

CANADIANA SCRAPBOOK

THE DEPRESSION YEARS: CANADA IN THE 1930s

Paul Mennill



Introduction

The Great Depression was a decade that seemed to go out of control. Canadians did not consciously shape the events of the Depression; rather, they responded desperately to the seemingly uncontrollable forces that sapped the lifeblood of the nation. As the economy crumbled in the winter of 1929-30, hundreds of thousands of men and women fell out of work and faced a hungry, cold, insecure world. In spite of predictions during 1930 and 1931 that the economy would improve, conditions grew worse. In the cities, an overpowering, impersonal disaster called "unemployment" hit the unskilled workers, the factory employees, the young and the old. Unemployed families could not afford to buy goods. Prices and profits fell. Manufacturing slowed down. Unemployment grew worse. And no one was able to stop the vicious cycle.

As if economic slowdown and severe unemployment were not enough, the prairie farms where Canada's wealth had once grown in the wheat fields, faced the worst droughts, the worst dust storms and the worst grasshopper plagues ever. Year after year farmers planted crops only to see them destroyed before harvest time.

Governments and businesses were unable to cope with the immense proportions of the problem. Welfare programs were stretched well beyond their limits. The poverty problem burst onto the political scene with dramatic protest movements like the On-to-Ottawa Trek. Unhappy with the old political parties, many Canadians involved themselves in new social movements designed to rebuild the nation.

Strange as it may seem, not everyone suffered during the decade of the Depression. Those with a moderate but secure income found that a little money went a long way. For some Canadians, the confidence, optimism, and vigour of the 1920s continued into the 1930s. It was a decade of contrasts. The ultimate contrast exploded into reality in September 1939 when the outbreak of the Second World War speeded economic recovery and ended Canada's preoccupation with herself.

This book documents the frustrations and hopes of those Canadians who faced the Great Depression. The scrapbook format presents a unique assembly of photographs, documents, comments, and explanations which compel the reader to observe, to participate, to locate himself in the Depression. Each page reveals the lives of individuals and lays their feelings, passions, agonies and judgements before the reader. The interplay of photographic and print documents draws the reader into the decade.

to Sandi, Danny and Sally

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THE DEPRESSION YEARS: CANADA IN THE 1930s

THE PROPERTY OF
NIPJON-FED ROCK DISTRICT
HIGH SCHOOL

PAUL MENNILL

Saunders Secondary School, London

88 398

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Prosperity in the twenties

In my younger days crops were good, prices of farm produce reasonably satisfactory, and an air of prosperity and general well-being pervaded the whole province. My father bought a new car, a new tractor, a new grain separator, a new washing machine and a new radio on the installment plan. No one seemed in the least bit worried about the future.

Then came the terrible stock market crash in 1929 and with it a fall in grain prices, which in succeeding years fell to unprecedentedly low levels. Unfortunately for the farmers, while the prices of farm produce grew steadily less, the freight rates and prices of farm machinery, gas and oil, and other farm necessities remained comparatively high. To add to my father's worries, a series of drought years set in when crops were exceedingly poor, often only averaging eight or ten bushels to the acre. The drought was accompanied by a swarm of grasshoppers which ate the scanty crops we succeeded in producing.

Within a year or so of the stock market crash other effects of the depression began to be felt in our district. Prices of all commodities began to fall, wage cuts became common and fear of unemployment began to affect all of us. Unemployed workers, seeking employment in the cities and in the grain fields, began to drift from one district to another, and transients who "rode the rods" became a familiar sight. Soon the cities were forced to set aside large sums for relief. I remember my mother estimating that during one of the worst years of the depression we must have produced meals for at least a hundred men during the year.

J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, pp. 234-235

Some People Lost Everything. . .

One man, now trying to support a wife and three children on wages that in August average \$15.00 to \$18.00 for 52 hours, had lost his house, a building lot in which he had invested, a 15 year endowment policy and about \$800 of savings. Another, sole support of wife and child with wages averaging \$9.00 weekly, had used up the whole of the \$2,500 he had managed to save during the boom years. Yet another, trying to maintain his mother and unemployed father, reported telephone disconnected and radio repossessed. These are but samples of general conditions—except that we found only a small number of workers who seemed ever to have had insurance. Very few even reported bank accounts. Living expenses use up their week's pay only too quickly.

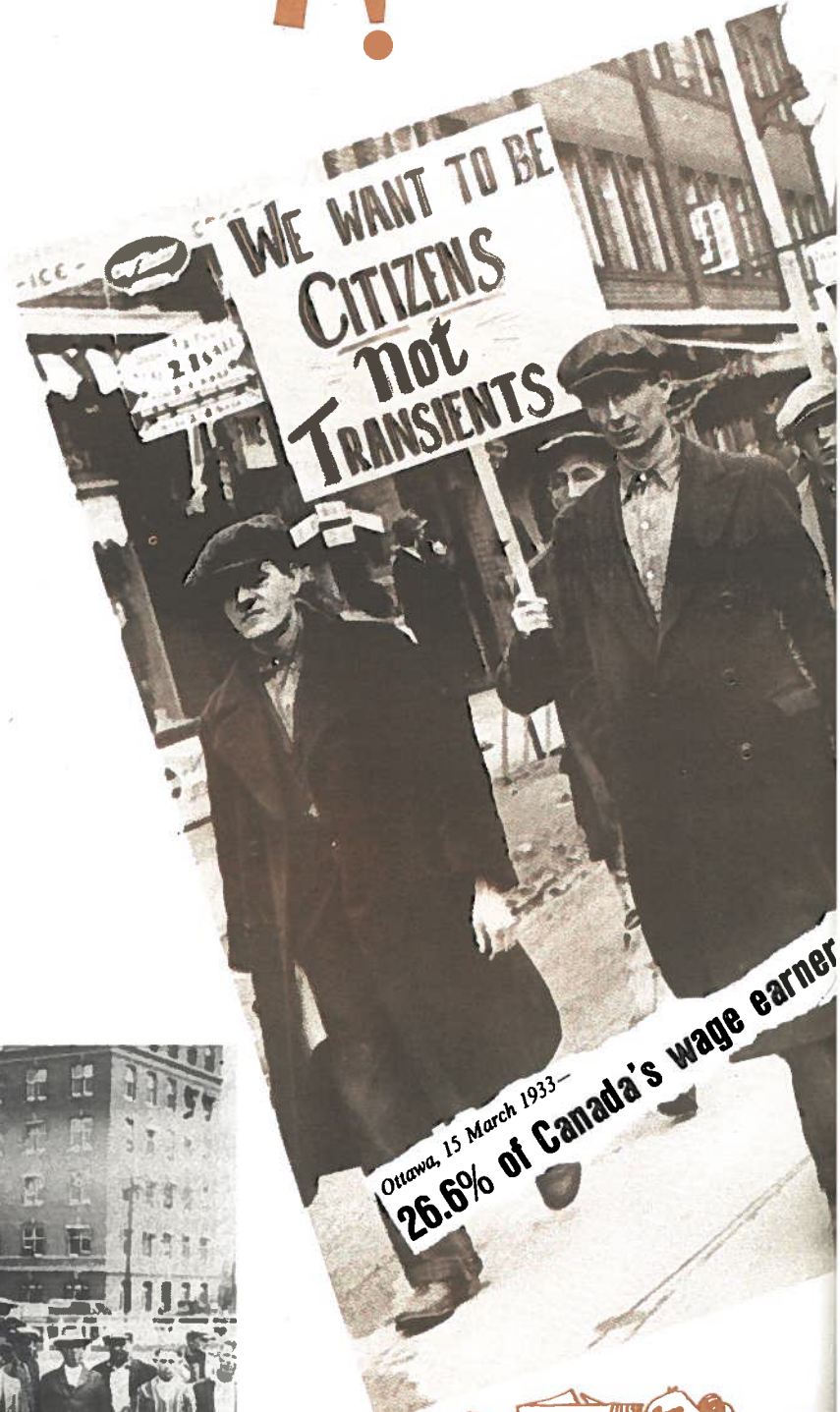
Here and there we would find workers who were still living tolerably despite poor wages. In

these cases there would usually be a family with several wage-earners, living together and pooling their resources. Often this meant serious overcrowding in rooms. F. R. Scott and H. M. Cassidy, *Labour Conditions in the Men's Clothing Industry*



Many unemployed men became desperate for work

FROM BOOM... TO BUST!





Apparently the number of actual evictions for non-payment of rent was small during the first two years of the depression. However, reports from various places during 1932 show a great increase in eviction notices, and many instances of people actually being put out on the street, although in general the social agencies appear to have found it possible to prevent this. H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 244

Conditions were very terrible at Magrath during the early thirties. Wheat was 19 cents a bushel; the best pigs sold at two dollars each, not two dollars a hundred but each. A number of farmers shipped cattle to market, and were billed back for excess freight—the cattle didn't pay the cost of freight charges. Hundreds of people in our area were on relief. Mortgages and interest piled up to excessive rates. I had a quarter section with 100 acres irrigated. Irrigation taxes on my 100 acres piled up to \$9,000. What was the use of paying any kind of taxes when you had \$9,000 against a quarter section? Practically every farmer fell heavily into debt and was also heavily mortgaged.

J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, pp. 239-240

The winter of 1932 was grim and tough. Eggs were five cents a dozen; hogs two cents a pound; cattle around five or six cents a pound. There was great pressure put on by creditors to collect debts for land and machinery. The situation grew desperate in 1933. Evictions for non-payment of debts began to take place. I had to go out north of _____ to give a family the bad news that they were to be evicted immediately. On this farm a man and his wife, three or four children, and a bed-ridden mother-in-law lived in an old shack. I had to tell that middle-aged man and his fragile wife, "My instructions are to put you on the road allowance at once." Another time I had to seize all a man's furniture. This man lived in a poor shack on a farm with his wife and children. He owed money for the furniture which he had in his possession. I was ordered to take his furniture away from him. The furniture was removed. J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, pp. 238-239

FOOD PRICES IN 1932 IN WINNIPEG

Bread	4¢ loaf
Butter	15¢ lb.
Eggs	15¢ doz.
Hamburger	8¢ lb.
Milk	6¢ qt.
Peanut Butter	20¢ lb.
Potatoes	30¢-40¢ per 100 lb.
Roast Beef	12¢ lb.
Sausage	7¢ lb.
Sugar	5¢ lb.

J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 146

INCOMES in 1931

Size of Income	Number of Persons		Per Cent of Total
	Male	Female	
Under \$1,000	1,526,000		56.2
\$1,000-\$1,500	643,000		23.7
\$1,500-\$3,000	448,000		16.5
\$3,000-\$10,000	85,000		3.2
\$10,000 and over	11,000		0.4
Totals	2,713,000		100.0

F. R. Scott, *Canada To-day*, p. 54

Teachers' salaries were drastically reduced. My salary was cut from \$1,050.00 to \$400.00 over a period of years. The number of unemployed teachers rose and salaries even in the most prosperous areas were not more than \$600.00 or \$700.00.

J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 235

NOT EVERYONE SUFFERED....

Some Canadians lived well in the 1930s. Prices were very low: by 1933 it took only \$3 to buy goods worth \$4 in 1926. With bread at about a nickel a loaf, hamburger a dime a pound, a good dress shirt costing about a dollar, suburban brick homes on the market at \$4,000 and less, and a thriving market in servants at one or two dollars a day, a family whose head worked steadily at decent wages, say \$20-\$30 a week, got through the decade rather pleasantly. In fact the average factory worker who kept his job in the 1930s enjoyed a slight increase in his standard of living (though his wages dropped, they did not fall as fast as the cost of living), and the full-time Dominion civil servant actually saw his standard of living rise by 25 per cent between 1926 and 1933. For a few people it was a time to make up the ground lost to inflation in the 1920s. buy that first automobile, hire a cleaning lady one day a week to run the new vacuum cleaner and electric washing-machine, take holidays, and relax in the evenings around the radio. They were the lucky Canadians.

L. M. Grayson and M. Bliss, *The Wretched of Canada*, p. vi

THE FINEST VALUES IN CANADA

UNDERWEAR

STANFIELD'S, TURNBULL'S, PENMAN'S

FOR MEN—

Stanfield's Heavy All Wool Rib Gold Label Shirts, size 36 to 46	1.49
Drawers, size 32 to 44	1.49
Stanfield's All Wool-Gold Label Combinations, per suit	2.49
Stanfield's Extra Heavy All Wool Elastic Rib "Red Label" Shirts, sizes 36 to 44	1.98
Drawers, sizes 32 to 42	1.98

TURNBULL'S DOUBLE-BREAST AND DOUBLE-BACK.

This garment, No. E-88, has a famous reputation for long wear and comfort. For those who cannot wear the ribbed wool, this is flat knit and just as warm. Shirt sizes 34 to 46

Drawers, with double back for extra protection, sizes 32 to 44	1.59
Turnbull's Wool-Tex Combinations for Men	1.39
Stanfield's Extra Heavy Wool Flannel Lined Shirts and Drawers, each	89c

FOR BOYS— You can rely on this Underwear for Boys.

For real comfort—Wool-Tex Combinations, sizes 22 to 32, per Suit	95c
Boys' All Wool Combinations, extra long wear and real comfort in this line, per Suit	1.89

A MOTHER WRITES TO PRIME MINISTER BENNETT FOR HELP, 1933:

Toronto, Ont.

I am writing to you because I am in desperate straits. I am not a beggar nor am I a person of nerve, but I am about to lose my home. I have paid \$3300.00 in it and now the mortgage company will foreclose unless I can pay up all that is owing this month. I have three sons, aged 17, 19 and 21, all so willing and anxious to work but can get absolutely nothing at all to do to earn a dollar, they have tried to get in the Camps but have been refused because they have a home in the city, or because they were unfortunate enough to be born in Toronto. I was born in Nova Scotia but have lived here over twenty five years. Yet I must lose all, is there no way, is there not anything that can be done. I am told that I am only one in thousands, does that better my position any? I am forty seven years old and have worked hard for everything I ever had, and it is hard to see it go now.

Mr. Bennett, I believe you to be a good as well as a great man, therefore I am appealing to you to help me save my home. Picture yourself, through no fault of your own, homeless, with sons willing but unable to provide for you.

Mr. Bennett, could you help me by a loan of five hundred dollars. I know times will be better as I realize you are striving toward that very thing as best you can and your great efforts will bring success, but my need is now.

Please help me or what can I do. Bennett Papers

TORONTO, 29 OCTOBER, 1929

Stock Prices Crash Early!

MILLIONS OF SHARES VALUED IN BILLIONS SOLD IN STOCK BREAK

Prices came tumbling down in the greatest crash of all at the opening of the stock markets today and what took hours to accomplish on Thursday was accomplished in minutes this forenoon.

Thursday's crash has been described as the worst in history, but this performance was put into the shade in the first half hour today.

All markets were swamped with selling orders and when the bell rang to start trading, there was a mad rush to get out at all costs.

Prices didn't mean a thing and eyes were shut to values in the wildest scamper to get out of the market the exchanges have ever witnessed.

