ON TO OTTAWA — JOHN PADDY McELLI

Jean This is an interview with Paddy McElligo
Dec 3rd 1974 the material to be usec
for a biography of Arthur Evans.
Where did you first met my father
what are your recollections of him.

Paddy I met Art I believe it was in 1932
and I was in and out of relief camp
as most young canadians at that tim
and I got to know Art very well
in the course of many many meeting
which we held over the years discussin
problems for our strike activities a
and around Van for relief camps most
things that we did and were done aro
Van

J You were in Vancouver; you came out I
think it was in April 1935 and brought
just about everybody from the camps

P Jack Polochuck who was killed in
Spain; Jack and I were camp organi
in the Hope Brenston area

J That was a famous area pretty hard

T You came into came into Van tell me where you in the Hudsons Bay where yo at the Cenotaph Could you tell me Something about it the papers tell it little differently than those who wer there

P Very much so in fact as usual at that time they didn't favour us in any way; and we wasn't too popular wit Mr McNeer or with his blue shirts or police

T I know that father used to call Mr Jeremiah Jesus McNeer would you te me the other name you said he used once

P There were several; one that I thoug was very appropriate was "Very McQu I think that describes Gerry very adequ but the distinct recollection I have of Gerry was when he read the riot ac at the cenotaph which showed his respect for it I guess

P. I was as close to McGeer almost as I am to you Jean when he read the riot act, We were entirely hemmed in in that little square which you would ca that little park area I can see it just plainly now as the day it happened. We had provincials, mounties city police and Gerry's private little army the blue shirts with his boys. We had the opportunity of disbanding and getting out of there or else - and we asked th we be permitted to march off in our various divisions and McGeer suggeste a committee to see him at city hall which at that time was in the Holde building and I was one of that committe and Jack Taylor who was present at the meeting asked McGeer I dont recollec the exact words but to the effect tha we would not be harassed or interfer in any way. Oh yes says McGeer we got to the second floor and

P were hauled off the elevator and throu
in the hoose gow - so much for Gerry
McGeers word - which endeared him t
us very much of course

J I think one of the slogans was wor
and wages not Oakalla cages

P Right right oh there were many of tho

J And were you also in the museum

P No I wasn't in the museum, that wa
my division There were four divisions
we met in the old wobblie hall I
forget the address the wobblies were
very cooperative most of them we use
thier hall Division 2 Hope Princeton
then there was another Division no I
I think it was they were in command
if you want to call it that the Russi
Hall on Pender east

J The Ukrainian one wasn't it in those o

Paddy Yes and I cant recollect at the momen
where the other two divisions met

P The met in different halls

J The orange hall someone was in upstai
but I dont know which one.

P Right, I know either I was division
Captain of no 2

J The descision was made after you w
unable to get any where with Patu
or McGeer or there was nothing forth
coming from the federal govt to go
Ottawa were you part and parcel of
that discession to go on to Ottawa

P Yes I was. There are so many things I
could tell about that. to begin with it
was very well organized we had our
divisions organized into squads of te
and the way in which it was organized
was the group captain and their was
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 all the way down the li
we had organized them in this way
that in the event if the captain for
instance was put out of action or
into custody no 2 automatically to

P over, this was the way it worked on the
box cars as we went through we had
squead to a box car and I put in a
little time in the British navy and we
the I. R A and they werent half as w
organized as we were

J That seems to be that there was obvio
for many reasons, I dont want to put wor
in your mouth, but you had this organ
for discipline as well as to try and cont
the odd stool pigeon who was tucked
into your ranks. and as I understan
P it there were a few that where know
but the decision was to made by some
or a group to keep them and know
who the devil they were than to
bring in strangers that would take y
a little while longer to figure out
plus if you knew who they were yo
made sure they didnt cause any dama
or distruction to discredit your name

P They were very well taken care

P of at all times - at all times belie
me

J Is there any specific incidents on the wa
to Regina that you remember that
you would like to talk about - I kno
that Mrs Sorley in your first stop ma
you all welcome with her mutton st

P Golden first I didn't know the lady be
I have a mental picture of her and
the discipline on that trick was real
something

J. And you had no serious injuries
was anyone hurt travelling

P The most serious injury we had wa
a guy got sunburn - there was a sq
to a car to a box car

J How many would that be

P 10 and I think we pumped our
squads up to 12 as we went along
We took our places on the box cars
flat cars coal cars what ever the hap
they happened to be in order

P and the few known stools that we h
they were very carefully nursed and t
few we suspected they didn't know
but they were baby sat all the time
all the way

I you did get to Regina and had an
invitation from the federal govt to
send a delegation to Ottawa I gues
we are all aware what happened at
Ottawa

P Very much so I was on that deleg

I And then the delegation come back and
we come to a area thats a black pag
in Canada's history and that's July 1
Would you like to tell me where yo
were the evening of July 1st

P I was right there

I At market square

P at market square yes

I and what did you see

P Well I think if I remember correctly
there were two big furniture mover

P vans Chrome truck I believe it was one pulled up - I don't remember the name of the streets one pulled up to our right so to speak one to our left and at our front the police and fire station's there was quite a breeze blowing that day

T This was a meeting for the citizens of Regina not the workers and there was a small amount of you actually that were there

P A few I would say maybe 100 give or take a few

T Do you remember the speakers on the platform at the time

P Yes Art Evans Red Walsh the delegate from Ottawa while I didn't pay any attention at the time I distinctly heard a whistle blow at which time the doors of the fire station opened and the city police came; mounties poured out of both of these trucks

