

# **On to Ottawa Trek**

## **Bibliography and Resources**

compiled by David Yorke, On to Ottawa Historical Society Director

### **Books specifically dealing with the On to Ottawa Trek:**

#### **Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek**

Ronald Liversedge

Edited by Victor Hoar, published by McClelland and Stewart Limited and The Carleton Library, 1973.

This edition contains the colourful 122-page memoir of the relief camps, the relief camp strike in Vancouver, and the trek itself, by trekker Ron Liversedge of Lake Cowichan, B.C. This memoir was originally published in a limited mimeograph edition in 1961. The edition produced by Victor Hoar includes the memoir, together with a number of documents related to the trek. These include the Report of the Macdonald Commission into the "Regina Riot", and documents from official sources relating to the relief camp strike, the trek, and the police action against the trek in Regina.

#### **When Freedom Was Lost**

Lorne Brown

Published by Black Rose Books, Montreal and the University of Toronto Press, 1987, ISBN 0 - 920057 - 77 - 2.

This is an excellent history of the establishment of the relief camps, the camp strike, the trek, and the Regina Riot. It is drawn from many archival sources as well as the oral histories of many trek participants and describes the degree to which the officials were prepared to dispense with legalities and civil rights in order to stop the unemployed demonstrators.

#### **All Hell Can't Stop Us: The On to Ottawa Trek and Regina Riot**

Bill Waiser

Published by Fifth House Ltd., Calgary, 2003, ISBN 1 - 894004 - 88 - 4.

A popularly written and very detailed recounting of the Trek from the time it left Vancouver, with a particularly full description of the "Regina Riot". Waiser draws

heavily on government and recently released police records for his description and describes the political tussling between the federal and Saskatchewan governments during the period the trekkers were in Regina. Also included is a description of the work of the Citizen's Emergency Committee, a coalition which aided the trek. The book also contains a list of the names of many of the trek members - about twenty percent of the 1,400 young unemployed who reached Regina.

### **We Were The Salt Of The Earth!**

Victor Howard [Victor Hoar]

Published by Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1985 ISBN 0 - 88977 - 037 - 9

Another history of the camps, the trek and the Regina Riot, by a US academic who took a keen interest in the unemployed and left-wing protest movements in Canada. It sets out the 'narrative' of the events from archival documents and many interviews with trek participants. It was criticized by a number of trek participants in Prairie Forum magazine, published by the University of Regina, (Fall 1986 - Vol. 11 No. 2), and the author published a reply also in that magazine, (Spring 1997 Vol. 12 No. 1).

### **Pubs, Pulpits & Prairie Fires**

Elroy Deimert

Published by Roseway Publishing, Halifax and Winnipeg, 2009  
ISBN-10: 1552663205 ISBN-13: 978-1552663202

A fascinating re-telling of the story of the depression, the Trek, the Regina police riot, and the aftermath, told in the novel form of a fictitious series of meetings between some contemporary prairie pub-goers and Trek veterans. It is in the twilight between hard history and fiction, but the material regarding the Trek is right on, well documented, and supplemented by the extensive interviews the author did have with leading trekkers.

### **Other Works Containing Material on the Trek**

#### **Work and Wages!**

Ben Swankey and Jean Evans Sheils

Trade Union Research Bureau, Vancouver, 1977.

This is the story of On-to-Ottawa trek leader Arthur 'Slim' Evans, told through documents and commentary. ( Co-author Jean Evans Sheils was the daughter of trek leader, Arthur 'Slim' Evans, and a former On to Ottawa Historical Society Director. She died in 1996.) In addition to the biography of Art Evans before and after the trek, it contains 13 chapters (pages 76 to 238) on the Relief Camp Workers strike, the trek, the delegation to Ottawa (which Evans led), the attack on the trek in Regina, and the campaign to defend the arrested trekkers.

**Raising the Workers' Flag: The Workers' Unity League of Canada, 1930-1936**

Stephen Endicott

University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2012

This is a detailed history of the Workers' Unity League, which spearheaded the organizing of the Relief Camp Workers' Union and provided the leadership of the Trek. Endicott's meticulously researched book has extensive reference to the Trek, and to earlier left-led organizing of the unemployed across Canada.

