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Delegates to Rossland Convention before the old WFM Hall.

B.C. DISTRICT

UNION NEWS

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July, 1955

Rossland Hall Again Throbs to History As Canadian Autonomy Becomes Fact

How nice Swales, worky Bacon
Caul 7/15/55

ROSSLAND—Midst historic surroundings dear to the hearts of the hard-rock miners and smelters, the Rossland Miners' Hall provided a fitting place for the coming into being of the fully autonomous Canadian union.

From the time when the convention opened on Monday, July 18, to the close, those of us who were present will never forget the series of outstanding events that brought the dream of the original founders of our great International Union in Canada to full realization. The members of the Mine, Mill and Smelterworkers Union, those of the present, and the hardy old-timers of the past, were as one in voice and deed and the labor movement of this continent, whose eyes were on Rossland for those days, witnessed events of great importance.

The final act of the convention was in the historic installation of the first elected executive board. How fitting it was that International President John Clark, who in the same district joined the W.F.M. in 1900, reading from the ritual drawn up by the W.F.M. installed President Neil Thibault, Vice-Presidents Harvey Murphy and William Kennedy; Secretary-Treasurer William Longridge; Ken Smith, board member, District 1; and Ray Stevenson, board member, District 2.

A constitution was drawn up by the delegates, based upon the present constitution, that unites the whole International, but it is the first Canadian constitution with the historic and famous preamble intact, setting out the principles that have been proven in the struggles and triumphs in the sixty-two years since they were written by the great men of our union.

A referendum vote by the rank and file throughout the Canadian section will now be taken; in the meantime the constitution will govern the actions of the newly-elected executive in the whole union.

Local 480, Trail and District Smelterworkers honored the newly-elected executive, guests and delegates to the convention at a banquet at the Colombo Hall, where the officers of Local 480 and their womenfolk together with the delegates and guests celebrated the event.

The first business of the convention was an emergency resolution pledging to our membership in the International Nickel, the huge international combine which refused to bargain in good faith, and forced Local 584, Sudbury and Local 637, Port Colborne, into a conciliation board. The Canadian membership as a whole not only pledged full support, but notified

Inco that they were taking on not only our membership in Sudbury and Port Colborne, but the whole Canadian, and for that matter, our U.S., membership. A unanimous vote recommended to all local unions an immediate five dollar assessment as an expression of the resolve of our union that if Inco does not settle, the whole union will be involved.

While the convention was taking place, our U.S. members were on the picket lines against the big American copper trusts, and the convention greeted their struggle and showed that while organizationally the Canadian and U.S. membership are autonomous, this does not mean separation in any struggle for conditions, and for the preservation of the union. We are all one.

Throughout the whole of the convention on all questions pertaining to the union, its pro-

gram and policies, the seventy delegates acted decisively and with determination. Committees and officers alike, under the capable chairmanship of Ken Smith, president of the Canadian Council, worked through in a way that brought praise and compliments from the honored old-timers who have witnessed many conventions and gatherings. President Clark, Brothers George Casey, George Dingwall and other veterans were present at our other great conventions in the past chaired by the first President Bryce, and by Moir and William Haywood. Their happiness and pride were expressed in every way.

The townspeople of Rossland and Trail who met our delegations from the east, from the Yukon and from Yellowknife and Saskatchewan and the British Columbian mining and smelting towns, complimented the delegates on their conduct and dignified behavior.

The resolutions adopted by the convention were highlighted by resolutions pledging this union to develop true internationalism; that the autonomous Canadian union will work closely with workers in our industry all over the world; will work to unite the working people in Canada and develop one metal miners and smelterworkers union. We will unite with all

organizations, but on a basis of equality and the preservation of the democratic rights of our membership, and shall maintain the referendum principle of all important questions. This is indelibly stamped into our conduct and preserved in our constitution. This we will yield to none. We will protect all men and their rights of race, religion, and political action.

The convention received greetings from unions all over
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BALDERSON ELECTED FOR 13th TERM

BRITANNIA—J. H. Balderson is president of Local 663 for his 13th term, following 1955 elections here, with J. Downie vice-president for Mt. Sheer and Henry Loozen vice-president for the Beach.

Other officers are G. A. Bennet, again business agent and secretary; treasurer, D. Puras, recording secretary for Mt. Sheer, and L. R. Simpson in the same office for the Beach; wardens, Brothers Anderson and Markoff, Mt. Sheer and Beach respectively; Mt. Sheer trustees W. W. White, Art Hagen, and Henry Vankuyk; Beach trustees, Bill Bells and Sam Pickering.