

The Roaring Twenties

A Historic Broadcast

In 1923, one of the most famous sportscasters in Canadian history called his first hockey game. His name was Foster Hewitt. Years later, the story of that first broadcast became famous.

I'd like you to go to the Mutual Street Arena tonight and broadcast the hockey game between Parkdale and Kitchener Seniors.

A what? A hockey game? Did I hear you right? Why wouldn't someone in the sports department do that job?

They haven't anyone with radio experience. No, you're our man, Foster. It could be that thirty, forty years from now you may be proud to say, 'I was the first person in all the world ever to broadcast a hockey game.'

That's quite a prophesy, Basil; but what if it's a flop?



No one had ever done play-by-play of hockey games over the radio before. For that first game, Foster sat in a glass booth at rink level to keep out the noise of the crowd. At times, he could barely see because the glass fogged up. He described the game over a telephone connected to the radio station. In 1931, he broadcast his first

“Hockey Night in Canada” game. This time he was perched high in the gondola over the rink in Maple Leaf Gardens. For almost 30 years, Foster Hewitt was hockey for thousands of Canadians who tuned in to his radio broadcasts. They listened to his excited call: “He shoots! He scores!” In the 1920s, NHL hockey and Foster Hewitt became part of Canadian history.

1. In the 1920s, the radio became a feature in many Canadian homes. Using a web diagram, brainstorm the effects you think radio broadcasting had on the lives of Canadians in the 1920s.
2. Examine the results. How do they compare with the way the Internet affects your life today?

New Inventions

Bring Change

In the 1920s, it must have seemed that the world was suddenly smaller for many people. New inventions such as the radio, mass-produced automobiles, and air travel meant that people in the remotest areas of the country were no longer as isolated. They could share in common forms of entertainment, travel to other regions, and tune in to the latest news broadcasts. While not everyone could afford the new fads and inventions, they moved to within the reach of more than just the wealthy. Many Canadians took them up with great enthusiasm. After the horrors of the war, people were ready to add some joy to their lives.

Radio

Radio was the great communication invention of the 1920s. Voices, news, and music could now be broadcast across the country using radio signals. It was the invention of the radio that helped shrink Canada's vast size. People living in isolated rural parts of the country were brought in touch with the cities of the nation. It became possible for a farmer living far from the city to twist the dials on a battery-powered radio set and listen to a hockey game from Montreal. Radio provided inexpensive entertainment in people's homes.

The earliest home sets had no tubes, but used a crystal (a thin piece of quartz).

Listeners tuned in a signal by moving a fine wire "whisker" over the surface of the crystal. Sounds from crystal radios were never very loud, so earphones were often needed. Several pairs of earphones were provided when neighbours came to visit and "listen in." A person could take a crystal set on a picnic, hang the antenna on a tree, and sit back and listen through the headphones. One Canadian, R. H. Hahn, recalls:

Around 1930, when I was seven or eight, I remember people sitting around with crystal sets at our homestead in northern Saskatchewan listening to the World Series. Only one person at a time could hear the thing. They'd share this little ear plug. I was never important enough to get a turn. There'd be a group of maybe 20 grown men at these gatherings, each taking a brief moment to hear what was going on, and then reporting it to everyone else.

Before long, improved and expensive radio sets appeared in the stores. These were built in elaborate wooden cabinets. Tubes replaced the crystal and whisker, and speakers replaced earphones. The radios operated by large batteries that had to be recharged frequently. In 1925, a brilliant young Canadian inventor, Edward "Ted" S. Rogers, discovered a way of plugging the radio directly into household elec-

In the 1920s, people anxiously tuned in to their radios for the latest news, sports, and entertainment programs. By 1929, one in five Canadian families owned a radio.



trical current. His invention was the world's first battery-less radio. It sold for approximately \$150.

In 1919, Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor of the first wireless radio, had set up the first commercial radio station in Montreal. In February 1927, Ted Rogers set up his own radio station in Toronto. His station's call letters CFRB continue today to stand for his invention (R for Rogers and B for Battery-less). By 1929, there were 85 small broadcasting stations in Canada. People could tune in to hear the latest news, weather, music, drama programs, sports broadcasts, comedies, and entertainment shows. The vast majority of programs, however, came from the United States.

Automobiles

The 1920s also saw the growth of the automobile industry. Henry Ford dreamed of making an inexpensive car that almost anyone could afford to buy. Ford decided to apply to car manufacturing a method of **mass production** that was being used in some other industries.