**We Stood Together**

Gloria Montero, editor

James Lorimer & Company, Toronto, 1987 ISBN 0 - 88862 - 269 - 4

This volume of various labour struggles contains a chapter entitled "Red Walsh - On To Ottawa 1935". It sets out in some 23 pages the interview recollections of one of the trek's leaders.

**The Great Depression 1929 - 1939**

Pierre Berton

McClelland & Stewart Inc. Toronto, 1990

This is an overall history of Canada's depression years and contains a section (pages 281 to 325) on the politics of R.B. Bennett, the unemployed organizations, the trek and the Regina Riot.

**Fighting Heritage**

Sean Griffin, editor

Tribune Publishing Co. Vancouver 1985 ISBN 0 -9692365 - 0 - 6

This collection of brief histories of B.C. labour struggles in the 1930"s contains a chapter by Sean Griffin entitled "On to Ottawa! - The Relief Camp Strike and the On-to-Ottawa Trek" (p. 13 - 64).

**B.C. Teachers' Federation, Labour History Vol. 1 No. 4, 1978**

BC Teachers' Federation Labour History Association

This issue is focussed on the depression years and the trek and contains interviews and recollections of the events by a number of participants including Morris Carrell, Red Walsh, Barbara Stewart, and Syd Thompson.

**Ten Lost Years 1929 - 1939**

Barry Broadfoot

Paper Jacks; Doubleday Canada, 1973/77 ISBN 0 - 7737 - 7094 - 1

This collection of generally unattributed reminiscences of Canadians who lived through the depression contains descriptions on the conditions of the unemployed, the relief projects, and a short chapter (p 361 - 371) on the trek, the Regina Riot, and on the left-wing movements.

**The Winter Years**

James H. Gray

MacMillan of Canada, Toronto, 1966 and 1968

Gray is the former editor of the Winnipeg Free Press, and his personal narrative of the depression on the praries contains a short section on the period around the Regina Riot (page 141 and following)

**Fighting for Labour**

Patricia Wejr and Howie Smith

Province of B.C. Victoria 1978

A compilation of oral history on audiotape with a print component; contains a chapter "The Hungry Thirties" with excerpts from trek participants Red Walsh, Steve Brodie, and Bob Jackson.

**Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada**

Stuart Jamieson

Information Canada (Woods Task Force on Industrial Relations), Ottawa, 1968

This survey of labour conflict includes a chapter on "Unemployed Organizations and the Regina Riot," Page 233 and following.

**The Depression Years: Canada in the 1930's**

Paul Mennill

Prentice-Hall of Canada, Scarborough, 1978.

This is a resource collection for high school students, setting out portions of documents from many aspects of the social history of the period. Apart from general material on the unemployed in the depression, it has 6 pages of documents and photos on the relief camps, the On-To-Ottawa Trek, and the 'Regina Riot'.

**On the Side of the People**

Jim Warren and Kathleen Carlisle

Coteau Books, Regina, 2005.

This is a fine illustrated history of labour in Saskatchewan. Chapter Seven, "Hold the Fort", describes the depression on the prairies, the experiences of the federal relief camps that were established in Saskatchewan, a summary of the origins of the Trek and its leaders, and a detailed account of the Trek in Regina and the July 1 police riot.

**Fury and Futility: The Onset of the Great Depression 1930-1935**

Ted Byfield

United Western Communications Ltd., Edmonton, 1998.

This is volume 6 of Byfield's journalistic history of Alberta in the 20th Century. Byfield was a conservative writer, active in founding the Reform party. The volume has a description of the trekkers in Alberta, and an account of the "Regina Riot."

## **Magazine Articles and Papers**

### **The 1935 On To Ottawa Trek**

Ben Swankey

Written in 1997 for the On to Ottawa Historical Society

This 32-page summary of the background to the trek, the relief camp strike, and the trek also outlines the later activities of many of the trek leaders, and the relevance of the trek to the present

### **On To Ottawa**

Doug Smith

Published in Horizon Canada Vol. 9 Number 99, March 1987 (Centre for the Study of Teaching Canada Inc., Saint-Laurent Quebec.

This 7-page article by a Manitoba labour historian contains many historic photos.