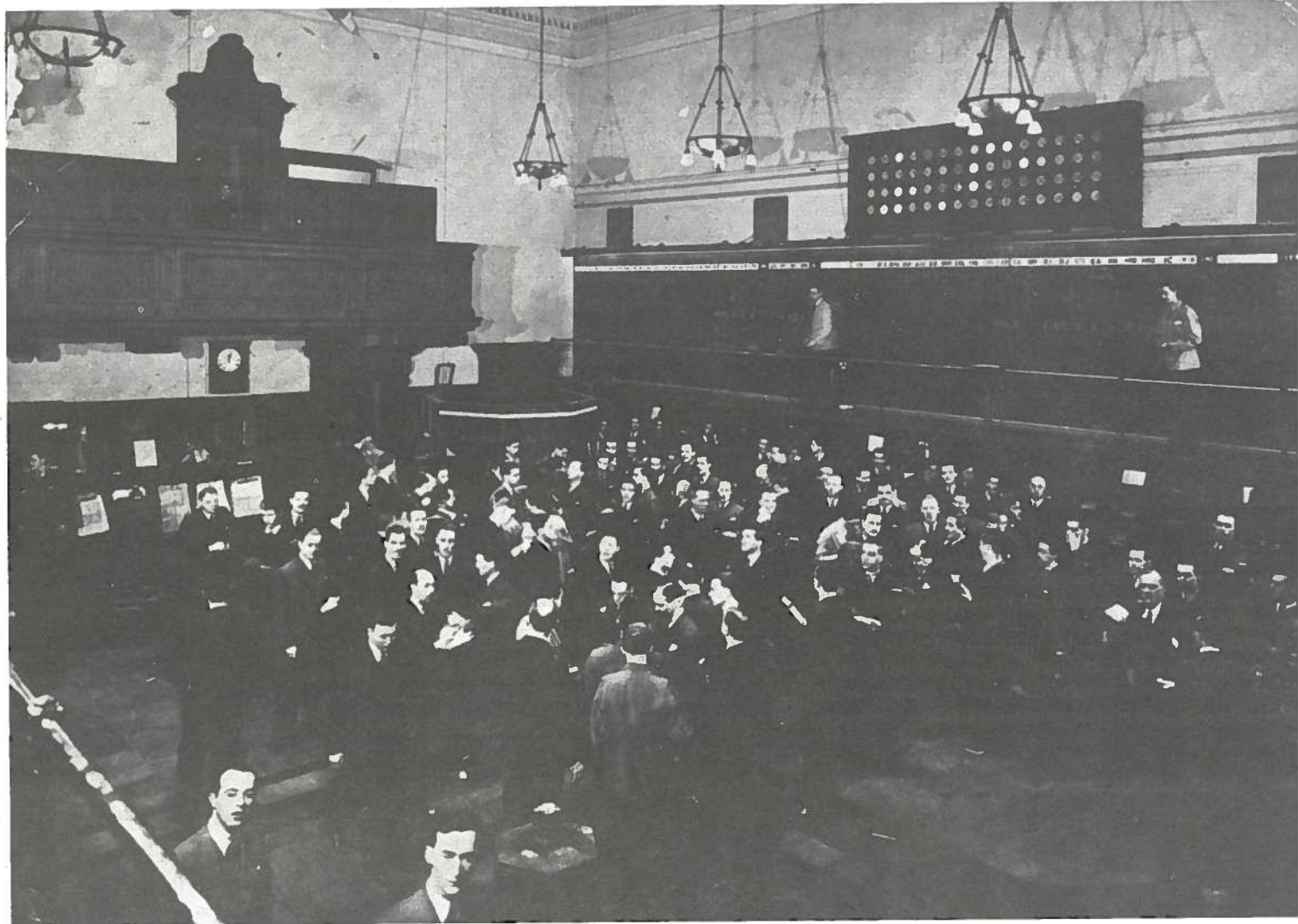
There was the case of a customer who held a 150-share block of a well-known stock. The quotation showed that it was dropping and at this particular time stood at 56. The holder had suffered a \$3,500 loss up to that time and in despair ordered his broker to sell. In the minute in which it took to get a phone connection and give selling instructions the stock had dropped another two points.

The small speculators unable to put up additional funds were the chief losers. Many of these are young clerks and salaried men with a few hundred dollars for speculation purposes. They were in large part responsible for the frantic unloading when savings were gone and they were unable to raise loans.

White-faced and distraught and with nerves at breaking point, these youngsters saw their money swept away as they stood helplessly by. One young fellow who had been left \$6,000 by an aunt and had bought several parcels of assorted stock with his newly gained funds was caught in the panic maelstrom and tossed everything overboard. He lost two-thirds of his inheritance without the quiver of an eyelash.

Losses have been enormous and fortunes wiped out overnight. Individuals who were rated millionaires one day are almost paupers today. An estimate of the losses suffered is next to impossible. The shrinkage in New York of listed and unlisted securities in the past five weeks is estimated at \$25,000,000,000.

Sixteen corporations having their securities listed on the Toronto Stock Exchanges have had \$1,100,000,000 lopped off valuations from the high for 1929 and the decline in the same issues on Monday was close to \$300,000,000 alone, or at the rate of almost \$1,000,000 a minute. *Toronto Daily Star, 29 Oct. 1929*



Scene of the Toronto Stock Market Crash

SAMPLE OF DECLINE IN STOCK VALUES FROM HIGH POINT OF 1929 TO LOW POINT OF 1932

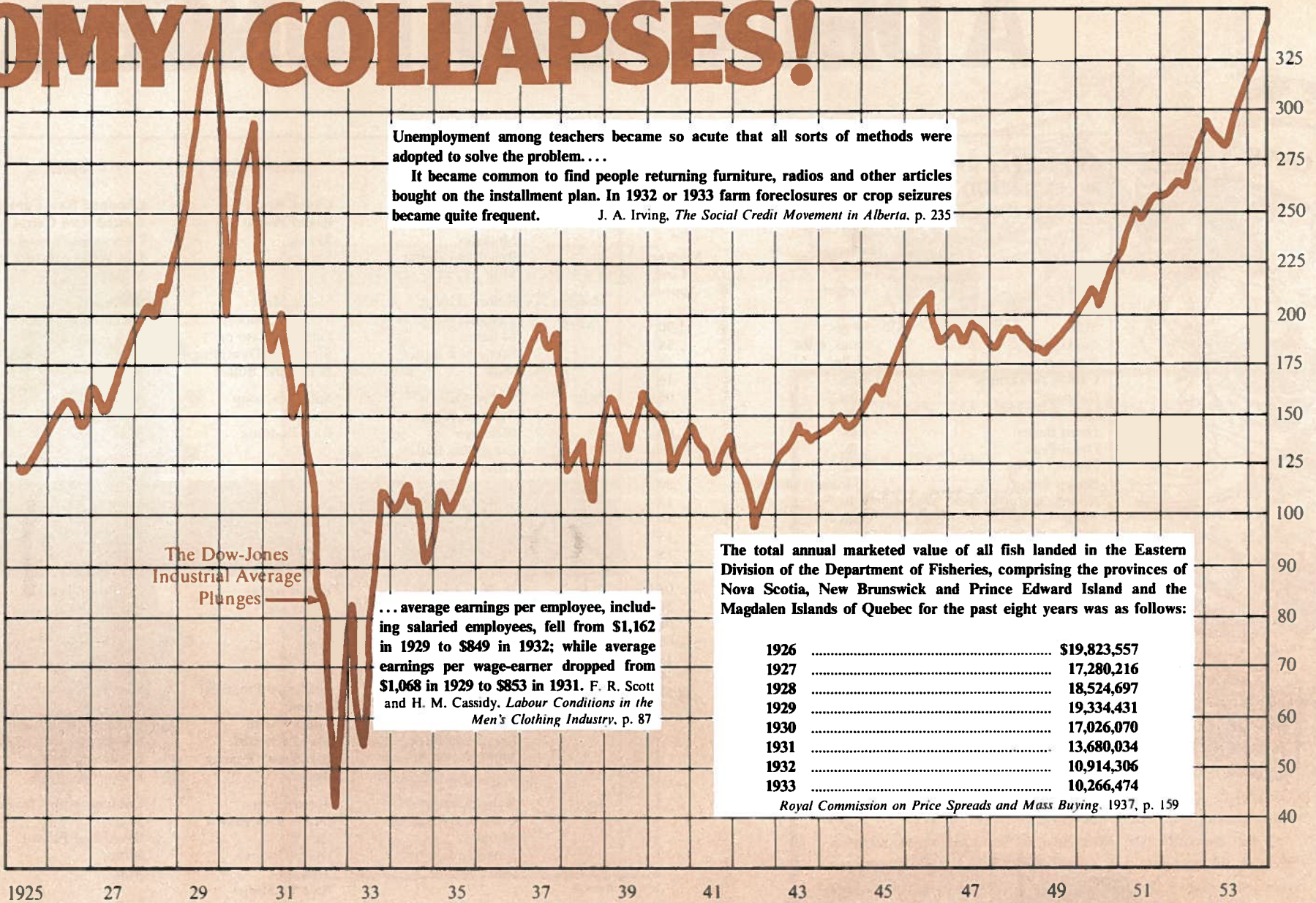
	1929 "High"	1929 Market Value	1932 (May) "Low"	1932 Market Value	Profits 1930	Profits 1932
			\$(000,000)	\$(000,000)	\$(000,000)	\$(000,000)
Bell Telephone	183	78	139.3	59.4	413.6	380.7
Brazilian Traction	82	7¾	516.2	52.3	468.9 (gross)	293.5
BA Oil	35¾	8½	94.1	21.3	41.1	43.7
Canada Cement	36	2¼	21.6	1.4	51.9 (gross)	26.4
Canada Cannery	28	2¾	3.8	.3	10.2	7.3
CPR	67½	8½	904.5	113.9	1,809.9 (gross)	1,239.4
Consumers' Gas	196	142	25.9	18.8	22.2	21.1
Distillers-Seagrams	28½	3½	42.8	5.3	38.2	15.3
Dominion Bridge	117½	9	48.2	3.7	23.8	12.3
Dominion Stores	55	13¾	14.9	3.6	24.1	23.0
Ford of Canada	70	5¾	111.2	9.1	458.6 (sales)	171.7
Hamilton Bridge	79	2	7.9	.2	3.0	1.8
Imperial Oil	41¼	7¾	1,089.9	194.8	205.6	147.1
Inter. Nickel	72½	4¼	997.4	56.7	166.8	33.6
Massey-Harris	99½	2½	72.2	1.8	.9	17.8
Noranda Mines	69	12½	154.5	27.9	6.1	5.9
Power Corp.	139¾	6	55.3	2.5	37.0 (rev.)	9.9
Sherwin-Williams	65	7	13.0	1.4	7.8	.7
Steel Co. Canada	69¼	11	25.8	6.0	35.8	18.3
Winnipeg Electric	109½	2	25.1	.5	24.3	20.9

SAMPLE OPERATING PROFITS 1930, 1932

	Profits 1930	Profits 1932
	\$(000,000)	\$(000,000)
Bell Telephone	413.6	380.7
Brazilian Traction	468.9 (gross)	293.5
BA Oil	41.1	43.7
Canada Cement	51.9 (gross)	26.4
Canada Cannery	10.2	7.3
CPR	1,809.9 (gross)	1,239.4
Consumers' Gas	22.2	21.1
Distillers-Seagrams	38.2	15.3
Dominion Bridge	23.8	12.3
Dominion Stores	24.1	23.0
Ford of Canada	458.6 (sales)	171.7
Hamilton Bridge	3.0	1.8
Imperial Oil	205.6	147.1
Inter. Nickel	166.8	33.6
Massey-Harris	.9	17.8
Noranda Mines	6.1	5.9
Power Corp.	37.0 (rev.)	9.9
Sherwin-Williams	7.8	.7
Steel Co. Canada	35.8	18.3
Winnipeg Electric	24.3	20.9

Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, 1932, pp. 437-441

NOMY COLLAPSES!



Why Did It Happen?

The Economists Say . . .

"The Canadian economy depended very heavily on selling Canadian goods to other nations. When the Depression hit, those other nations stopped buying. It also caused the prices of Canadian goods to fall to low levels, and the whole economy suffered badly."

"After the very successful wheat crops of 1928, there was a surplus of foodstuffs in the world. No-one wanted to buy Canadian wheat."

"By the late 1920s, Canada's primary industries were reaching a limit to their development. But they kept on producing anyway. In 1928-1929, Canada produced more pulp and paper, more metals, and more automobiles than could possibly be purchased."

"The world-wide effects of World War I were being fully felt. The war debts and the reparations payments owed by the defeated nations had severely shaken the world financial system."

"The late 1920s was a period of too much speculation and credit expansion, especially in the U.S.A. Investors were allowed to buy huge quantities of stock on credit (margin). The result was highly inflated values and prices. When people lost confidence in the system, the whole bubble burst."

"When the U.S.A. found that its money had tightened up, there was no more capital to invest in Canadian industries."

"When manufacturers found that they had more goods than could be bought, they laid off workers. Unemployed workers lost their source of income and had no money to purchase goods. This caused manufacturers to lay off more workers. Once begun, the cycle was almost impossible to stop."

The Hoboes Said . . .

"We wisely listened to each others views on depression. It's due to tariffs, to immigration, the price of wheat, the U.S.A., Russia, war, their "big-bugs", religion, the "bohunks". Nothing but war will bring back prosperity; no cancellation of war debts; no socialism; no God;—let's have the good old days; scrap machinery, to hell with motor cars, deport the Reds, deport the "bohunks", oust Bennett. . . ."

Saskatchewan History, Spring, 1969, pp. 62-63

A DECADE OF HUNGER...



MONTREAL RELIEF OFFICIALS GIVE ONE WEEK'S FOOD ALLOWANCE AND SUGGEST MENU FOR A FAMILY OF FIVE, 1932:

Food	Weight	Montreal Cost Approx.
Milk	13 qts.	1.30
Tomatoes	3 uns. 6 lbs.	.18
Potatoes	25 lbs.	.25
Carrots or Turnips	4 lbs.	.16
Cabbage	2 lbs.	.05
Onions	2 lbs.	.08
Dried Beans	1 lb.	.04
Dried Peas	1 lb.	.06
Prunes or Figs	1 lb.	.12
Brown Bread	10 loaves. 240 oz.	.60
Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat	3 lbs.	.15
Flour	2 lbs.	.10
Rice or Barley	2 lbs.	.15
Cheese	1 lb.	.15
Chuck Roast	3½ lbs.	.46
Beef or Pork Liver	½ lb.	.08
Butter	1 lb.	.26
Peanut Butter	½ lb.	.08
Shortening	½ lb.	.08
Molasses	1 pt.	.13
Sugar	2 lbs.	.10
		\$4.58

	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper
<i>Sunday</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Chuck Roast Baked Potato Turnip Prunes	Chopped Raw Cabbage Grated Raw Carrot or Cheese Sauce on Toast Hot Water Gingerbread Milk
<i>Monday</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Sliced Meat Tomato Sauce Onion, Potato or/ Stew with Dumplings/ Bread and Butter	Scalloped or Creamed Potatoes Bread and Butter Figs Milk
<i>Tues.</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Split Pea Soup Bread Rice Pudding	Scalloped Rice with Cheese Bread and Butter Milk
<i>Wed.</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Baked Liver Carrots and Onions Potatoes	Soup made with left over meat with barley and vegg. Bread and Peanut Butter Milk
<i>Thurs.</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Baked Beans Bread and Butter Figs	Cream of Tomato Soup Baking Powder Biscuits Milk
<i>Friday</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Scalloped Potatoes/ Cheese Tomato with Bread Crumbs Bread with Peanut Butter	Split Pea Soup or Creamed Bean Soup Prunes Bread and Butter Milk
<i>Sat.</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Scotch Soup (made with Rolled Oats) Onion, Potato, Tomato/ Rice Pudding	Cabbage with Cheese Sauce Bread and Peanut Butter Milk

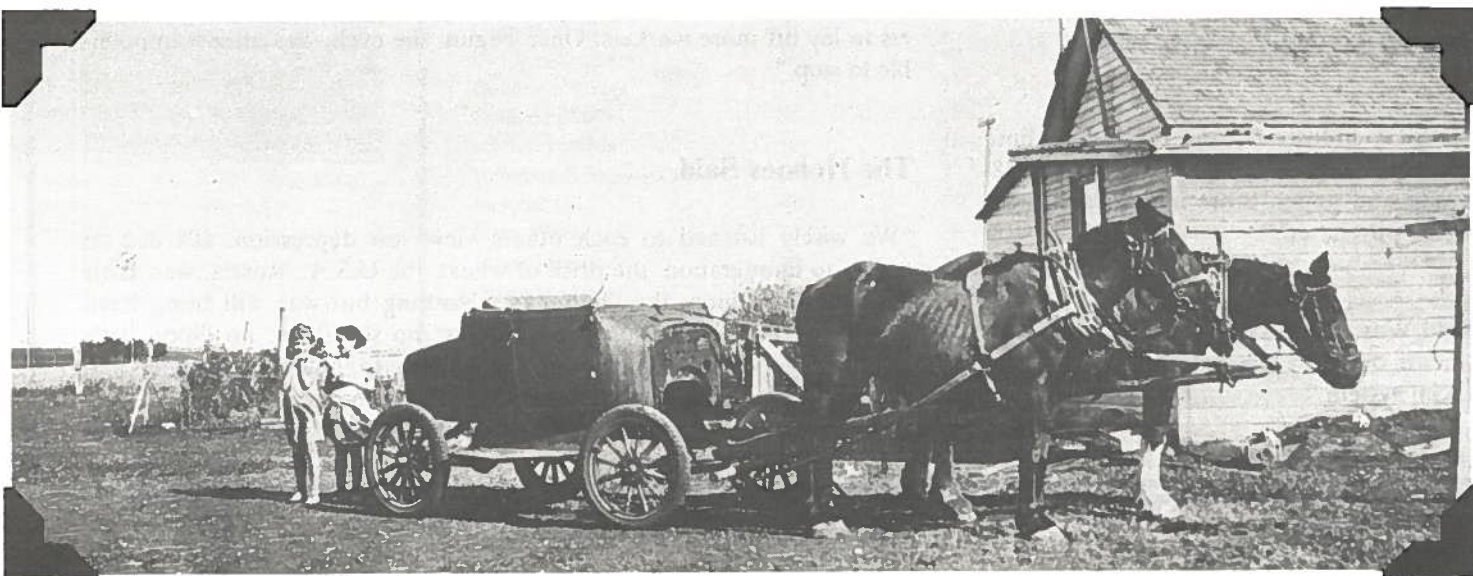
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Great numbers of people have moved to poorer quarters, or have "doubled up" with friends or relatives as a means of economizing...

