

The rich lived in the south end of town, and they were rich by any standard. A writer described Armstrong Point, an exclusive residential peninsula jutting into the Assiniboine River:

"There were no houses . . . There were only castles, huge castles three full stories in height, some with leaded glass windows, and all, certainly, with dozens of rooms. They were built in an assortment of architectural styles and peopled by names from Winnipeg's commercial and industrial *Who's Who*."

The prosperous middle class lived in the west end of town. The north held most of the newcomers—by the records of the time it had 83 per cent of the Slavs, 87 per cent of the Jews, 67 per cent of the Scandinavians, and 22 per cent of the Germans. A few of the residents were mildly prosperous but most were not.

During World War I the cost of living went up 75 per cent while wages went up only 13. In 1919 the average construction worker in the city earned \$900 a year. The minimum income needed for an average-sized family was calculated at \$1500.

In March, 1919, representatives of western labour unions met in Calgary and voted to form One Big Union, OBU, a national organization that would include all working people, skilled and unskilled. The biggest representation, forty-seven delegates, was from Winnipeg.

On May 1 the Winnipeg construction workers, who had lost much ground during the war, went on strike. The next day the metal workers, who were trying to gain recognition of their union as a bargaining agent, followed. On May 15 the overwhelming majority of the other union members voted to support them with a general strike.

The Strike Committee of 300 was soon opposed by a Citizen's Committee of 1,000, including the city's business and government leaders. The Citizen's Committee recruited 2,000 special police and fired the regular ones. The federal government sent in additional Royal

Canadian Mounted Policemen and organized and armed a militia.

On June 17 the six most prominent strike leaders were arrested in their beds at gunpoint. On June 21 an organization of war veterans sympathetic to the strikers organized a mass rally. Streetcars were blocked and one was set on fire. The special police fired a volley and one man was killed. They then cleared the streets with clubs and the militia moved in with machine guns. The Strike Committee called off the strike on June 26.

The Big Flood

On April 7, 1950, the Winnipeg City Engineer said that a flood was "highly probable."

He also noted that the \$1.1 million program of dike construction authorized the year before had not been carried out.

By April 22, the Red River, swollen by heavy snows and rain and fed by tributaries on both sides of the border, went over its banks and spread over farms, towns and villages.

On May 10, 70,000 people were evacuated from Winnipeg. Thousands of volunteers piled millions of sandbags along temporary dikes. Thirty thousand more people were evacuated and 10,500 homes were flooded.

On May 22 the waters began to recede. Losses were estimated at \$175 million.

By 1952 a system of permanent dikes had been built along the Red River and part of the Assiniboine, and, after much campaigning by city leaders, the federal government contributed \$315 million toward the construction of a twenty-nine-mile floodway. The project, which involved the moving of more earth than was moved in the construction of the Panama Canal, was completed in the early 1960s. "Duff's Ditch" (after Premier Duff Roblin) was widely criticized as an unnecessary expense until it saved the city from serious flooding in 1966.

Ghost Story

In July, 1924, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the inventor of Sherlock Holmes and an enthusiastic believer in spiritualism, came to Winnipeg to lecture.

Dr. Thomas Glendenning Hamilton, a surgeon and an experimenter in telekinesis—the moving of inanimate objects by spiritual forces—invited him over for the evening.

He came and they sat down in a bedroom Dr. Hamilton had converted into a seance room. They were joined by the rest of the Hamilton family, a few friends and Mrs. Elizabeth Poole, a medium.

Mrs. Poole "charged" the table by placing her hands on it for a moment. The table was then put



Winnipeg General Strike, June 10, 1919.