

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE HEADQUARTERS

Ottawa, 15th July, 1936.

SECRETNO. 815WEEKLY SUMMARYREPORT ON REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATIONSAND AGITATION IN CANADAReport

Unemployed demonstrations throughout Canada have assumed a more militant character. In Toronto and suburbs over thirty participants have recently been arrested on charges arising out of the seizure and forcible detention of public officials.

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APPENDIX NO. I: GENERAL

1. Unemployed Demonstrations and Disturbances

(A) Toronto, Ont.

On 6th July approximately 2,000 relief strikers, led by 30 women, stormed the relief offices in the Township of York and held as hostage Relief Administrator R. B. Geggie and his entire office staff. After a severe battle with the police, the mob forced their way into the small welfare offices and informed the officials that they were going to remain there until the single unemployed men were taken back on relief, and relief payments resumed on the basis of the scale prevailing prior to 31st May. For six hours the strikers held the offices and paralysed the traffic for blocks around the district. Later, on the same

evening, at a special emergency meeting the York Township Council decided to meet their demands and the standard scale of relief to be maintained until the Township's funds are exhausted. As soon as it was learned that the council had come to terms, the strikers began to disperse but all were warned by Ewart Humphries, [deletion:2-3 words] and leader of the Strike Committee, that they were to stand ready and not become disorganized.

On 8th July similar action was taken by the strikers in Etobicoke Township, resulting in the seizure of the relief offices and the forcible detention of Reeve W.A. Armstrong and Relief Officer C. Crubb.

As a sequel to these and other disturbances in the various townships, 30 men have been arrested by Provincial and York County Police, including Ewart Humphries, leader of the unemployed movement, and Harvey Murphy, [deletion:1/2 line] of the Ontario Workers Federation on Unemployment. They have been charged with kidnapping, under Section 297 of the Criminal Code, and will appear in court on 17th July to answer the charges.

The Canadian Labour Defence League will defend the accused and for that purpose is initiating a wide campaign. Labour unions in Canada and in the U.S.A. will be asked to assist and a prominent Canadian lawyer is to be engaged to direct the defence of the accused in Court.

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[deletion:2 1/2 lines] considerable time was devoted to the question of the possibility of extending the strike movement among relief workers in Southern Ontario. It was agreed:—

(a) To carry on wide agitation against the Government using funds to assist the railroads through the present scheme of sharing the costs for railroad construction work. To concentrate especially on showing up the help it would give the C.P.R., being privately-owned.

(b) Demand a rate of 50¢ per hour, 40-hour week, and lower maintenance (board and room) on all relief jobs or employment for raw labor.

(c) To go about organizing a "General Laborers' Union" among highway (relief) workers which could be affiliated to the Trades and Labor Council and would assist in drawing the trade unions closer to the actions of the relief workers.

(d) To send all available C.P. of C. members for work in the various camps opened, or to be opened, to organize the above union and prepare for strike action for the above demands.

The discussion revealed that there was a strong corps of Communists employed on road construction at Agincourt.

(B) Winnipeg, Man.

The Single Men's Unemployed Ass'n of Winnipeg held a mass meeting in the Market Square on the evening of 5th July with approximately 400 people in attendance. J. Collier, W. McNeil, D. Grainger, S. Doyle and Bayden were the speakers. D. Grainger, Bayden and Doyle urged the people to turn out for picket duty in front of the Legislative Building on 6th July.

On 6th July about 300 single unemployed men gathered at the Legislative Building, at approximately 11.00 a.m., to demonstrate and picket the building. The men continued the demonstration until 10.00 p.m. when they dispersed. The turnout for this demonstration was poor. The men were unable to secure tents and the necessary supply of food to remain on picket duty through the night as at first intended. No attempt was made to create real damage and those in attendance dispersed in an orderly manner.

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On 7th July at 6.00 p.m. about 200 men demonstrated at the Legislative Building. Members of the Russian Workers Club Choir rendered several revolutionary songs and short speeches were given by Bayden and Grainger. The latter informed the demonstrators that the Executive Committee of the Single Men's Unemployed Ass'n. would establish its headquarters on the grounds and that an endeavour was being made to obtain tents for the pickets in order that they may remain on the grounds during the night. The demonstrators dispersed peacefully at about 10.00 p.m.