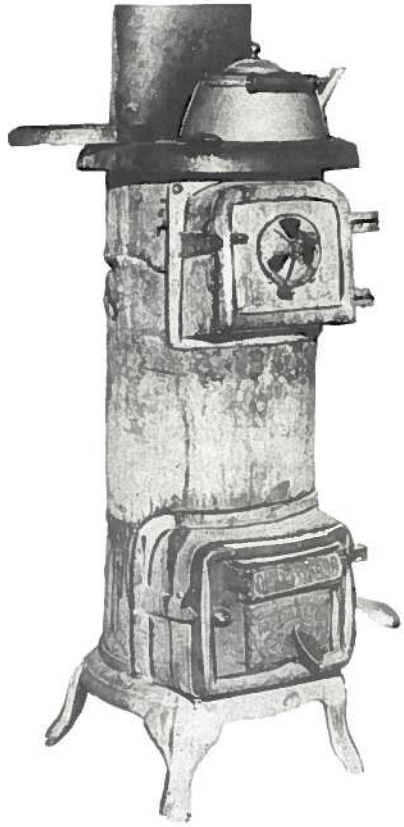
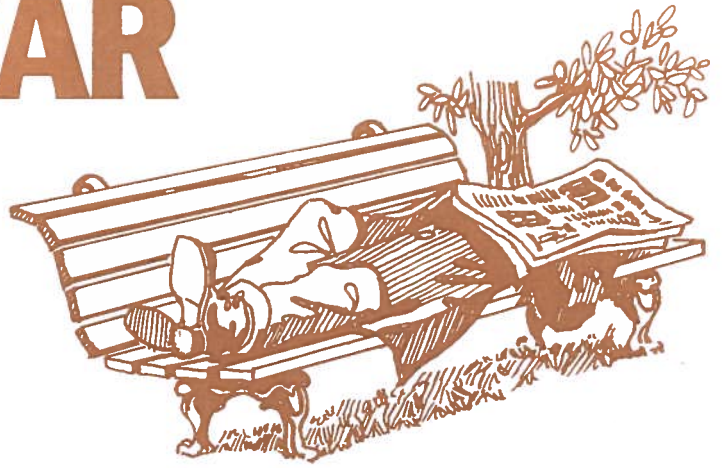
The problem of eviction notices has now become most serious in many communities, and relief organizations, with inadequate allowances for rents, are hard pressed to keep roofs over the heads of their clients...

A notable instance of deterioration in housing standards brought on by inability of tenants to pay rent and inadequate arrangements for rent relief has occurred in York Township, where during the present summer a tent colony has been set up in a public park to shelter a considerable number of evicted families. H. M. Cassidy. *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, pp. 244-245



A Bennett Buggy

COLD... AND FEAR



ACTUAL MONTHLY FOOD EATEN BY A FAMILY OF EIGHT IN NEW BRUNSWICK, 1934:

2 Bags Flour	2 Gallons Oil
2 Gallons Molasses	10 lbs. Rolled Oats
10 lbs. Beans	4 lbs. Lard
10 lbs. Pork	2 Small Bags Salt
2 lbs. Tea	
10 lbs. Sugar	

A PENNILESS FATHER OF THREE LISTS THE AMOUNT OF FOOD IN HIS ALBERTA HOME ON 13 MAY 1931:

Bread: 2 home-made loaves
Potatoes: ½ bag
Tea: 2 oz.
Milk: 2 quarts
Salt: 5¢ worth
Dried Raisins: ½ packet
Oatmeal: 3 lbs.
Wheat: 3 lbs.
Eggs: 1 doz.

Bennett Papers

LETTERS TO PRIME MINISTER BENNETT:

Lambert, Sask., 1934

... we have three children 2 of School age, one boy is going to School. Some day's he cant go to school as we have no food in the house & I wont let him go those day's. He has one Suit of under wear one pair overalls one pair sock's one pair moccasin rubbers & that all the clothes he has, not even a top shirt or a pair of trousers & the girl she cant go to school as she hasent proper clothing to go with & the little boy five years of age is in bad need of clothing Mr. Warden hasent had a Job sence the Seven Sisters poer house construction job was completed & I'll tell you weve had a hard struggle ever Since. ... we are living in a shack two rooms a bed room Just enough room for two beds & the house is cold theres two inches of Ice freezes on the water in the house cold nights we are shivering in bed at night we have no mattresses on our beds, only gunny Sacks & not enough blankets on our beds. Mr. Warden has no under wear no top shirt no Socks only rags on his feet no trousers only overauls. & they are done for, boots are near don my Self I have no house dresses & no wash tub & when I tell Mayor Veal those thing's he says why dont you go back to Manitoba where you came from ... there are times we live on potatoes for days at a time & its lasting So long I dont see how much longer it can last all I have in the house now is potatoes & there are good meny people the same in this town I am five months pregnant & I havent even felt life yet to my baby & its I feel quite sure for the lack of food.

Bennett Papers

Angliers, P.Q., 1935

... I am the wife of a return soldier who has served 4 years overseas under the Canadian army and I am a mother of 5 children living. On the 6 of Jan 1934 I took very sick as I was in a family way suffering from so many disease I started to loose my eyesight. And which the Doctor told my husband it was through weakness. So finally in the 16 of Jan when my baby Girl was born I was in real darkness I wasent able to see no one around my bed. And I stayed in bed 3 month Jan Feb & March without no treatment whatever because my husband was without work and which he has been for several years. So the first part of April I started to get up for the first time. On which I wasent able to see nothing with very little food in the house & 6 children it was very hard for me to get better so on the 11 of June my baby got a bad cold & she died ... we had no money to get even a Doctor. So I half blind & losing a child made it worse for my health. So about the month of Aug it was a Doctor in town so my husband brought him home to examine my eyes. So he told me that he could not do me nothing whatever as I have to go through an eye specialiste. And which I have no money to preciede to the destination which it will be to Toronto or Ottawa so please have mercy on me as I'm only a young mother age 32 and the condition I am I cannot attend to my housework. ...

Bennett Papers



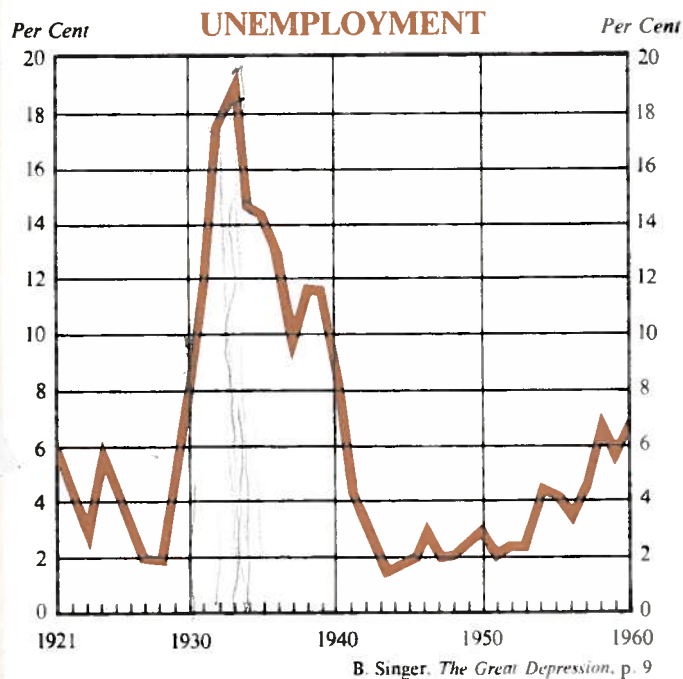
Squatters in a camp in an Edmonton dump

The housing situation has also been acute among single men. Last summer hundreds of men in Toronto had no place of abode and slept out-of-doors. One morning at 4 a.m. the writer counted about 60 men lying on the grass, usually with newspapers wrapped about them, in one small park in the downtown section of the city. At the time civic relief officials estimated that nearly 1,000 men were sleeping out-of-doors or in makeshift shelters. Several hundred of them were encamped in a "jungle" at the Don Valley, where they had taken possession of brick kilns that were not being used or of box cars lying on the railway tracks, or had made themselves rude shelters from sheet iron, lumber or canvas they had picked up. Other cities also had jungle encampments of the sort.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 245



... the young and unskilled found it very difficult to find permanent employment; unemployment among wage-earners was lightest in managerial, professional and commercial-financial occupations and in government and education; it was heavier in transportation, manufacturing and merchandizing; and it was heaviest in the building trades and export industries, mining excepted. M. Horn. *The Dirty Thirties*, p. 11



OUT OF WORK!

FRIENDSHIP?

I worked in this little store on Bloor Street West. A little store but my boss had a good neighborhood business, vegetables, canned goods. Well, it was just a little store like there were hundreds in Toronto. A family store.

I opened up at eight because somebody had to be there for the first deliveries, bread, vegetables, and I stayed to six at night and I got \$7 a week which suited me all right and the owner would let me take home wilted vegetables and things he knew he couldn't sell that day. It wasn't much but my sister was with me and no job. We came from Timmins. So every bit helped and we got by. The room was \$6 a month, the one we lived in.

This girl I went to school with in Timmins, Edith, she looked me up and used to come around to the store sometimes or up to the room to eat. She didn't have a job. Edith and I were girl friends in that I'd known her since I was a kid. You could say we were good friends.

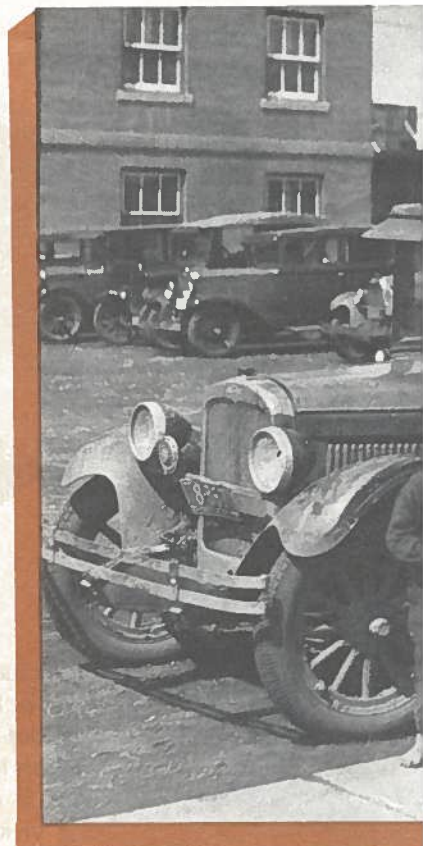
One Saturday afternoon the owner, this Italian, he asks me if I would work for \$5 a week and I said I was supporting my sister so how could I. It wasn't fair, I told him. Wasn't my work good? I didn't steal from him. So he said he was sorry but he'd have to let me go and there I was, one hour I've got a job and the next minute, and without actually saying I wouldn't take the \$2 cut, like a 30 per cent cut, I was out.

I went back Tuesday to get some things I'd left in the backroom, and guess who was clerking behind the counter? Sure. You don't have to guess too hard. My friend, my wonderful friend Edith. She'd gone around behind my back and told Aiello, the store owner, she'd work for \$5. That happened a lot in those days. When it was between friendship and a job, friendship just went out the window. It was four months before I got another job.

B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 215

In the town of Sydney and the mining towns... there are approximately 1,500 young men between the ages of 18 and 23 who are unemployed and never as yet have had work. Sydney and Glace Bay each have 400 and 500; Sydney Mines and North Sydney each 200 and another 2 or 3 hundred divided between New Waterford and Dominion. These young men are living with their parents who in practically every instance are receiving inadequate wages and in many cases the parents drawing direct relief. This is a condition which should be rectified if at all possible.

Bennett Papers





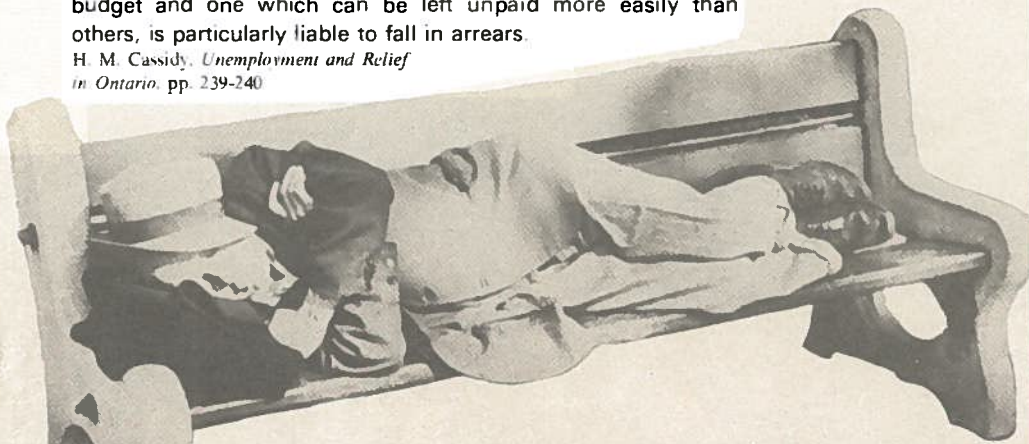
Waiting in line for six jobs in Edmonton, 1934

The first effect of unemployment upon the worker, of course, is to strike at any savings he may have accumulated. . . .

