

## Chapter Seven

---

# The Parade

*Somebody has a lot to answer for ... It is fairly certain that, had the parade permit been granted, no loss of life would have resulted. This has been the usual experience in the past. Surely a parade is an absurd issue on which to stake life and death.*

– *Manitoba Free Press*, 1 October 1931

*They broke that union up through all their mounties and machine guns. The shooting put a lot of hatred in people's hearts, something which to this day has never all died out.*

– Thomas Hesketh, Bienfait miner, interview by Michelle Rohatyn in 1979

The strike committee decided to hold a parade from the coalfields into Estevan culminating in a meeting at the town hall. It was scheduled for Tuesday, 29 September, two days after the open-air meeting in Bienfait where Annie Buller spoke. Its purpose was to win public support. The parade turned into a massacre: three miners shot dead and more than twenty people wounded by the town police and the RCMP.

The community was astonished. 'Even today we are puzzled that something this savage could happen in our midst,' said the member of the Legislative Assembly for Estevan as he stood at the spot of the massacre addressing a commemorative gathering sixty years later. He decried the greed, stubbornness, and intolerance that 'once led to senseless murder in the name of law and order' and he warned that it could happen again unless we constantly remind ourselves that our society today has no place for yesterday's inequities.<sup>1</sup>

How did it come about? What happened? The answer to this question