P to throw gas grenades in fact some the boys grabbed these and threw the back in the truck and of course

J There was no warning of what was happening

P No warning nothing

J. There was no disturbance to have caus this

P Nothing at all - There was absolutel no reason for it. It was a peacef- meeting it was an attack a delibera planned attack on a peaceful meeti by principally the mounties and the city police

J Do you remember after what their reason was for bringing on this attac

P Ive heard many reasons not many Ive heard a few - I cant think of any other than that they that it was orders from the Bennett govt to break us up - How they did it dident matte a damn as long as it was done

P As a matter of fact they broke up that particular meeting but they strengthened our organization

J and what happened to you on that particular evening

P Well after we barricaded the street I went through my mind right then the city police walking towards us with their clubs up it reminds me of the Keystone cops thats just what flashed through my mind I remember we barricaded the streets and there was a about the length of a car op the chap was an American and I said sorry old boy we have to borrow your car "What the hell do you want my car for" well look there's just room for one and yours fits sorry old boy "Well I'll be god damned" say he. He and his family got out of the car - We told them now look we're sorry about this - its quite

P possible were going to be attacked in all directions see these guys - Well while all this was going on boys - young fellows with carriers on their bikes were coming up with rocks, pieces of pavement chunks of wood bottles - "I'll be back in a minute" they would dump it and take off. And when the cops got in range we threw rocks they opened fire - I cant recollect how many were hit Prange was hit, I think it was a rickochet that got him I'm not sure. Then of course the mounties rode in all directions now thats wrong not all directions they came at us in three directions on horse back as well as on foot, and it was at this time that I got hurt, a horse stepped on my knee, then we decieded at this time, just about the time word went around break up into your squads and get back

Paddy - to the stadium the best you can - Or
ineedent I wont forget this is for
publecity Jean I wont use the n
but there were 2 brothers with us
who have since become Doctors
they were first aid men; and one o
the boys Blondie was helping me
my Knee was begining to swell an
bother me and I can't remember th
name of the hotel, but the mounte
were coming both ways and this is
place for us I said "Lets get into
hotel". I think it was an Irishman
who owned it " You can't come in he
"Im sorry old boy were here". Nothing
will be damaged. Were not giving yo
a hard time about it were just tak
cover, "Whats happening" "Take a lo
out that door but dont stay too long"
And he looked both ways and said
Alright. There was a little gu
Ive forgotten his name, We beca

P rather famous afterwards, very prim a
proper English gentleman and he plea
to inform us that we we hooligans
and hoodlums and that he was goin
out on the street, I went over to him
I said "Look old timer if you go ou
you'll get battered on the head" "I'm
a loyal British subject they just wa
you blasted hooligans" Okay old
timer. A mountie sergeant; a wha
he laid the poor old guy out cold. S
I reached out grapped him by the
leg pulled him in the door. Blondie
brought him to, when he come to
"Get them" "Kill them" "Get rid of
everyone of them" I say. I beg you
pardon sir, I thought you were a loyal British subje
British subject be god damned Ki
them I say

T And did you end up in the hospit
that evening

P Oh yes yes. I ended up in the hosp

J. Was that the night father was arrest

P Yes.

J Would you like to tell me somethe about your recollections of the Kind o man my father was

P Well to say he was a great guy wa putting it mildly

J His personality - he a load of bare tough - wit - what were the Kin of things that made them a leader the trek.

P Well his qualifications he had a very keen active brain - all his efforts were dedicated towards the working class

J Was he able to enlisit the suppart of the men, many certainly weren't communists and he had been Branded a red through the newspapers all over the country. Did that bother those who weren't really politically awar That just wanted work & wages

T Was he able to have their confidence

P Yes I would say so - There were some of course and this again was due to the mounties rats being infiltrated into our ranks and of course they never missed an opportunity to say that so & so communist But it did not bother the vast majority of those who were not communists - I was a member of the communist party then myself. Art Evans wasn't an easy man to work with

T Ive heard that before

P He didnt - Any one on his committee there were no dead heads you pulled your weight or you weren't on the committee irrespective of whether you were a communist or not - You had a job to do - it had to be done

T. Well I dont Know him from that angle but I do Know that he was a hard workingman

P Well no one of us could Keep up with him physically - sure as heel not mentally

J What happened after you left the hospital Paddy

P. I reported the group - I was supposed to stay in hospital longer than I did but I couldnt see that as soon as I could get my leg under me ; if it hadnt been for this first aid man of ours - at that time I had been put in charge of the first aid - that first aid group that was something else - we had male nurses qualified male nurses I dont know how many, we had nine of them on the committee and there were two doctors

J Actually professional doctors

P Actually M.D.'s

J. Unable to get jobs.

P They were like the rest of us

P I could give you their names but I'd rather not now

J I'll take their names of & the tape and try and get their permission to use their names

P I'd like to locate them I've been trying for years and can't - They could very well be dead I don't know One I believe was killed in World War II, but the two brothers in particular they came to Vancouver they weren't doctors at this time; they did become doctors

J How interesting

P and we had the first aid group, they functioned very well, we had our own building which of course had been designated as a first aid station in the fair grounds

J Is there anything else that you would like to ~~tell~~ me particularly about your association with dad

J Can you remember any of the names he used for Bennett or any of the politica or the police that he had not too much use for

P Oh lord thats a long time ago

J I know it so I'm stretching all of our memories Paddy may I have permission to use the material on this tape for my fathers biography

P By all means

J Thank you very much.