

CHANT HYMNS, KNEEL BESIDE LEADER'S BODY  
Thousand Doukhobors at Grand Forks Station Form Weeping Mass

GROUP MARCH UP FROM THIRTY MILES  
Seven Hundred Leave for Brilliant to Share the Funeral Rites  
Nelson Daily News, October 31, 1924

GRAND FORKS, B.C., Oct 30 - Grand Forks mourned last night as never before The tragic deaths of John McKie, her most outstanding citizen, and Neil Murray, well-known war veteran, athlete and rancher plunged the city into deepened gloom.

But the quaint and unexampled evidence of grief among the members of the Doukhobor colony over the loss of their leader was the enactment of drama of surpassing doleful impressiveness.

No more mournful spectacle could be conceived than the never ending procession of these weirdly dressed and honest people with black capes over their heads as they trudged through rain and mud on the middle of highway in groups of 20 to 100, some having trampled many miles, older people and children in wagons, chanting their odd native hymns, as they threaded the streets to the bier of the late lamented leader, around which they continued to pay homage until after midnight.

It was heart-rendering to witness these people who had gazed upon the remains of their leader with stoical, passive, tearless faces for hours chanting continuously, finally break and give vent to their feelings as the hour for the departure of the special train arrived, when more than 1,000 became a weeping mass of humanity by Doukhobors here. They had become regarded as immune from tears.

The Doukhobors live in settlements through the valleys for a distance of 30 miles, and messengers with the tragic news did not reach many of them till late in the day.

The 300 members of the local settlement congregated near the depot during the day awaiting further news of the accident and the arrival of the remains. Those from the outlying districts hastened on foot and continued to arrive long after midnight.

Some of these communities came in large groups and formed a grotesque procession as they wended their way down through a drenching rain, and by 11 o'clock nearly 1,000 had congregated around the Pullman coach in which the late leader had been conveyed from the scene of the accident.

The train arrived about 6 o'clock, and the Pullman was so placed at the depot that those from without could look through an open window and see the dead leader as he lay as if asleep in the lower berth with flowers all around him.

Late in the evening the Doukhobors started a procession through the Pullman, and each in turn on arrival at the deathbed knelt on hands and knees in humility, the chanting of the others outside the coach continuing all the while. It was during this period that the inquest was in progress at the court house. Out of deference to the Doukhobors the jury came and viewed the body without removing them.

When the evidence of the train crew had been completed, about midnight. the special train with the remains and a couple of coaches filled with Doukhobors left for Brilliant, where after special funeral services the body will be laid to rest.