

## Chapter 2 The Nine-Hour Crusade

James S. Williams didn't waste time stewing in jail after his arrest for seditious conspiracy in the spring of 1872. He and 12 other organizers of the Toronto printers' strike, also arrested for their trade union activities, spent at least some of their time plotting the founding of the *Ontario Workman*, Canada's first true labour newspaper.

As a leader of Local 91 of the Toronto Trades Assembly, Williams, along with TTU president and TTA assembly trustee Joseph C. McMillan and fellow master printer David Sleeth Jr., knew the value of reaching union members with a new labour journal. Once Sir John A. Macdonald's Conservatives passed the Trades Union Act later that year, the movement would need information to stimulate organizing drives. It would also need a voice to speak out when Macdonald undermined the act legalizing unions by passing a second clone of Britain's labour statutes, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which prohibited essential union activities such as picketing and other forms of protest.

As key players in what was becoming known as Toronto's labour junta, the London-born Williams and his Scottish co-conspirator McMillan lobbied hard for changes to these laws. They eventually saw their efforts rewarded when strikes were legalized and official discrimination against workers lessened with the passage of several amendments in the mid-1870s. Through it all, the *Workman* would prove their strongest lobbying tool.

The junta, including future Toronto mayor Edward F. Clarke, knew that they could not count on the daily press to present their views either accurately or sympathetically. They could expect little solace from these papers and might have rotted in jail waiting for the party press to rise to their cause. The *Globe*, owned by the notoriously anti-labour George Brown, could be counted on to blast the printers. During the 1872 Toronto printers' strike, Brown hired scabs, published fiery anti-labour editorials and made speeches bitterly denouncing the demands for the printers had struck.

The same new technology, cheap newsprint and improved transportation and communications systems that made it cheaper to produce the new dailies also made it technically easier to start the *Workman*. And the hostile journalistic climate created by Brown made it increasingly desirable for Williams and his colleagues to do so. He hoped his brothers and sisters in the movement would support the idea and that local merchants would be attracted to the paper as an advertising medium (\$150 a column inch for a year).

But like any such venture, Canada's first official labour newspaper needed a cause. It found one in the printers' strike and the TTU's demand for a 54-hour work week (nine-hour day) with no decrease in wages. It was a cause that would also serve as what nine-hour movement historian John Batty called the "genesis" of the Canadian labour movement.

The printers' strike ended in mid-March 1872. A month later, on Thursday, April 18, the *Workman* published its first issue. It was eventually to become the house organ of the TTA, Canada's first city-wide labour central, and the voice of the entire movement. But like other labour papers to follow, the eight-page tabloid hardly riveted the new country's 50,000 industrial labourers to their work benches. At five cents a copy, it was somewhat overpriced compared to the penny dailies. Still, it did appeal to the few thousand activists in the new movement who wanted news from a labour perspective.

Williams declared this lofty ideal under the *Workman*'s logo: "The equalization of all elements of society in the social scale should be the true aim of civilization." He also boasted that the paper would expose "the true cause of all evils that labour complains of," and "with equal plainness and fearlessness show that a simple and effectual remedy can be applied to the removal of the evils."

The *Workman* began life under the auspices of the Toronto Co-operative Printing Company. But the "outspoken new labour paper," as historians Desmond Morton and Terry Copp describe it, could not survive as a co-op despite the conventional belief in labour circles that co-operation was the best route to social reform for the working classes.

In September 1872, Williams, McMillan and Sleeth, all neighbours on Ontario Street, hatched a plan to rescue the failing paper. Their personal funds depleted, the three men turned to the highest power in the land, Sir John A. Macdonald. The prime minister responded to the call for help by first pressuring cabinet minister Sir Alex Campbell to buy government advertising in the *Workman*. Still, the paper could not sustain itself without much broader support from the movement. However, radicals in the newly built house of labour were reluctant to encourage such support, since they believed that the TTU leaders had curried favour with the Conservatives. The trio's next move sullied their reputation ever more.

Believing that the *Workman* was key to the survival of the labour movement, Williams again went to Macdonald. This time he and his cohorts pleaded for a loan so they could buy the paper. The little cabinetmaker, as the prime minister nicknamed himself, promptly sent \$500 to the *Workman*. "I don't suppose I will ever get the money," he snorted, "but I may as well keep it over them as security for good behaviour." It was a cardinal sin in the eyes of some labourites.