Another result of unemployment is to make impossible payments upon houses, furniture or other goods being bought on the installment plan

When the savings of the unemployed family are depleted, or when there are no savings of any amount to draw upon at the beginning of the unemployment period (which is probably characteristic of the majority of working-class households), debts begin to pile up with landlord, butcher, grocer, baker, doctor, and others. Rent, since it is one of the heaviest items of the budget and one which can be left unpaid more easily than others, is particularly liable to fall in arrears.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, pp. 239-240



Destitute blacksmith and family in Edmonton



A DESPERATE FATHER EXPLAINS . . .

I have been unemployed for 26 months and am married and have three children all sick ages 4 years, 2½ years and 14 months.

We have lost our home, furniture and all during the 26 months of unemployment.

I was employed by the Manitoba Telephone System for some years since leaving school in 1914.

I was discharged on Feb. 25th 1930

and have not done any work since that time. On the 20th of February the city of Winnipeg refused to give me further assistance . . . the result is that we have had many a hungry day since then and now the landlord has placed us upon the Street and that is where I am now with my family . . .

We are hungry, tired and desperate and cannot hold out any longer.

Bennett Papers

WOODSWORTH PROTESTS GOVERNMENT ACTIONS. . . .

J. S. WOODSWORTH: . . . How do we actually deal with the large number of people who are today unemployed? May I point out that there is a certain class of them whom we are simply getting rid of. Out of a grand total of deportations for the past year and a half of some 15,368, there were 9,446 who were deported simply because they had become public charges. I am not holding the government altogether responsible for this action because I know that there has been a good deal of pressure on the part of municipalities to have these people deported; but it is not fair that when we have invited immigrants to come to this country, people who very often have broken up their homes and given up jobs in the old land, having torn themselves loose to come here, expecting to find the opportunities which were promised to them, we should, as soon as they find themselves unable to obtain work, simply send them back to the countries from which they came. I do not think it is at all fair. In this land of plenty we should have assumed our obligations to care for them. *House of Commons, Debates*, 22 Nov. 1932

A LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER BENNETT:

Hamilton, Ontario 1934

Dear Sir:

I am writing you as a last resource to see if I cannot, through your aid, obtain a position and at last, after a period of more than two years, support myself and enjoy again a little independence.

The fact is: this day I am faced with starvation and I see no possible means of counteracting or even averting it temporarily!

I have received a high-school and Business-college education and I have had experience as a Librarian. My business career has been limited to Insurance, Hosiery, and Public Stenography, each time in the capacity of Bookkeeper and Stenographer—briefly, General Office work.

When the Sanderson-Marwick Co., Ltd., went out of business I had saved a little money and there being no work there for me I came to Hamilton. Since then I have applied for every position that I heard about but there were always so many girls who applied that it was impossible to get work. So time went on and my clothing became very shabby. I was afraid to spend the little I had to replenish my wardrobe. Always the fear was before me that I would fail to get the position and then I would be without food and a roof over my head in a short time. Many prospective employers just glanced at my attire and shook their heads and more times than I care to mention I was turned away without a trial. I began to cut down on my food and I obtained a poor, but respectable, room at \$1 per week.

First I ate three very light meals a day; then two and then one. During the past two weeks I have eaten only toast and drunk a cup of tea every other day. In the past fortnight I have lost 20 pounds and the result of this deprivation is that I am so very nervous that I could never stand a test along with one, two and three hundred girls. Through this very nervousness I was ruled out of a class yesterday. Today I went to an office for an examination and the examiner just looked me over and said; "I am afraid Miss, you are so awfully shabby I could never have you in my office."

Day after day I pass a delicatessen and the food in the window looks oh, so good! So tempting and I'm so hungry!

Yes I am very hungry and the stamp which carries this letter to you will represent the last three cents I have in this world, yet before I will stoop to dishonour my family, my character or my God I will drown myself in the Lake. However, I do not hint that I have the slightest intention of doing this for I am confident that you will either be able to help me find employment or God will come to my aid.

But in the meantime my clothing is getting shabbier and I am faced with the prospect of wearing the same heavy winter dress, that has covered me all winter, during the coming summer.

Oh please sir, can you do something for me? Can you get me a job anywhere in the Dominion of Canada. I have not had to go on relief during this depression but I cannot get relief even here. Moreover it is a job I want and as long as I get enough to live I shall be happy again.

I have tried to get work at anything and everything from housework up but I have been unsuccessful and now I am going to starve and in debt to my landlady. I wouldn't mind if I could just lay down and die but to starve, oh its terrible to think about.

Bennett Papers

**TO BE ELIGIBLE TO OBTAIN DIRECT RELIEF PAYMENTS
IN MOST ONTARIO MUNICIPALITIES (1931), YOU MUST:**

1. Prove that you are not able to support yourself and that no relative can help.
2. Be a man supporting a family.
3. Have been a resident of the municipality for at least one year before applying.
4. Turn in your liquor permit.
5. Turn in your automobile license plates and driver's license.
6. Remove telephone from your house.
7. Register at the unemployment office (to show your willingness to work).
8. Work on municipal projects from time to time.
9. Allow relief office investigators to come to your home to check on these rules.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, pp. 164-176



The married unemployed had to bring their gunny sacks or some kind of container to a building behind the Daily Province building where they had doled out to them so much beans, macaroni, sugar, meat, soup bones, and so on. It was called by the unemployed the "Gunny Sack Parade" and was a humiliating experience.

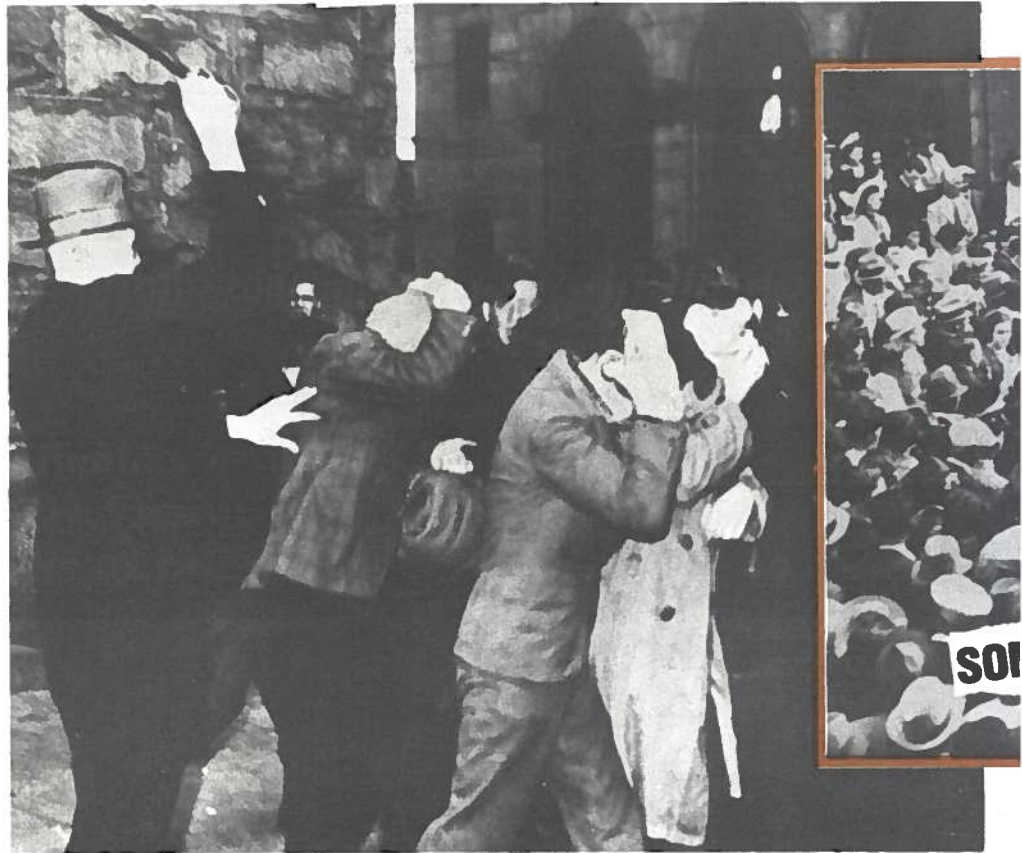
People came from every part of the city to this one distributing centre, having to wait for hours in long line ups, then tote home, sometimes miles, the food ration based scientifically on enough calories to keep one alive. There was a campaign going on to have this system for the married people abolished and a system of cash or scrip established. R. Liversedge, *Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek*, pp. 16-17

ON THE

Relief Payments Were Never In Cash

In all Ontario cities for which information is available, relief has been issued in kind or in orders for goods rather than in cash.

Generally the grocery orders which authorized relief recipients to obtain foodstuffs from retail stores were good only for specified items, staple articles such as flour, lard, salt, sugar, rolled oats, butter, stewing meat, potatoes, turnips and soap. The purpose of specifying the articles that could be purchased was, of course, to prevent families on relief from spending their allowances upon luxury foodstuffs. In some places families were left to obtain bread and milk from retail stores with their grocery orders, as they pleased, while in others there were separate arrangements for the distribution of bread and milk. Some cities issued orders on bakeries and dairies which could be exchanged for bread and milk tickets, and others gave out the tickets at their relief offices. Practice also varied with respect to fuel, the most common method being to issue orders for a given amount of fuel which relief recipients could present to the dealers of their choice. H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, pp. 189-190



The X family of four persons—a man and his wife and two children—came to Vancouver from a prairie town in 1936, partly because the husband, a skilled tradesman, had lost his job and partly because they were advised to move in the interest of the wife's health. Although they had a fair amount of money on arrival, the husband was unable to find work and they were compelled to apply for relief within six months. Relief was refused, but they were offered transportation back to the town from which they had moved. A Vancouver doctor advised that the wife was not in fit condition to be returned and Mr. X was informed by letter from the authorities of his former home town that he would not be eligible for relief there. The man then refused to return to the prairie and relief was eventually given to him.

L. Richter, *Canada's Unemployment Problem*, p. 212

**FINDINGS OF AN ONTARIO STUDY
ON RELIEF 1932:**

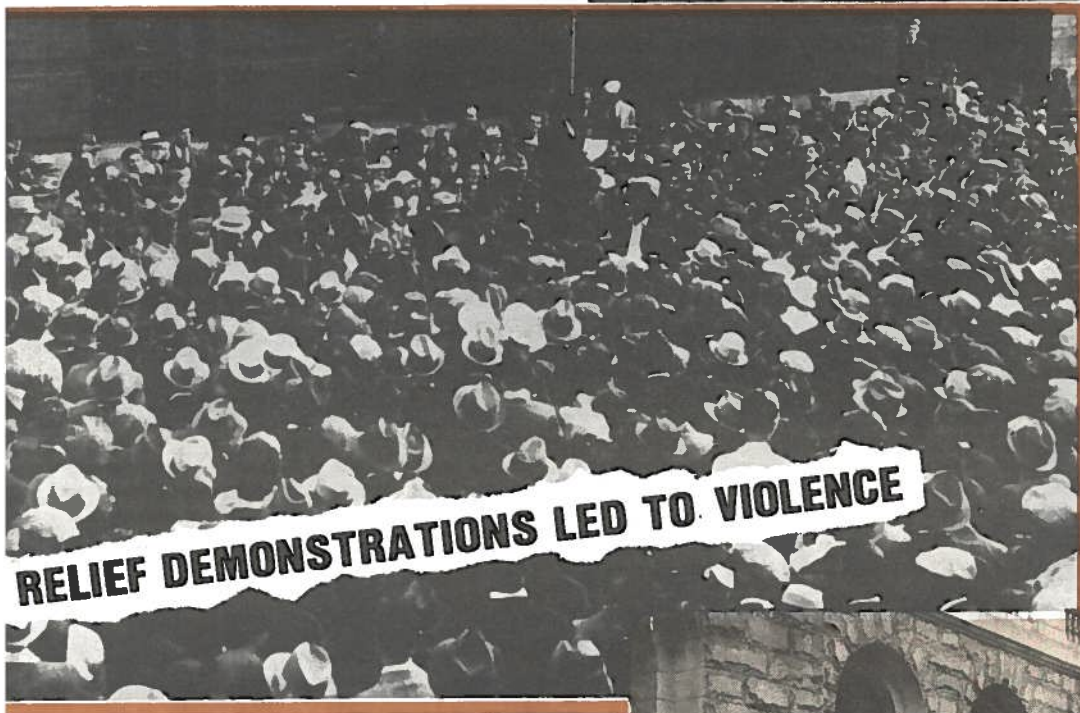
The chief concern of the relief offices has been to supply destitute families with food and fuel. . . . Most of the cities did not issue new clothing, but a number arranged for the distribution through the relief office of second-hand clothing that was donated. . . . the value of food orders for a family of five varied from \$3.50 to \$8.50 weekly in eleven cities. This is one of the clearest indications of variation in relief policy from place to place that can be pointed out. Certainly it would appear that if a \$3.50 order was sufficient for a family in one Ontario town an order of \$8.50 must have been more than enough elsewhere. Or if the large order was necessary to provide destitute families with sufficient food the smaller order was far too low. . . . the minimum retail cost of adequate food orders in most Ontario cities can scarcely be lower than \$6.00 or \$7.00 per week for a family of five. . . . it would appear that the minimum cost of food and maintenance for a family of this size must be at least \$65 or \$75 per month in most Ontario towns and cities. In view of the fact that the scale of public relief that was issued did not approach this level in any of the cities that were studied, it appears that dependent families which were entirely lacking in private resources must have been compelled to obtain supplementary assistance or to undergo such privations as would lead to deterioration in health, morale and efficiency. H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, pp. 180-187

The most revealing statistics measured the numbers of people whose income was too low for them to survive on without public help. In each year from 1933 through 1936 an average of about 12 per cent of the Canadian population received emergency relief. Another 5 percent of the population normally depended on such existing programs as mother's allowances, old age pensions, charitable aid, etc. In the worst year of the depression about two million Canadians, or one in five of the population, were public dependents. These figures ignore the tens of thousands who were too proud to fall back on 'charity' and the millions whose standards of living fell but not quite far enough to force them onto relief. L. M. Grayson and M. Bliss, *The Wretched of Canada*, pp. ix-x

Man being evicted from Vancouver Post Office



DOLE



RELIEF DEMONSTRATIONS LED TO VIOLENCE



The aftermath

The "Moving of Dirt"

The nature of the works undertaken by the municipalities to provide employment was very much alike in most places. First in importance came sewers, water-mains and trench-digging jobs, and then street and highway grading. In addition there were some park improvement and flood prevention works. One of the leading regulations of the governments in giving out grants was that they should be expended upon works that would require a high proportion of expenditure on labour.

All of these jobs involved the "moving of dirt" in large quantities, work that could be done by men without special skill or training for it, and this was the task upon which the battalions of the unemployed, armed with picks and shovels, were concentrated.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 135



YOU MUST BE WILLING TO WORK...

Faced with heavy relief costs during the summer of 1931 and unwilling that able-bodied men should receive a dole without working, the municipal officials of London hit upon the idea of sending a number of their unemployed to assist farmers in the surrounding countryside who could not afford to employ hired men regularly. The scheme, which was begun in the latter part of June, provided that an unemployed man from the city might be engaged by a farmer to work for board and for "such payment as he feels the employee may earn in excess of his board or as he may be able to pay."

On its side the City agreed to provide relief for the families of married men during their absence on the land... Any able-bodied man refusing farm work under this scheme was to be ineligible for further relief. At the same time an attempt was made to protect the men against unfair working conditions by requiring the farmers to subscribe to a code of simple working rules, including a limit of ten hours' work daily and every second Sunday off duty for the employee.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 177

LETTERS TO PRIME MINISTER BENNETT:

Upsalquitch, N.B., 1934

Dear Sir as I'm a widow and with five children I have recourse to you I try everything regarding the Parish relief and it is impossible for me to live with what they gave me I suffer with hunger cold etc. listen to this I have a great confidence to you after God you are the only man who can help me, in the month of January they gave me \$3.00 to live 6 persons I don't know how I could give my children three meals a day with so Small quantity. I tell you we are suffering and a great many Upsalquitch I think I have more right than anybody else to complain as I am a widow and I have an awful trouble for the wood.

