express my gratitude to Andy Parnaby, my housemate for three years in Kingston and Vancouver, who listened to me talk of Kipnis endlessly. More to the point, his work on the 1930s began before and greatly influences mine. See Andrew Parnaby, "What's Law Got to Do with It? The IWA and the Politics of State Power in British Columbia, 1935–1939"; Andrew Parnaby and Andrew Neufeld, *The IWA in Canada: The Life and Times of an Industrial Union*; Andrew Parnaby, *Citizen Docker: Making a New Deal on the Vancouver Waterfront, 1919–1939*; and his ongoing research on working-class comestible consumption in Blubber Bay.
- 25 See, for example, Dennis Guest, *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada*, and John Taylor, "Relief from Relief": The Cities' Answer to Depression Dependency."
- 26 It is important to note that Keynesian spending was always limited in the post-war era. See Doug Owram, *The Government Generation, Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900–1945*, and Robert Campbell, *Grand Illusions: The Politics of the Keynesian Experience in Canada, 1945–1975*.
- 27 The classic work on the business community as an obstacle to genuine reform is Alvin Finkel, *Business and Social Reform in the Thirties*. On the liberal reform impulse in British Columbia during the 1930s, see Robin Fisher, *Duff Pattullo of British Columbia*, and Margaret A. Ormsby, "T. Dufferin Pattullo and the Little New Deal."
- 28 Denyse Baillargeon, *Making Do: Women, Family and Home in Montreal During the Great Depression*; Margaret Hobbs, "Rethinking Antifeminism in the 1930s: Gender Crisis or Workplace Justice? A Response to Alice Kessler-Harris" and "Equality and Difference: Feminism and the Defence of Women Workers During the Great Depression"; Margaret Little, "No Car, No Radio, No Liquor Permit": *The Moral Regulation of Single Mothers in Ontario, 1920–1997*; Ruth Roach Pierson, "Gender and the Unemployment Insurance Debates in Canada, 1934–1940."
- 29 Allan Irving, "The Development of a Provincial Welfare State: British Columbia, 1900–1939"; Rennie Warburton, "Conclusion: Capitalist Social Relations in British Columbia"; Andrew Yarmie, "The State and Employers' Associations in British Columbia: 1900–1932." The concept of the state playing a "decommodified role" is that of Claus Offe in his *Contradictions of the Welfare State*.
- 30 The obvious exception is making *Do: Women, Family and Social Reform in the Thirties*.
- 31 One important exception to this is Marcus Klee's work on "relief capitalism." Some industries, he persuasively argues, viewed municipal and provincial spending as a subsidy, allowing them to lower wages. Government relief, in this way, helped to foster sweated labour. Marcus Klee, "Fighting the Sweatshop in Depression Ontario: Capital, Labour and the Industrial Standards Act."
- 32 Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 10. In my reading of Jameson, I am under the powerful influence of Clint Burnham, *The Jamesonian Unconscious: The Aesthetics of Marxist Theory*. Relatedly, the retrospective illusion of the metacommentary thus has the advantage of allowing us to measure the yield and density of a properly Marxist interpretive act against those of other interpretive methods – the ethical, the psychoanalytic, the myth-critical, the semiotic, the structural, and the theological – against which it must compete in the "pluralism" of the intellectual marketplace today. I will here argue the priority of a Marxian interpretive framework in terms of semantic richness. Marxism cannot today be defended as a mere substitute for other methods, which would then be triumphalistically consigned to the ascan of

history; the authority of such methods springs from their faithful consonance with this or that local law of a fragmented social life, this or that subsystem of a complex and mushrooming cultural superstructure. In the spirit of a more authentic dialectical tradition, Marxism is here conceived as that “untranscendable horizon” that subsumes such apparently antagonistic or incommensurable critical operations, assigning them an undoubted sectoral validity within itself, and thus at once cancelling and preserving them. Ben Reitman, quoted in Nels Anderson, *The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man*, 87.

- 33 St. John Tucker, quoted in Anderson, *The Hobo*, 87.
- 34 Nicholas Klein, quoted in Tim Cresswell, *The Tramp in America*, 49.
- 35 Anderson classifies homeless men into five types: “(a) the seasonal worker, (b) the transient or occasional worker or hobo, (c) the tramp who ‘dreams and wanders’ and works only when it is convenient, (d) the bum who seldom wanders and seldom works, and (e) the home guard who lives in Hobohemia and does not leave town.” Anderson, *The Hobo*, 63.
- 36 Andrew Roddan, for example, cited Anderson’s *The Hobo* in *God in the Jungles* (1931), republished as *Vancouver’s Hoboes*, 25.
- 37 It is commonplace knowledge that North American and British women, such as Boxcar Bertha, periodically passed themselves off as men on the road and in the jungles, to mask their identities and as a strategy to avoid danger. Unfortunately, I have located no evidence of this phenomenon in this context. For an excellent discussion, see Cresswell, *Tramp in America*, 97–109.
- 38 In this context, a male household head whose family did not reside in Vancouver could apply for and receive aid in that jurisdiction and then hit the road to scrounge for himself, allowing the often inadequate relief allotment to be distributed among the remaining family members. Stanley Hutcheson, in *Depression Stories*, claims that such a practice extended to those preparing to head to war in the late 1930s, citing cases in which men and women married so as to allow the woman access to the man’s income.
- 39 See especially Cresswell, *Tramp in America*.
- 40 DePastino, *Citizen Hobo*; Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts*; Cecilia Danysk, *Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880–1930*.
- 41 Todd McCallum, “‘Not a Sex Question’? The One Big Union and the Politics of Radical Manhood” and “The Strange Tale of Tom Cassidy and Catherine Rose, or, Free Love, Heterosexuality and the One Big Union.”
- 42 My interpretation is influenced by Paul Jackson’s unpublished doctoral research on the relief camps, conducted at the same time that I was researching chapter 5. He is not implicated in my conclusions, of course. A brief glimpse of Jackson’s research can be obtained in *One of the Boys: Homosexuality in the Military During World War II*, 156–57.
- 43 As far as I can tell, the first scholar to make such an argument is Marion Elizabeth Lane, “Unemployment During the Depression: The Problems of the Single Unemployed Transient in British Columbia, 1930–1938.” See also, in chronological order, Bettina Bradbury, “The Road to Receivership: Unemployment and Relief in Burnaby, North Vancouver City and District and West Vancouver, 1929–1933”; John Douglas Belshaw, “The Administration of Relief to the Unemployed in Vancouver During the Great Depression”; and Theresa Healy, “‘Trouble Enough’: Gender, Social Policy, and the Politics of Place in Vancouver and Saskatoon, 1929–1939.”
- 44 Lara Campbell argues,
- It is images of men and of male unemployment that often frame the popular imagination of the “dirty thirties”: men standing in relief lines or in soup kitchens, men protesting on the streets, and men “riding the

rods” in search of work. But although such images symbolize the general hardship of the era, they hide and subsume gender conflicts, the crucial role of women’s domestic labour, and how the changing definitions of manhood shaped the experiences of men over time. *Respectable Citizens: Gender, Family, and Unemployment in Ontario’s Great Depression*, 57.

I disagree. While this description certainly applies to numerous individual accounts, on balance the research agenda of the past thirty years has focused more on family unemployment, and on familial relations more generally, than it has on the single homeless man – as it should – and this is true of Canada in addition to the vast American literature. The transient certainly remains an archetype, but cannot be considered the only one. As well, I do not assume that projects such as mine which do little to address gender conflicts automatically “hide and subsume” them.

45 Allen Seager, “Introduction,” 15.

46 Paul Phillips, *No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in BC*, 101.

47 James Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914–1941*, 4.

48 Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, 16.

49 Boxcar Bertha, as told to Ben L. Reitman, *Sister of the Road: The Autobiography of Boxcar Bertha*.

50 Starting in 1931, applicants had to swear the following oath:

I [name] of [address] in the City of Vancouver, Province of British Columbia, do solemnly declare that my reason of application for registration under the scheme of the Provincial Government of British Columbia for the registration of the unemployed, is, that I am destitute, being without the necessities of life, and that neither I nor any of my dependents have any financial resources whatsoever. CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H. W. Cooper to Chairman, Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.

51 In one sense, the relief industry bore similarities to processes associated with advertising. According to Sut Jhally, consumers of television and other media work while watching the obligatory advertising. This work by the watcher is, in fact, what is sold by advertising agencies and media corporations to the owners of industries that produce the goods and services to be advertised. Like the spectator, the relief recipient had to offer something in exchange. Sut Jhally, “Probing the Blindspot: The Audience Commodity,” and *The Codes of Advertising: Fetishism and the Political Economy of Meaning in the Consumer Society*.

52 For liberal scholarship on these processes, see David Monod, *Store Wars: Shopkeepers and the Culture of Mass Marketing, 1890–1939*, and Daniel Robinson, *The Measure of Democracy: Polling, Market Research, and Public Life, 1930–1945*. In this area, as in others, materialist analyses are the best in the field: in addition to Parnaby, *Citizen Docker*, and for a sampling of new Canadian accounts, see Donica Belisle, “A Labour Force for the Consumer Century: Commodification in Canada’s Largest Department Stores, 1890–1940”; Cynthia Comacchio, “Mechanomorphosis: Science, Management, and ‘Human Machinery’ in Industrial Canada, 1900–1945”; and James Wishart, “Class Difference and the Reformation of Ontario Public Hospitals, 1900–1935: ‘Make Every Effort to Satisfy the Tastes of the Well-to-Do.’” Frederick Winslow Taylor himself claimed that “the same principles can be applied with equal force to all social activities: to the management of our homes; the management of our farms; the management of the business of our tradesmen, large and small; of our churches, our philanthropic institutions, our universities, and our governmental departments.” Quoted in Robert Kanigel, *The One Best Way: Frederick Winslow Taylor and the Enigma of Efficiency*, 438–39.

- 53 For the intellectual context of the rationalization of charity in Canada, I have relied on Marlene Shore, *The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, the Chicago School, and the Origins of Social Research in Canada*.
- 54 Graham S. Lowe, *Women in the Administrative Revolution: The Feminization of Clerical Work*.
- 55 See Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada*.
- 56 *Unemployed Worker*, 15 November 1930.
- 57 Karl Marx, "The Secret of Primitive Accumulation."
- 58 Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, 873.
- 59 Bill Waiser's *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946* contains much valuable detail about the administrative structures maintained by government spending on unemployment relief and internment projects.
- 60 See, for instance, Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia*.
- 61 Siegfried Kracauer, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 27-28. On the form of Kracauer's and Adorno's writing in this period and its relationship to the unsayable, see Gerhard Richter, *Thought-Images: Frankfurt School Writers' Reflections from Damaged Life*.
- 63 On "stylistic obsolescence" as one of the pillars of Fordism, see Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, esp. 117-63.
- 64 Kracauer, *Salaried Masses*, 72.
- 65 Walter Benjamin, "An Outsider Makes His Mark."
- 66 Eric Lott, "Perfect Is Dead: Karen Carpenter, Theodor Adorno, and the Radio; Or, If Hooks Could Kill"; David Jenemann, *Adorno in America*. We owe much to Jenemann for his excellent work in situating Adorno wholly within the American culture industry.
- 67 Jameson began with "T.W. Adorno; or, Historical Tropes," which opens as follows:
To whom can one present a writer whose principal subject is the disappearance of the public? What serious justifications can be made for an attempt to summarize, simplify, make more widely accessible a work which insists relentlessly on the need for modern art and thought to be difficult, to guard their truth and freshness by the austere demands they make on the powers of concentration of their participants, by their refusal of all habitual response in their attempt to reawaken numb thinking and deadened perception to a raw, wholly unfamiliar real world?
- 68 Ariel Dorfman, "The Infantilization of the Adult Reader."
- 69 Adorno, "Auction," in *Minima Moralia, Reflections from a Damaged Life*, 119-20. Peter Dews's *Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory* (1987) remains the best comparative analysis of Adorno and Foucault, as well as of other figures such as Jürgen Habermas and Axel Honneth; see especially 176-242.
- 70 "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism," 440, in Foucault, *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 433-58.
- 71 Quoted in "Interview with Michel Foucault," 273, in Foucault, *Michel Foucault: Power, 239-97*.
- 72 *Ibid.*, 274.
- 73 See "Interview with Michel Foucault," 276-77, in which Foucault claims that Frankfurt School philosophers did not conduct historical research: "They are eaters of history as others have prepared it. They consume it preprocessed."
- 74 Neil Brenner, "Foucault's New Functionalism"; David Garland, *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory*, 131-75; Kate Soper, "Productive Contradictions"; Pieter Spierenburg, "Punishment, Power and History: Foucault and Elias"; Paul Paolucci, "Classical Sociological Theory and Modern Social Problems: Marx's Concept of the Camera Obscura and the Fallacy of Individualistic Reductionism," "Foucault's

- Encounter with Marxism,” and “The Scientific Method and the Dialectical Method.”
- 75 E.P. Thompson, “The Poverty of Theory: Or an Orrery of Errors,” 193 (emphasis in original).
- 76 Governmentality is Foucault’s term for the modalities of administration and control through which modern European states govern their populations at many levels, including the political, the legal, as well as the biological (through the provision of health care), and penal realms.
- 77 Rationalization is a complex modernization process that refers to a tendency of the corporate or managerial class in contemporary capitalist societies to reshape traditions, values, and human emotions/behaviours through the employment of rational, predictable, and efficient planning methods. The result of this process is a profound alteration in the patterns of collective and individual life.

Chapter 1: A Strike, a Conference, and a Riot

- 1 Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life*, 42 (emphasis in original).
- 2 “Vancouver Millionaire Pays Monthly Allowance to Knight of the Road,” *Vancouver Daily Province*, 29 December 1929.
- 3 Larry Glassford provides an account of McRae’s involvement in both the 1927 Tory convention that anointed Bennett as party leader and the 1930 federal election campaign. See *Reaction and Reform: The Politics of the Conservative Party Under R. B. Bennett, 1927–1938*, esp. 21, 25, 40–41, 72–97. On McRae and the Provincial Party, see Ian Donald Parker, “Simon Fraser Tolmie and the British Columbia Conservative Party, 1916–1933.”
- 4 “Vancouver Millionaire.”
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” 389–400. “Moment of danger” is from Thesis VI; “brush . . . against the grain” is from Thesis VII.
- 7 These events have been briefly examined in Patricia Roy, “The Mecca of the Unemployed,’ 1907–1929,” and Lita-Rose Betcherman, *The Little Band: The Clashes Between the Communists and the Canadian Establishment, 1928–1932*, 89–95. The economic collapse and its immediate effects in British Columbia are recounted in Allan Irving, “The Development of a Provincial Welfare State: British Columbia, 1900–1939”; James Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914–1941*; and Veronica Strong-Boag et al., *Working Lives: Vancouver, 1886–1986*, esp. 177–81.
- 8 “State of emergency” is from Thesis VIII of Benjamin’s “On the Concept of History.”
- 9 I have not found any other examples of municipal endorsements of non-contributory unemployment insurance, but according to Alvin Finkel (pers. comm.) the election of Communists to City Council in Blairmore, Alberta, later in the 1930s may have resulted in such.
- 10 Margaret A. Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History*, 438–39.
- 11 The classic work unaffiliated foreign lumpenproletariat in Canada is Donald Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896–1932*.
- 12 Paul Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media*, 60.
- 13 “Vancouver Must Look Ahead,” *Vancouver Sun*, 29 September 1929.
- 14 *Vancouver Sun*, 4 December 1929.
- 15 On these aspects of Fordism, the best detailed critical account remains Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908–1921*.
- 16 *Vancouver Sun*, 30 October 1929.