At about 10.00 a.m. on the following day approximately 75 members of the S.M.U.A. took their places in front of the Legislative Building carrying a number of placards bearing various slogans. The men indulged in a game of baseball, and refreshments were served from the steps of the Parliament Building. Most of the demonstrators remained until night fall and then marched away in half sections.

It would appear that the leaders of this unemployed movement are finding it increasingly difficult to rally a sufficient number of men for these demonstrations in front of the Legislative Building. Every effort is being made, however, to belittle law and order and the men are being told that the police are afraid to interfere with them. The leaders proclaim that the authorities do not want a repetition of the Regina riot of last year, and maintain that should the police attempt to apply force, the public support would swing behind their campaign. There are indications that the rank and file members of the move-

ment are beginning to get tired of this continual parading and are loath to turn out.

(C) Medicine Hat, Alta.

On 3rd July members of the Unemployed Protective Ass'n at Medicine Hat, together with their wives, proceeded to the City Hall where they established themselves in the City Council Chamber refusing to leave until granted an audience by the Mayor. Three delegates were chosen to interview the Mayor, requesting an increase of from 30¢ to 40¢ per hour in the scale of relief grants. The Mayor informed the delegation that he considered that the majority of those on relief

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were in that position through their own lack of initiative. The demonstrators were requested to vacate the Council Chamber and the men agreed to do so but left the women and children in the building. After some further discussion between the delegates and the Mayor, in the course of which the Mayor had promised that a special meeting of the City Council would consider their request, the demonstrators, however, decided to vacate the building and return to their homes.

(D) Regina, Sask.

The Saskatchewan Union of Unemployed, Regina Branch, held a public meeting in the Market Square on 22nd June. It was attended by 200 people and the speakers were the Reverend S. B. East, Steve Lessik and E. V. Mills. The subject under discussion was the Saskatchewan Municipal Relief Act and the meeting was called to protest this provincial legislation. Reverend East, the main speaker, called upon the people to get together and march on the Parliament Buildings en masse and protest against the latest amendment to the said Act which is said to give the Minister administering the Act power to ship rural relief recipients back to the municipalities from whence they came. In connection with the proposed demonstration the Reverend East advocated passive resistance similar to that practised by Mahatma Ghandi. No particular date, however, was set for the demonstration.

(E) Saskatoon, Sask.

Approximately 35 delegates representing various unemployed organizations in the City of Saskatoon met on 30th June and decided to send delegates to the Provincial Conference which is to take place at Regina on 13th, 14th and 15th July. The meeting, which took the form of a United Front Conference, instructed the delegates to submit two basic demands to the Provincial Conference: (1) continuous work and a fair wage program; (2) non-contributory unemployment insurance, to be put into effect immediately. It was further agreed to hold a

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public meeting on the Market Square following the Regina Conference at which the reports of the delegation to Regina will be received.

2. National Bureau of L.A.W. & F. Admits Large Deficit

A financial statement issued by [~~deletion:3-4 words~~] of the League Against War and Fascism, on 10th June revealed a deficit of approximately \$2,700 in the accounts of the National Council of the said league. The deficit is due to some extent to neglect on the part of the District Councils to meet their obligations. A study of the financial statement shows that even after all accounts are paid, there would still remain a deficit of \$1,700. Action, official organ of the league, was forced to suspend publication because the local committees failed to pay for the copies sent them.

3. Tom Ewen Transferred to Vancouver, B.C.

Tom Ewen, trade union leader of the Communist Party of Canada and former national sec'y. of the Workers Unity League, has been transferred to Vancouver to supervise trade union activity of the Communist Party in the B.C. district. He is to depart for the coast shortly together with his wife, Beckie Buhay Ewen.

4. R.C.W.U. Changes Name

The Relief Camp Workers Union, British Columbia district, is said to have changed its name to "B.C. Relief Project Workers Union". Its offices are situated at 615 Hastings Street, West, Vancouver.

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APPENDIX NO. II: REPORTS BY PROVINCESI. BRITISH COLUMBIA5. Communists of Vancouver Hold Picnic

Approximately 1,500 people attended a picnic held by the Communists of Vancouver in Hastings Park on 28th June. The picnic has been hailed by the Communists as a huge success as the collection taken at this picnic netted approximately \$350. The expenses were \$150, leaving a net profit of \$200.

