

Arrow project as one of only two recipients of its honour award. The panel which made the decision was drawn from the American Societies of *Civil Engineers, Architects, Landscape Architects*, and of *Planners!* Their report said in part that the programme "has contributed greatly to the entire region surrounding the artificial lake. It has created a regional facility in the lake and brought life back to a whole community up and down the lake."

Nor should it be forgotten that B.C. Hydro and the provincial government have spent something over \$50 million in excess of the cost of "replacing like with like" on amenities in the area.

One of the statements in the book that has my unqualified concurrence is the last sentence in Chapter Four:

If Hydro is judged to have emerged with credit from its exercise in the Arrow Lakes, it will be largely to the credit of its field men — its appraisers, engineers, planners, and information officers — who did their difficult jobs, for the most part, with understanding and humanity.

And prominent among all those who contributed understanding and humanity was Jim Wilson.

Victoria

HUGH L. KEENLEYSIDE

Recollections of the On To Ottawa Trek, by Ronald Liversedge. *With Documents related to the Vancouver Strike and the On To Ottawa Trek* edited by Victor Hoar. Toronto: The Carleton Library No. 66. McClelland and Stewart, 1973. xviii, 331 pp. \$4.50.

In the annals of social dissent in the 1930's the On To Ottawa Trek is a landmark. The number of men involved, their objectives and leadership. The support they received in Western Canada and the tragic riot in Regina on July 1, 1935, attracted widespread attention, caused a great deal of controversy and contributed to the defeat of R. B. Bennett's Conservatives in the federal election several months later.

Amongst the scattered literature on the subject, Ronald Liversedge's *Recollections* has occupied a place of honour ever since they were made available in a limited mimeographed edition a dozen years ago. He belongs to that rare breed of Canadian writers: a manual worker who sets down his reminiscences on paper. Like many other opponents of the status quo in the 1930's, Liversedge was an immigrant. Born in England,

he spent some time in Australia before he came to North America in 1927. Typically of rebels during the Depression, he was a staunch Communist. His vividly described experiences at Sudbury, on the Prairies and in Vancouver strengthened his Marxist predilections and his hostility to the established order and its representatives; these he denounces in no uncertain terms, regardless of whether they are Mounties or his *bête noire* R. B. Bennett.

To students of B.C. history and politics the most interesting parts of his memoirs are those that deal with the struggles of the unemployed in Vancouver; the preparations for the strike of Relief Camp workers in the Interior; the techniques that the strike leaders used to preserve solidarity among the rank-and-file, to seek moral and financial support in the communities in which they agitated and to obtain at least some relief from the three layers of government. As a fairly prominent activist among the unemployed and the trekkers, Liversedge was in a good position to observe what happened in the course of street riots, the occupation of the Vancouver Library and Museum on Hastings and Main, and at meetings of trekkers' leaders, who carefully planned their moves when they were not addressing large crowds or negotiating with the authorities.

The picture which emerges is of widespread dissatisfaction among the young single unemployed. These, according to the Trek leaders, Arthur "Slim" Evans, were "mainly concerned" with the "hopelessness of life" in the Relief Camps. Their strong criticism of living and working conditions in the camps was not shared by members of the Macdonald Commission whose report Professor Hoar publishes in its entirety. (He would have enhanced the usefulness of the section on Relief Camps had he also drawn on articles about the "slave camps" or "internment camps" in the *Commonwealth*, the organ of the C.C.F. in B.C.)

Police documents, including reports of anonymous spies among the trekkers in Vancouver, provide a glimpse of the role the Communists played in channelling the frustrations and anger of the unemployed. Both Liversedge and the documents Professor Hoar has unearthed in the National Archives show convincingly that public opinion on the West Coast was for a time in broad sympathy with those who left the Relief Camps to draw attention to their plight. This complicated the task of the authorities eager to remove the trekkers who had become highly politicized. Not that the various layers of government could agree on how best to cope with the trekkers, either in Vancouver or as they moved eastward. The telegrams and letters that the Mayor of Vancouver and the Premier of B.C. exchanged with members of the federal Cabinet reveal the ex-

tent to which those in power were unwilling to assume responsibility for unpopular measures. Dire warnings were used in an effort to shift the blame and gain short-term political advantage over their political rivals.

Similar differences of opinion emerged in the debate over the Trek in the House of Commons, reproduced by Professor Hoar. There the government was criticized at great length by one of its former members, H. H. Stevens, while R. B. Bennett defended the record of the Tory administration. Earlier on, the Prime Minister and his colleagues met a trekkers' delegation. Their exchange of views, also included in this valuable collection of documents, helps to explain why those who vegetated in the Relief Camps and in Vancouver hated so much R. B. Bennett and all that he stood for.

University of British Columbia

IVAN AVAKUMOVIC