- 17 *Vancouver Sun*, 21 November 1929.
- 18 *Vancouver Sun*, 30 October 1929.
- 19 *Vancouver Sun*, 28 November 1929.
- 20 “New Prosperity Era Here,” *Vancouver Sun*, 21 December 1929.
- 21 *Vancouver Sun*, 31 December 1929.
- 22 *Vancouver Sun*, 2 November 1929.
- 23 *Vancouver Sun*, 29 October 1929.
- 24 CC, series 20, box 14-F-5, file 4, G.D. Ireland to A.J. Pilkington, 30 October 1929.
- 25 CC, series 20, box 15-A-1, file 1, Report of the Special Committee on the Finances of the Relief Department, 7 November 1929.
- 26 CC, series 20, box 14-F-1, file 10, W. Page to City Council, 28 November 1929.
- 27 CC, series 20, box 14-F-3, file 14, Percy Bengough to City Council, 16 February 1929.
- 28 *Vancouver Sun*, 14 November 1929.
- 29 *Vancouver Sun*, 15 November 1929.
- 30 *Vancouver Sun*, 26 November 1929.
- 31 “The Problem of Unemployment,” *ILP News*, February 1930.
- 32 CC, series 20, box 15-A-5, file 7, G.D. Ireland to A.J. Pilkington, 23 November 1928.
- 33 CC, series 20, box 14-F-5, file 4, C. Maxwell to G.D. Ireland, 16 April 1930.
- 34 CC, series 20, box 14-F-5, file 4, Summary of Unemployed Single and Married Men as per Relief Department Reports to Council, n.d. [April 1930].
- 35 CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 11 July 1930.
- 36 CC, series 20, box 14-F-5, file 4, C. Maxwell to George Ireland, 16 April 1930; G.D. Ireland to A.J. Pilkington, 17 April 1930.
- 37 BPC, series 180, box 75-A-2, file 1, Minutes of a Regular Meeting, 7 November 1929.
- 38 *Vancouver Sun*, 28 September 1929.
- 39 *Vancouver Sun*, 24 October 1929.
- 40 *Vancouver Sun*, 1 November 1929.
- 41 *Vancouver Sun*, 4 December 1929.
- 42 *Vancouver Sun*, 30 and 31 December 1929.
- 43 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Frank Godber to Inspector Thomson, 7 January 1930.
- 44 *Vancouver Sun*, 12 November 1929.
- 45 *Vancouver Sun*, 4 December 1929.
- 46 I have maintained the spelling and grammar of the original documents save for examples where comprehension is impossible. In these cases, I have placed my letter or word substitutions within square brackets.
- 47 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of Detectives MacDonald and Corbett, 4 December 1929 (emphasis in original).
- 48 “Unemployed on Parade,” *Vancouver Daily Province*, 5 December 1929; *Vancouver Sun*, 6 December 1929.
- 49 Litterick was quoted the day before as saying, “It will be an orderly procession; if there’s any trouble, it won’t come from us.” “‘On to Moscow’ Parade Fixed,” *Vancouver Daily Province*, 4 December 1929.
- 50 CC, series 20, box 15-A-1, file 6, W. McEwan and J. Litterick to Relief and Employment Committee, 5 December 1929.
- 51 The best work on the Communist Party’s unemployed activism in Vancouver is John Manley, “‘Starve, Be Damned!’: Communists and Canada’s Urban Unemployed, 1929–1939.”
- 52 See Todd McCallum, “‘Still Raining, Market Still Rotten’: Homeless Men and the Early Years of the Great Depression in Vancouver,” 159–65.
- 53 The Vancouver Welfare Federation is discussed in chapter 4. A different interpretation of the federation is available in Shirley Tillotson, *Contributing Citizens: Modern Charitable Fundraising and the Making of the Welfare State, 1920–1966*.

54 CC, series 20, box 15-A-1, file 6, W.C. Atherton to Members of the Relief and Employment Committee, 5 December 1929; *Vancouver Sun*, 6 December 1929.

55 *Vancouver Sun*, 5 December 1929.

56 *Vancouver Sun*, 7 December 1929.

57 *Vancouver Sun*, 10 December 1929.

58 "Jobless Men Now Seek Union Rates," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 10 December 1929.

59 "In early childhood I saw the first snow-shovellers in thin shabby clothes. Asking about them, I was told they were men without work who were given this job so that they could earn their bread. Then they get what they deserve, having to shovel snow, I cried out in rage, bursting uncontrollably into tears." Adorno, "Monograms," in *Minima Moralia*, 190.

60 "Urge Work Under Grading By-Law," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 13 December 1929; *Vancouver Sun*, 17 December 1929. The \$4.50 figure cited by Bennett conflicted with the figure cited by Atherton in the initial meeting with VUWO delegates. Because union wages for outdoor workers ranged from just under \$4.00 to \$4.60, neither figure should be regarded as inaccurate or implying a change in position.

61 See Bingham's report to the Board of Police Commissioners, dated 10 December 1929. BPC, series 181, box 75-C-1, file 13. The quotations that follow come from this report.

62 "Unemployed Ask \$4.50 'Cash Money,'" *Vancouver Daily Province*, 16 December 1929.

63 "Council Meets Unemployed Wednesday," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 17 December 1929.

64 "The Unemployed," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 17 December 1929; *Vancouver Sun*, 17 December 1929.

65 *Vancouver Sun*, 18 December 1929; "Urge No Change in Policy of Relief Work," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 18 December 1929.

66 *Vancouver Sun*, 18 December 1929.

67 CC, series 20, box 14-F-7, file 17, J. Litterick and W. McEwan to City Council, 18 December 1929; "Urge No Change in Policy of Relief Work."

68 "Two Paraders Are Arrested," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 20 December 1929; *Vancouver Sun*, 20 December 1929.

69 BPC, series 181, box 75-C-2, file 14, W.J. Bingham to Board of Police Commissioners, 7 February 1930.

70 *Unemployed Worker*, 28 December 1929.

71 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of Detectives Rae and Fletcher, 30 December 1929 (emphasis in original).

72 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of Daniel Dorroch, 2 January 1930.

73 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of John Mackenzie, 10 January 1930.

74 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of Special Constable Frank Godber, 31 December 1929.

75 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Capt. Jervis to Chief Constable Bingham, 21 December 1929.

76 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of Capt. Jervis, 23 December 1929.

77 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of PC Eric Hichens to Chief Constable, 30 December 1929.

78 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of PC Eric Hichens to Inspector Thomson, 2 January 1930.

79 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Capt. George Ash to Inspector Thomson, 31 December 1929.

80 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Unemployment Record, "Scotty" Simpson, 24 December 1929.

81 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of PC Eric Hichens to Inspector Thomson, 12 January 1930.

82 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Frank Godber to Inspector Thomson, 7 January 1930.

- 83 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of PC Eric Hichens to Inspector Thomson, 17 January 1930.
- 84 CC, series 20, box 15-A-6, file 2, John Mackenzie to W.J. Bingham, 18 July 1930; W.J. Bingham to Alderman Atherton, 19 July 1930.
- 85 BPC, series 181, box 75-C-2, file 14, W.J. Bingham to Police Commissioners, 7 February 1930.
- 86 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of PC 149, 26 December 1929.
- 87 *Vancouver Sun*, 8 and 10 January 1930.
- 88 According to Ireland, fewer than forty workers joined the strike. "Tried to Get Relief Workers to Strike," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 7 January 1930; *Vancouver Sun*, 7 January 1930.
- 89 BPC, series 181, box 75-C-1, file 17, W.J. Bingham to Board of Police Commissioners, 12 February 1930.
- 90 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of Frank Godber, 31 December 1929.
- 91 VPD, series 199, Frank Godber to Inspector Thomson, 7 January 1930.
- 92 VPD, series 199, Memo on Location of Gangs on City Relief, 27 January 1930.
- 93 VPD, series 199, John Mackenzie to Chief Constable Bingham, 10 January 1930.
- 94 *Unemployed Worker*, 28 December 1929.
- 95 On the BC labour bureaucracy, I tend to follow Mark Leier, *Red Flags and Red Tape: The Makings of a Labour Bureaucracy*.
- 96 UBCSC, Vancouver and District Labour Council Papers, series A, VDLC Minutes Book, 5 November 1929; CC, series 20, box 14-F-6, file 4, Percy Bengough to City Council, 8 November 1929.
- 97 CC, series 20, box 14-F-3, file 9, John Sidaway to Mayor Malkin, 24 December 1929.
- 98 CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 2, Vancouver and Unemployed Workers' Organization to Alderman R.N. Fraser, 13 January 1930; William Bennett to Alderman R.N. Fraser, 13 January 1930.
- 99 CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 2, Agenda — Unemployment Conference, n.d. [January 1930].
- 100 "Public transcript" is employed by James Scott in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*.
- 101 "Unemployment Situation Debated," *Vancouver Sun*, 14 and 15 January 1930.
- 102 CC, series 20, box 15-B-5, file 3, Paul Raymond to Mayor W.H. Malkin, 30 December 1929.
- 103 CC, series 20, box 15-B-7, file 8, Paul Raymond to the Vancouver Unemployment Conference, 14 January 1930.
- 104 "Blacklisting Charged by City's Jobless," *Vancouver Sun*, 16 January 1930; "Conference to Report on Friday," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 16 January 1930. See also Andrew Neufeld and Andrew Parnaby, *The IWA in Canada: The Life and Times of an Industrial Union*.
- 105 The account of the resolutions committee is based on Report of the Resolutions Committee re the Unemployment Situation, 17 January 1930, and Fraser's report to City Council, 21 January 1930, both found in CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 2.
- 106 Ibid.
- 107 See the description of procedures in CC, series 20, box 15-E-1, file 6, Report of Chas. Jones, 28 June 1932. On the broader history, see Margaret Little, "Claiming a Unique Place: The Introduction of Mothers' Pensions in BC."
- 108 Report of the Resolutions Committee; Fraser's report to City Council.
- 109 Ibid.
- 110 Ibid.
- 111 Ibid.
- 112 On third-party movements, see John Herd Thompson, with Allen Seager, *Canada 1922–1939: Decades of Discord*.

- 113 *ILP News*, February 1930.
- 114 CC, series 20, box 15-B-1, file 2, R.E. Timmins to City Clerk, 19 August 1930.
- 115 *Vancouver Daily Province*, 13 January 1930. Bennett had earlier argued for a federal system of unemployment insurance at a public meeting at First United Church.
- 116 “Aim to Solve Unemployment,” *Vancouver Daily Province*, 18 January 1930; “Unemployment Conference Outlines Relief Schemes,” *Vancouver Sun*, 18 January 1930.
- 117 Fraser’s report to City Council.
- 118 In general, I follow Ian Angus’s argument concerning the Third Period in Canada. See *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada*, 233–91. At the same time, I would emphasize that the Vancouver chapter of the Communist Party went through several “corrections” of line and personnel purges during this period, suggesting a diversity of views beneath the unified Stalinist rhetoric.
- 119 A handbill with this quotation printed on it can be found in UBCSC. Charlton Family Papers, box 1, file 3, along with a collection of other anarchist classics.
- 120 “Police Ban on Unemployed Parades,” *Vancouver Sun*, 28 January 1930.
- 121 “Whips Used to Break Up ‘Jobless,’” *Vancouver Daily Province*, 27 January 1930.
- 122 *Vancouver Sun*, 29 January 1930.
- 123 BPC, series 181, box 75-C-2, file 14, W.J. Bingham to Board of Police Commissioners, 7 February 1930.
- 124 *Ibid.*
- 125 *Ibid.*; “Funeral Delayed by Jobless Riot,” *Vancouver Daily Province*, 29 January 1930.
- 126 BPC, series 181, box 75-C-2, file 14, W.J. Bingham to Board of Police Commissioners, 7 February 1930.
- 127 CC, series 20, box 15-A-4, file 4, Martin Forkin, Secretary, Brandon Unemployed Association, to City Council, 4 March 1930; CC, series 20, box 15-A-4, file 5, G. Broadhurst, Secretary, Brandon Unemployed Association, to City Council, 17 February 1930.
- 128 CC, series 20, box 15-A-6, file 2, J.D. Forrest to Mayor and City Council, 28 January 1930.
- 129 CC, series 20, box 15-B-3, file 1, E. Norman to City Council, 5 February 1930.
- 130 CC, series 20, R.E. Timmins to City Clerk, 5 February 1930; BPC, series 181, box 75-C-3, file 12, R.E. Timmins to Board of Police Commissioners, 5 February 1930.
- 131 CC, series 20, box 15-B-3, file 1, W. Page to City Council, 31 January 1930; Geo. Pettipiece to City Council, 1 February 1930.
- 132 CC, series 20, box 15-B-3, file 1, Jas. England to City Council, 12 February 1930.
- 133 “Vancouver Red Army Badly Beaten,” *Vancouver Daily Province*, 29 January 1930.
- 134 BPC, series 180, box 75-A-2, file 1, Minutes of a Regular Meeting, 30 January 1930.
- 135 BPC, series 180, box 75-A-2, file 1, Minutes of a Regular Meeting, 12 February 1930.
- 136 BPC, series 180, box 75-A-2, file 1, Minutes of a Special Meeting, 28 April 1930.
- 137 MO, series 483, box 33-A-5, file 11, Investigation Summary, as prepared by Mr. Woodford, 10 August 1930; Report of Helliwell Maclachlan & Co. to Mayor and City Council, 4 June 1930; Report of Special Committee Relative to Inquiry into the Relief Department, n.d.
- 138 I have discussed these interpretations in “The Great Depression’s First History? The Vancouver Archives of Major J.S. Matthews and the Writing of Hobo History.”
- 139 See Manley, “Starve, Be Damned!” 468.

Chapter 2: “Useless Knowledge” About Jungle Life

- 1 Edmond Kelly, *The Elimination of the Tramp by the Introduction into America of the Labour Colony System Already Proved Effective in Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland, with the Modifications Thereof Necessary to Adapt This System to American Conditions*, 15.
- 2 Theodor W. Adorno, “Sur l’eau,” in *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life*, 156–57.