Bernard Ostry, a student of early Canadian labour politics, argues that Williams and the others "must always suffer the accusations of having committed an unethical deed by secretly and irresponsibly compromising their supposedly independent labour journal, and thereby jeopardizing the future of their colleagues and of the movement of which they were respected national leaders."

Ostry adds, however, that "as the only recognized working class weekly in trade union hands, it was an invaluable weapon and one can appreciate the owners' desire to keep it running even at the cost of borrowing from its opponents." Critics of the deal felt

differently, but in the end it was a tempest in a teapot. Six months after the load was made, in the spring of 1873, Macdonald had his hands full with the Pacific Scandal. Trying unsuccessfully to hold power under a Grit barrage of charges that he had taken over \$300,000 in political donations from the future builders of the national railway, he did not likely have time to worry about the *Workman*. Indeed, “no evidence has yet been brought to light to suggest that Macdonald brought pressure to bear upon the journal to pursue a policy sympathetic to his party,” says Ostry, “or that the fact of the loan itself was in any way a barrier to frank and honest discussion of labour problems in the *Workman*’s columns.”

With funds secured, the trio agreed that Williams, who had once published the *Uxbridge Times*, would be the paper’s new “superintendent.” As a first order of business, he promised readers that the paper would “know no party,” but would “advocate the repeal of all laws having a class tendency.” As the official organ of the nine-hour movement, the *Workman*’s first goal was to cover the fight for shorter working hours with vigorous determination.

The Toronto paper wasn’t alone in its support of the movement for shorter hours. Other labour papers sprang up to rally workers around the issue. The *Western Workman* in London, Ontario, “echoed the same themes [as the Ontario Workman],” says Steven Langdon in his book on the emergence of the Canadian working-class movement, “attacking the poverty which industrial capitalism brought with it, and stressing the ‘inherent indestructible energy’ of the working class – ‘which no power could conquer or overthrow’.”

The *Workman’s Journal*, probably published in Toronto, may also have been a nine-hours supporter. As was its habit, the *Ontario Workman* advised its readers to watch for this new paper, and it hailed the appearance of the *Journal*, noting that its “columns are unreservedly dedicated to the advocacy of these interests so dear to workingmen, and the ability with which the subjects most closely connected with those interests are handled speaks volumes for its ultimate success.”

In Hamilton, James A. Fahey’s daily *Standard* had provided sympathetic coverage of the Toronto printers’ strike and thus earned the respect of nine-hours leader James Ryan. Fahey’s biographer Russell Hann notes that Ryan supported the daily for what he termed its “protective spirit and conservative proclivities.” But Williams didn’t share the appreciation. He soon condemned the *Standard* for its “mercenary disposition.”

“Too long have the labourers of the world been the stepladders to fame and emolument to designing and unprincipled men,” Williams wrote in condemning Fahey, “but in this instance the man in question, though sufficiently mean, had not brains enough to use the working classes at sufficient length to give him competency.” Williams predicted that Fahey would cease to be a nine-hours supporter when labour subsidies ceased and the influence of the nine-hour movement that brought them “has ceased to be dreaded by the monied classes.”

Having dismissed its only competition, the *Workman* made shorter hours a *cause celebre* in its pages. Various called “a social revolution” and “a matter of urgent social necessity,” reduced hours of work were seen as a general panacea for many social ills.

Nine-hour advocates reasoned that workers would be able to spend more hours education themselves, in line with labour’s view that education was the great class equalizer. More time to cultivate a healthier, happier family life would in turn mean better social security in old age. Workers would also become more productive because they would be healthier and less tired on the job. “Its supporters claimed that legal limitation of the hours of work would help to relieve unemployment as well as give working men more leisure,” notes Elizabeth Wallace. For a time some Toronto merchants even supported the idea, thinking it would strengthen their own campaign for earlier shop closings.

In the United States, the shorter hours movement became “a fight for the liberty of the worker,” according to historian David Montgomery. Labour radicals saw the movement challenging the very notion of private property. The prominent American labour journal, *Fincher’s Trade Review*, stressed the importance of the issue by including the following slogan in its masthead: “Eight Hours, A Legal Day’s Work for Freemen.”

Despite all the ballyhoo, the movement failed to deliver on the main goal of shortening the work day; that would take a far greater effort and several more years. In fact, although the labour movement put up a radical front through the labour press, it seldom managed to live up to the militant billing it received. It was rarely able to mobilize forces to fight the essentially conservative political parties.

