



RELIEF CAMPS



& ON-TO-OTTAWA TREK

The UNEMPLOYED

- During the Great Depression, there were many **unemployed** men (est. 70,000 in 1932) because of factory slow downs and the Dust Bowl (farmers)
- Young, single men **migrated** to the cities (riding the rods) to look for jobs and cities began filling with **drifters** (many married men with families stayed put
OR
left their families to find jobs)
- People were **homeless, hungry, frustrated** and **angry** with the **government**

FREE
SOUP COFFEE & DOUGHNUTS
FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

HORA
BAILIFF

FREE SOUP







RELIEF (WORK) CAMPS

- The Government was afraid of **riots and damage**, as major cities were filling with unemployed men
- Thousands of single men had **few options** and were criss-crossing the country **looking for work**
- PM Bennett** decided to build **WORK CAMPS**
- These were often located in isolated northern towns, in the Canadian wilderness (**RURAL**)
- The camps were voluntary, but those who resisted could be arrested for vagrancy



- Relief camps were run by the Dept. Of Defence

JOBS PERFORMED: men cleared bush, built roads, dug ditches, planted trees, erected public buildings

HARD, MANUAL LABOUR

HOUSING: Often 40-80 people roomed in one “house”

COMMON COMPLAINTS: food was terrible, not allowed to vote, many injuries, no doctors, bad pay

RATE OF PAY:

20 cents per day

(1/10 of what an employed labourer would make doing the same work!)



Unemployment relief camp





HOPE vs. REALITY

- PM Bennett's government **hoped** the camps would **ease the unrest**
- In reality, men became **even more frustrated** that the government could not provide them with meaningful work
- The camps became a focal point for the **generation's anger**

“They [unemployed men] were to be hidden away to become forgotten men, the forgotten generation.”

Ron Liversedge

THE BOILING POINT

- Complaints were “not being heard”
- In April 1935, the men’s unhappiness boiled over
- 1,500 men** from the British Columbia relief camps went on **STRIKE** and congregated in Vancouver
- In turn, this created months of **protests across Canada**
- Men from the BC relief camps decided to go to **Ottawa** and **DEMAND improvements**

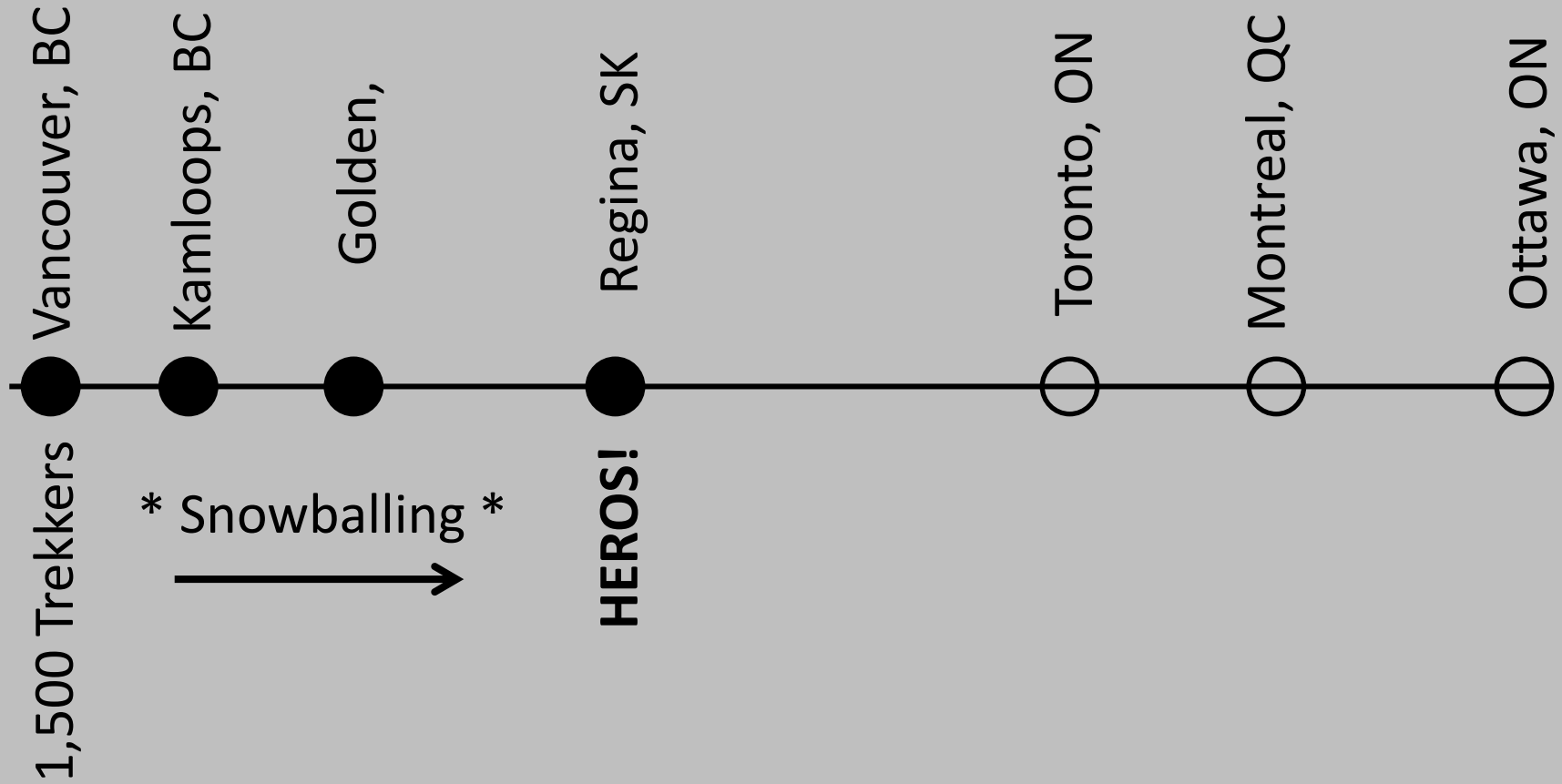


TREKKERS DEMANDS:

- 1. More money, less hours**
- 2. Protection (PPE) and Money if injured**
- 3. Form a union**
- 4. Camps no longer run by National Defence**
- 5. Welfare**
- 6. Give them back the right to vote**

ON-TO-OTTAWA TREK

- Visited city
- Didn't make it to these cities







STOPPED!

- **PM Bennett stopped the Trek in Regina**
- Trekkers sent **8 of their leaders** to visit PM Bennett in Ottawa
- There was a serious meeting, but **nothing was resolved**
- When the leaders returned to Regina, the men were disappointed and organized a public protest

REGINA RIOT

- Police arrive at the public protest and a riot begins
 - Leaders were jailed
 - 130 people were arrested
 - 2 people died
 - No changes – men forced back to BC camps





The Regina Riot, showing Constable Alex Hill lifting the body of Detective Charles Millar. Trekker Nick Schaack was the other fatality of the riot.

THE AFTERMATH:

The government decides to close the relief camps