- 3 R.M., "Death of a Derelict," *Daily Clarion*, 24 June 1938. See Steve Brodie, *Bloody Sunday, Vancouver, 1938: Recollections of the Post Office Sitdown of Single Unemployed*.
- 4 R.M., "Death of a Derelict" (my emphasis).
- 5 For another story that connects poverty, suffering, and contortions of the body, see Franz Kafka's "A Hunger Artist."
- 6 Kelly, *Elimination of the Tramp*, 9.
- 7 Todd DePastino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*, 15.
- 8 In the Canadian context, see Reinhold Kramer and Tom Mitchell, *Walk Towards the Gallows: The Tragedy of Hilda Blake, Hanged, 1899*, 106–18.
- 9 The best community study of migrant workers in North America is Frank Tobias Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880–1930*.
- 10 Theodor Adorno addressed Romanticism as follows:
The Romanticized concept of the proletariat assigns the "task of salvation" to the latter, because it is supposed to stand outside the nexus of social guilt, whilst suppressing the fact that it is dependent on the social mechanism. The Romantic concept is complemented here by the no less Romantic notion that society would be able to regenerate itself if only it could find its way back to its unsullied origins. . . . Wagner falsifies the condition of the disinherited by misrepresenting the oppressed man as an unmutated one. "God and Beggar," 120.
- 11 See Agnes C. Laut, *Am I My Brother's Keeper? A Study of British Columbia's Labor and Oriental Problems*, which was first published in 1912 as a collection of *Saturday Night* articles; Andrew Roddan, *God in the Jungles: The Story of the Man Without a Home* (1931), republished as *Vancouver's Hoboes* in 2004; Jack Scott, *Plunderbund and Proletariat: A History of the IWW in British Columbia*; and Mark Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia*, and *Rebel Life: The Life and Times of Robert Gosden, Revolutionary, Mystic, Labour Spy*.
- 12 Norbert MacDonald, *Distant Neighbors: A Comparative History of Seattle and Vancouver*; Robert A.J. McDonald, *Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863–1913*.
- 13 On the role of migrant workers in British Columbia in 1919, see James R. Conley, "Frontier Labourers, Crafts in Crisis, and the Western Labour Revolt: The Case of Vancouver, 1900–1919."
- 14 Patricia Roy, "Vancouver: 'The Mecca of the Unemployed,' 1907–1929"; James Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914–1941*, 22–30.
- 15 SFT, box 3, file 18, H.T. Whitehead, Secy, Committee of the Executive Council on Unemployment Relief, to Premier S.F. Tolmie, 11 April 1933.
- 16 MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 1, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 27 July 1932; K. Phillips to W.R. Bone, 27 July 1932; Investigator to W.R. Bone, 27 July 1932.
- 17 For some historical context, see Paul Jackson, *One of the Boys: Homosexuality in the Military During World War II*; Steven Maynard, "Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall: Homosexual Subcultures, Police Surveillance, and the Dialectics of Discovery, Toronto, 1890–1930"; and Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880–1930*.
- 18 On the Unemployment Relief Act of 1930, see Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own*, 47–50.
- 19 VSS, series 451, box 107-F-1, Registration Book.
- 20 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 3, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 25 July 1932. Numerical breakdowns by age, length of residence in Vancouver and Canada, nationality, fitness, and military service were included with Bone's memorandum.
- 21 Michel Foucault, *An Introduction*, 135–59.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 138–39 (emphases in original).

- 23 On the claim that “population” enabled governmentality, see Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, 101–10. In the English-speaking academy, governmentality was introduced through *The Foucault Effect*, which reprinted his lecture of 1 February 1978 and several interviews as well as studies by people in his seminar. See Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*.
- 24 Foucault used population in the first four lectures at the Collège de France in 1978. See *Security, Territory, Population*, 1–114.
- 25 Bruce Curtis, “Foucault on Governmentality and Population: The Impossible Discovery,” 509.
- 26 Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840–1875*, 24.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 41–43.
- 28 Donald Avery, “Dangerous Foreigners”: *European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896–1932*, esp. 90–115.
- 29 Cecilia Danysk, *Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880–1930*, esp. 115–20.
- 30 Conley, “Frontier Labourers.”
- 31 See especially “Interim Report on Relief Camps in Canada,” *Labour Gazette* (February 1936): 141–52.
- 32 Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900–1935*.
- 33 BPC, series 181, box 75-C-4, file 18, W.J. Bingham to Mayor and Board of Police Commissioners, 21 January 1931.
- 34 Andrea Graziosi, “Common Laborers, Unskilled Workers, 1880–1915.”
- 35 Gregory S. Kealey, “State Repression of Labour and the Left in Canada, 1914–20: The Impact of the First World War.”
- 36 Martha Millet, “Women of Spain,” 63.
- 37 “Reissue, repackage, repackage” is a line from the song “Paint a Vulgar Picture,” found on The Smiths’ 1987 album *Strangeways, Here We Come* (Rough Trade Records).
- Every reasonably aware person of our time is aware of the obvious fact that art can no longer be justified as a superior activity, or even as a compensatory activity to which one might honorably devote oneself. The reason for this deterioration is clearly the emergence of productive forces that necessitate other production relations and a new practice of life. . . . It is in fact necessary to eliminate all remnants of the notion of personal property in this area. The appearance of new necessities outmodes previous “inspired” works. They become obstacles, dangerous habits. The point is not whether we like them or not. We have to go beyond them. Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can be used to make new combinations. Guy Debord and Gil Wolman, “A User’s Guide to Détournement.”
- 38 On the effects on the human body of periodic fasting, see Sharman Apt Russell, *Hunger: An Unnatural History*.
- 39 Andrew Roddan, *Vancouver’s Hoboes*, 17.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 41 John Douglas Belshaw, “Two Christian Denominations and the Administration of Relief to Vancouver’s Unemployed, 1929–1939,” 290. On the social gospel in the interwar years, see Michael Gauvreau and Nancy Christie, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare in Canada, 1900–1940*.
- 42 Sydney Scott, “Vancouver Jungles and Their Denizens,” *Vancouver Province*, 6 September 1931.
- 43 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 13, Report of Eric Hichens to Chief Constable, 23 July 1931.
- 44 CC, series 20, box 15-D-1, file 18, J.W. McIntosh to Mayor and City Council, 24 June 1931.

- 45 Be honest: have you caught yourself thinking “at least they’re in False Creek”?
- 46 Paul Ocobock, “Vagrancy and Homelessness in Global and Historical Perspective,” 1.
- 47 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-3, K.J. Burns to Frank Waters, 3 August 1931.
- 48 CC, series 20, box 15-E-1, file 2, George Buscombe to A.J. Pilkington, 28 October 1931. Buscombe claimed that his warehouse had been divided and taken to the Harbour Board jungle and to a jungle on the False Creek flats. For the correspondence on the Union St. warehouse, see the following, all found in box 15-E-1, file 2: A.W. Buscombe to A.J. Pilkington, 15 October 1932; Memorandum covering Solicitor’s Ruling, 27 October 1932; A.J. Pilkington to A.W. Buscombe, 28 October 1932; A.W. Buscombe to City Clerk, 8 November 1932; George Buscombe to A.J. Pilkington, 8 November 1932; George Buscombe to City Clerk, 14 November 1932.
- 49 J. Sydney Williamson, “Jobless Pour into Vancouver and City Pays to Feed Them,” *Vancouver Sun*, 3 November 1930.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 On the broad contours of provincial economic development, see the essays in Rennie Warburton and David Coburn, eds., *Workers, Capital, and the State in British Columbia*.
- 52 “BC Plan Would Relieve Municipalities from Care of Floaters,” *Vancouver Province*, 16 June 1931.
- 53 CC, series 20, box 15-D-1, file 18, J.W. McIntosh to Mayor and City Council, 24 June 1931.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Roddan, *Vancouver’s Hoboes*, 18.
- 56 Ibid., 19.
- 57 Ibid., 18–20.
- 58 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-3, Waters to Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, 20 July 1931.
- 59 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 13, Report of Eric Hichens to Chief Constable, 23 July 1931.
- 60 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-3, Waters to Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, 27 July 1931. Waters maintained that “none of the men belong[ing] to the camp on your property” had participated, but the evidentiary basis for this statement is not clear.
- 61 Waters’s lists of names are found in VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-3.
- 62 VSS, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, H. W. Cooper to W. C. Atherton, 3 September 1931.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 13, Report of G. Gosse to Chief Constable, 3 September 1931.
- 65 Williamson, “Jobless Pour into Vancouver”; MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 1, K. Phillips to Relief Officer, 27 July 1932.
- 66 There are theoretical and methodological parallels in Foucault’s frequent return to the concept of the “event” as that which establishes discontinuities or breaks and generates new dispositifs — an obvious attempt to disrupt the smooth surfaces of French structuralism — and Thompson’s analysis of the “conjuncture” in *Whigs and Hunters* and historical process in “The Poverty of Theory.” Michel Foucault, “The Discourse on Language”; Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*; E.P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origins of the Black Act*, and “The Poverty of Theory: Or an Orrery of Errors.”
- 67 *Vancouver Daily Province*, 16 June 1931.
- 68 “Jungle Crew Are Well Fed,” *Vancouver Province*, 26 June 1931.
- 69 Roddan, *God in the Jungles*, plate between pp. 8 and 9.
- 70 Sam Roddan, *Batter My Heart*, 75–78.
- 71 Vancouver School of Theology, First United Church Papers, box 3, Annual Reports, Year Ending December 31st 1931, Miss H.A. Johnston, Report of Secretarial Department, 15.

- 72 Vancouver School of Theology, First United Church Papers, box 3, Annual Reports, Year Ending December 31st 1930, Miss H.A. Johnston, Report of Secretarial Department, 34; Annual Reports, Year Ending December 31st 1931, Miss H.A. Johnston, Report of Secretarial Department, 16. If accurate, these figures suggest that Roddan's claim to have fed fifty thousand homeless men is exaggerated, as it would mean that most only received a single meal.
- 73 VCA, Add. Mss. 54, Major James Skitt Matthews Collection, volume 8, number 1, box 503-C-2, Narrative of W.J. Moore, 23 August 1933.
- 74 Roddan, *Vancouver's Hoboes*, 77–78.
- 75 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-2, Frank Waters to Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, 17 July 1931.
- 76 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-2, "The 'Jungles' of 1931," excerpt from *Early Vancouver*, vol. 1.
- 77 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-2, Frank Waters to Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, 17 July 1931.
- 78 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 13, Report of Eric Hichens to Chief Constable, 23 July 1931.
- 79 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-3, K.J. Burns to Mrs. E.W. Hamber, 10 August 1931.
- 80 See, for instance, Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society*, and Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*.
- 81 "Structure of feeling" is taken from Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*.
- 82 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-2, Colonel R.D. Williams to J.S. Matthews, 30 September 1931. The quotation comes from a handwritten notation made by Major Matthews on this letter.
- 83 "Vancouver Jungles and Their Denizens."
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 Roddan, *Vancouver's Hoboes*, 20.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Ibid., 98.
- 89 Ibid., 86.
- 90 Ibid., 30–31.
- 91 On organizations related to the unemployed in the Lower Mainland, see Bettina Bradbury, "The Road to Receivership: Unemployment and Relief in Burnaby, North Vancouver City and District and West Vancouver, 1929–1933," esp. 62–64, 70–72, 140–42; John Manley, "'Starve, Be Damned!' Communists and Canada's Urban Unemployed, 1929–1939"; and Todd McCallum, "'Still Raining, Market Still Rotten': Homeless Men and the Early Years of the Great Depression in Vancouver."
- 92 Stanley Hutcheson, *Depression Stories*, 64.
- 93 Ibid., 61.
- 94 For examples of hoboes supporting a group until their resources were exhausted, see B.C., "Down in Con's," *The Worker*, 23 January 1932; Hutcheson, *Depression Stories*, 59–62; One of Them, "Riding the Rods Proves Easy If You Know the Ropes," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 3 August 1931; and A. Bundle-Stiff, "The Old Lumberjack," *The Worker*, 6 July 1929.
- 95 Hutcheson, *Depression Stories*, 60.
- 96 "Vancouver Jungles and Their Denizens."
- 97 Hutcheson, *Depression Stories*, 27.
- 98 G.H. Westbury, *Misadventures of a Working Hobo in Canada*, 89.
- 99 One of Them, "Riding the Rods."

- 100 Hutcheson, *Depression Stories*, 61.
- 101 Ibid.
- 102 E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy Revisited," 273–75
- 103 There is a wonderful online collection of Canadian hobo signs at *Canadian Geographic*, <http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/magazine/mao1/indepth/hobo/hobolisting.asp>.
- 104 Hutcheson, *Depression Stories*, 65.
- 105 BCA, Add. Mss. 2659, John Thompson Papers, John Thompson to "Daddy," 28 August (no year).
- 106 Ibid.; Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California*. For a discussion of the proletarianization of farm labour in the Canadian context, see Cecilia Danysk, *Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880–1930*.
- 107 For a similar story, see Hutcheson, *Depression Stories*, 32.
- 108 "Experiences of a Depression Hobo," 6.
- 109 TDP, vol. 46, file 5, D.B. Johnstone to T.D. Pattullo, 5 April 1932.
- 110 Hutcheson, *Depression Stories*, 23. See also One of Them, "Riding the Rods" for an account of how hoboes both came to the aid of each other and depended on the residents of towns for assistance.
- 111 See, for example, D.C., "Terror on the Railroad," *The Daily Clarion*, 8 October 1937. For general acts of intimidation, see Boxcar Kelly, "Making the Hump," *The Worker*, 21 May 1932.
- 112 *Unemployed Worker*, 28 March 1931.
- 113 "Vancouver Jungles and Their Denizens."
- 114 "Experiences of a Depression Hobo," 5.
- 115 One of Them, "Riding the Rods." John Law was a popular figure. See, for example, Boxcar Kelly, "Making the Hump."
- 116 "The 'Jungles' of 1931," in *Early Vancouver*, vol. 1, 165.
- 117 CC, series 20, box 15-C-6, file 4, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 8 September 1931.
- 118 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-2, Waters to Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, 20 July, 27 July, 4 August, and 9 September 1931.
- 119 CC, series 20, box 15-C-6, file 4, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 8 September 1931.
- 120 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-3, Waters to G.W. Head, 29 July 1931; G.W. Head to K.J. Burns, 30 July 1931; Waters to Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, 3 September 1931. The man and boys of a "degraded moral type" may have been a wolf/punk coupling. See DePastino, *Citizen Hobo*, 85–91; Frank Tobias Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880–1930*, 123–27; and Steven Maynard, "Queer Musings on Masculinity and History," esp. 191–97.
- 121 VCA, CC, series 20, box 15-D-1, file 18, Dr. J.W. McIntosh to Mayor and City Council, 24 June 1931.
- 122 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-3, Waters to Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, 27 July 1931.
- 123 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-3, Waters to Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, 24 June, 27 July, and 3 September 1931
- 124 "Impressions of a Jungle Tour Through Canada," *The Worker*, 17 October 1931.
- 125 VCA, CC, series 20, box 15-D-6, file 9, Jessie Todd to City Clerk, 26 June 1931; C. Robinson to City Clerk, 24 July 1931.
- 126 *The Worker*, 25 July 1931.
- 127 Boxcar Kelly, "Making the Hump."
- 128 *The Worker*, 12 September 1931.
- 129 *The Worker*, 25 July 1931.