But, as Battye says, it did bring about the “first newspaper written by and for Canadian workingmen, a vehicle through which working-class aspirations could be expressed without depending upon the doubtful and selective favours of the commercial press.” The *Workman* dedicated itself to that chore with great energy. Quickly branching out from the nine-hour issues, the paper argued that “a thorough and general system of education [must be] one of the first duties of the state.” And it did “warmly support the principle of UNION among workingmen.” The weekly honoured its pledges through commentaries on working and living conditions, critiques of laws aimed at controlling trade union activities, and its coverage of the political dog fights between Grits and Tories vying for the labour vote.

The *Workman* also found plenty of space for dispensing advice, which would become a hallmark of the pioneer labour press. A member of numerous lodges and fraternal associations, including the Orange Order and the Masons, Williams had long cultivated his strong views on proper personal conduct. Few editions passed without at least one lecture on the frivolous purchase of tobacco and alcohol, two of the most readily available escapes from a life of drudgery.

‘you are wasting every year in smoke and drink a sum which if saved and taken good care of,’ Williams wrote, “would make you independent at sixty years of age, or set you up in a business of your own at thirty, with some prospects of success.” Workers were

told to “fare hard and work hard while you are young, and you will have a chance to rest when you are old.”

Williams seldom missed an opportunity to pass on paternalistic preachings. An example: “The highest riches do not consist in princely income; there is greater wealth than this. It consists of a good constitution, a good heart, stout limbs, a sound mind, and a clear conscience.” Similar bits of advice on how to live frugal and clean lives came under titles such as “Starting in the world,” “Do the Right Thing,” and “Stealing, Lying and Slandering.” Such items endeared the paper to temperance advocates and church goers, but were unlikely to bring about badly needed social changes. Still, Williams filled his paper with some of the liveliest commentary of the period.

Readers could pick and choose among the many issues of the day. Articles dealt with “Education and Employment for Girls,” “A Liberal Land Policy,” Suffrage for Women,” “Household Education,” “Labour and Knowledge,” and “Underpaid Work.” The *Workman* offered its subscribers “Foreign,” “American,” and “Canadian” news mixed with lengthy columns of “Labour Notes” and numerous anecdotes. Moral teachings and tidbits of wisdom and folly were amassed in tiny type under headlines such as “Sawdust and Chips,” “Grains of Sand,” and “Tales and Sketches.”

On the literary page, the paper supplied “a good deal of didactic and hortatory doggerel in favour of the workingman’s cause,” according to literary historian Frank Watt. “During these early stages of Canadian radicalism the potential power of literature was gradually realized,” he suggests, adding that the “seeds of understanding were already present in the *Ontario Workman*.”

Williams did, indeed, publish some bad poetry. But his heart was in the right place. “Despite the editorial view that creative writing was mere entertainment and diversion from the troubles of life,” he told readers, “we will be invited now and then to turn aside from the turmoil and strike of that world, and find peaceful enjoyment.”

Victorian society already sponsored many publications, all of which competed fiercely for the working-class reader’s time, money and allegiance. They seldom attempted to represent the nascent labour movement, leaving this domain to the *Workman* alone. But they did appeal to what historian Peter Roger Mountjoy called “working-class conservatism.”

Mountjoy argues that evangelists and political activists could publish until they were blue in the face in an effort to divert working-class readers from their apparently natural course of seeking escapism and pleasure. Such political and religious reading material could only reach workers if they added to the plethora of mass entertainment already available to them from other sources. “All who sought to influence the working classes learnt to copy the techniques of the entertainment press,” Mountjoy added, and that included the Canadian labour press founded by British immigrants.

The conservative element was also much catered to be what media historian Paul Rutherford called a “veritable supermarket of newspaper delights” in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century – various leisure, temperance, religious, family and other entertainment publications. Amidst all the light-hearted humour, popular recipes, and a moral tale or household tip would inevitably come the anti-union, anti-radical bias.

So when Williams opted for the odd poem, serialized a novel or printed a joke, he was not doubt thinking of the *Workman*’s survival in a crowded market place. For the paper to carry on, it had to emulate the competition to some extent. To build a readership beyond the labour activists, the *Workman* had to reach out to the more conservative rand and file workers.

