

## Chapter Three

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# Boruk's Boarding House

*For the average mind to follow the trend of events is confusing ... The sum and substance of the commotion is that a very far reaching revolution is under way in Canada. It involves a measure of abandonment of the individualistic preference and a partial acceptance of the principle of communism.*

– Donald C. Dunbar, editor, the *Mercury*, Estevan, 2 July 1931, after learning about the federal-provincial decision to finance relief work for the single unemployed.

*It must be observed, while individual liberty is being restricted for the time being, the Soviet objective is plainly the ultimate equalizing and multiplying of material wealth and physical enjoyment.*

– *ibid.*, 26 March 1931

One evening in mid-July 1931, about the time a devastating cyclone hit the Bienfait area, a dark-haired man, of medium build and not yet thirty, got off the train, his travelling bag and portable typewriter in hand. Before leaving the CPR station in Bienfait he took a minute to look around since it was here that a famous armed robbery and murder had occurred a few years earlier when the Bronfman interests were running liquor illegally into the United States. After satisfying his curiosity he started walking westward on Railway Avenue, passing the King Edward Hotel, crossing the wind-blown top of Main Street, past Hawkinson's Hall until he came to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool elevator. Looking across the street he saw a large, ungainly flat-roofed building, white clapboard on one half, unpainted plain boards on the other with 'Rooms & Meals' written on its upper wall. He went over and knocked on the door.