- 130 Hal Griffin and Sean Griffin, "On to Ottawa! The Relief Camp Strike and the On-to-Ottawa Trek," 18–19.
- 131 *The Worker*, 13 and 27 June 1931; *Vancouver Daily Province*, 25 June, 5 July 1931.
- 132 VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-2, *Unemployed Worker*, 8 August 1931. Good coverage of the demonstration was offered by the *Vancouver Daily Province*, 3 August 1931.
- 133 "Jungle Crew Are Well Fed."
- 134 "Police Injured in Downtown Street Battle," *Vancouver Province*, 2 August 1931.
- 135 "Experiences of a Depression Hobo," 63.
- 136 Hutcheson, *Depression Stories*, 115–16.
- 137 Constable Waters took great pains to assure Williams that the two dead men were not residents of the jungle but recent arrivals. VCA, Matthews Collection, box 503-C-2, Frank Waters to Vancouver Harbour Commissioners, 9 September 1931; "Fear Typhoid from Jungles," *Vancouver Province*, 4 September 1931.
- 138 VSS, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, Statement of H.A. McDonald, 3 September 1931.
- 139 VSS, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, H.W. Cooper to W.C. Atherton, 3 September 1931.
- 140 "Open Refuge for Homeless," *Vancouver Province*, 5 September 1931.
- 141 "City Provides Beds and Meals for Jungle Men," *Vancouver Province*, 6 September 1931; CC, series 20, box 15-C-6, file 4, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 8 September 1931.
- 142 CC, series 20, box 15-C-6, file 4, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 8 September 1931.
- 143 BPC, series 180, box 75-A-2, file 1, Special Meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners, 3 September 1931.
- 144 CC, series 33, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 21 September 1931.
- 145 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 10, H.W. Cooper to W.J. Bingham, 21 September 1931.
- 146 "Jobless Trekking to City," *Vancouver Sun*, 14 November 1931.
- 147 Thomas Pynchon, *Against the Day*, 19.
- 148 See the discussion in Fredric Jameson, "The Politics of Utopia."
- 149 In an article on Canadian unions and welfare from 1950 to 1965, Shirley Tillotson offers a defence of the limited vision and autocratic decision-making power of a bureaucratically encased union leadership. Her defence is based on the necessity of effective action by "experts" within the constraints of context, seen as a "paradox endemic in all attempts to induce autonomous action in others." This normalization of what was then the Canadian union movement's most hierarchical and bureaucratized organizations *at their moment of becoming so* in the name of efficiency of action is an example of means-ends rationalization inherent to Fordist-era liberal categories of analysis: how can this framework measure (or even locate) the efficiency of self-directed, autonomous actions in a context without any formalized institutions or leaders? Tillotson argues,

Rather than making the measure of union democracy be an erasure of difference between leaders and led, with such an erasure's real costs to some kinds of strategic effectiveness, the hallmarks of good democratic practice might be a leadership system that generates, not just a single "opposition" party, but multiple organizational foci of leadership, so as to foster regenerative criticism of and change in the personnel and the tactical approaches of the labour bureaucracy. "When Our Membership Awakens: Welfare Work and Canadian Union Activism, 1950–1965," 168, 167.

A similar defence of some of the hierarchical and disciplinary character of the leadership of social welfare organizations can be discerned in Tillotson's *Contributing Citizens: Modern Charitable Fundraising and the Making of the Welfare State, 1920–1966*.

- 150 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, xix.
- 151 Michel Foucault, "Different Spaces," in *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 178. In this lecture, Foucault positions the mirror as a "kind of mixed, intermediate experience" between utopias and heterotopias. Regarding the former, he writes: "Utopias are emplacements having no real place. They are emplacements that maintain a general relation of direct or inverse analogy with the real space of society, but in any case these utopias are spaces that are fundamentally and essentially unreal." My reading of this piece is influenced by Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Theory*, 16–21.
- 152 "Bodies and their pleasures" references the arguments concerning the body in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, and *An Introduction*, the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*; "subjugated knowledges" appears in Foucault's first lecture at the Collège de France in 1976, published in English translation in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*; "limit-experiences" appears in several places, my preference being "Interview with Michel Foucault"; and "counter discourses" appears in lectures and publications dating from the late 1970s and early 1980s. All of these are discussed in the best of the biographies, David Macey's *The Lives of Michel Foucault: A Biography*. See also Didier Eribon, *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self*, and David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*, esp. 126–85.
- 153 Donald Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896–1932*.
- 154 "Sensuous human activity, practice" is from Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach," quoted in Francis Wheen, *Karl Marx*, 93.
- 155 Foucault, "Different Spaces," in *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 179–80.
- 156 See especially Neil Brenner, "Foucault's New Functionalism," which differentiates Foucault's analysis from liberal and other forms of functionalism.
- 157 On the early history of the concept of "unemployment" in Canada, see Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager, *Unwilling Idlers: The Urban Unemployed and Their Families in Late Victorian Canada*.
- 158 Foucault, "Different Spaces," in *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 181.
- 159 *Ibid.*, 184.
- 160 Karl Marx, cited in Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, 144. Award yourself bonus points if you predicted that this quote would appear in this book.
- 161 For the argument that Marx envisioned the realm of freedom as existing only in a post-capitalist society, see Ian McKay, "The Many Deaths of Mr. Marx: Or, What Left Historians Might Contribute to Debates About the 'Crisis of Marxism,'" esp. 42. For the more positive version, in which the realm of freedom was thought to exist (in certain contexts) alongside that of necessity, see Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada's Left History*, 11–13.
- 162 I have made this argument in reference to the writings of Reverend Andrew Roddan in "The Reverend and the Tramp, Vancouver, 1931: Andrew Roddan's *God in the Jungles*."
- 163 On the primitive accumulation of capital in the Canadian context, see Bryan D. Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860–1914*, 3–18.
- 164 James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*.
- 165 *Ibid.*, xi.

Chapter 3: The Crucifixion Machine and the Quest for Efficiency

- 1 "Go Drown Yourself!" in Barry Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years, 1929–1939: Memories of Canadians Who Survived the Depression*, 357–59.
- 2 Hegemony? Which hegemony? See Perry Anderson, "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci."
- 3 CC, series 40, box 120-A-4, file 29, W. Wardhaugh, Report on Findings of Mr. Paul McD. Kerr, 30 April 1936, 12.
- 4 Siegfried Kracauer, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*, 29.
- 5 On civic relief under Ireland, see Diane Matters, "Public Welfare Vancouver Style, 1910–1920."
- 6 "Shrill economic determinism" is from Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980*.
- 7 Paula Maurutto, *Governing Charities: Church and State in Toronto's Catholic Archdiocese, 1850–1950*, 8. Unfortunately, Maurutto cites no accounts that fit this description. See also Mariana Valverde, "Some Remarks on the Rise and Fall of Discourse Analysis," 71–73.
- 8 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, 3.
- 9 See for example, Maurutto, *Governing Charities*; Valverde, "Some Remarks."
- 10 By "quasi-Marxist knowledge," I mean to indicate accounts not explicitly identified as Marxist in provenance but which rely on (consciously or not) Marxist tools and can help to further Marxist interpretations.
- 11 Mariana Valverde, "The Mixed Social Economy as a Canadian Tradition." An important exception is James Pitsula, whose work takes into account the different market arrangements with which relief was provided. See his "The Mixed Social Economy of Unemployment Relief in Regina During the 1930s."
- 12 It is important to note that the much-criticized account of Harry Braverman took into account developments in office work. See *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*.
- 13 VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-31, 31 December 1930; CC, series 20, box 15-A-6, file 7, William McQueen to R.B. Bennett, 31 December 1930.
- 14 On the economic context, see John Herd Thompson, with Allen Seager, *Canada 1922–1939: Decades of Discord*.
- 15 VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-30, Meeting of the City Council, 7 April 1930.
- 16 CC, series 20, box 15-A-6, file 6, A.J. Pilkington to Relief Committee, 28 July 1930; CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 11 July 1930.
- 17 H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 28 July 1930; CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 1, Memorandum from Premier S.F. Tolmie Relative to Unemployment and Relief in the City of Vancouver, n.d. [August 1930].
- 18 "Gov't Asked to Halt Influx of Unemployed," *Vancouver Sun*, 4 November 1930.
- 19 CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 13 October, 2 September, 24 November 1930.
- 20 VSS, series 450, box 106-C-7, file 2, H.W. Cooper, Memorandum re the Unemployment Relief Act 1930 and Its Operation in Vancouver, 19 January 1931.
- 21 CC, series 20, box 15-A-7, file 7, Mrs. Fleming to Mayor Malkin, 20 June 1930.
- 22 H.W. Cooper, Memorandum re the Unemployment Relief Act 1930 and Its Operation in Vancouver.
- 23 See especially James Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914–1941*, 44–70
- 24 The best account of the problems with the Unemployment Relief Act, 1930 in British Columbia's Lower Mainland is Bettina Bradbury, "The Road to Receivership: Unemployment and Relief in Burnaby, North Vancouver City and District and West Vancouver, 1929–1933." For national overviews, see Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own*, 47–50, and Thompson, with Seager, *Canada 1922–1939*, 209–13.

- 25 H.W. Cooper, Memorandum re the Unemployment Relief Act 1930 and Its Operation in Vancouver.
- 26 CC, series 33, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 24 November 1930.
- 27 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman A.G. Harvey, 25 February 1932.
- 28 For details of this diversion of funds, see VSS, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, Report of Hamilton Crisford and J.T. Gawthrop re Investigation of Relief Administration, City of Vancouver, n.d. [spring 1935].
- 29 CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 6 October 1930.
- 30 CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 15 September 1930.
- 31 CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 14 November 1930.
- 32 Stephen Meyer, *The Five Dollar Day: Labor Management and Social Control in the Ford Motor Company, 1908–1921*, 95–122.
- 33 VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-31, Meeting of the City Council, 2 March 1931.
- 34 This is discussed in further detail in chapter 5.
- 35 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 9, H.W. Cooper, Memorandum re Unemployment, 27 March 1931.
- 36 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 9, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 9 and 23 March 1931.
- 37 CC, series 20, box 15-C-4, file 2, R.E. Timmins to City Clerk, 14 March 1931; City Clerk to Relief and Employment Committee, 17 March 1931; Vancouver Council, NUWA, to City Council, 18 March 1931.
- 38 *Unemployed Worker*, 21 March 1931.
- 39 John Belshaw, “The Administration of Relief to the Unemployed in Vancouver During the Great Depression.”
- 40 CC, series 33, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 25 January 1932.
- 41 VSS, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Mayor Taylor, 20 June 1932.
- 42 Compare with, for instance, the account of Toronto’s relief system during the same period, in Maurutto, *Governing Charities*, 71–75.
- 43 Later in the decade, when transient families became sufficient in number to merit their own classification, the residency distinction remained the first applied, resulting in substantive disparities in relief provision between resident and transient families.
- 44 CC, series 20, box 15-D-6, file 8, Committee of the Executive Council on Unemployment Relief, Circular re Registration of Unemployed, 23 July 1931; VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-32, Meeting of the City Council, 25 August 1931.
- 45 VSS, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 25 August 1931.
- 46 See Lorne Brown, *When Freedom Was Lost: The Unemployed, the Agitator, and the State*, and Bill Waiser, *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada’s National Parks, 1915–1946*.
- 47 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 11, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 2 October 1931.
- 48 See CC, series 20, box 16-A-4, file 4, William Dennies to Mayor Taylor, 4 August 1933; VSS, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, Report of Hamilton Crisford and J.T. Gawthrop re Investigation of Relief Administration, City of Vancouver, n.d. [1935], esp. 5–6.
- 49 Report of Hamilton Crisford and J.T. Gawthrop re Investigation of Relief Administration.
- 50 Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, 33.

- 51 On the transformation being “mostly dialectical”:
 If Benjamin said that history had hitherto been written from the stand-
 point of the victor, and needed to be written from that of the vanquished,
 we might add that knowledge must indeed present the fatally rectilinear
 succession of victor and defeat, but should also address itself to those
 things which were not embraced by this dynamic, which fell by the
 wayside — what might be called the waste products and blind spots that
 have escaped the dialectic. Theodor W. Adorno, “Bequest,” in *Minima
 Moralia*, 151.
- All references to the activities of “daily life” are from *Minima Moralia: Reflections
 from a Damaged Life*: walking and running, “More haste, less speed,” 102; *Snow White*,
 “Over the hills,” 121; public speaking, “Institution for deaf-mutes,” 137; “erotic
 qualities,” “Inter Pares,” 32–33; character of lying, “Promise me this, my child,” 30;
 “nonchalant gestures,” “Second harvest,” 110; zoos, “Mammoth,” 115; and memories
 of childhood, “The bad comrade,” 192–93.
- 52 These are all references from *Minima Moralia*: avarice, “Le nouvel avare,” 35; luxury,
 “Auction,” 120; masochism, “Diagnosis,” 123–24 (although there are many others);
 tact, “On the dialectic of tact,” 35–37; solidarity, “Cat out of the bag,” 51.
- 53 Theodor W. Adorno, “Proprietary Rights,” in *Minima Moralia*, 37.
- 54 See, for example, the complaints of civic politicians in MO, series 483, box 33-B-2,
 file 1, W.L. Woodford and W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 25 August 1932.
- 55 For examples, see CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, which contains Colonel Cooper’s
 biweekly reports for the winter and spring of 1932.
- 56 VSS, series 449, box 106-A-6, file 2, L.D. McDonald to Mayor and Members of Relief
 Committee, 4 February 1935.
- 57 CC, box 120-A-4, file 30, Helliwell, Maclachlan & Co., Public Welfare and Relief
 Report, 4 November 1931, 8; “Support Not Given Cooper,” *Vancouver Sun*, 10 Nov-
 ember 1931.
- 58 For a sample of complaints made to elected officials, see MO, series 483, box 33-B-
 2, file 1.
- 59 CC, series 33, box 26-D, vol. 61, Meeting of the Relief and Employment Committee,
 18 May 1931.
- 60 CC, series 53, box 28-B-3, file 4, W.A. Tucker, Final Section of Report on Special
 Investigation of the Relief Department, City of Vancouver, BC, 1 October 1935, 11.
- 61 CC, series 33, box 26-D, vol. 61, Meeting of the Relief and Employment Committee,
 7 November 1932.
- 62 W.R. Bone Diary, 6 June and 10 June 1933, quoted in CC, series 53, box 28-B-3, file
 2, W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation of City Relief Department,
 City of Vancouver, Vancouver, BC, 16 September 1935, 14. Tucker’s report, especially
 the Interim Report, quoted verbatim from private diaries maintained by Bone.
 The diaries themselves have not been located, and thus it is not possible to situate
 Tucker’s excerpts within their broader context.
- 63 CC, series 20, box 15-A-6, file 2, Motion of the Executive of the Vancouver Central
 Ratepayers Association, n.d. [May 1930]. For another ratepayers’ campaign against
 inefficiency, see the motion of the Charles Dickens Ratepayers’ Association of Ward 7,
 in CC, series 20, box 16-A-4, file 12, D.R. Campbell to City Council, 16 September 1933.
- 64 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 11, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 9 November
 1931.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 1, Report of Special Committee re Intensive Investiga-
 tion of Relief Cases, 29 August 1932, 5.
- 67 Ibid., 6.

