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THE WINNIPEG TRIBUNE

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Tramp, tramp, tramp the kids are marching



Rock music entertained the huge throng before moving off.

An estimated 25,000 persons, most of them youngsters, this morning started on the Miles for Millions march, a 35-mile trek through Metro Winnipeg to raise about \$150,000 for the island of St. Lucia.

The official starting time was supposed to be 8 a.m., but two groups of several thousand broke ahead of the main pack. By the time Lieutenant-Governor Richard S. Bowles declared the march started, most of his audience had already left.

The early starters caused a frantic search by march organizers to find enough volunteers to man the first check-point at Provencher Park.

March organizer-in-chief Pat R. Mooney told the assembled youngsters that there were more than 21,000 of them — and that was long before everybody had arrived.

Among the dignitaries giving the marchers their send-off were United Way chairman D. S. Rodger, MPs Stanley Knowles and Bud Sherman, Alderman Gurzon Harvey and former premier Duff Roblin.

About 45 tables were set up on both sides and at the front of the Legislature Building, to handle registration of the crowds that covered almost every square inch of grass on the north side grounds.

And once they were off, the marchers, aged from three to 80, but most of them teen-aged, formed a wave down both sides of Memorial Boulevard, turning off and tying up traffic on Portage Ave.

Within 20 minutes, the first of them were at Provencher Park in St. Boniface, moving quickly through 40 tables set up to stamp their distance cards.

through part of East Kildonan, spreading out up Main St. in West Kildonan.

By noon, the bulk of the marchers were coming down from McPhillips Ave., to the Fort Garry Gate on South Main St. and heading into St. Vital.

The first marchers were expected to finish at about 3 p.m., with a large number coming in between 4 and 6 p.m. — and others trickling in after that, as late as 2 a.m. About 4,500 were expected to cover the whole distance.

Last year, about 6,500 started, while 1,750 made it all the way over an equal distance.

About 700 volunteers are manning checkpoints throughout the Metro area.

During the latter half of the march, food and refreshments are being offered in great amounts to the marchers.

Several companies are contributing, and the three national political parties, the Liberals, Progressive Conservatives and New Democrats, all set up stands at checkpoints. They were asked to refrain from handing out any campaign material to the marchers.

Medical help is being provided by 56 student nurses and several people associated with the St. John's Ambulance — who last year used up more plastic bandages for blisters in one day than they usually use during a whole year.

Six personnel carriers and eight pickup vans were supplied by the armed forces to pick up tired marchers. In addition, they have two water trucks on the road for the thirsty.

Twenty cars, linked to a communications centre in the Legislature Building, kept communications in touch with what was happening on the road.