My husband is dead a year ago he took is death in the Dalhousie Jail or Prison they put him in for an account of \$29 and he took a lung inflammation he ask for the doctor and they told him it was not an hospital the Prison was wet on account of having washed it and he slept in that state I went to a lawyer he told me if I had the money I will have my right but I was to poor to go with that in a process I wrote to the Provincial Government without any Success I hope that you will understand me and help me I don't think its a reason to let your voters die because they are poor a great many are Intelligent people and dies in distress.

Dear Hon. Sir a great many people here understand your Wisdom I am one who respect you and hope in you remain yours in note am in confidence. Bennett Papers

Ferguson, N.B., 1933

Dear Sir,

The respectable people of this country are fed-up on feeding the bums for that is all they can be called now. This "free" relief (free to the bums) has done more harm than we are altogether aware of. The cry of those who get it is "Bennett says he won't let anyone starve". They don't consider that the people (many poorer than themselves but with more spunk) have to foot the bill. The regulations (which are only a poor guide after all) were too loose from the start and could be and were easily side stepped many times.

Getting relief has become such a habit that the majority think only of how to get it regularly instead of trying to do without once in a while. Nearly all of them have dogs too which are fed by the country and are of no practical use. One family near me has three and another has two and others one and I know it is the same everywhere. I also know that food enough to keep one dog will keep at least four hens and keep them laying. The family that has the three dogs ate at least 550 pounds of meat from the second week in November until the first part of March. There are the parents, twins 10 years old and four children from one year to eight. Who but the dogs got a good part of that? Also dogs everywhere are chasing and catching deer but if a man tries to get one for the family he is either fined or jailed if found out.

Bennett Papers

This day I walked in, and in the kitchen I heard the most terrible fight. Screaming. Yelling. This is what it was. They were on the dole, money from the county and that was the most terrible and humiliating experience. My friend's father had done the shopping and he had bought a package of tobacco. Ten cents. That was the argument. How dare he buy tobacco! The money should have gone for something else. Yell, scream, curse. To young and quiet little me, this was horrifying. Two people I loved in such a terrible fight over 10 cents.

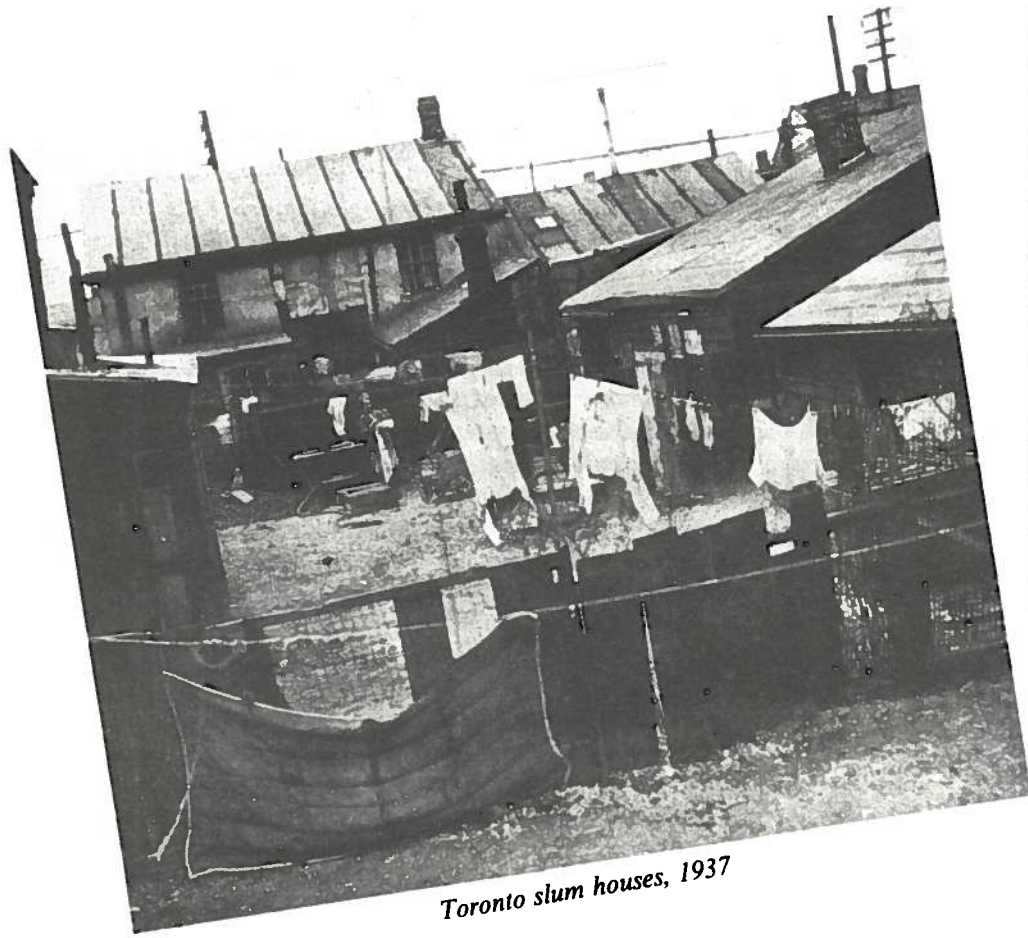
Finally the father yelled, 'Okay, I'll never buy tobacco again as long as I live, but I won't buy tea either! Not even a dime's worth.'

That ended the argument right there. You see, she was a woman who loved tea, to sit at the table in the living room and sip tea and read, or gossip with a friend or just to contemplate the day, or her life, or tomorrow. He was telling her she'd have to give that up.

Oh, it is a small story, I imagine, and not very interesting, but here were two lovely people at each other's throats. Their nerves must have been worn raw. They must have been near the breaking point, trying to live on the few cents a day they were given and to keep up a front, keep up a facade of being one of the town's important families.

If he couldn't have his beloved tobacco, then she couldn't have her beloved tea. How sad, and yet that's what the Depression must have been like for so many people.

B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 189



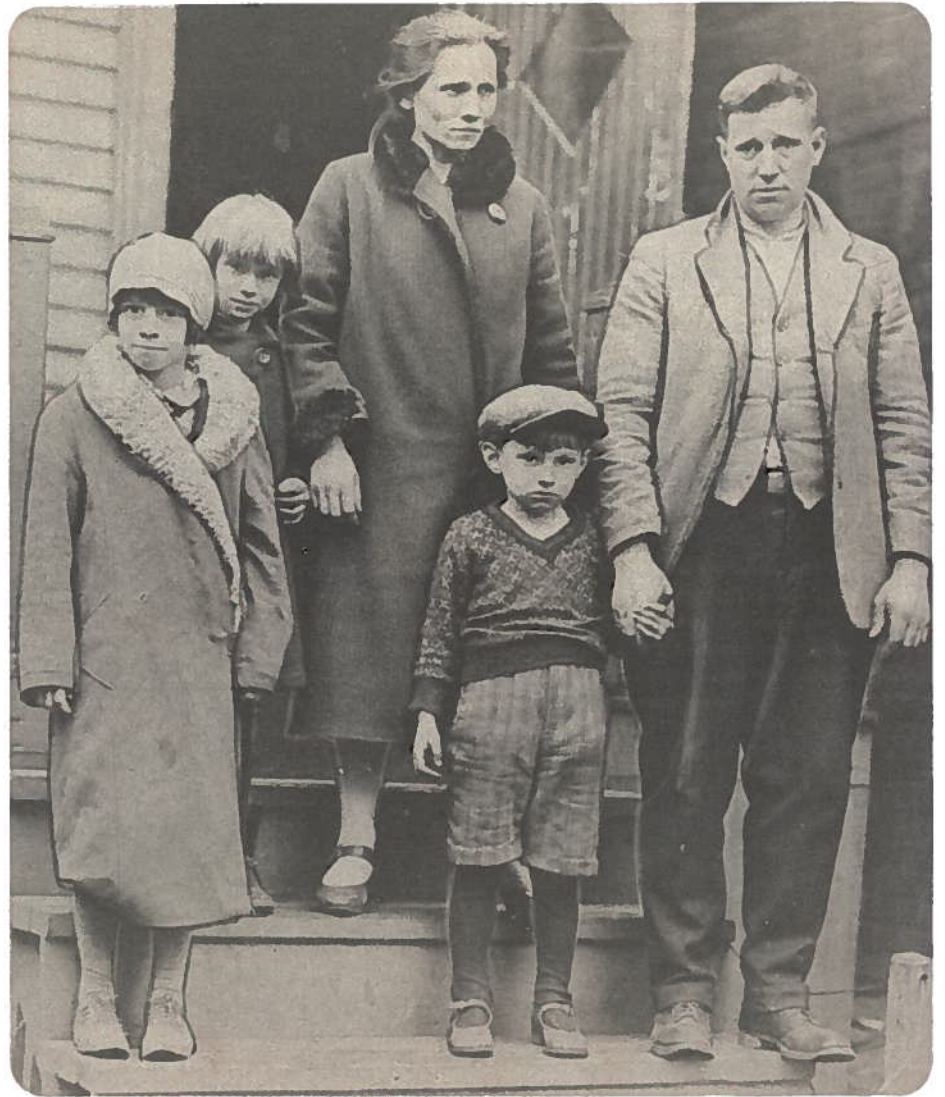
Toronto slum houses, 1937

[The Depression has caused] the lowered morale and broken spirits of the unemployed. As a group they are discontented and unsettled in mind. Many have lost confidence in themselves, have lost their feeling of self respect, have developed bitterness towards established institutions, and are living in hopeless despair. In addition, the fact of existing on relief appears to have developed pauper attitudes in substantial numbers of working people. Practically all of the relief officers and social workers who were consulted in the course of this study commented upon the remarkable growth of dependent attitudes. The doling out of relief, it was said, was having a definite pauperizing effect. Fears were expressed by a number of relief officers and social workers regarding the effect of relief upon young children. It was said that in many instances parents were falling into the habit of sending the children to the relief office or the social agency to ask—or demand—food, clothing or other assistance; and it was felt that this experience of getting something for nothing was a very bad one for the children.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 253

Suicides, however, have very definitely grown in number. In 1930, 404 people committed suicide and in 1931, 405, as compared with an average number of about 300 for the three years 1927-1929. One medical officer of health reported that several cases of attempted suicide attributable to mental depression caused by economic stress had come to his attention, and other reports of this nature have also been received. H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 251

Mr. M. Tikarski rescues sleeping family from burning Toronto home, 6 April 1932



TROUBLED FAMILIES...

TO MARRY, OR NOT TO MARRY?

... young people who would normally marry and have children have been forced to give up plans of this nature, at least for the time being. In the nature of things this involves a certain amount of mental stress and strain, which is far from wholesome...

Many working-class housewives, in order to obtain some ready cash, have taken in boarders or roomers, a practice which frequently involves serious overcrowding in the home...

Particularly serious is the problem of the boy or girl of 16 or 17 who has left school and who would normally be at work but who is unable to find a job. Such young people have nothing to do with themselves, have no money, and are denied the ordinary opportunities of taking part in various recreations and amusements. In consequence, it is easy for them to develop bad habits. Moreover, they quite naturally (if unjustly) come to feel resentment against their parents who are unable to supply them with money and clothes; and against conditions in general, which deny them an opportunity of earning wages which would bring them in the things which they desire.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, pp. 250-251

Year	Number of Marriages	Year	Number of Marriages
1926	66,658	1932	62,531
1927	69,515	1933	63,865
1928	74,311	1934	73,092
1929	77,288	1935	76,893
1930	71,657	1936	80,904
1931	66,591		

L. Richter, *Canada's Unemployment Problem*, p. 141

In addition to all this government provision we have had much direct relief (thanks to the United Church in Ontario) for which no repayment is asked. Rev. T. worked like a Trojan in this distribution, opening a store in the old presbyterian church. The church at Brussels, Ontario, sent us a car of mixed fruit and vegetables, 57,000 pounds of it in all, apples, potatoes, beets carrots, onions, cabbage. . . . There was quite a quantity of beautiful preserved fruit. . . . Clothing, mostly second hand, but all good, was also received in immense bales and T. personally handed out every garment. He told me that he had given out 2,430 articles, ranging from fur coats to baby's diapers. There were a number of good fur coats both men's and women's—and much new underwear, donated. T. told me he was very much tempted to grab off a coat for himself which drew my attention to the fact that he did need one badly so I gave him father's old "Coon Coat". . . .

The United Church surely responded nobly—particularly from Ontario. Over 130 car loads of fruit and vegetables donated to Sask. and the railways transported all free.

M. Horn. *The Dirty Thirties*, p. 99



A WASTED YOUTH?

As the nights got colder I would build a fire in the fireplace and let the kitchen stove go out. Then I'd pull up my old Boer War rocking chair and sit watching the fire while the cat snoozed at my feet. Sitting there watching the flames, I thought of the future and wondered what it held for me. The economy was in a turmoil and the struggle for jobs uppermost in everybody's mind. If you didn't work you went short on groceries. Unemployment Insurance benefits were not even in embryo then. The big question that confronted young single fellows was how to make a buck. I had quite a lot of grub in my cupboards, no rent to pay and my land taxes were payable in the far distant future. Living this kind of life was ideal for an elderly person with an income, but too serene and placid for me.

J. B. Vaughn. *The Wandering Years*, p. 149

My whole life has been spent in my native town and for more than fifty years I have been connected with the Coal and Steel activities at New Glasgow and Trenton [Nova Scotia]; during all that time I have never seen the situation so grave as at the present time. . . . There is a great deal more destitution here than we have ever known. My house is besieged front door, back door and side door from early in the morning to long past the dewey eve. A couple of evenings ago I had a visit from three different widows who have boys between the ages of sixteen and twenty years without employment and who are absolutely destitute. My daughter . . . has given away all the spare clothes we have and I find myself reduced to one pair of trousers and two pairs of shoes.

Bennett Papers

LETTERS TO PRIME MINISTER BENNETT:

Harney, Saskatchewan

Dear Mr. Bennett.

I just thought I would write to you Because I thought you would write Santa for me and tell him I was a good girl all the time. and Mamma tells me her and Daddy has no money to give Santa for my little brother and me and we cant hang up our stockings up. Would you send me some money and I will send it to him or do you think Mr. Bennett he would forget Brucy and me my I hope he dont I wish you write and tell him Im here and Imll be so good. but if Daddy has no money to give him he cant come. Will you write and tell me if you wrote to Santy.

Bennett Papers

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear Sir:

Sometime ago I wrote a letter to you appealing for help or employment.

It is now forty months since I had the pleasure of a pay check.

My family, are all undernourished, ill clothed and ill sheltered and are in need of Medical Assistance.

How long do you think we can carry on under these circumstances.

You stated that there would be no one starve in Canada I presume you meant not starve over night but slowly our family amongst thousands of others are doing the same slowly and slowly.

Possibly you have never felt the Pang of a Wolf. Well become a Father have children then have them come to you asking for a slice of bread between meals and have to tell them to wait. Wait until five of humanitys humans sleep all in one room no larger than nine square feet with one window in it. . . .

I do not believe I am crazy but am reaching the breaking point.

My body, my muscles, my brain are like sodden wood crumbling under this strain. Through the lack of idleness.