- 68 MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 1, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 5 August 1932; Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee re Intensive Investigation of Relief Cases, 11 August 1932; MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 4, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 22 September 1932; W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 23–36 (emphasis in original).
- 69 W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 23.
- 70 See Margaret A. Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History*, 446–48; Ian Donald Parker, “Simon Fraser Tolmie and the British Columbia Conservative Party, 1916–1933”; and Allen Seager, “Introduction,” 17.
- 71 CC, series 20, box 15-C-4, file 5, H. W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 19 October 1931.
- 72 “‘Radical Change in City Relief Needed,’” *Vancouver Sun*, 26 January 1932.
- 73 VSS, series 450, box 106-B-5, file 6, Department of Social Service, Budget Estimates, 1933.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 VSS, series 449, box 106-A-6, file 2, Questionnaire re Administrative Staff of Vancouver City Relief Department, 27 May 1935.
- 76 See, for example, the breakdown of estimated versus actual costs in VSS, series 450, box 106-B-5, file 6, City of Vancouver, Estimates 1932.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 1, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 15 July 1932.
- 79 CC, series 20, box 14-F-5, file 4, The Handling of Meal and Other Tickets, n.d.
- 80 FS, series 299, box 93-A-2, file 17, *The Purchasing Agent*, 1929.
- 81 FS, series 299, box 93-A-2, file 17, Memorandum of W.A. Sheppard, 15 September 1930.
- 82 “Central Buying Scheme Approved,” *Vancouver Sun*, 7 November 1930; VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-31, Minutes of the City Council, 15 December 1930.
- 83 Questionnaire re Administrative Staff of Vancouver City Relief Department, 27 May 1935.
- 84 VSS, series 450, box 106-B-2, file 5, Memorandum of Relief Officer W.R. Bone, 15 August 1933.
- 85 Questionnaire re Administrative Staff of Vancouver City Relief Department, 27 May 1935.
- 86 MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 1, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 5 August 1932.
- 87 VSS, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Mayor Taylor, 20 June 1932.
- 88 VSS, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, Report of Hamilton Crisford and J.T. Gawthrop re Investigation of Relief Administration, City of Vancouver, n.d. [1935], 7.
- 89 On office technology, see Graham Lowe, “Mechanization, Feminization, and Managerial Control in the Early Twentieth-Century Canadian Office.”
- 90 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H. W. Cooper to Alderman A.G. Harvey, 8 February 1932.
- 91 VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-31, Meeting of the City Council, 31 December 1930.
- 92 CC, box 120-A-4, file 30, Helliwell, Maclachlan & Co., Public Welfare and Relief Report, 4 November 1931, 1–5.
- 93 John Dos Passos, *The Big Money*, 75.
- 94 Fredric Jameson offers a cogent analysis of the form of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in relation to Adorno’s other works in *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic*. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 31.
- 95 “‘Governmentalization’ of the state” is taken from Foucault’s now famous lecture of 1 February 1978; see *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, 109.
- 97 CC, series 53, box 28-B-3, file 3, W.A. Tucker, A Resume of the Final Report on a Special Investigation of the City Relief Department, City of Vancouver, and findings therein, 28 September 1935, 1–2.

- 98 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.
- 99 MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 4, Robert B.C. Mundy, "Special Instructions to Visitors," 3 September 1932.
- 100 The number of sections would vary as modifications were made in subsequent years.
- 101 Mundy, "Special Instructions to Visitors," 7.
- 102 Ibid., 9.
- 103 VSS, series 449, Memorandum of Relief Officer W.R. Bone, 23 January 1932.
- 104 Mundy, "Special Instructions to Visitors," 1.
- 105 Ibid., 7 (emphasis in original).
- 106 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Chairman, Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.
- 107 VSS, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Mayor Taylor, 20 June 1932.
- 108 See Harry Braverman's discussion of F.W. Taylor for a similar logic. *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, 85-123.
- 109 VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-32, Meeting of the City Council, 15 February 1932.
- 110 VSS, series 450, box 106-C-2, file 1, Report of Hamilton Crisford and J.T. Gawthrop re Investigation of Relief Administration, City of Vancouver, n.d. [1935], 8.
- 111 VSS, series 449, box 106-B-2, file 5, Memorandum of Relief Officer W.R. Bone, 23 March 1933.
- 112 Mundy, "Special Instructions to Visitors," 6.
- 113 Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, 117-18; David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925*, 217, 221-23.
- 114 W.A. Tucker, Final Section of Report, 7.
- 115 "Council Hears Maccabe Appeal," *Vancouver Sun*, 10 November 1931.
- 116 "Both Sides Win in Relief Office Investigation," *Vancouver Sun*, 13 November 1931.
- 117 Ibid.
- 118 W.A. Tucker, Final Section of Report, 3 (emphasis in original).
- 119 CC, series 20, box 16-A-4, file 14, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 16 February 1933.
- 120 W.A. Tucker, Final Section of Report, 5.
- 121 Ibid., 5-6.
- 122 W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 3-4 (emphasis in original).
- 123 Ibid., 6.
- 124 MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 1, Report re Intensive Investigation of Relief Cases, 29 August 1932.
- 125 W.R. Bone Diary, 8 May 1933, quoted in W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 14.
- 126 W.R. Bone Diary, 4 July 1933, quoted in W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 14.
- 127 W.R. Bone Diary, 26 July and 16 August 1933, quoted in W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 8-10; W.A. Tucker, Final Section of Report, 6.
- 128 W.R. Bone Diary, December 1932 and January 1933, quoted in W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 12 (emphasis in original).
- 129 W.A. Tucker, Resume of the Final Report, 10.
- 130 W.A. Tucker, Final Section of Report, 61.
- 131 W.R. Bone Diary, 29 September, 3 October and 4 October 1933, quoted in W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 16-18.
- 132 W.A. Tucker, Final Section of Report, 5.
- 133 W.A. Tucker, Resume of the Final Report, 3-5.
- 134 W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 37-39.
- 135 W.A. Tucker, Resume of the Final Report, 6-7.
- 136 W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 22.

- 137 Ibid., 62; W.A. Tucker, Final Section of Report, 54.
- 138 W.R. Bone Diary, 27 November, 28 November and 1 December 1933, quoted in W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 28; W.A. Tucker, Final Section of Report, 49–50.
- 139 W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 29–33.
- 140 Ibid., 34; W.A. Tucker, Final Section of Report, 49–51.
- 141 W.R. Bone Diary, 14 October 1933, quoted in W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 51.
- 142 Dorothy Livesay produced a compelling fictional portrait of this reality in “Case Supervisor,” in *Right Hand Left Hand*, 103–11.
- 143 W.A. Tucker, Interim Report on Special Investigation, 21.
- 144 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 9, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 23 March 1931.
- 145 CC, series 33, box 26-D, vol. 61, Meeting of the Relief and Employment Committee, 6 June 1932.

Chapter 4: The Racket in Tickets and the Traffic in Lives

- 1 David Ricardo Williams, *Mayor Gerry: The Remarkable Gerald Grattan McGeer*, 173–74.
- 2 MO, series 483, box 46-A-1, file 1, Mayor Gerald Grattan McGeer, Inaugural Address, 2 January 1935, 1.
- 3 See the handbills in SFT, box 5, file 15, *Canadian Fascisti: They Are Out for the New Deal!*, 24 April 1933, and *Fascisti of Canada Proclamation*, 1 May 1933.
- 4 Bob Hesketh, *Major Douglas and Alberta Social Credit*.
- 5 Mayor Gerald Grattan McGeer, Inaugural Address, 3.
- 6 See Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France*, esp. 142–212.
- 7 Lorne Brown, *When Freedom Was Lost: The Unemployed, the Agitator, and the State*; R.C. McCandless, “Vancouver’s ‘Red Menace’ of 1935: The Waterfront Situation.”
- 8 Mayor Gerald Grattan McGeer, Inaugural Address, 1.
- 9 Ibid., 4.
- 10 Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*, 248 (my emphasis).
- 11 Siegfried Kracauer, *The Salaried Masses: Duty and Distraction in Weimar Germany*, 25; Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*; Fredric Jameson, “On Negt and Kluge.”
- 12 FS, series 299, box 93-A-3, file 10, Memorandum of Chas Jones, City Clerk, for Select Committee on Provincial Finances, 14 May 1932.
- 13 It could be argued that municipalities were bound by law to provide relief. However, while municipal governments forced into bankruptcy, in part due to relief costs, were forced to endure the appointment of an administrator tasked with slashing spending, I know of no municipal government that suffered a similar fate for refusing to provide relief during the 1930s.
- 14 CC, series 40, box 120-A-4, file 29, W. Wardhaugh, Report on Findings of Mr. Paul McD. Kerr, 30 April 1936, 12.
- 15 *Unemployed Worker*, 9 April 1932.
- 16 UBCSC, SPAM 10512, *The Frame-Up of Allan Campbell: The Story of the Unemployed of Vancouver and Their Fight Against the Police Terror* (Toronto: National Executive Committee, Canadian Labor Defense League, n.d. [1932?]), 4–5.
- 17 Dorothy Livesay, “Canada to the Soviet Union,” in *Right Hand Left Hand*, 72. The best recent analysis of Livesay’s work during this period (including this poem) is Candida Rifkind, *Comrades and Critics: Women, Literature and the Left in 1930s Canada*.
- 18 CC, series 20, box 15-D-2, file 5, S. Marriomatis to City Relief Committee, 28 February 1931.
- 19 CC, series 20, box 15-B-3, file 11, George McCrossan to William McQueen, 19 May 1930.

- 20 On the explosion of cheap restaurants in urban America in the interwar years, see Dorothy Sue Cobble, *Dishing It Out: Waitresses and Their Unions in the Twentieth Century*, 19–23.
- 21 James Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914–1941*.
- 22 VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-31, Meeting of the City Council, 31 December 1930.
- 23 “McInnis Opposes Logger Scheme,” *Vancouver Sun*, 4 November 1930.
- 24 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Chairman, Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.
- 25 CC, series 20, box 15-E-7, file 8, W.A. Sheppard to Relief Committee, 4 August 1932.
- 26 Chinese men who received meal tickets were segregated in practice, allotted tickets only for the Winnipeg Café. CC, series 20, box 15-E-7, file 8, W.A. Sheppard to Relief Committee, 4 August 1932.
- 27 CC, series 20, box 15-D-1, file 15, Lee Kepment to Relief Committee, 31 January 1931.
- 28 CC, series 20, box 15-D-5, file 5, Alfred J. Bland to Alderman Atherton, 23 January 1931.
- 29 CC, series 20, box 15-B-2, file 4, Mattias Nordin to Mayor and City Council, 29 May 1930.
- 30 CC, series 20, box 16-A-5, file, file 8, Report of Special Committee re Relief Tickets on Restaurants, 26 April 1933.
- 31 On the racial politics of relief and food, see Kay Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980*, and especially Gillian Creese, “Exclusion or Solidarity? Vancouver Workers Confront the ‘Oriental Problem,’” and “The Politics of Dependence: Women, Work and Unemployment in the Vancouver Labour Movement Before World War II.”
- 32 CC, series 20, box 16-A-6, file 6, Mayor Taylor to W.A. Sheppard, 29 November 1933.
- 33 CC, series 20, box 16-A-6, file 6, E.A. Gillingwater to Alderman Miller, 15 December 1932. See also K. Olsen to Alderman Dean, 8 December 1932.
- 34 CC, series 20, box 16-A-6, file 6, W.A. Sheppard to Mayor Taylor, 9 September 1932.
- 35 CC, series 20, box 15-F-3, file 3, Mattias Nordin, Lyli Lindquist, and Ida Judd to City Council, 7 July 1932; CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 8 August 1932.
- 36 CC, series 20, box 15-C-6, file 4, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 8 September 1931.
- 37 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 8, C. Robinson to City Clerk, 2 November 1931.
- 38 CC, series 20, box 15-B-1, file 4, Harry Kydd to Alderman Miller, 15 May 1930.
- 39 CC, series 20, box 15-D-5, file 5, Mrs. Anne Bourque to Alderman H.J. DeGraves, n.d. [1931].
- 40 CC, series 20, box 15-A-7, file 7, T. Fancett to Mayor and City Council, 15 May 1930. For a similar appeal, see CC, series 20, box 15-C-2, file 11, Chas. Appleton to Alderman W.C. Atherton, 28 January 1931.
- 41 CC, series 20, box 15-B-1, file 8, John L. Lewis to Mayor Malkin, 20 May 1930.
- 42 CC, series 20, box 15-B-1, file 8, Ian Shaw to City Clerk, 23 January 1931.
- 43 CC, series 20, box 15-B-1, file 8, Report of Special Committee re Relief Restaurants, 25 February 1931.
- 44 CC, series 20, box 15-D-5, file 2, Report of Special Committee re Relief Restaurants, 22 April 1931.
- 45 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Chairman, Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.
- 46 CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 23 June 1932.
- 47 CC, series 20, box 15-F-3, file 4, B. Nichol to W.A. Sheppard, 7 June 1932.

