Labour History Project Working People: A History of Labour in BC



**On-to-Ottawa**

**Film Summary:** During the Great Depression, unemployed men took to the rails, with the intention of arriving en masse in Ottawa. While they did not reach their destination, this protest lives on in memory. Students are introduced to the economic and political realities of the “Dirty thirties” and information on the On-to-Ottawa Trek

**Curriculum Application**

Social Studies 11

**The Essential Question:**

Evaluate the political and social impact of the On-to-Ottawa Trek on Canada’s Depression era.

What historical factors

**Summary of the Lesson Activities**

1. Focus questions for the vignette provide a short lesson option. (15 minutes)
2. Small Group Activity
3. Historical Perspectives writing exercise; individually or in small groups
4. This lesson has been adapted from Youth, Unions and You, A Secondary Teacher’s Guide to Labour Studies for B.C. Schools available through the BCTF on line at: <http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/public/TeachingResources/YouthUnionsYou/SS11_L2.pdf>

Learning Objectives

1. Apply critical thinking and ethical reasoning skills
2. Analyze examples of injustice in Canada related to socio-economic status
3. Describe the effects of and various responses to the Great Depression (e.g., unemployment, government intervention, protest parties, soup kitchens)

**Materials and Resources Provided**

["On to- Ottawa" Episode 2- Working People –A History of Labour in British Columbia](https://cdnapisec.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/preview/partner_id/1454421/uiconf_id/26824312/entry_id/0_8llfdmmk/embed/dynamic)

Activity 1: On-to-Ottawa Trek Introduction

Lesson Activity 2: A Trekker Remembers

Lesson Activity 3:Discussion questions and classroom activities

**Additional Suggested Materials**

[These were the reasons…Chapter 5: Unemployed Get a Union - Stories from the relief camps](https://teachbcdb.bctf.ca/list?q=These+were+the+reasons&p=1&ps=25)

[On-to-Ottawa 75th Anniversary Celebration](http://www.ontoottawa.ca/index1.html)

[On-to-Ottawa and For Twenty Cents a Day videos](http://www.ontoottawa.ca/index1.html)

[Battle of Ballentyne Pier; Graphic History Project](http://graphichistorycollective.com/graphic-history-project/)

[Begbie Contest Political Cartoons](http://www.begbiecontestsociety.org/DEPRESSION.htm)

**Vignette Questions**

1. What were the economic conditions in Canada in the 1930’s?
2. Why do you think the Canadian government set up rural work camps for the unemployed?
3. Why would the unemployed want to travel to Ottawa?
4. What were the reasons for the riot in Regina?
5. Evaluate the On-to-Ottawa Trek?

**Credit: Teaching Activities and Lesson Plan developed by Arthur Scott Parker**

1. **First Class**: Read the Historical Context and the On-to-Ottawa Trek-Introduction (Activity 1) with the class, and discuss.
2. Show the class the On-to-Ottawa Knowledge Network Vignette (if a teacher decides to only show the short vignette and does not assign the readings, the brief discussion questions could be used following the vignette).
3. Distribute the reading on Ronald Liversedge A Trekker Remembers ( Activity 2), read together and answer the discussion questions ( Activity 3)
4. **Second Class**: Divide class in groups of four students. In their group, students will collaboratively write one friendly letter from the point of view of Ronald Liversedge, the trekker. The letter will be addressed to his parents back in Vancouver. The letter should describe what he sees and hears, the people he meets, his inner frustrations about being young and unemployed.
5. Have each group read their letter to the class. At this time, the class can do a variety of activities, including asking questions to each of the groups and/or discuss the similarities and differences in the letters. The letters could be sent to another group, and then have the groups collectively or individually write back to Ronald, from the point of view of his parents.
6. **Evaluation** Collect and mark questions and letters.

**Lesson Activities**