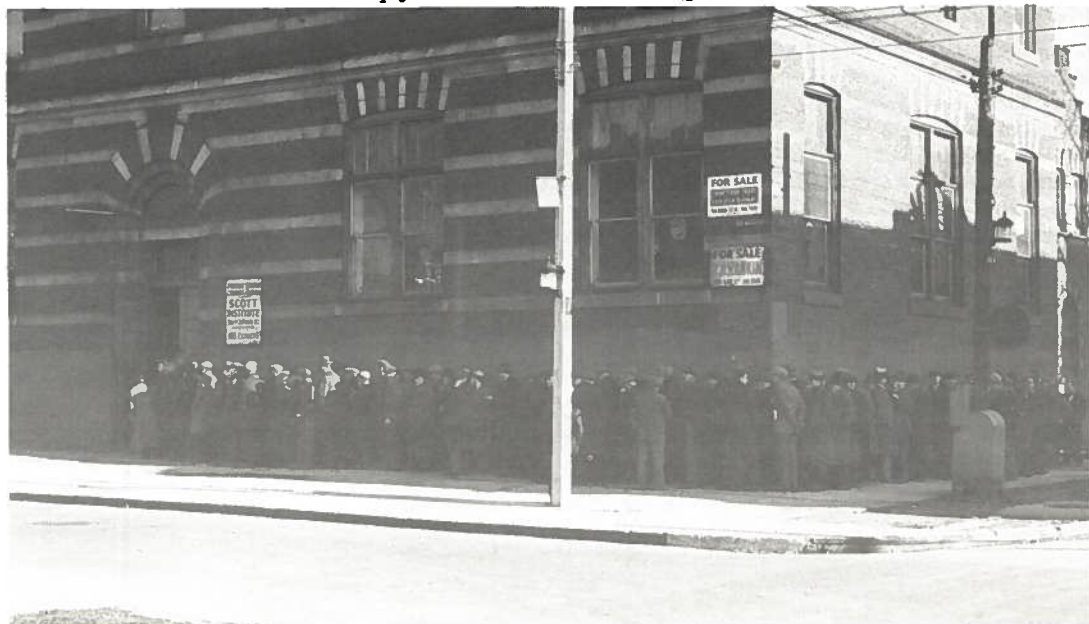
I have knowledge of Electrical work—Chaffeur—Sailor Telephone and Telegraph work.

For God's sake please make a personal endeavour to assist me toward a brighter outlook immediately.

Bennett Papers

AND HELPING HANDS

Line-up for the Scott Institute soup kitchen



DUST...



Dust storm blowing across Alberta farm, 1933

I could go about 10 feet beyond the house fence and pick up a clod of dirt, as big as this fist. I'd lay it on my hand and you could see the wind picking at it. Pick, pick, pick. Something awful about it. The dry dust would just float away, like smoke. Like twisting smoke from that piece of land. If I tightened my grip, if I squeezed and crumbled her, then it would blow faster and right before your eyes in a few minutes that hunk of dry dirt would just blow away, even the bits of dust which collected into the wrinkles of your hand. I used to say the wind would polish your hand shiny if you left it out long enough. B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 38



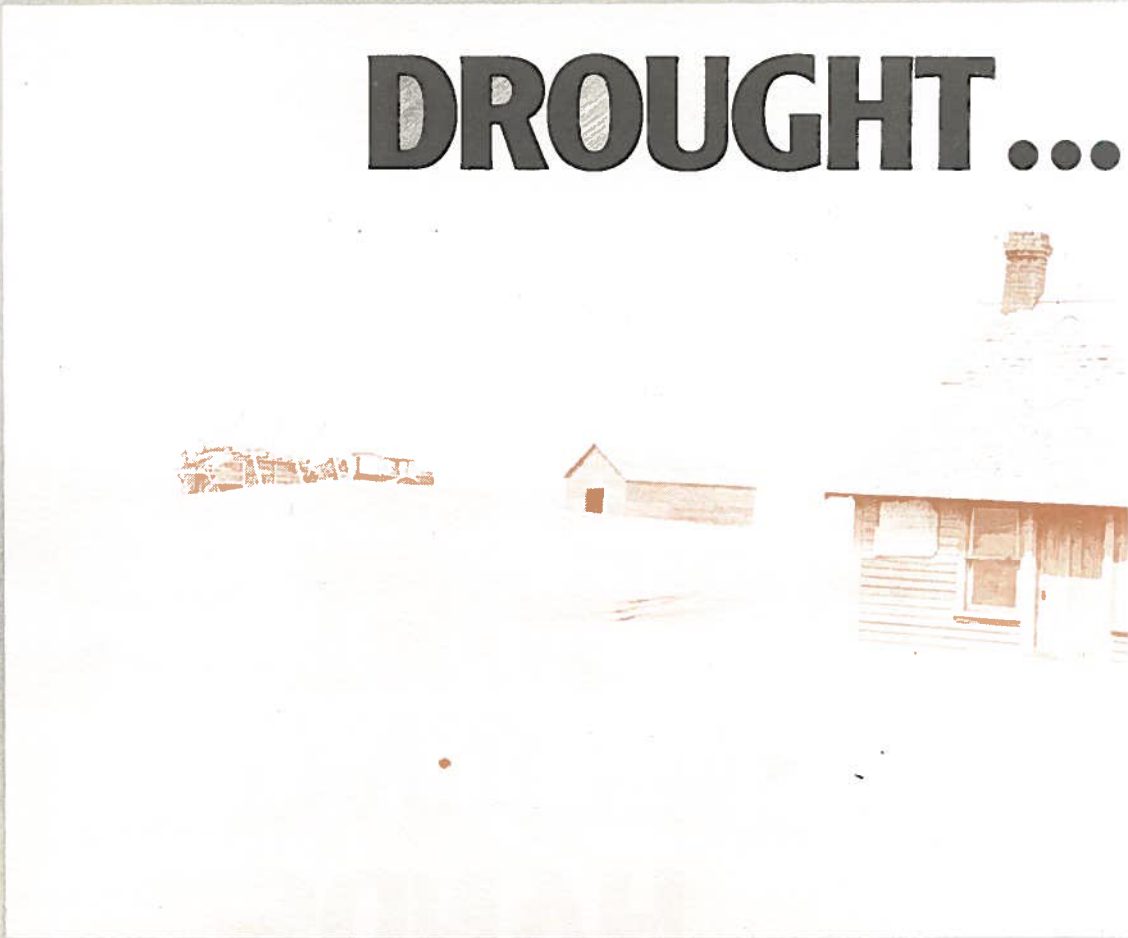
The land had reached the point where it had been worked and worked and harrowed and ploughed so much that it was very fine. There was nothing to hold it and it just picked up and blew across the countryside. You look out and see this great cloud of dust coming and then you're in it and you can hardly see twenty feet ahead. The grit gets into your nose and mouth and into the houses, drifting in under the doors and windows. By 1936 the sky in Moose Jaw and Regina had a perennial overcast and the sidewalks were gritty with dust under your feet.

J. Patton, *How the Depression Hit the West*, p. 27

THE WEATHER IN THE DECADE OF "THE DUST BOWL"

- 1930 — Blizzards and bitter cold in winter (-30° F in Calgary).
- 1931 — Lack of snow causes drought in spring; dust storms begin; summer hot and dry; crops fail in Palliser Triangle.
- 1932 — Worst grasshopper plague in 50 years hits Manitoba.
- 1933 to 1935 — Very severe winters; drought in summers; crops destroyed.
- 1936 — Winter cold reaches -50° F in Edmonton; many cattle frozen to death; prolonged summer heat reaches 108° F in Winnipeg; grain fields wilt.
- 1937 — Worst year ever in the Palliser Triangle; cold, snowless winter; lack of rain in spring and summer causes worst dust storms; prolonged summer heat reaches 110° F in Regina.
- 1938 — Good spring weather followed by summer hail and worst grasshopper blizzards ever; crops destroyed.
- 1939 — Return to normal.

DROUGHT...

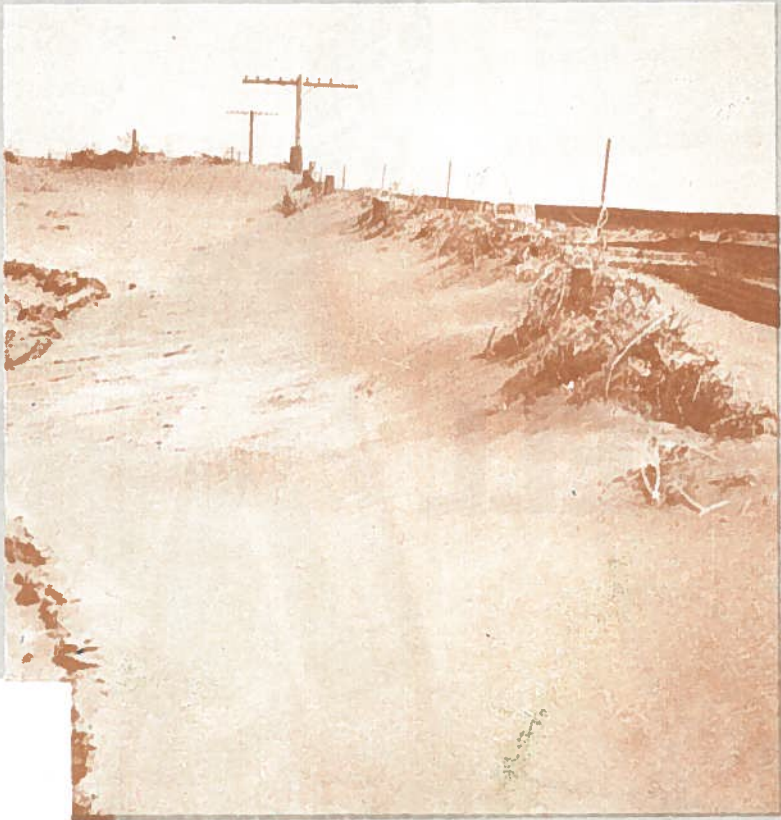


SASKATCHEWAN WHEAT PRODUCTION

Year	Acres	Yield	Production	Value of Wheat Sold off Farms
1928	13,791,000	23.3	321,215,000	\$218,000,000
1929	14,445,000	11.1	160,565,000	134,932,000
1930	14,714,000	14.0	206,700,000	72,293,000
1931	15,026,000	8.8	132,466,000	44,407,000
1932	15,543,000	13.6	211,551,000	56,889,000
1933	14,743,000	8.7	128,004,000	52,301,000
1934	13,262,000	8.6	114,200,000	57,950,000
1935	13,206,000	10.8	142,198,000	68,400,000
1936	14,596,000	8.0	110,000,000	81,000,000
1937	13,893,000	2.7	37,000,000	16,000,000

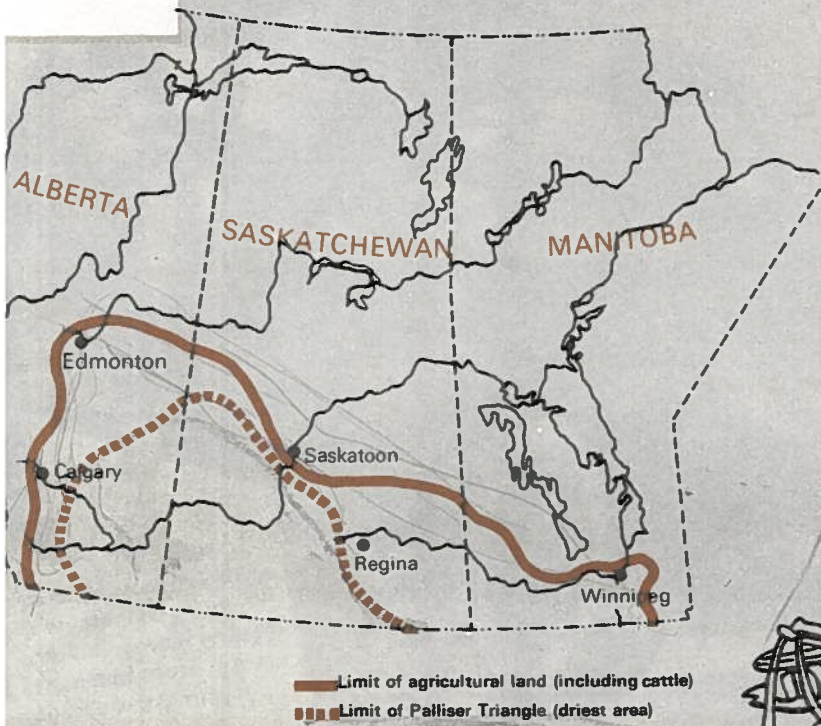
J. H. Gray, *Men Against the Desert*, p. 56

Some farmers claimed their year-old babies cried with fright when they first saw rain. People used to spin yarns about testing how bad the dust storm was. They'd toss a gopher up in the air, and if he fell to the ground the storm wasn't too bad. If he dug a hole up there, it was a bad one. J. Patton, *How the Depression Hit the West*, p. 27



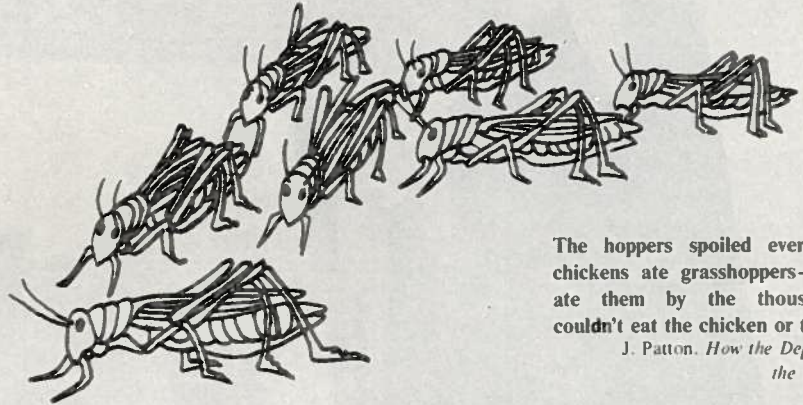
We were all going through grinding poverty in our district. We sold 200 lb pigs at \$3 each; some farmers had to kill their pigs rather than finish feeding them. We sold oats at 8 cents a bushel, after paying 5 cents a bushel to have them threshed. Wheat was around 25 cents a bushel, eggs 5 cents a dozen, cream 12 cents a pound. J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 251

'The most fun', said Billy, 'was last year when it rained, remember, and the water barrels all got full. My Dad pushed the wagon over near the big barrel and Bobby and I jumped into the barrel. Boy, it was keen! We'd jump in and get wet and come out and put soap on and jump in! Boy! My Dad said if it rains again this summer, we can do it again. We sure hope it rains, don't we Bobby?' J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 176



As the depression years hit us we found that good crops only meant more work and not necessarily prosperity. Prosperity, we found, was dependent on "price." By bitter experience we learned that even if we raised No. 2 wheat, top steers, special grade cream and prize-winning hogs and sheep, we were always hard up if the price was low. It did not matter if our hens laid 150 eggs or even 200 eggs per year when the price was 5 cents per dozen, even when the fact that they were a good grade of eggs did not bring in sufficient to even pay for putting straw into the hen-house . . . The mortgage interest began to go unpaid and we tried to make our underwear and overalls last for four years instead of two. J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 255

Sometimes the infestation built up slowly. In other places, a sudden invasion out of nowhere of clouds of hoppers would devour every scrap of garden greenness, strip every leaf from Caragana hedges, and whirl on to devour the heads of a ripening grain crop in a strip a mile wide. In Winnipeg the hoppers even made the golf courses unplayable. J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 105



The hoppers spoiled everything. If chickens ate grasshoppers—and they ate them by the thousands—you couldn't eat the chicken or the eggs. J. Patton, *How the Depression Hit the West*, p. 30

But grasshoppers. Trillions. They would black out the sky and when they passed, nothing would be left. I've seen an ordinary kitchen broom leaning up against the side of a granary where we were crushing oats and when the hoppers were finished, all that was left of that broom was the handle and you couldn't tell it had been a handle because it was so chewed up except for the metal band which kept the bristles held together. Grasshoppers didn't eat machinery, but by God, I've seen them eat the leather off the seat of a John Deere tractor. B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 40



AND GRASSHOPPERS

One family in five was out of work. Two families were not on relief but so deep in debt and so far into poverty that they would have taken relief if they could have. The fourth family was just getting by, and the fifth family, the merchants, the lawyers, all the professional men, the grain people and the retired people living in town, they were doing very well. Very well indeed.
 B. Broadfoot. *Ten Lost Years*, p. 68



The Waverley Brand
 80-328, Waverley Toaster. Nickel-plated finish. Element is guaranteed for one year. Fitted with cord and plug. Price... **2.75**
 80-330, Waverley Toaster. Heavily nickeled. Element is guaranteed for one year. Fitted with cord and plug. Priced very low... **2.25**



"Premier Junior"
44.50
 Delivered

You will be delighted with the surprising efficiency of this Cleaner and the results obtained by it.