This did not mean the paper abandoned its causes. Where it provided “Household recipes” and the like, it also bolstered the struggle for women’s rights. In “Ballot Women,” for example, readers were told to “teach them [your daughters] that man occupies no position that woman cannot fill, even to a pair of pants. Teach them that without the ballot woman is simply a cooking and washing machine; that with it she can rule her own little roost. We have plenty of ballot girls, but what we wants is ballot women.”

Births, deaths and marriages were announced along with often-gruesome descriptions of an industrial accident or other tragedies. “On Monday last a man named McGan, employed in the Oakville sawmill, met with a shocking accident, one of his hands being completely severed from the arm,” one item reported. “On Saturday last a man named Crosslin, employed in Buck’s stave factory, Collingwood, had one of his feet nearly cut off while working a circular saw,” another informed readers.

These items indicated the paper’s concern for health and safety in the workplace, but they might also have been attempts at some competitive sensationalism. They were interspersed with reports on “Occupations and Health,” which listed deaths per thousand in various jobs, and items such as the one that showed that accidents “connected with the liquor business are least healthful,” if not “absolutely dangerous.”

Politically, the *Workman* had to straddle the line between radicalism and conservatism. Indeed, the *Globe* called the *Workman* “staunch Tory” and “flaming, full-fledged Tory.” And historian Bryan Palmer scolded the paper for its failure to “break down...the barriers between skilled and unskilled men and women” and its “dependency on paternalistic political figures.”

But labour historian Charles Lipton portrayed the aggressive tabloid as “a great model” and “exemplary in its clarity, forthrightness, the way it recorded the workers’ struggles and gave expression to their faith.” It “led the way in Labour’s early efforts for political action” and “practiced the truth that a concern for the people’s conditions is a prerequisite of progressive politics and integral culture.”

Still, most historians agree that the paper was more interested in social amelioration than in radical social change. “Nine hour leaders [including Williams] clearly believed that only through the pursuit of economic reform in the work place, aided through legislation or co-operation, would economic exploitation be overcome,” according to historian Robin Wylie. “There was to be no revolutionary political challenge.”

Indignant editorials on labour standards, unemployment and poor wages and working conditions appeared frequently as the *Workman* forged its social advocate image. It noted “the necessity for an improvement in the social condition of our poor,” for example, “and proposed ways to alleviate unemployment. “It is hoped that the tales of hardship and suffering...will go further than merely having public attention directed to them,” urged the *Workman*, “and the result be made that strenuous and systematic efforts may be made to mitigate the misery, not so much by doling out with the cold hand of charity, as by inaugurating public works.”

Williams also took a strong stand, as did labour editors throughout the rest of the century, against massive government assisted immigration for the purpose of employing cheap industrial labour even though Canadian workers were available. The issue took an ugly turn when it came to Chinese labourers. As superintendent of the Chinese department at the Metropolitan Sunday School, Williams had a closer relationship than most with the new Canadians. But whatever personal understanding he might have had of the situation was overshadowed by broader labour concerns. Under the heading “The Coolie Traffic,” the *Workman* argued that “whenever Chinese labour has appeared it has withered out hopes and blasted what little prosperity life seemed to have in store for us.”

Where Williams lashed out mercilessly at one group of workers, he offered his deepest sympathies for another. “There is no greater evil sapping the foundation of our physical greatness as a people than the habit or custom of placing boys in factories and workshops at an immature and tender age,” declared an article reprinted from the American *Cooper’s Journal*. Williams warned that the practice of using child labour was “more widely prevalent than many suppose.”

Although many families needed the pittance that the children earned, it was clear that society as a whole wanted them out of the workplace and into the classroom. Compulsory education became a reality in Ontario in 1871 and the *Workman* carried the banner high. For Williams, with six daughters, and McMillan, with three sons all destined to be printers, education was a paramount issue and the paper rigorously championed it. In fact, Williams later became a member of the Toronto Public School Board.

“As this grand principle [education] takes deeper root among the masses of our people, Reform shall become more radical and general,” Williams wrote. “As one of the Reforms, not in the distant future, that the progressive people of this country shall demand, if we mistake not, is that those to whom is entrusted the lives and liberties of the people shall become more directly responsible to the people.”

Literacy historian Harvey J. Graff points out that “to the working class press, the promotion of reading was complex. Reading brought comfort in lonely hours and consolation as well as amusement. To satisfy these needs required varying degrees of ability, some of which would not be held by all literate individuals.” The *Workman* therefore “provided instruction in reading skills,” and “inveighed against recurring illiteracy and the degradation of education.”