The B.C. Workers News, Communist organ published at Vancouver, is to continue publication, it was decided by the Centre of the Communist Party at Toronto. For a time it was anticipated that the Centre at Toronto would order its liquidation in order to give the Daily Clarion a clear field in Vancouver and district. As a result of this decision the local leaders at Vancouver, including [deletion: 1/2 line] have decided that with a little manoeuvring by personal contact they can get back all the subscriptions they lost and add to the circulation of the B.C. Workers News. [deletion: name] is leaving Vancouver for a three weeks' tour of British Columbia, with the intention of popularizing the publication.

Approximately 700 people attended a meeting of the Single Unemployed Men's Protective Ass'n. in the Royal Theatre, Vancouver, on 5th July. A. E. Burton and C. J. McKendrick spoke on "Relief and Evictions". Burton gave an outline of the "struggles" of the transients and single men on relief during the past few years. He made the assertion that the single unemployed men of British Columbia were the best organized in Canada, having shown better results than any other similar body throughout the country. Relating recent occurrences in France and Spain, he remarked "We can't have a revolution when we are hungry, the issue at the present time is to fight and organize by holding protest meetings, demonstrations, etc."

C. J. McKendrick devoted the major portion of his time to criticizing the Vancouver Jubilee Committee and the people responsible for the jubilee celebration. He particularly criticized the spending

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of public funds in connection with the celebration while "the workers were treated worse than dogs", and appealed to the audience to become organized and to join in the fight of the unemployed workers.

II. ALBERTA

6. Edmonton Communists Hold Conference

The Communist Party of Canada, Edmonton section, held a City Conference on 28th June with approximately 100 of its leading members in attendance. J. Lakeman reported on the political situation, elaborating upon the decisions of the VIIth Congress of the Communist International and the IXth Plenum of the C.P. of C. He stressed the need of building "Unity" Committees in every locality and a united front of the common people, citing the C.C.F., Social Credit Party, United Farmers of Alberta, Canadian Labour Party and trade unions as a base for this united front. He also urged the building up of C.P. leadership in these various organizations.

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[~~deletion: 2/3 line~~] J. (Andy) Hogarth of Calgary addressed the meeting, stressing the importance of the Communist International and its relation to the class struggle in every Capitalist country. He dealt with the "great achievements" attained by the C.P. in the American Federation of Labor, the campaign against war and Fascism, the abolition of Section 98 of the Criminal Code, etc. He said that the C.C.F., Social Credit groups, farmers' organizations and trade unions must be strengthened and brought under the influence of the C.P. The Party, he said, must be reorganized and brought out into the open as soon as possible. It must cease to lead a subterranean existence and must meet openly and in decent and respectable places. He could see no reason why the membership of the Party in Edmonton could not be increased to 400 before the end of October.

III. QUEBEC

7. Communists in Quebec Provincial Elections

The Communist Party at Montreal has definitely decided to run only two official candidates, Fred Rose in the St. Louis Division, and Evariste Dube in St. James. Jean Perron, editor of the Communist organ Clarte, will run on a Labour ticket in Mercier Division, having been endorsed by the Montreal Section of the Labour Party.

Fred Rose is being conceded very little chance to win in St. Louis Division, which is composed mostly of Jewish elements, the reason being the Jewish elements are at present incensed against the stand taken by the C.P. in the Palestine situation, and all Zionist organizations have taken a definite stand

against the C.P. on this question. Though for a while it looked as if unity could be established between various Progressive Parties and the C.P., the Jewish elements of the Labour Party - because of their hatred of the C.P. at the present time - were instrumental in defeating the move for unity during the election campaign. It is now very doubtful as to whether unity can be established in time and the Jewish labour leaders, especially in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Section, have definitely come out for a policy of supporting Ber-covitch, M.L.A., against Fred Rose.

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It has been decided to tax all employed and partially employed C.P. members one day's wages in order to help finance the election campaign, the minimum amount of tax per Party member being \$2. This tax is over and above the regular organizational taxes that have been imposed on the units of late. It is causing quite a bit of grumbling among Party members and to date only \$50 has been collected. It has been estimated that \$350 can be collected in this manner.

It is very doubtful as to whether sufficient funds can be raised to carry on a successful election campaign as support will also be given to the French candidate, Evariste Dube. The French Canadian Sections, most of whom are unemployed, will not be capable of raising more than ten per cent of their needs.

Evariste Dube is conceded absolutely no chance to win the St. James Division. To quote Fred Rose, it is doubtful if he will poll 500 votes.

The opening mass meeting of the election campaign will be held in the Prince Arthur Hall on Thursday evening, 16th July.

IV. THE MARITIME PROVINCES

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