- 48 CC, series 20, box 15-F-3, file 4, F.F. Kennedy to W.A. Sheppard, 8 June 1932.
- 49 *Unemployed Worker*, n.d. [January 1931].
- 50 UBCSC, Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, box 42A, file 26, Report of Delegation of Unemployed Sponsored by the British Columbia Joint Committee on Unemployment, Who Presented the Demands on Behalf of the Unemployed of British Columbia, Before the British Columbia Cabinet, 7 December 1934 at 10:30 a.m., 6.
- 51 CC, series 20, box 15-C-5, file 1, G. Connelly to Mayor Taylor, n.d. [1931].
- 52 CC, series 20, box 15-D-2, file 6, R. McNally to City Council, 24 April 1931.
- 53 CC, series 20, box 15-F-2, file 3, Report of Special Committee re Relief Tickets on Restaurants, 12 December 1932; CC, series 20, box 15-F-3, file 2, J.P. Macdonald to Relief Committee, 15 December 1932.
- 54 CC, series 20, box 16-A-7, file 3, Fred Grange to Finance Committee, 6 December 1933.
- 55 *Unemployed Worker*, 21 March 1931.
- 56 "Brother," "White Girls," *Vancouver Sun*, 30 January 1932.
- 57 UBCSC, Hotel, Restaurant and Culinary Employees and Bartenders Union, Local 28 Papers, box 5, Minutes of HRE, Local 28, 13 October 1933, 2 March 1936, 20 July 1936, 3 August 1936, 21 September 1936. My understanding of labour relations in restaurants has been greatly influenced by Cobble, *Dishing It Out*.
- 58 John Ahern, "Meal Ticket Charges," *Vancouver Sun*, 17 December 1931.
- 59 CC, series 20, box 15-B-2, file 11, Petition Presented to Alderman Atherton, 4 November 1930. For a discussion of this type of lodging, see Jill Wade, "Home or Homelessness? Marginal Housing in Vancouver, 1886-1950."
- 60 J.S., "Tobacco Tickets," *Vancouver Sun*, 19 December 1931.
- 61 CC, series 20, box 15-D-6, file 10, Letter of the Vancouver Direct Relief Association, n.d. [December 1931].
- 62 CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 14 December 1931; CC, series 20, box 15-C-4, file 5, J.J. Pennycooly to Mayor and City Council, 19 December 1931.
- 63 CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 60, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 25 January 1932.
- 64 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.
- 65 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 2, W.A. Sheppard to Mayor and City Council, 23 December 1931.
- 66 CC, series 20, box 15-F-2, file 2, Report of Special Committee re Relief Tickets on Restaurants, 9 September 1932.
- 67 CC, series 20, box 16-A-6, file 6, W.A. Sheppard to Mayor Taylor, 9 September 1932; CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 7 November 1932.
- 68 Report of Special Committee re Relief Tickets on Restaurants, 9 September 1932.
- 69 CC, series 20, box 15-F-2, file 2, Report of Special Committee re Relief Tickets on Restaurants, 22 September 1932.
- 70 CC, series 20, box 16-A-4, file 7, Special Restaurant Committee, Circular Letter to Restaurants, 28 November 1933.
- 71 CC, series 20, box 16-A-1, file 2, Frank Stead to W.A. Sheppard, 28 October 1933.
- 72 CC, series 20, box 16-A-3, file 5, Henry Noble to Alderman W.W. Smith, 12 April 1933.
- 73 MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 3, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 26 October 1932.
- 74 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.
- 75 CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman W.C. Atherton, 24 November 1930.
- 76 CC, series 20, box 15-F-7, file 1, Donald Campbell to Finance Committee, 23 March 1933.
- 77 VSS, series 450, box 106-B-2, file 5, Memorandum of Relief Officer, 15 April 1931.

- 78 CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 19 October 1931.
- 79 CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 9 November 1931.
- 80 CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 19 December 1932.
- 81 CC, series 20, box 15-E-4, file 9, Austin Levca to Relief Committee, 16 September 1932.
- 82 CC, series 20, box 15-E-7, file 9, Geo. Poke to Mayor Taylor, 1 November 1932 (spelling as in original).
- 83 CC, series 20, box 15-E-6, file 5, E. Odlum to City Council, 26 October 1932.
- 84 CC, series 20, box 15-D-7, file 8, City Clerk to Relief and Employment Committee, 2 November 1932.
- 85 VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-33, Meeting of the City Council, 14 November 1932.
- 86 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 5, John Rivers to Mayor, 17 December 1931.
- 87 CC, series 20, box 15-E-7, file 11, T.R. Rogers to Finance Committee, 4 January 1932. This parallels the discussion of relief as a business subsidy, or “relief capitalism,” in Marcus Klee, “Fighting the Sweatshop in Depression Ontario: Capital, Labour and the Industrial Standards Act.”
- 88 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.
- 89 T.R. Rogers to Finance Committee, 4 January 1932.
- 90 “Civic Relief Heads Scored,” *Vancouver Sun*, 11 December 1931.
- 91 CC, series 20, box 16-A-4, file 14, W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 14 March 1933.
- 92 CC, series 20, box 16-A-1, file 9, H.B. Hungerford to Relief Committee, 4 April 1933.
- 93 CC, series 20, box 16-A-1, file 9, H.B. Hungerford to City Council, 6 March 1933.
- 94 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Chairman, Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.
- 95 Ibid.
- 96 Ibid.; VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-31, Meeting of the City Council, 21 January 1931.
- 97 Meeting of the City Council, 21 January 1931.
- 98 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 8, Report of Special Committee on the Central City Mission, 29 March 1932.
- 99 CC, series 20, box 16-A-1, file 14, E.L. Slevin to Dr. J.W. McIntosh, 13 October 1933.
- 100 Bettina Bradbury, “The Road to Receivership: Unemployment and Relief in Burnaby, North Vancouver City and District and West Vancouver, 1929–1933,” and “‘Trouble Enough’: Gender, Social Policy, and the Politics of Place in Vancouver and Saskatoon, 1929–1939”; John Manley, “‘Starve, Be Damned!’ Communists and Canada’s Urban Unemployed, 1929–1939.”
- 101 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 2, Motions of the Working Class Ex-Servicemen’s League, 28 April 1932.
- 102 CC, series 20, box 15-F-3, file 8, John Baird to City Council, 7 May 1932.
- 103 *Unemployed Worker*, 2 April 1932.
- 104 *Unemployed Worker*, 16 January 1932.
- 105 *Unemployed Worker*, 15 November 1930.
- 106 *Unemployed Worker*, n.d. [January 1931].
- 107 Ibid.
- 108 Background information on Charles and W.C. Woodward can be found in VCA, Add. Mss. 222, Woodward Family Papers, box 566-D-2.
- 109 “Private Citizens Offer to Care for 400 Jobless,” *Vancouver Sun*, 11 November 1930.
- 110 SFT, box 3, file 19, Henry B. Thomson to Premier S.F. Tolmie, 29 June 1931; CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.

- 111 Henry B. Thomson to Premier S.F. Tolmie, 29 June 1931 (emphasis in original).
- 112 Todd McCallum, "‘Still Raining, Market Still Rotten’: Homeless Men and the Early Years of the Great Depression in Vancouver," 356–72.
- 113 CC, series 20, box 15-B-5, file 2, Unnamed to George Ireland, 16 April 1930.
- 114 MO, series 483, box 33-A-5, file 13, H.W. Cooper, Memorandum to City Council, 12 August 1930.
- 115 CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 14 November 1930.
- 116 CC, series 20, box 15-C-7, file 6, A. Leslie Coote to Mr. Simmers, 15 March 1931.
- 117 CC, series 20, box 15-C-4, file 4, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 21 September 1931.
- 118 CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Meeting of the Relief and Employment Committee, 8 September 1931.
- 119 CC, series 20, box 15-E-4, file 1, G.F. Gibson to Alderman Bennett, 19 July 1932.
- 120 VSS, series 449, box 106-A-5, file 10, R.J. Lecky to H.W. Cooper, 8 December 1931.
- 121 CC, series 20, box 15-C-4, file 4, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 21 September 1931; CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.
- 122 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman A.G. Harvey, 25 January 1932.
- 123 *Unemployed Worker*, 17 October 1931.
- 124 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman A.G. Harvey, 8 January 1932.
- 125 VSS, series 449, box 106-A-5, file 10, Memorandum on Vancouver Emergency Refuge, n.d. [August 1932].
- 126 Tutte denied even meeting with Richardson. MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 1, F.H. Richardson to Mayor Taylor; Statement of A.E. Tutte, 3 September 1932; W.R. Bone to Mayor Taylor, 6 September 1932.
- 127 BCA, GR 2586, Provincial Health Officer, Records Regarding Disease Outbreaks, box 3, file 6, Ada Muir and John Baird to H.E. Young, 14 February 1932; H.E. Young to Ada Muir, 19 February 1932; Ada Muir to H.E. Young, 21 February 1932.
- 128 *Unemployed Worker*, 24 October 1931.
- 129 Ada Muir to H.E. Young, 21 February 1932.
- 130 Veteran, "Legion Opens Soup Kitchen in Spite of Relief Promised," *Vancouver Sun*, 8 November 1930.
- 131 CC, series 20, box 15-E-7, file 12, C. Robinson to City Clerk, 21 June 1932; Mary Miller to City Council, 31 October 1932.
- 132 *Unemployed Worker*, 12 September 1931.
- 133 *Unemployed Worker*, 21 November 1931.
- 134 CC, series 20, box 15-D-6, file 10, Demands of Vancouver Unemployed Workers Organization, n.d. [1931].
- 135 H.W. Cooper to Finance Committee, 13 January 1932.
- 136 *Unemployed Worker*, 28 March 1931.
- 137 *Unemployed Worker*, 26 December 1931.
- 138 *Unemployed Worker*, 28 March 1931.
- 139 *Unemployed Worker*, 14 November 1931.
- 140 *Unemployed Worker*, 2 April 1932.
- 141 *Unemployed Worker*, 16 April 1932.
- 142 *Unemployed Worker*, 7 January 1933.
- 143 MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 1, Secretary to the Mayor to W.R. Bone, 19 July 1932.
- 144 *Unemployed Worker*, 14 November 1931.
- 145 During this period, relief recipients who were overpaid by the Relief Department saw future allotments cut until the amount was repaid. VSS, series 449, box 106-A-5, file 10, R.J. Lecky to W.R. Bone, 29 October 1932.

- 146 *Unemployed Worker*, 3 October 1931.
- 147 MO, series 483, box 33-B-2, file 1, Report of F. Jellett to W.R. Bone, 1 August 1932.
- 148 *Unemployed Worker*, 6 February 1932.
- 149 CC, series 20, box 15-E-3, file 4, George Watson to C.N. James, 5 February 1932.
- 150 VCA, Add. Mss. 849, United Way of the Lower Mainland Papers, box 1, file 2, F. Ivor Jackson, History of the Community Chest and Councils of the Greater Vancouver Area, 1960, 2.
- 151 UW2, box 617-A-1, First Annual Meeting, Report of the Board of Directors, 18 May 1931.
- 152 UW2, box 617-A-2, Bylaws of the Vancouver Welfare Federation, n.d.
- 153 VCA, Pamphlet 1931-11, Vancouver Welfare Federation, *If You Were Face to Face* (Vancouver, 1931).
- 154 Ibid.
- 155 F. Ivor Jackson, History of the Community Chest, 165–66.
- 156 CC, series 20, box 15-B-1, file 1, Hamilton Read to City Clerk, 3 November 1930.
- 157 VCA, Pamphlet 1931-2, Vancouver Welfare Federation, *Sure! I'll Share* (Vancouver, 1931).
- 158 Ibid.
- 159 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 8, Report of Special Committee on the Central City Mission, 29 March 1932.
- 160 CCM, box 567-C-5, file 4, Meeting of CCM Board of Directors, 27 November 1930.
- 161 CCM, box 567-C-5, file 4, Meeting of CCM Board of Directors, 11 December 1930.
- 162 CCM, box 567-C-6, file 1, Meeting of CCM Board of Directors, 2 June 1931.
- 163 CCM, box 567-C-6, file 1, Meeting of CCM Board of Directors, 1 December 1931.
- 164 George Watson to C.N. James, 5 February 1932.
- 165 UW2, box 617-A-2, Report of the Budget Committee, 15 February 1932.
- 166 UW2, box 617-A-2, Report re “Reference Slip” System of Preventing Panhandling, as Arranged Between Federation and the Central City Mission, 12 May 1932.
- 167 UW2, box 617-A-2, J.H.T. Falk, Report on Central City Mission Ticket System, 13 April 1932.
- 168 UW2, box 617-A-2, J.H.T. Falk, Some Samples of Cases of Men Using the Ticket System to an Extent Which Indicates the Need for Action on the Part of the Social Worker at the Mission, n.d. [April 1932].
- 169 CCM, box 567-C-6, file 1, Minutes of CCM Executive Committee Meeting, 14 April 1932.
- 170 Report re “Reference Slip” System of Preventing Panhandling, 12 May 1932.
- 171 CCM, box 567-C-6, file 1, Meeting of CCM Board of Directors, 10 May, 5 December 1932.
- 172 CC, series 20, box 16-C-1, file 2, Y.H. Stevenson, “City Mission Lays Cards on Table in Challenge to Mud-Slingers,” 10 January 1934, 2. This purported to be the product of an investigation by the Trans-Canada News Service.
- 173 CC, series 20, box 15-E-3, file 4, Central City Mission, Financial Statement for Month of April 1932.
- 174 Report of Special Committee on the Central City Mission, 29 March 1932.
- 175 CC, series 20, box 15-E-3, file 4, George Watson to Alderman Fraser, 23 March 1932.
- 176 CCM, box 567-C-6, file 1, Meeting of CCM Board of Directors, Evangelist Report for July 1931.
- 177 “City Mission Lays Cards on Table,” 3 (ellipses in original).
- 178 CC, series 20, box 15-D-5, file 3, Arthur Bird to J.W. McIntosh, 25 August 1931; Hynes to J.W. McIntosh, 26 August 1931; J.W. McIntosh to Rev. Nelson Harkness, 26 August 1931.
- 179 George Watson to C.N. James, 5 February 1932.
- 180 George Watson to Alderman Fraser, 23 March 1932.

- 181 CCM, box 567-C-6, file 1, Special Meeting of CCM Board of Directors, 7 June 1932.
 182 George Watson to Alderman Fraser, 23 March 1932.
 183 CC, series 20, box 16-C-1, file 2, John Cameron to Harold Cribb, 19 January 1934.
 184 George Watson to C.N. James, 5 February 1932.
 185 Report of Special Committee on the Central City Mission, 29 March 1932.
 186 CC, series 20, box 15-E-4, file 15, Dr. J.W. McIntosh and Alderman Fraser to Finance Committee, 1 March 1932.
 187 Special Meeting of CCM Board of Directors, 7 June 1932.
 188 CC, series 20, box 15-E-3, file 6, P.G. Drost to City Council, 14 November 1932.
 189 CC, series 20, box 15-C-3, file 2, Arthur Bird to Alderman Dean, 30 March 1931.
 190 CC, series 20, box 15-F-7, file 1, Charles Craig to City Clerk, 6 November 1933; W.E. Pinchin to City Council, 13 November 1933.
 191 UBCSC, Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection, box 33, file 7, Report of Alex Fordyce, Chairman of the Committee to Investigate Any or All of the Agencies in the Welfare Federation, 20 June 1939, 11-17.
 192 CC, series 20, box 15-D-6, file 9, R.H. Neelands to Acting Mayor John Bennett, 8 October 1931.
 193 CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 20 February 1933
 194 George Watson to C.N. James, 5 February 1932.
 195 John Sidaway, *ILP News*, February 1930.
 196 *Vancouver Sun*, 4 December 1929.

Chapter 5: "Work Without Wages," or Paving the Way for Economic Development

- 1 Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, 147.
 2 SFT, box 8, file 21, Charles McHardy to S.F. Tolmie, 31 October 1931.
 3 SFT, box 8, file 22, Pat Philip to S.F. Tolmie, 12 January 1933.
 4 *Ibid.*
 5 The best statement on the centrality of property rights in the early development of British Columbia is Tina Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia, 1821-1871*.
 6 On the identity of civilization and barbarism, see Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History."
 7 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 109.
 8 V.N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and R. Titunik. For a thought-provoking critical use of Vološinov as a corrective for some of the key arguments of British cultural studies as exemplified by the work of Stuart Hall, see Shane Gunster, *Capitalizing on Culture: Critical Theory for Cultural Studies*, esp. 171-215.
 9 Michel Foucault, *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973-1974*, 56.
 10 Foucault also argued that relations of signification were distinct from those of discipline:
 It soon appeared to me that, while the human subject is placed in relations of production and of signification, he is equally placed in power relations that are very complex. Now, it seemed to me that economic history and theory provided a good instrument for relations of production, and that linguistics and semiotics offered instruments for studying relations of signification — but for power relations we had no tools of study. "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault: Power*, 327.
 11 See especially the lecture of 21 November 1973, in *Psychiatric Power*, 39-58.
 12 Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, 66.