Many of the social reforms advocated or lauded by the *Workman* overlapped to some extent. The call for shorter hours that helped launch the paper, for example, raised middle-class eyebrows because it was felt that fewer work hours would mean more hours in the local pub. That, reasoned the Mrs. Grundys of the day, would cause more social problems at home and on the street. Thus the paper generally supported temperance, warning readers to stay away from the ‘demon rum’ for fear that they and their families would be driven to ‘rack and ruin’.

The Canada Temperance Act or Scott Act would not become law until 1878, but the *Workman* did its share to ensure eventual passage of the prohibition legislation. The counter-argument was that shorter hours would allow more educational activity such as reading, attendance at public lectures and enrolment in mechanic’s institutes. Here’s how the *Workman* put it: “An hour a day amounts at the end of the year to 365 hours. In that space how many valuable books may be read, how much pleasure enjoyed in your own home, and how blessed you will be in the gratitude of your own wife and the intimate and cultivated love of your children.”

The alcohol problem cut deep into the fabric of society. Temperance historian Brian Harrison demonstrates that governments were not always supportive of workers’ efforts to improve their lot through abstinence. After all, this would reduce tax revenue from the sale of liquor. In Britain, for example, the Beer Act of 1830 considerably increased the consumption of alcohol. As well, some labour advocates were critical of the middle-class nature of the temperance movement. Harrison notes that Frederick Engels condemned temperance reformers for failing to see that the workers’ environment “made it unrealistic to ascribe their drinking habits to any failure of moral responsibility.”

Indeed, as Engels himself had written in 1844, workers were “deprived of all pleasures except sexual indulgence and intoxicating liquors. Every day they have to work until they are physically and mentally exhausted. This forces them to excessive indulgence in the only two pleasures remaining to them.” For Engels, and his colleague Karl Marx, the problem called for a more drastic solution than simply restricting the consumption of liquor. But the *Workman* would never fully embrace their proposal for a social revolution to completely overthrow capitalism. Instead, the paper hailed co-operation and other half-measures as the ideal routes to social betterment for workers.

Williams frequently spread the word about one co-op enterprise or another in Britain. He published regular reports on the progress of the co-op movement as the best way to tackle the problems caused by an inequitable system of distributing wealth. Although it was not

the revolutionary solution advocated by some, it did offer some immediate hope of respite from a crippling economic system.

John (Cousin Sandy) Fraser explained labour's view of the value of co-ops in an article in his Montreal alternative political paper and *Workman* contemporary, the *Northern Journal*. "It is not simply a question of social organization, of the true idea of property and what gives a just title to it, of personal estimation and of the relative rank of men; it is a question of whether a working man shall be looked upon as an economical producing machine; in a word it is a social revolution."

The election of Ottawa printer and labour leader Daniel John O'Donoghue to the Ontario legislature in 1874 pushed co-operation into the background. O'Donoghue, called the father of the Canadian labour movement, had proved that a working man could get elected to public office. Williams saw the potential and, although stopping short of a call for universal suffrage, he advocated the vote for working men without property. Since only property owners could vote at the time, many workers were without the franchise. These new votes could help more labour candidates get elected and help bring "a more just and equitable distribution of the comforts, aye, even the elegancies of life," Williams argued. "The rich getting richer, the poor growing poorer, is now the social order," he wrote, "and as the poor grow poorer so does their servility to the rich increase."

The *Workingman's Advocate* in Chicago put it differently in an article Williams reprinted. "The tendencies of capital to centralize; of railroads to monopolize; of corporations to combine; and of legislation to discriminate in favour of interests proportionate to the wealth they represent, are omens of evil, and the harbingers of oppression fatal to the life, growth, and development of the dearest interests of the labouring classes."

Support for labour candidates became a preoccupation for Williams and company. Beyond debunking the myths propagated by the two mainline parties or supporting the labour candidates who sought to defeat them, it was also a matter of battling the daily press. The *Workman* recognized the social value of the popular press. "The newspaper is just as necessary to fit a man for his true position in life as food or raiment," cajoled one editorial. "Show us a ragged, barefoot boy, rather than an ignorant one. His head will cover his feet in after life if he is well supplied with newspapers... Give the children newspapers." But Williams saw red whenever it came to political issues and the dailies.

