

**Saskatchewan Archives Board, Tape R-320
Excerpts transcribed from interview with Harry Nicholson, Estevan City Council
member at the time of riot. Interviewed 24 August 1973 in Estevan by Larry
Johnston**

Nicholson:

City Council had a meeting when we were advised there was going to be a parade here. We had a special meeting and advised the man in charge at Bienfait by wire. Of course we don't know if he ever got it – it was badly handled in that way. Because they should have had somebody take it to him and sign for it, but they never did. Sloan was kinda the leader. They had other fellows here, but he was the backer. The wire was forbidding the parade. We had the meeting before noon and it was sent directly after that by the secretary under instructions from the council. I don't just remember the wording of the wire because the secretary sent it. But as I remember it said, "we were advised the union is organizing a parade to be marched on Estevan." And then they said that the city council at a meeting has voted to notify you that the parade is prohibited. I wouldn't say that that's just the exact words but that's the sens of it. No, there was one other thing – action will be taken to prohibit the parade. That's all – I don't believe it ever said police.

The council was not all unanimous on this. It was they were afraid that there would be trouble in the middle of the town and that the stores would likely be broken into and so on. This was the main reason for prohibiting the parade. There were other things said but this was the main thing and there were requests for some of the merchants to certain councilors and the Mayor especially....

Interviewer:

I'm told that these sorts of parades were sort of traditional in a lot of mining disputes. Was council aware of this? Or did they even think this was, in fact, true?

Nicholson:

No doubt, we knew about it. About parades in other places. There isn't any question about that.

Interviewer:

Had there been, to your knowledge, trouble of that sort in other parades?

Nicholson:

I don't think it was ever raised there. As a matter of fact, the matter of a parade anywhere else wasn't actually raised. But you can't say we didn't know about it, because we all read the newspapers, and knew about parades in other places. This may have had something to do with agitating some of the fellows too, I don't know....

Souris Avenue, this is where the trouble started, when the police cracked "Old Dan" (Dan Moore) over the head. They attempted to go and the police attempted to stop them. What first started the fighting was when Dan got rapped over the head. I don't know why he got rapped over the head.

Interviewer:

As the fighting progressed the RCMP and the town constables started to retreat a bit....

Nicholson:

They fired over the heads of the rioters, they parade, or whatever you want to call it. There were tow or three women there, very radical ones, with their hair flying and swearing....