Adds to Comfort
 01-332, A Waverley Heater is a great convenience. It can be carried about the room to room and attached to any socket. Fitted with wire guard and 12-inch concentrating reflector. Element guaranteed for one year. Price... **3.75**

SOME PEOPLE LIVED WELL



EASY STREET ...

If you had \$125, you were on Easy Street. Remember, no income tax. None. You had to be making more than \$2,000 to pay income tax, and then it was very little. How the country got along I don't know. Yes, I was making \$1,500, and I was doing well. We had a house, and our payments were about \$35 a month with interest. Of course, it took years and years to pay off, but nobody thought about that. When things got better, after '39, that \$35 was a lot cheaper than rent and everybody who'd bought a house on time felt better and all those who pooh-poohed the whole buy-a-house thing felt lousy. I had a Ford, yes, a Model A and then later, about '37, I bought a 1933 Plymouth and that was a good little car. A little dandy. I drove her to 1948 and then sold her for more than I'd paid for it.

Clothes? I have bought good suits with a vest and an extra pair of pants for \$20, the best cloth. Off the rack, of course, but good Scottish material. I have bought a good suit, not the best but good, for \$13 which would wear like iron and I still have an old overcoat around that I bought in 1936 and it cost me \$9.95 and I remember that price well, and when I die, that coat will go to the Good Will or the Salvation Army and some down-and outer will wear it for another few years. Underwear, socks, shoes, shirts, man, they were almost giving them away. Shoes, say \$4, and good ones too. Shirts, 95 cents over at Eaton's.

But you mustn't get the idea that everything was rosy. What I meant was that if you shut your eyes to all the misery, then you could do fine. But if you were a man, a person who was concerned, then it worried you.
 B. Broadfoot. *Ten Lost Years*, pp. 236-237



For sale at Eaton's, 1931-1932



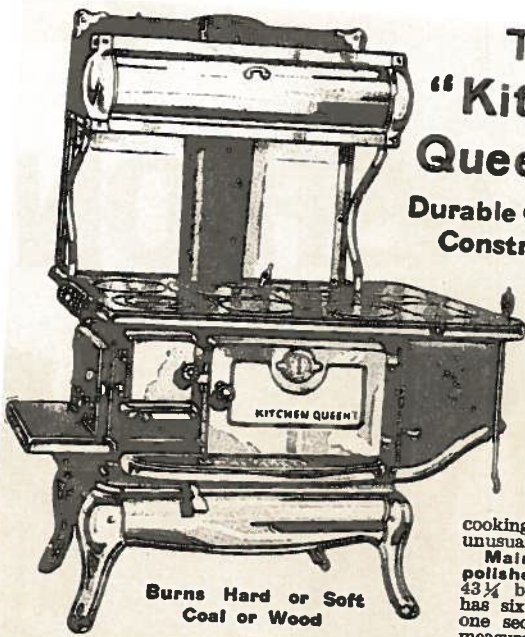
Heating Pad
80-335. Handy Electric Heating Pad. A comfort-giving accessory in cold weather and particularly in a sick room. Has three-heat control switch. Low Price..... **4.45**



Table Oil Lamp
01-361. For a soft but sufficiently strong and permeating light, you can hardly choose this Table Oil Lamp. Has nickel-plated draft burner, 10-inch ribbed shade and large straight chimney. Price, complete..... **4.00**
01-362. Extra Shade. Price **1.00**
01-363. Extra Wicks. Each..... **12c**



Decorative
01-343. Is not only decorative, but in good taste—and surprisingly inexpensive. Twisted Metal Shade, with Bridge Lamp base, fancy adjustable and socket. Height about 55 inches. Long cord and plug without bulb or shade. Price, each..... **1.95**
01-344. The Paper Parchment Shade, with its assorted designs, comports the delightful effect produced by the stand. Price..... **20c**



The "Kitchen Queen E"
 Durable Cast-Iron Construction

5900
 Delivered

Burns Hard or Soft Coal or Wood

A Cast-iron Range, built to give long service. Has a pleasing appearance and is noted for its fine cooking qualities. An unusually fine baker. **Main Top**, highly polished, measures 43 1/2 by 27 ins., and has six 9-inch covers, one sectional. **Oven** measures 17 by 18 by 11 ins., and is fitted with convenient and roomy, with nickel-plated drop door. **Cabinet** is convenient and roomy, with nickel-plated drop door. **Body** built of high-grade Cast Iron, securely fitted; measures from floor to main top 30 1/2 ins., and 59 1/2 ins. to top of warming cabinet. **Fire-box** size 17 by 6 by 6 ins., fitted with heavy iron linings and duplex grate to burn coal or wood. **Reservoir**—Sheet copper, well tinned inside, with damper control; has capacity of four gallons. **White Enamelled** splashers back and oven door. **Nickel-plated Trim.**



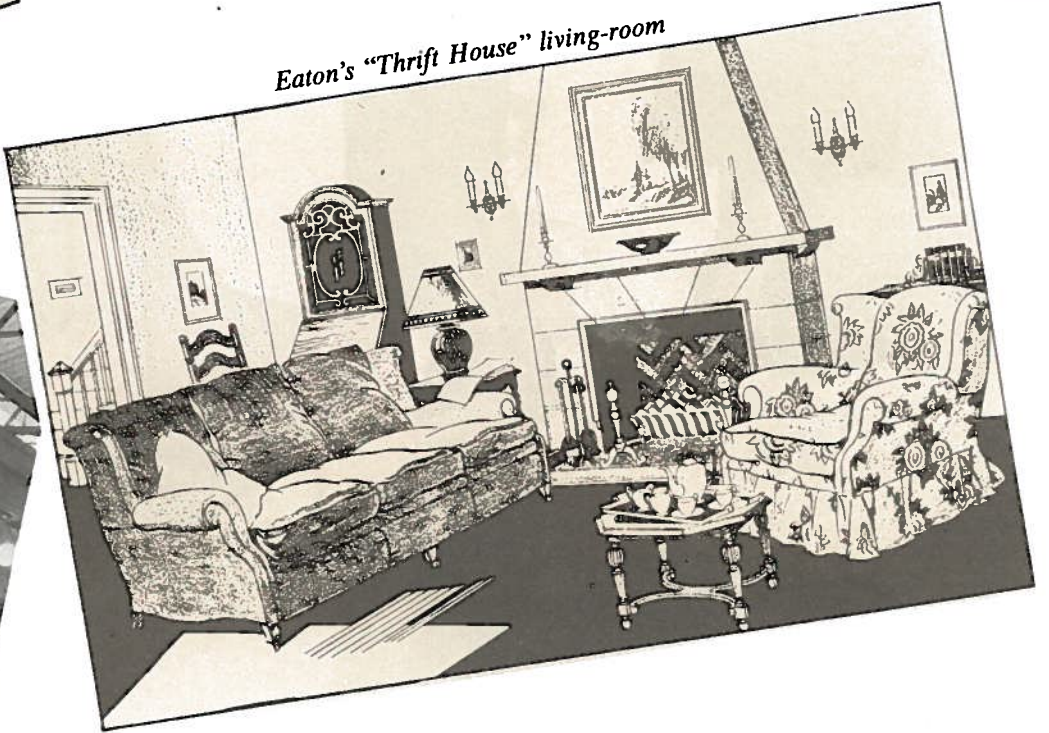
Handsome Bridge Lamp

01-349. There is a refinement in the comparatively ornamental style of this Walnut-finished Bridge Lamp, with its simply turned stem. By contrast the ornamental arm shows up the better Lamp has adjustable push-through socket, extension cord and plug. Stand only, less bulb and shade..... **5.15**

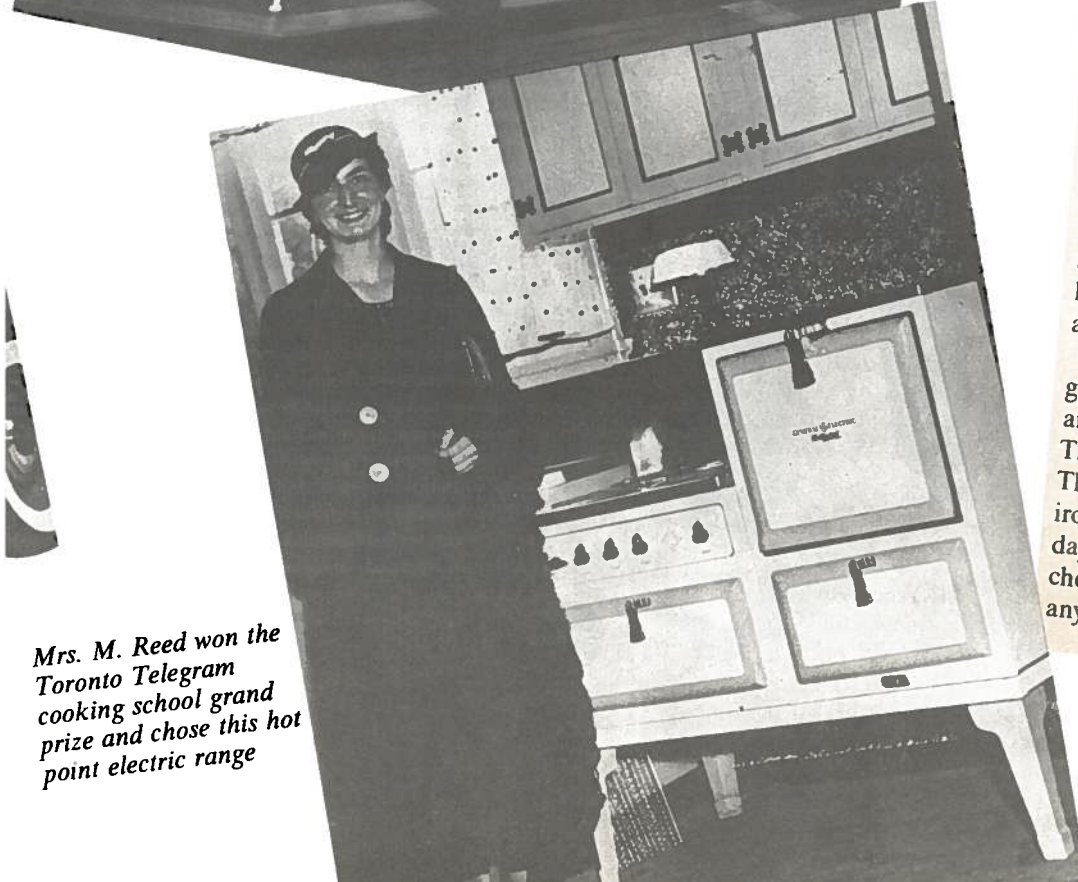
01-350. Shade for above, lined and interlined with Rayon, covered with Georgette. Rich Metallic and Rayon fringe edges trimmed with Metallic braid. Size about 9 by 13 1/2 inches. Colors Blue and Orange; Black and Orange; Taupe and Orange. Price **3.25**



At the Canadian National Exhibition



Eaton's "Thrift House" living-room



Mrs. M. Reed won the Toronto Telegram cooking school grand prize and chose this hot point electric range

We moved to Montreal in 1933 and we found what we were looking for the first day, a perfectly lovely house in Westmount. There were houses for rent or for lease and you could buy them, everywhere. While we waited for our furniture to come out from the coast we all stayed at the Ritz. A grand hotel then, and it still is.

I phoned an employment agency and told them I wanted some staff and they asked a few questions and the next day a woman came over to the hotel. I told her I knew nothing about running a house and she the best servants she could find. We drove over to the house and she worked it out this way. A chef and a woman who could be my maid and also serve the meals, and two domestics and a yardman, we had perfectly huge grounds, and a laundress who would come in Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

When our furniture moved in, this agency had people for us. The chef got \$40 a month and his board and room. My maid got \$30 and board and room. The first domestic maid got \$25 and the second maid got \$15. The gardener, and he was the chauffeur too if we wanted it, he got \$25. The laundress got two dollars a day, and she scrubbed by hand and ironed by hand and she lived at home. I paid her carfare too. Ten cents a day. Perfectly ridiculous, isn't it? Buying a human being, an excellent chef, for \$10 a week, or a small maid for 50 cents a day. Nobody thought anything of it.

B. Broadfoot, Ten Lost Years, p. 6

FASHION



The PUMP
Featuring
A SMART
NEW BOW
2.45
PAIR
DELIVERED



CHOICE OF
BLACK OR WHITE

Chic Details Make Smart Shoes

62S-284. Black. 62S-31. White.

The perky bow set on the vamp adds a decided air of style to these jaunty Pumps of Black Calfskin or fine White Leather, and the price is remarkably low for such quality. The high Spike heels are full-breasted. D width. Sizes 2 1/2 to 7 (including half sizes). Pair, delivered **2.45**



To Keep White Shoes
"White"

52S-074 This dependable White Shoe Cleaner is easy to apply and effective in its results. Bottle **25c**

FROM THE PAGES OF

EATON'S

CATALOGUES



Muskoka vacation, 1931



11.75
Delivered
All-Wool Blue Serge



82G-921
11.95
delivered

82G-221
12.95
delivered

**Fancy Tweed or Blue Botany
With "Tattersall" Vest**

44-165 **1500** 44-166 **1775**
Fawn Tweed. Del'd All-Wool Botany. Del'd

Sizes 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40-inch chest.
Leg lengths 28 to 32 inches.

All the style features of the season are embodied in these smart-looking suits for young men. They are made of **Fancy Fawn Tweed**, about two-thirds Wool, or **All-Wool Blue Botany Serge**. Cut on popular single-breasted style with two-button front. "Tattersall" vest has pleats and flaps on lap-pockets. Trousers are made with pleated front, fly pockets, belt loops and cuffs.



Wedding In London, Ontario, 1933

**Man TAILORED
WITH Hand TAILORING**

- ① Jacket front and lapels interlined with authentic Men's Wear Hymo canvas
- ② Sleeve linings fitted by hand
- ③ Shoulders padded like a man's
- ④ All edges taped no sagging
- ⑤ Lapels basted and tacked by hand



Odd Coats

Sizes 36 to 46-inch chest.

44-164. Well-made Odd Coats of All-Wool fine Blue Botany. Single-breasted style with notched lapels. Three-button front and strongly lined. Each, delivered **8.50**

"High Fashion"



78G-228

298
delivered



YOUNG MODERNS ARE CHOOSING THESE

Ayers' All-Wool
TWEED
9.75
DELIVERED

Guards Model for Young Men

44-160 Fancy Grey. 44-161 Fancy Fawn.

Sizes 34 to 42-inch chest. Average length 47 inches.

Well-tailored Top Coat, made from All-Wool Fancy Grey or Fawn Tweed of the well-known Ayers' quality that has a reputation for wear and good appearance. Guards style with one-piece half-belt at back. Well-lap'd collar and welted breast pocket. Body pockets have flaps and coat is half lined with Rayon-faced Satin. All exposed seams neatly piped.