### **British Columbia: Vanguard of Radical Protest - the On-To- Ottawa Treks – 1935 & 1985.**

Judy Hamaliuk

1986 Unpublished

This paper, written by one of the organizers of the 1985 50th anniversary further Trek to Ottawa and a former Director of the On to Ottawa Society, links a summary of the earlier events and the still-present problems of unemployment and poverty in 1985.

### **On to Ottawa!**

Sean Griffin and Hal Griffin

Published as a 12-page supplement to the May 29, 1985 issue of the Pacific Tribune Vol. 48 No. 20, Vancouver B.C.

This summary draws on both documents and a number of interviews with leaders and participants in the trek and has a detailed description of the relief camp strike activities in Vancouver which preceded the Trek.

## **Freight Trains & Memory Lanes - The On to Ottawa Trek**

John Eleen

Published in Our Times magazine, Vol 14 No. 4, August 1995.

This is a brief summary of the events of the Trek, together with the author's recounting of the stories of depression conditions related by his parents.

## **General Books About the Depression in Canada**

### **The Wretched of Canada: Letters to R.B. Bennett 1930 - 1935**

Michael Bliss and L.M. Grayson

University of Toronto Press, 1971.

**The Great Depression: Essays and Memoirs from Canada and the United States**  
compiled by Victor Hoar

Copp, Clark Publishing, Toronto 1969

### **The Dirty Thirties: Canadians in the Great Depression**

Michiel Horn, ed.

Copp, Clark Publishing, Toronto 1972.

### **The politics of Chaos: Canada in the Thirties**

Blair Neatby

Macmillan of Canada, Toronto, 1972.

### **No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State 1914 -1941**

James Struthers

University of Toronto Press, Toronto 198

## **Other Resources**

### **The Royal Twenty Centers: The Department of National Defense and Federal Unemployment Relief: 1932 -1936**

G.M. LeFresne

This is an unpublished B.A. Thesis from the Royal Military College, Kingston, 1962. It looks at the camps from the point of view of military efficiency, but its detailed information has been cited by many writers on the relief camps.

**Microcosms of Misfortune: Canada's Unemployed Relief Camps Administered by the Department of National Defence**

Thomas W. Tanner

Another unpublished M.A. Thesis referred to in many works on the relief camps, for the University of Western Ontario, London, 1965.

**Proceedings of the On to Ottawa Trek Conference, October 1985**

Canadian Plains Research Centre, Regina

This is the transcript of papers, speeches and interviews conducted at this conference. Informants include William Gilbey, Doc Savage, Dr. Lorne Brown, Dr. Victor Howard (Victor Hoar), Bob Jackson, Ben Swankey, and Dr. Emmett Hall.

**Regina Public Library and the Saskatchewan Archives Board**

Microfilm copy of the evidence, exhibits and report of the Regina Riot Inquiry Commission (The Macdonald Commission) 1936.

**On to Ottawa (Video)**

Sara Diamond, Director: Produced by the On to Ottawa Historical Society and the Women's Labour History Project (1992)

A 54-minute VHS tape recounting the conditions of the Depression and the On to Ottawa Trek, including Trek veterans Bob Jackson, Jean Shiels and Ray Wainwright in the On to Ottawa presentation written by Tom Hawken, who performs with other musicians. This has become the classic video record of the Canadian struggles for the work and wages.

**For Twenty Cents a Day (Video)**

Colleen Fuller, Director: Produced by the BCTF Labour History Association (1979)

This is a 25-minute video transferred from the original film version. It has footage



of the relief camps and unemployed demonstrations in the 1930s and tells the story of the establishment of the relief camps, the trek, the defeat of R.B. Bennett in 1935, and the renewed unemployment problems leading to the Vancouver Post Office sit-in and its repression on Bloody Sunday 1937. It features interviews with poet Dorothy Livesay (who was active in support of the unemployed in the depression), Syd Thompson (a Trek veteran, later leader of the IWA Vancouver local ) and Steve Brodie, who was on the Trek, and a central leader in the 1937 sit-in.

## **Further References**

There are many further sources suggested in the bibliographies of many of these books. In particular, the bibliography of *We Were The Salt of the Earth* has further readings about the relief camps and the political aspects of the On-to-Ottawa Trek, and Pierre Berton's *The Great Depression* has a very extensive bibliography related to all the events in the "Dirty Thirties" in Canada.