Every effort "to secure to labour it[s] just reward is howled down by the 'press'," the *Workman* complained in an early mudslinging match with the dailies. "A corrupt newspaper, like the deadly Upas tree, poisons all who come in contact with it." Ironically, the *Workman* and papers that followed slammed the commercial press, while borrowing from the people's journals that were publishing some of the best social affairs reporting of the time. Even its readers got into the act. "Accustomed as I am to see questions of the first importance perverted and distorted, their advocates misrepresented and maligned," wrote one reader, "yet I must confess the *Globe* out-Herods Herod in its mode of discussing anything relating to the labour movement in this country." Other readers took

pot shots on a letters page which became as popular for Canadian working-class readers as Hyde Park on Sunday for the British.

In order to bring the Canadian worker such a variety of weekly news, entertainment and commentary, the *Workman* struggled to pay its own way through subscriptions and advertising. (There were ads for everything from fine handmade cigars to sure-fire cures for cancer and the latest in men's and women's apparel.) But it seems that the bulk of the work force in the early 1870s was not prepared to support an independent labour press.

With the help of the prime minister's loan, the *Workman* stayed alive for about two more years, giving it a longer life than many of the labour papers that followed it. But by 1874, the paper was forced to suspend publication. Williams had again run out of cash.

As Lipton explains, this time a more appropriate saviour came forward in the form of the Canadian Labour Union, the country's first national labour central. Delegates to its 1875 convention, including McMillan representing the TTU, realized what a loss the collapse of the *Workman* would be and offered to bail out the weekly. The convention proceedings read: "Believing that the education of working men of the capital is the surest way of awakening their interest and co-operation in the cause of union and labour reform, and believing that the establishment of a labour newspaper is the best means of obtaining that object, The Canadian Labour Union pledges itself to use every legitimate means in its power to support any newspaper that may be established to reflect the views of the masses of our working men in matters affecting their welfare.

The CLU boost helped Williams struggle on until early 1875 when the paper closed its doors for a second probably final time. There is some evidence of an attempt to revive the paper as late as 1877, by which time McMillan had become treasurer of the CLU and a member of its parliamentary committee. But the *Workman's* demise was clearly at hand and the young labour movement would be left without a strong social advocacy voice during a period of deepening economic depression and social malaise.

Some of the legislation that labour had been calling for had passed by 1877, but the movement was too weak to do anything about the failure of both the Liberals and the Conservatives to bring about the meaningful social legislation needed to improve the conditions under which working families lived and worked.

As the decade came to a close, Williams and McMillan carried on building the new movement and continued to run their printing firm. Williams, who had learned the printing trade in a Methodist book room, stayed in the commercial printing business until his retirement. By 1881, the two friends were busy founding a new central labour body that would become the powerful Toronto Trades and Labour Council. From 1881-84, McMillan ran a bookstore which was a centre for labour activity and acted as an agent for the *Trades Union Advocate*, an organ of the rapidly expanding Knights of Labour.

The new organization was a marked departure from the old concept of craft unionism pioneered by the Toronto junta. It would demand the unionization of all workers and a more sweeping brand of social change than was ever conceived in the *Workman*.

But the fact that there were no major social advances during the period when the junta was in control of the movement does not mean that the *Workman* failed in its mission. The paper was in many ways conservative, but it was a step ahead of the Tory producer ideology that Isaac Buchanan had so earnestly embraced in the *Workingman's Journal* a decade earlier.

In fact, the Toronto paper had revealed the first real signs of a working-class consciousness – what Watt calls “a proletarian spirit...in the small radical labour press that struggled to support the interests of that class.” This spirit “manifested itself in disillusion with and radical criticism of the programme of nation building,” he wrote, and “in an inclination to associate the patriotic forces which supported the National Policy with the motives and methods of capitalist exploitation.”

Whether this radical spirit grew out of the working class itself remains undocumented. Long hours of hard labour may have kept most workers from developing the same keen consciousness of social ills as the labour press expressed. Still, many of the issues highlighted and debated in the *Workman* during the nine-hour movement's heyday resurfaced again and again in the years to come.

As the capitalist economy became more sophisticated, workers and their families became increasingly aware of the injustice of their situation. Their best source of information for becoming aware was the labour press. It was there and through the rise of trade unions that they began to understand the nature of their oppression, of class divisions in Victorian society, and of the importance of uniting to change it.