Delivered **9.75**



SONG AND DANCE

FAMOUS
AMERICAN DANCE BANDS
HEARD WEEKLY ON RADIO
IN CANADA

78 RPM

BREAKABLE

LES BROWN AND HIS BAND OF RENOWN
WAYNE KING • CAB CALLOWAY • HARRY JAMES
BENNY GOODMAN • DUKE ELLINGTON
ISHAM JONES • FREDDY MARTIN
COUNT BASIE • TED WEEMS



What was important, though Canadians probably did not realize it at the time, was the emphasis that the CRBC, which became the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1936, put on home grown talent. The Mart Kenney band, for one, broadcasting from Vancouver, became known from coast to coast in the thirties.

H. McNamara and J. Lomas, *The Bands Canadians Danced To*, p. 10

FAMOUS CANADIAN DANCE BANDS AND THEIR DANCE HALLS

HARRY BEDLINGTON AND HIS WHISPERING ORCHESTRA—*The Savarin, Toronto*
FRED CULLEY—*Royal York Hotel, Toronto*
TRUMP DAVISON—*Club Esquire*
GLENN GRAY—*Casa Loma, Toronto*
NELSON HATCH—*The Old Mill, Toronto*
MART KENNEY AND HIS WESTERN GENTLEMEN—*All of Western Canada*
HORACE LAPP—*Royal Muskoka Hotel*
GUY LOMBARDO AND THE ROYAL CANADIANS
FERDE MOWRIE—*Club Embassy, Toronto*
BERT NIOSI—*Palais Royale, Toronto*
DAL RICHARDS—*Panorama Roof Garden, Hotel Vancouver*
DON ROMANELLI—*Royal York Hotel, Toronto*
LUIGI ROMANELLI—*King Edward Hotel, Toronto*
OZZI WILLIAMS—*Club Kingsway, Toronto*



Horace Lapp and his orchestra, Banff Springs Hotel, 1939

H. McNamara and J. Lomas, *The Bands Canadians Danced To*

Toronto Telegram, 17 August 1932—"My nose is too tired" is the excuse girls will be offering if the new "Zulu Grip"—with noses and foreheads in "synchro-mesh"—gets to be a habit in Toronto dance circles. The Dancing Masters of America, convening at the Royal York Hotel, are opposed to the "Zulu Grip" and are publicly denouncing it... Dancers show the anathemized "Zulu Grip" and the proper way to hold a girl while dancing.

"Who is the most popular bandleader to come out of Canada?" The question is unfair. Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians have topped the list since they left for the United States in the twenties.

Guy and his brothers, Carmen, Lebert and Victor, all natives of London, Ontario, arrived at a style that became known as "The sweetest music this side of heaven". Maybe the tunes have changed, but the style? Never.

That Lombardo sound has given its leader and his men some of the highest salaries in the dance band business. H. McNamara and J. Lomas, *The Bands Canadians Danced To*, p. 106





The well-paid Romanelli musicians, an exclusive group that at one time or another included Horace Lapp, who later led his own orchestra, and arranger-composer Johnny Burt, sometimes made as much as \$100 a week, a huge salary for depression days. Sometimes they played non-stop. As Trump recalls those hectic years: "When Eaton's College Street Store opened in the fall of 1930 we played three sessions a day on the main floor, then went on to the King Edward from 10.30 p.m. to 1.30 a.m. We did the same thing when the Bank of Commerce on King street opened the same year."

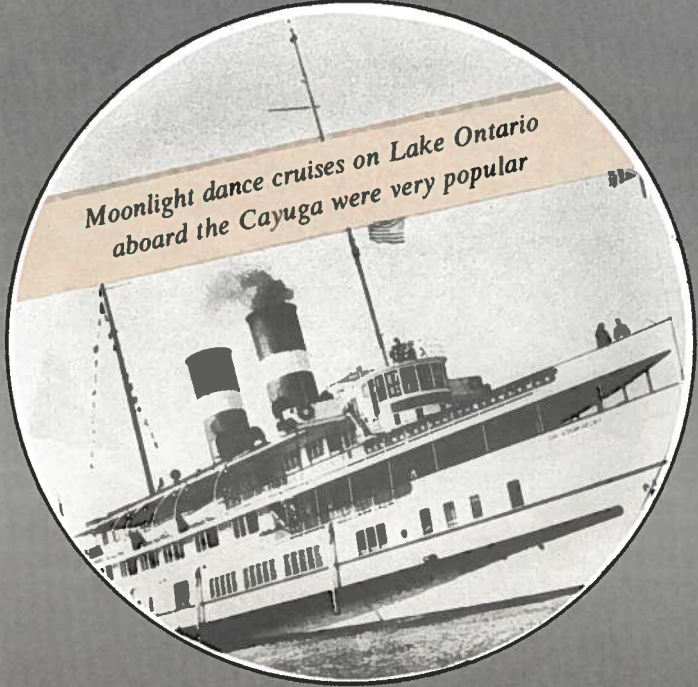
H. McNamara and J. Lomas, *The Bands Canadians Danced To*, p. 4



Luigi Romanelli in the Oak Room of the King Edward Hotel, Toronto



- Beer Barrel Polka**
 Look for the Silver Lining Stardust
 September Song When My Dreamboat Comes In
 Buddy Can you Spare a Dime? Pennies From Heaven
 Flat Foot Floogey with the Floy Floy
-
- POPULAR SONGS IN THE THIRTIES**
-
- I'll Never Smile Again The Lady is a Tramp
 Happy Days Are Here Again Just Around the Corner
 There's a Rainbow in the Sky Stormy Weather
 The World is Waiting for the Sunrise
 The West, a Nest, and You Dear



Moonlight dance cruises on Lake Ontario aboard the Cayuga were very popular



Jacking up a Dodge in the Northwest Territories, 1930

The census gives a total of 288,000 farms for the three Prairie provinces and 192,000 for Ontario, and contains a brief record of farm facilities in all the provinces. Of the 288,000 farms of the Prairie provinces, 5,036 have water piped in the kitchen; or one out of every 57.20 farms in western Canada in contrast with one out of every 9.54 in Ontario. In the west one out of every 72.8 has water piped in the bathroom (it would be interesting to know how many have a bathroom of any kind) as compared with one out of 15.76 in Ontario. One out of every 34.44 western farmhouses is lighted by gas or electricity as compared with one out of 5.95 in Ontario. In proportion to farms Ontario has more than twice as many rural telephones and over 40 per cent more rural automobiles than western Canada. Of these automobiles four out of five in Ontario, four out of seventy-six in western Canada, may travel on paved or gravelled highways, or, 20 per cent. of Ontario farms and 94.7 per cent. of all western farms are located on dirt roads. F. R. Scott. *Canada To-day*, pp. 56-57



Automobiles disappeared from the streets. In the mid-thirties many motorists still laid up their cars in winter. Block-heaters were not in common use, winter-weight oil was unknown, and a common expense of winter motoring was the replacement of antifreeze. The odour of alcohol permeated the cars and those who used ethylene glycol found their cooling systems tragically leak-prone. They were confronted, at the shank end of an evening, with a round pink stain on the snow under their radiator to show where their anti-freeze had gone.

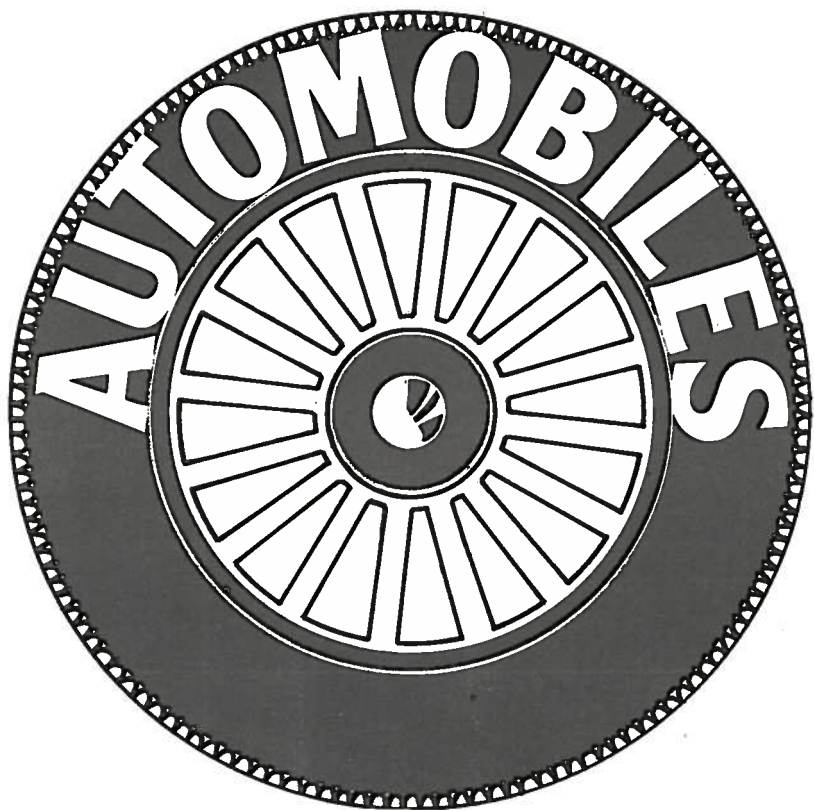
In the rural west, motor transportation was completely immobilized. Most cars and trucks used outside the cities were still crank-equipped. But cranks could not spin frozen engines, and many a desperate farmer seeking to heat his truck engine with a blowtorch succeeded only in setting it afire. For most farmers, there was little point in starting a truck or tractor, for there was no place to go. The sideroads from Winnipeg to the Rockies became blocked by snow drifts. However, in 1936 most farms still had a team or two of work horses and a Bennett buggy—a car with its engine removed, pulled by a team of horses. As long as air could be kept in tires, Bennett buggies were easier to pull than farm wagons. J. H. Gray. *The Winter Years*. p. 107



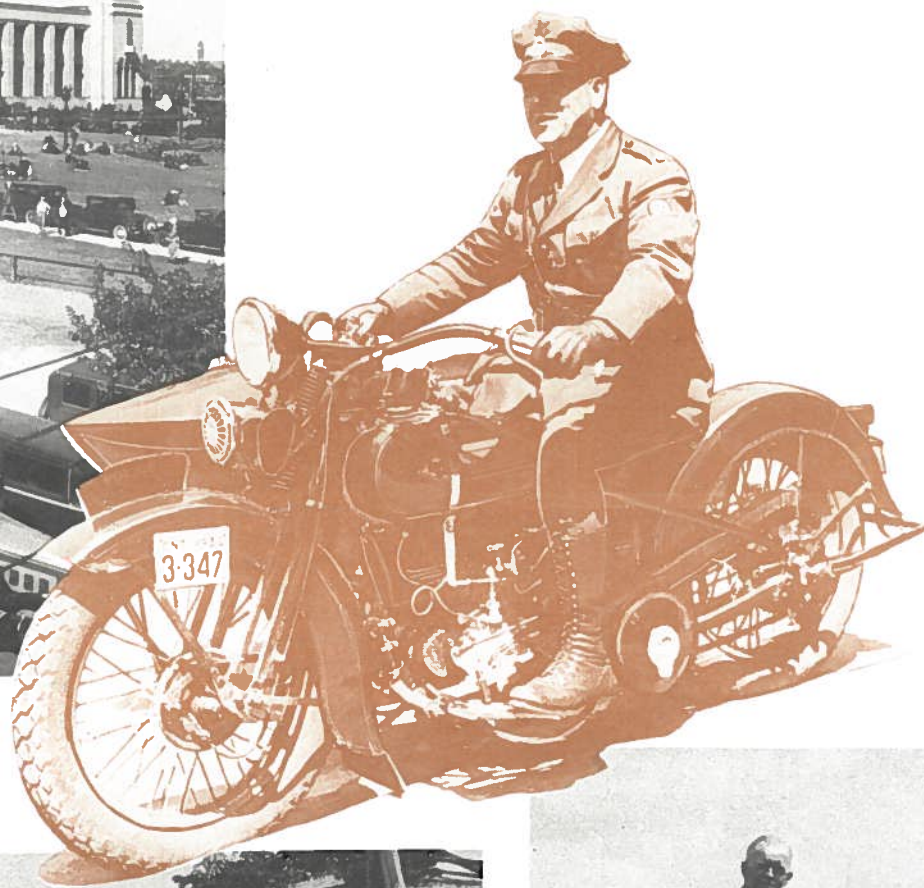
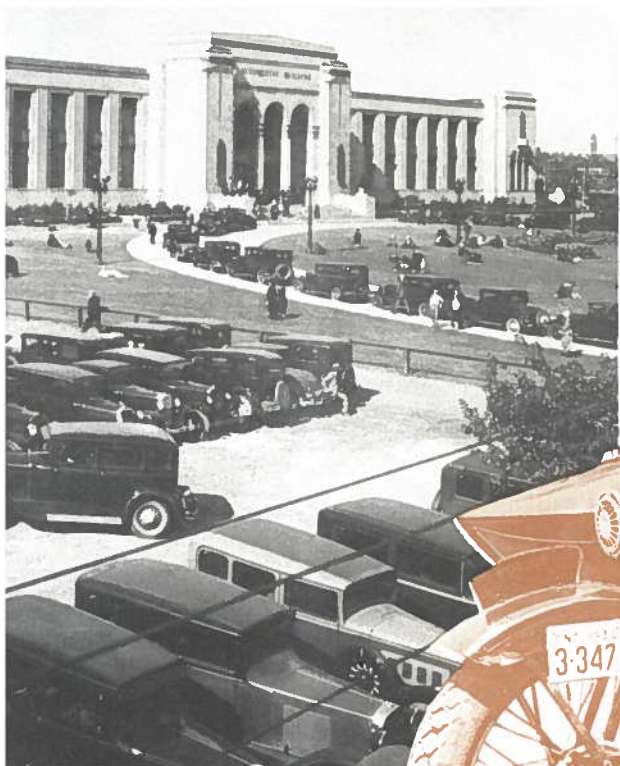
At the Auto Show, 1931

In the days before hard-surfacing, hand-operated graders were pulled by horses, and it took days to grade a small stretch of road. With the pounding of traffic and the winds helping, a wash-board effect was created on these gravel roads, and when you had been driving along on a fair piece of road, and all of a sudden hit a stretch of this wash-board, all hell broke loose. You'd swear that the car was coming apart at the seams. The four fenders would vibrate in agony, while the hood cover danced in glee. Running boards would scream at the pounding gravel, which sounded like a machine-gun as it banged up against them. If you were riding in the front seat, you took the chance of having the windshield collapse in your lap, not to mention the roof caving in on the whole issue. However, if you had led a good life, the chances were that you'd survive, providing you weren't travelling far. If the road had just been graded and a truck passed you, the world would be obliterated in dust. You'd survive all right, but the dust would keep your mouth shut for a while after you'd arrived.

Some drivers who were averse to putting their lives on the line would use a little caution when they ran into one of these wash-board stretches. J. B. Vaughn. *The Wandering Years*. p. 218



New twelve-cylinder Cadillac, 1936



Hitch-hiking in those days was nothing like it is now. There were no paved roads, and the gravel was darn hard to walk on. You could wear out a pair of shoes in no time; that is if you walked far. And the dust was terrible; every time a car went by, great clouds of dust would envelop you. You'd sputter and choke, cursing that driver. I will say, though, that most drivers were very considerate, and if they couldn't stop to pick you up, they'd slow down to avoid making too much dust. These drivers you appreciated. However, most drivers would stop and give you a lift if they had any room.

Furthermore, it was considered an unpardonable sin for one car to pass another and swing back in front immediately. Many windshields were broken this way, not to mention the dents caused by flying gravel. If you saw a car in trouble on the road, you would always stop to enquire if you could help, asking if the fellow needed a jack, some patching, or a pump. Courtesy was prevalent then. J. B. Vaughn, *The Wandering Years*, p. 215

