

## Chapter Nine

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# The Trials

*It seems impossible to get in on anything ... I was at the boarding house last night ... I am still talking 'Red' and lots for the Union also against the police and operators, but no one except me seem interested.*

– stool-pigeon, Taylorton mining camp, report to RCMP, 27 October 1931

*There is not sufficient evidence available to warrant bringing Forkin and Mrs. Buller to trial.*

– A. McCutcheon, chief of police, Estevan, 25 November 1931

*There began in Estevan the trial of the miners and their leaders. Class hatred dominated that trial. It was the first mass trial of workers in the history of Estevan and of the province. The court was crowded every day. The accused gave a good account of themselves.*

– Annie Buller, *National Affairs Monthly*, May 1949

'At all times in court conduct yourself calmly and deliberately ... You are not speaking for yourself alone, but as a representative of your class.' The speaker was the Reverend Alfred E. Smith, of Brandon, Manitoba, who came to Estevan for three weeks at the time of the court trials to help the arrested miners organize their defence. He knew that most of them, and the friends who came to speak for them, would never have been near a courthouse before; they would find the court language unfamiliar and they would feel small, ill at ease with the pomp and ceremony and the complicated proceedings.

Smith was a preacher who, like Tommy Douglas, believed that Jesus was a revolutionary in his day, concerned to bring glad tidings to the