

P035- Nelson Thibault fonds
1934-1986 (predominant 1950-1967)
1.15 m of textual records and photographs

Biographical Sketch: Nelson Thibault (1916-1986) was born near Qu'appelle Valley, Saskatchewan. In 1939 he secured work as a nickel miner with the International Nickel Co. Of Canada Ltd. (INCO) at both Levack and Froid Mines in Sudbury. He married his wife Mary in 1942, she and three of their five children survive him. He became active in the affairs of Local 598 of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (I.U.M.M.S.W.) and from 1947 until 1951, he served as this union's elected President, after defeating James L. Kidd. From 1951 until 1954 he was I.U.M.M.S.W. Regional Director, and from 1955 until 1961 he was National President. He was then appointed National Director of the Legislative, Health & Safety and Compensation Dept. of I.U.M.M.S.W. and retained this position until 1967. Following the 1967 merger of I.U.M.M.S.W. with the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), Mr. Thibault left Sudbury for Saskatoon to work as a USWA staff representative there. In 1972 he accepted a transfer to the Union's Winnipeg Office and continued to the work of organizing, servicing, conducting union education seminars and arbitration cases. In 1976 he was elected President of the Manitoba Federation of Labour. Mr. Thibault retired in 1978 to devote his time to New Democratic Party endeavours, and to serve on a number of health, safety and welfare commissions for the Saskatchewan and Manitoba Provincial Governments. He was the recipient of a Governor General's Award for his outstanding work on behalf of the labour movement in Canada.

Scope and Content: The Nelson Thibault fonds consists, among others, of correspondence, copies of speeches, submissions and reports, election materials, photos, the Charter of the I.U.M.M.S.W., a delegate's ribbon, newspapers and clippings.

The records of this fonds provide an account of Mr. Thibault professional activities over the years. They attest to the interests and activities of Mr. Thibault in his capacity as President of both the Local 598 and the Canadian office of I.U.M.M.S.W., as well as to I.U.M.M.S.W. public events and activities. Personal and official correspondence between Mr. Thibault and other union members, as well as his speeches, press releases and election materials document the difficult years of factionalism and animosity between members of the I.U.M.M.S.W. and the USWA in Sudbury during the early 1950's and 1960's. Events preceding and during the 1967 merger of these two unions are also detailed. Files from his activities as member of Task Force Committees, commissions and also as a USWA representative both in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, inform on his realizations. The correspondence outlines his role with the Manitoba Federation of Labour, but also his wider activities within the world of trade unionism.

Note: Immediate source of acquisition: A first accrual was received prior to 1982. A second accrual sent by Mrs. Mary Thibault was received in 1997.

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Finding aids: A preliminary inventory is available in the Archives.

Related material: The following fonds may contain complementary information: P019-Mike Solski fonds; P026- International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, Local 598/Sudbury fonds.

Associated material: The Archives of Ontario has complementary records.