

meetings, bringing together a nucleus of women. The W.A. in Ladysmith prioritized organizing social functions. Not all women in the town supported the union; some opposed their husbands becoming members, for fear of strikes and loss of pay. Few women came into the Ladysmith mills as workers and few men supported women working in the industry. The issue of equal pay was posed in relation to the different nationalities working in the industry.

#### ELLEN BARBER

Mrs. Barber was one of the first women active in the Vancouver Trades and Labour Congress (affiliate of the Trades and Labour Congress). She was involved in organizing laundry and communication workers during the World War I period. The tape describes union organization during WWI; working conditions in the laundries; bargaining procedures; organizing the unions; the laundry strike and its defeat; the formation of the Minimum Wage Board; telephone workers' strike; attitudes to women within the unions; working in war industry in WWII; post-war lay-offs of women workers; piecework; CCF involvement in the unions; her family's roots and her decision to become a unionist; women's suffrage and its affect on working women; <sup>prejudice against</sup> oriental workers and parallel attitudes to women; the Shirtwaist and Laundryworkers' International Union in the 1940's; the street-car strike of 1918; Depression use of female labour; the impact of the Russian Revolution on the labour movement; shipyard conditions; accidents in the laundries; women's organizations in the 1930's.

#### MYRTLE BERGREN

Mrs. Bergren was born in England, coming to Canada in 1925 when her family came to farm in the Okanagan, where they lived through the Depression. She left school at 13, working for 15¢/day on an asparagus farm. Later she worked at housework for \$10/month until 1939, when she worked in a bakeshop, attending stenography classes in the morning. She then worked at the Kelowna Courier for \$65/month moving on to the Princeton Courthouse as a stenographer. There, she joined the Civil Servants' Association despite the anti-union atmosphere in her office and her own mistrust of unions. She spent two years in the airforce during the War and in 1946 <sup>she</sup> was offered a job with the International Woodworkers of America at \$35/week which she accepted. Her attitudes towards unions changed rapidly and she became a strong union militant when she saw unions in the context of class society. She also joined the Communist Party. ~~She worked for the IWA until the split in 1948.~~ She studied with Becky Buhay about the role of women in society. ~~She married Hjalmer Bergren, an organizer for the IWA and moved with him to Lake Cowichan in 1946 and worked with the Women's Auxiliary there.~~ <sup>in 1946</sup> In 1948 the IWA leadership led a split and formed the Woodworkers Industrial Union of Canada, a Canadian union. The Bergrens had relocated in Vancouver, but now returned to Lake Cowichan where they organized for the WIUC and their house became the centre of union activity in the area until the dissolution of the WIUC. Women played a major