- 13 Ibid., 69. It should be noted that Foucault came to reject the experiential framework employed in this book and would no doubt have reworked the notion of an “ethical consciousness” to discard its humanist elements. See “Preface to *The History of Sexuality, Volume 2*,” in *The Foucault Reader*, 333–39.
- 14 Foucault, *History of Madness*, 73.
- 15 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 25–26. See also the argument concerning panopticism in *Discipline and Punish*, 220–21.
- 16 Ibid., 175.
- 17 In this category, we can include Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980*; Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia*; and Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority*.
- 18 For relevant Canadian works on attempts to reform the subjectivity of the poor, see, among others, James Pitsula, “The Treatment of Tramps in Late Nineteenth-Century Toronto,” and Mary Anne Poutanen, “The Homeless, the Whore, the Drunkard and the Disorderly: Contours of Female Vagrancy in the Montreal Courts, 1810–1842.”
- 19 On the economic ideology of Tolmie’s government, see Robert Groves, “Business Government: Party Politics and the BC Business Community, 1928–33,” and Ian Donald Parker, “Simon Fraser Tolmie and the British Columbia Conservative Party, 1916–1933.”
- 20 Peter Campbell, *Canadian Marxists and the Search for a Third Way*; Mark Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia*; Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement 1899–1919*.
- 21 Paul Craven, “An Impartial Umpire”: *Industrial Relations and the Canadian State 1900–1911*.
- 22 The most important letters in this exchange are found in the National Archives of Canada, RG 27, Department of Labour, Strikes and Lockouts files, vol. 350, Strike 17, H.H. Ward to F.E. Harrison, 19 February 1932; M. O’Dougherty to Bolton, 26 February 1932. See also vol. 351, Strike 47, H.H. Ward to P. Philip, 13 May 1932. The federal department continued to clip news articles on relief camp strikes, especially from the *Unemployed Worker*. The standard official paperwork produced by employers and employees, however, was rarely involved.
- 23 James Struthers, for example, does not see the regime of work camps as another form of capitalist production, instead labelling them a “government-sponsored perversion of capitalist values.” *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914–1941*, 98–99, 134.
- 24 Patrick Brennan, “‘Thousands of Our Men Are Getting Practically Nothing at All to Do’: Public Works Relief Programs in Regina and Saskatoon, 1929–1940”; Bill Waiser, *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada’s National Parks, 1915–1946*.
- 25 *Unemployed Worker*, 15 November 1930.
- 26 *Unemployed Worker*, 10 June 1932.
- 27 PW, box 3-B-2, file 4, Minutes of the Public Works Committee, 20 October 1930.
- 28 PW, box 3-B-2, file 4, Minutes of the Public Works Committee, 23 October 1930.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 PW, box 3-B-2, file 4, Minutes of the Public Works Committee, 30 October 1930, 11 November 1930.
- 31 PW, box 3-B-2, file 4, Minutes of the Public Works Committee, 11 November, 1 December 1930.
- 32 PW, box 3-B-2, file 4, Minutes of the Public Works Committee, 27 November, 1 and 15 December 1930.
- 33 PW, box 3-B-2, file 1, Minutes of the Public Works Committee, 12 and 19 January 1931.
- 34 PW, box 3-B-2, file 1, Minutes of the Public Works Committee, 26 January, 2 February, 23 March 1931.

- 35 PW, box 3-B-2, file 1, Minutes of the Public Works Committee, 7, 20, and 27 April 1931.
- 36 PW, box 3-B-2, file 1, Minutes of the Public Works Committee, 16 and 17 June 1931; *Unemployed Worker*, 27 June 1931.
- 37 *Victoria Colonist*, 19 June 1931; *Victoria Times*, 20 June 1931.
- 38 PW, box 3-B-2, file 1, Minutes of the Public Works Committee, 2 and 9 February 1931.
- 39 SFT, box 6, file 9, Frank Ayryss to S.F. Tolmie, 2 June 1931; R.H. Pooley to S.F. Tolmie, 18 June 1931; S.F. Tolmie to R.H. Pooley, 15 July 1931; J.H. McMullin to Jane Denison, 11 July 1931.
- 40 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 13, *The Workers' Voice*, 17 October 1931.
- 41 PW, box 3-B-2, file 4, Minutes of the Public Works Committee, 21 September 1931.
- 42 I thank James Wishart for introducing me to this phrase. See his "Class Difference and the Reformation of Ontario Public Hospitals, 1900-1935: 'Make Every Effort to Satisfy the Tastes of the Well-to-Do.'"
- 43 CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 31 October 1930.
- 44 CC, series 20, box 15-B-4, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 14 November 1930.
- 45 CC, series 20, box 15-B-5, file 3, H.W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 17 November 1930.
- 46 "McInnis Opposes Logger Scheme," *Vancouver Sun*, 4 November 1930.
- 47 "City Seeks Camp for Idle Men," *Vancouver Sun*, 12 November 1930.
- 48 Not a "Bum," "Men Seeking Relief Not 'Bums,'" *Vancouver Sun*, 6 November 1930.
- 49 "Back to the Woods," *Unemployed Worker*, 8 November 1930.
- 50 The term *concentration camp* was one of the popular designations for work relief camps in 1930s North America, indicating the generalized understanding of the centrality of confinement in order for such programs to function effectively.
- 51 CC, series 20, box 15-D-5, file 6, F. Leighton Thomas to Mayor Taylor, 15 January 1931.
- 52 CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 11 November 1930.
- 53 CC, series 20, box 15-D-5, file 1, Report of Committee to Meet the Unemployment Committee of the Provincial Government, 6 January 1931.
- 54 VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-31, 14 January 1931.
- 55 CC, series 20, box 15-D-3, file 2, Arthur Bird to Alderman Atherton, 13 January 1931; Bird to City Clerk, 23 January 1931; P. Walker to City Clerk, 20 January 1931; City Clerk to P. Walker, 26 January 1931; P. Walker to City Clerk, 2 February 1931.
- 56 CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 9 February 1931.
- 57 CC, series 20, box 15-C-7, file 13, Jeanette George to Mayor L.D. Taylor, 12 January 1931.
- 58 CC, series 20, box 15-D-6, file 8, Bernard Warden to Mayor Taylor, 16 January 1931; John McGougan to City Clerk, 18 January 1931.
- 59 CC, series 20, box 15-D-6, file 8, H.B. Devine to Mayor Taylor, 21 January 1931.
- 60 CC, series 33, Committee Minutes, box 26-D, vol. 61, Minutes of the Relief and Employment Committee, 23 February 1931.
- 61 See Todd McCallum, "The Reverend and the Tramp, Vancouver, 1931: Andrew Roddan's *God in the Jungles*."
- 62 *Kamloops Sentinel*, 15 May 1931.
- 63 *Kamloops Sentinel*, 19 May 1931.
- 64 *Kamloops Sentinel*, 22 May 1931.
- 65 *Kamloops Sentinel*, 22 May, 2 June 1931.
- 66 *Kamloops Sentinel*, 5 and 9 June 1931.
- 67 *Kamloops Sentinel*, 9 June 1931.
- 68 *Kamloops Sentinel*, 12 June 1931.

- 69 *Kamloops Sentinel*, 26 and 30 June 1931.
- 70 SFT, box 12, file 23, G.A.B. MacDonald to P. Philip, 12 June 1931.
- 71 SFT, box 12, file 23, J.P. Morgan to P. Philip, n.d. [summer 1931].
- 72 CC, series 20, box 15-D-6, file 10, Union of BC Municipalities, Resolutions to Be Placed Before the Government, n.d. [September 1931].
- 73 CC, series 20, box 15-E-4, file 1, J. Islay Mutter to Mayor Taylor, 15 March 1932.
- 74 SFT, box 1, file 3, S.F. Tolmie to L.R. Andrews, 8 January 1931.
- 75 *Unemployed Worker*, 4 April 1931.
- 76 On the broader context for municipal campaigns, see John Taylor, “Relief from Relief: The Cities’ Answer to Depression Dependency.”
- 77 SFT, box 9, file 8, S.F. Tolmie to R.B. Bennett, 14 January 1931.
- 78 SFT, box 7, file 3, S.F. Tolmie to J.W. Jones, 13 February 1931.
- 79 SFT, box 3, file 20, Clipping from *Salmon Arm Observer*, 25 June 1931.
- 80 SFT, box 8, file 21, Report of the Chief Engineer, Department of Public Works, on the Unemployment Situation, 5 August 1930.
- 81 SFT, box 8, file 19, R.W. Bruhn to S.F. Tolmie, 22 April 1931; R.W. Bruhn to S.F. Tolmie, 30 April 1931.
- 82 See report in Horn, ed.; Struthers.
- 83 SFT, box 12, file 20, S.F. Tolmie to Gideon Robertson, 19 June 1931.
- 84 Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own*, 52–54.
- 85 TDP, vol. 49, file 5, Transcript of Unemployment Inquiry, 4 April 1932, Testimony of R.W. Bruhn, 1004–5.
- 86 SFT, box 12, file 20, Untitled Memorandum on Estimated Cost of Unemployment Relief to 31 July 1932, n.d.; JWJ, vol. 1, file 4, P. Philip to J.W. Jones, 23 October 1931.
- 87 JWJ, vol. 1, file 4, P. Philip to J.W. Jones, 23 October 1931.
- 88 SFT, box 34, file 12, P. Philip, Short Outline of Administration of Unemployment Relief in British Columbia, 6 January 1933.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own*, 57.
- 91 JWJ, vol. 1, file 3, R.B. Bennett to J.W. Jones, 16 October 1931.
- 92 SFT, box 8, file 21, S.F. Tolmie to P. Philip, 19 October 1931.
- 93 SFT, box 7, file 3, Deputy Minister of Finance to Premier Tolmie, 22 October 1931.
- 94 SFT, R. H. Pooley to J.W. Jones, 28 October 1931.
- 95 SFT, J. W. Jones to S.F. Tolmie, 3 November 1931.
- 96 JWJ, vol. 1, file 3, P.B. Fowler to J.W. Jones, 14 October 1931.
- 97 SFT, J. W. Jones to S.F. Tolmie, 30 October 1931.
- 98 SFT, box 7, file 5, E. D. Johnson to Acting Minister of Finance, 31 October 1931.
- 99 SFT, box 12, file 20, P. Philip to all District Engineers, 31 October 1931; SFT, box 9, file 16, S.F. Tolmie, Circular Letter, 2 February 1932. This letter, which outlined the Tolmie cabinet’s rationale for its work camp program, was sent to influential Tories in Ottawa: Brigadier General A.D. McRae, Senator; H.H. Stevens, MP and Minister of Trade and Commerce; John Fraser, MP; W. Esling, MP; H. Barbour, MP; D. B. Plunkett, MP; Grote Sterling, MP; George Black, MP and Speaker; and George H. Barnard, KC and Senator.
- 100 SFT, box 8, file 19, P. Walker, Memorandum for Premier Tolmie, 3 November 1931.
- 101 SFT, box 8, file 21, P. Philip to S.F. Tolmie, 16 November 1931.
- 102 SFT, box 12, file 20, S.F. Tolmie to R.B. Bennett, 21 December 1931.
- 103 SFT, box 12, file 20, J.W. Jones to E.B. Ryckman, 5 November 1931.
- 104 SFT, box 8, file 19, Resolution of the Central Conservative Association of Salmon Arm, n.d.
- 105 SFT, box 1, file 18, Speech of Premier S.F. Tolmie, Annual Meeting of the BC Conservative Association, 27–28 November 1931, 23–24.

- 106 SFT, box 12, file 25, P. Philip to S.F. Tolmie, 27 October 1931.
- 107 JWJ, vol. 1, file 3, J.B. Knowles to J.W. Jones, 31 October 1931.
- 108 SFT, box 8, file 19, S.G. Blaylock to S.F. Tolmie, 26 October 1931.
- 109 SFT, box 8, file 19, R.W. Bruhn to S.F. Tolmie, 28 October 1931.
- 110 UBCSC, Nelson Seymour Lougheed Papers, box 1, file 1, N.S. Lougheed, Memorandum for the Premier, 5 May 1932.
- 111 SFT, box 7, file 11, Analysis Made of Kidd Report, 3 September 1932.
- 112 SFT, box 9, file 19, S.F. Tolmie to George Black, 31 October 1931.
- 113 SFT, box 21, file 2, J.W. Jones to A.H. Williamson, 23 December 1932.
- 114 TDP, vol. 39, file 10, T.D. Pattullo's Address to the Annual Meeting of the Victoria Liberal Association, 17 October 1930, 4.
- 115 TDP, vol. 41, file 15, Victor Odium to T.D. Pattullo, 18 December 1931 (ellipses in original).
- 116 SFT, box 21, file 2, Report of Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly on Unemployment, 11 April 1932, 4, 6.
- 117 In his regular column, "In the House," Michael Smyth quoted Patricia Roy's view of Tolmie's "lacklustre administration." *Vancouver Province*, 17 July 1998, A6.
- 118 See, for example, the complaints of Percy Broadfoot, a Conservative Party functionary, to leading federal Tories like H.H. Stevens and Leon Ladner. VCA. Add. Mss. 641, Leon J. Ladner Papers, vol. 7, file 45, Percy Broadfoot to General A.D. McRae and others, 30 May 1929.
- 119 The best account of patronage and the Tories is Parker, "Simon Fraser Tolmie."
- 120 SFT, box 11, file 17, D.T. Scott to S.F. Tolmie and Members of Parliament, 27 March 1931.
- 121 SFT, box 6, file 9, R.H. Pooley to S.F. Tolmie, 25 August 1930.
- 122 See the exchange between Tolmie and the Saanich Conservative Association in SFT, box 3, file 19: A.H. Spurr to S.F. Tolmie, 31 August 1931; S.F. Tolmie to A.H. Spurr, 5 September 1931; A.H. Spurr to S.F. Tolmie, 10 September 1931; S.F. Tolmie to A.H. Spurr, 9 October 1931.
- 123 SFT, box 1, file 18, Minutes of the Executive Committee of the BC Conservative Association, 13 February 1932.
- 124 SFT, box 8, file 21, John McBride to S.F. Tolmie, 28 October 1931.
- 125 SFT, box 1, file 18, C.E. Barry to Lindley Crease, 12 March 1932.
- 126 SFT, box 1, file 12, A. MacArthur to S.F. Tolmie, 1 November 1932.
- 127 D.T. Scott to S.F. Tolmie and Members of Parliament, 27 March 1931.
- 128 S.F. Tolmie, Circular Letter, 2 February 1932.
- 129 Ibid.
- 130 TDP, vol. 49, file 5, Transcript of Unemployment Inquiry, 4 April 1932, Testimony of Pat Philip, 998.
- 131 SFT, box 8, file 19, Dr. C.M. Kingston to S.F. Tolmie, 19 September 1931.
- 132 TDP, vol. 34, file 1, L.L. Adams to T.D. Pattullo, 8 December 1931.
- 133 SFT, box 7, file 9, Ed Bush to S.F. Tolmie, 6 April 1932.
- 134 Report of Select Committee, 6.
- 135 Report of Select Committee, 13–15. There is no record that the hearings were broadcast on the radio; Brown may have referred to news reports about the committee hearings.
- 136 Ibid.
- 137 SFT, box 6, file 12, R.H. Pooley to S.F. Tolmie, 18 October 1930; SFT, box 2, file 23, Ku Klux Klan to S.F. Tolmie, 29 September 1932, and W.H. Morrison to S.F. Tolmie, 7 August 1933; and the numerous letters from Morrison in box 5, files 12 and 13.
- 138 SFT, box 21, file 7, Extract from *Victoria Times-Colonist*, 13 November 1931.
- 139 See, for example, SFT, box 21, file 25, Extract from *Vancouver Province*, 18 December 1931.

- 140 TDP, vol. 45, file 20A, T. D. Pattullo to G. L. Fraser, 18 August 1932.
- 141 SFT, box 21, file 25, Speech by Honourable T. D. Pattullo at the Hotel Vancouver, 24 September 1931.
- 142 Report of Select Committee, 6-7.
- 143 TDP, vol. 43, file 4, Memorandum on Unemployment and Farm Relief Act 1931, Analysis of Expenditures, 15 February 1932.
- 144 TDP, vol. 49, file 13, Partial Transcript of Unemployment Inquiry, n.d., Testimony of Pat Philip, 770.
- 145 Imagine the following hypothetical scenario. Suppose the average common labourer on a road-building project earns \$4.00 per day, the standard for this class of work in the fall of 1931, to shovel a hundred mounds of dirt. They are free to spend this wage as they like at the end of the day. Assuming a one-to-one relationship between wages earned and dirt shovelled, the labourer would receive \$2.40 for a day for which their efficiency rate was 60 percent. In the relief camps, married men received \$2.80 and single men \$2.00. However, the government received not only labour but also 85 cents per day in automatic deductions. The cost to the Tolmie government to house transients was 87.1 cents (60.5 for food and 26.6 for overhead costs), meaning a loss of 2.1 cents per man per day. In other words, camp inmates paid for their own food and shelter. In reality, married men cleared \$1.95 and single men \$1.20 on the days they worked. On idle days, they would lose money. To this must be added high prices at government stores. Selling for above-market prices, goods like blankets, rain slickers, boots, and tobacco returned a share of the relief wage to the state. Thus, it is not clear that the economic policies of Philip's camp system were less efficient or fiscally sound than the traditional workings of industries like construction, logging, and mining.
- 146 Partial Transcript of Unemployment Inquiry, n.d., Testimony of Pat Philip, 771-72.
- 147 UBCSC, A. M. Stephen Papers, box 2, scrapbook 2, A. M. Stephen, "Starve Quietly, My Sons!," 1 May 1932.
- 148 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 8, Report of P. G. Griffin, D. Gillis, George Hurst, and H. H. Strong to Inspector Thomson, 27 September 1931.
- 149 On federal deportation policies in this period, see Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada, 1900-1935*.
- 150 P. G. Griffin et al. to Inspector Thomson.
- 151 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 9, H. W. Cooper to Alderman Atherton, 28 September 1931.
- 152 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 9, Unemployed Delegation to Colonel Cooper, 28 September 1931.
- 153 Ibid.
- 154 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 11, "Demonstrate at City Hall" handbill, n.d. [September 1931].
- 155 Unemployed Delegation to Colonel Cooper, 28 September 1931.
- 156 Ibid. Workers were to be paid for time lost due to inclement weather, since the province intended to deduct board charges daily, whether or not work was done. The delegation also called for meal tickets to be redeemable at any restaurant and for the release of all "class war prisoners."
- 157 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H. T. Whitehead to H. W. Cooper, 12 January 1932.
- 158 CC, series 20, box 15-D-4, file 9, H. W. Cooper to J. Brodsky, 28 September 1931.
- 159 VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 13, Acting Chief Constable to Chief Constable D. C. Draper, 5 October 1931.
- 160 *Unemployed Worker*, 3 October 1931.
- 161 *Unemployed Worker*, 10 October 1931.
- 162 Speech of Premier S. F. Tolmie, 27-28 November 1931, 25.

- 163 Partial Transcript of Unemployment Inquiry, n.d., Testimony of Pat Philip, 755.
- 164 *Unemployed Worker*, 17 October 1931.
- 165 *Ibid.*
- 166 UBCSC, Nelson Seymour Lougheed Papers, box 1, file 5, Equipment Inventory, Abernethy Lougheed Logging Company Ltd., 31 October 1931.
- 167 TDP, vol. 43, file 4, P. Philip to J.B. Sutherland, 17 September 1931; SFT, box 12, file 24, Report on Allco Camps Presented to Hon. R.H. Pooley, Acting Minister of Finance, 9 November 1931; Equipment Inventory, Abernethy Lougheed Logging Company Ltd.
- 168 Report on Allco Camps Presented to Hon. R.H. Pooley, 9 November 1931.
- 169 S.F. Tolmie, Circular Letter, 2 February 1932.
- 170 SFT, box 12, file 20, S.F. Tolmie to H.H. Stevens, 20 June 1931.
- 171 SFT, box 12, file 20, S.F. Tolmie to R.B. Bennett, 20 June 1931.
- 172 S.F. Tolmie Circular Letter, 2 February 1932.
- 173 *Ibid.* See also Speech of Premier S.F. Tolmie, Annual Meeting of the BC Conservative Association, 24.
- 174 Partial Transcript of Unemployment Inquiry, n.d., Testimony of Pat Philip, 734-35.
- 175 SFT, box 12, file 20, S.F. Tolmie to Leon Ladner, 12 December 1931.
- 176 "They did not now consider a man who went out to the camps as a scab, but if they had to go, go down to 49 Powell E & get their credentials so as to carry on the organizing amongst their camps." VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, file 14, Report of H.G. Smith to Deputy Chief Hood, 30 October 1931. The police were detailed to attend meetings of the National Unemployed Workers' Association, the Canadian Labor Defence League and the Working-Class Ex-Servicemen's League. Their reports are collected in VPD, series 199, box 75-F-1, files 13 and 14.
- 177 *Unemployed Worker*, 21 November 1931.
- 178 *Unemployed Worker*, 10 October 1931.
- 179 *Unemployed Worker*, 6 February 1932.
- 180 CC, series 20, box 15-D-6, file 9, R.E. Timmins to City Clerk, 26 June 1931.
- 181 CC, series 20, box 15-E-3, file 4, C.E. Palmer to City Council, 27 February 1932.
- 182 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman A.G. Harvey, 18 January 1932.
- 183 CC, series 20, box 15-F-1, file 1, H.W. Cooper to Alderman A.G. Harvey, 21 March 1932.
- 184 SFT, box 8, file 19, R.W. Bruhn to S.F. Tolmie, 28 October 1931.
- 185 SFT, box 3, file 9, W.S. Simpson to S.F. Tolmie, 20 July 1933.
- 186 Report of Select Committee, 6.
- 187 *Unemployed Worker*, 31 October 1931.
- 188 *Unemployed Worker*, 5 December 1931.
- 189 *Unemployed Worker*, 14 November 1931.
- 190 TDP, vol. 41, file 14, Charles Lord to T.D. Pattullo, 19 October 1931.
- 191 TDP, vol. 49, file 5, Residents of Camp at Cloyah Bay to T.D. Pattullo, 30 December 1931.
- 192 *Unemployed Worker*, 19 December 1931.
- 193 *Unemployed Worker*, 20 February 1932.
- 194 *Unemployed Worker*, 7 January 1933.
- 195 *Unemployed Worker*, 16 January, 6 February 1932.
- 196 *Unemployed Worker*, 26 December 1931.
- 197 *Unemployed Worker*, 27 February 1932.
- 198 *Unemployed Worker*, 16 January 1932.
- 199 *Unemployed Worker*, 2 and 30 January 1932.
- 200 *Montreal Star*, 15 February 1932.
- 201 National Archives of Canada, RG 27, Department of Labour, Strikes and Lockouts files, vol. 351, Strike 47, P. Philip to H.H. Ward, 27 April 1932.

- 202 *Vancouver Sun*, 5 May 1932.
- 203 *Unemployed Worker*, 27 February 1932.
- 204 *Vancouver Sun*, 12 February 1932; *Victoria Times*, 12 February 1932; *The Worker*, 27 February 1932.
- 205 *Unemployed Worker*, 20 February 1932.
- 206 *Nelson News*, 24 February 1932.
- 207 *Vancouver Province*, 24 February 1932.
- 208 *The Worker*, 27 February 1932.
- 209 *Unemployed Worker*, 12 March 1932.
- 210 Leon Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, (emphasis in original). The full title is “The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International: The Mobilization of the Masses Around Transitional Demands to Prepare the Conquest of Power.” Also known as the Transitional Program, it was published in the May–June 1938 issue of *Bulletin of the Opposition* and is available at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1938/tp/index.htm>.
- 211 CC, series 20, box 15-E-3, file 1, Wilberforce Cooper to City Council, 24 February 1932.
- 212 *Ibid.*
- 213 *Unemployed Worker*, 12 September 1931.
- 214 *Unemployed Worker*, 24 October 1931.
- 215 *Unemployed Worker*, 21 November 1931.
- 216 “Higher Mathematics for the Unemployed,” *Unemployed Worker*, 5 March 1932.
- 217 “Higher Mathematics.”
- 218 CC, series 20, box 16-A-6, file 6, E.A. Gillingwater to Alderman Miller, 15 December 1932.
- 219 “Higher Mathematics.”
- 220 *Ibid.*
- 221 CC, series 33, box 26-D, vol. 61, Meeting of the Relief and Employment Committee, 22 February 1932.
- 222 *Ibid.*
- 223 *Ibid.*
- 224 VCA, City Council Minutes, MCR 1-32, Meeting of the City Council, 23 February 1932.
- 225 *Unemployed Worker*, 5 March 1932.
- 226 Arthur Evans to City Council, 4 March 1932. Evans’s claim was not altogether unfounded. The City of Vancouver had organized a celebratory dinner to commemorate the arrival of one of the Siamese Royal Family in the summer of 1931.
- 227 BPC, series 180, box 75-A-2, file 2, Meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners, 5 March 1932.
- 228 *Unemployed Worker*, 5 March 1932.
- 229 *The Worker*, 16 April 1932.
- 230 *Unemployed Worker*, 2 and 9 April 1932.
- 231 *Unemployed Worker*, 5 March 1932; National Archives of Canada, RG 27, Department of Labour, Strikes and Lockouts files, vol. 352, Strike 104, J.M. Campbell to Bolton, 9 August 1932.
- 232 *Vancouver Province*, 6 May 1932.
- 233 *Vancouver Sun*, 5 May 1932. This would be the Scottsboro Boys.
- 234 *Vancouver Province*, 7 May 1932.
- 235 Stanley Hutcheson, *Depression Stories*, 78–79.
- 236 National Archives of Canada, MG 30, Department of National Defence Papers, vol. 58, file 361, vol. 1, “Present Situation in Camps,” 24 May 1933. Thanks to Paul Jackson for this reference.

Conclusion: Vancouver, “The Mecca of the Surplus”

- 1 “Fitter Happier” is from the 1997 album *OK Computer* (EMI). Lyrics can be found at <http://www.greenplastic.com/radiohead-lyrics/ok-computer/fitter-happier/>. It says something about the power of Fordist ideas that the computerized voice used in “Fitter Happier” was described by Thom Yorke, lead singer of Radiohead, as “the most emotional voice I have ever heard.”
- 2 John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power*, chapter 1. The entire book is available at <http://libcom.org/library/change-world-without-taking-power-john-holloway>.
- 3 This is the root premise of many classic studies of relief provision for the poor. See, for example, Richard B. Splane, *Social Welfare in Ontario, 1791–1893: A Study of Public Welfare Administration*.
- 4 G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests*, 43, 52 (emphasis in original).
- 5 James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*.
- 6 The Relief Department bears some responsibility for the armies of homeless men who descended upon Vancouver, since many of their policies were designed first and foremost to turn poor men into transients for administrative and financial purposes.
- 7 *Kamloops Sentinel*, 3 January 1930.
- 8 David Rees, *Get Your War On*. The cartoon quoted was posted on 7 August 2002 at <http://www.mnftiu.cc> but has since been removed from the site.
- 9 CC, series 20, box 15-E-4, file 11, City Council Motion Sheet, Aldermen Deptford and Dean, 15 August 1932.
- 10 CC, series 20, box 16-A-3, file 1, City Council Motion Sheet, Aldermen Smith and Deptford, 8 March 1933.
- 11 James Overton, “Public Relief and Social Unrest in Newfoundland in the 1930s: An Evaluation of the Ideas of Piven and Cloward.”

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Add. Mss. 3, Thomas Dufferin Pattullo Papers

Add. Mss. 23, J.W. Jones Papers

Add. Mss. 2659, John Thompson Papers

GR 666, BC Provincial Police, Crime Analysis and Fines Records

City of Victoria Archives

CRS 28, Public Works Committee Records

CVS 81, City of Victoria, Relief Committee Minutes

National Archives of Canada

MG 30, Department of National Defence Papers

RG 27, Department of Labour, Strikes and Lockouts Files

University of British Columbia, Special Collections

A. M. Stephen Papers

Angus MacInnis Memorial Collection

British Columbia Liberal Association Papers

Nelson Seymour Lougheed Papers

Premier Simon Fraser Tolmie Papers

Vancouver and District Labour Council Papers

William Bennett Memorial Collection

Vancouver City Archives

Add. Mss. 54, Major James Skitt Matthews Collection

Add. Mss. 222, Woodward Family Papers

Add. Mss. 378, Amy Edwards Papers
Add. Mss. 576, Central City Mission Papers
Add. Mss. 618, Vancouver Real Estate Exchange Papers
Add. Mss. 641, Leon J. Ladner Papers
Add. Mss. 849 and 849-2, United Way of the Lower Mainland Papers
City Clerks' Papers
City Council Minutes
Financial Services Papers
Health Department Papers
Papers of the Mayor's Office
Vancouver Board of Police Commissioners Papers
Vancouver Police Department Papers
Vancouver Social Service Department Papers

Vancouver School of Theology

United Church Archives, First United Church (Institutional Mission) Papers

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