Ford set up an **assembly line** that ran from one end of a building to another. At one end of the line were the frames of the cars. At first, the line did not move. The workers walked along it adding parts to the automobiles. Later, Ford had the line itself move like a conveyor belt. As the line moved, new parts were added to the frame by workers who remained in one place. By the time a car reached the end of the line, it had been assembled and was ready to be driven.

Each worker on the assembly line had a separate job. Some added parts, while others secured the parts in place. This was called the division of labour. Ford also used standard parts for his cars, which meant that wheels, engines, and bodies were exactly alike for each car. As a result, Ford was able to produce the famous, practical "**Model T**" at a price that average North Americans could afford. The "Tin Lizzy," as the Model T was affectionately called, had a simple box-like design. But in 1924, it could be purchased for around \$395.

The automobile has probably done more than any other machine to change our way of living. It put North Americans on wheels. On Sunday, a family with a car could call on relatives 15 or 20 km away and still be home in time for supper. Farm families could travel to nearby towns and cities for a day's shopping and buy goods they could only get by mail-order catalogue before. It was also easier for farm children to get to schools and for the sick to get to hospitals. The car made farm life less isolated and lonely.

For many people, cars also became status symbols. Movie idols in the 1920s all drove cars and reinforced the image that cars represented freedom and glamour. Cars also gave people a new sense of individualism. They were much more private than riding on a train, streetcar, or bus.

But the early models were often an adventure to drive for most people. A crank and a tow rope were standard equipment in every automobile. The crank was needed to get the engine started. A tow rope was required because motorists never knew when they might get stuck in mud or snow. More than one pleasant Sunday drive was spoiled when the family car became mired in mud. Most motorists did not attempt to drive in the winter at all. They put their car up on blocks because the engines tended to seize up with the cold.

By 1929, only the United States had more cars per person than Canada. Automobile manufacturing became a cornerstone of Canadian industry. At first, many small companies made, assembled, or sold cars in Canada. But by the 1920s, these small companies could not compete with larger American firms that were mass-producing less expensive models. In 1918, Samuel McLaughlin, who had started producing cars in Canada in 1908, sold his company to General Motors. In 1925, Wal-

ter P. Chrysler bought out the struggling Maxwell-Chalmers Company in Windsor, Ontario, and established the Chrysler Company of Canada. The American giant, Ford, had been manufacturing cars in Canada since 1904. Known as the "Big Three," these companies controlled car manufacturing in North America. By the end of the decade, Canada had become the second largest producer of automobiles in the world after the United States. Canadian-built cars were exported to the United States and around the world to countries in the British Empire.

The automobile had other effects on the economy. Spin-off industries sprang up across the country: gasoline, rubber, glass, oil, asphalt, and paint to name a few. Jobs were created in service stations, roadside restaurants, parking lots, repair shops, and road construction. Governments spent increasing amounts of money on roads, highways, and bridges. Main roads were paved and some country roads were given a surface of gravel. The tourist industry also benefited. The family car made it pos-



The age of the automobile had arrived. Model T Fords roll along the assembly line.

Motor Vehicle Registration in Canada

1903	220
1911	22 000
1921	465 000
1931	1 201 000

Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

sible to have a summer cottage and to travel longer distances for summer vacations. Along the major roads, tourist cabins and motels developed to house the increasing number of travellers. Trucks and tractors were also being produced at an increasing rate. Trucks were used for hauling freight from factories and food from farms. Tractors made heavy work on farms easier and more efficient.

The automobile created some problems, however. No one knew that this great invention would pollute the air, cause incredible traffic jams, and bring death to thousands of people each year. Criminals also made use of the automobile. Vancouver police reported at least six robberies a night in which the thieves made their getaway in a car. Police departments were soon forced to buy automobiles themselves. Governments found they needed to set speed limits on roads and introduce other traffic regulations. Most provinces required drivers to obtain licences.

Aviation

Stunt flyers and air travel were also part of the 1920s. Canadian pilots who returned from World War I were anxious to continue flying. Some bought war surplus biplanes and “barnstormed” across the country. They performed daring stunts over country fairs. As onlookers below gasped in horror, the pilots would dive and loop-the-loop, and even hang from the wings of their flimsy craft. For “two bucks

a flip,” they would take the adventuresome for an airplane ride.

Other flyers got jobs as **bush pilots**. Oil and mining companies needed a way to get people and supplies to remote areas. Bush pilots helped to open northern frontiers of Canada by flying prospectors, geologists, and supplies into mineral- and oil-rich areas. Soon planes were also used to spot forest fires, and to take aerial photographs and geological surveys.

In 1924, the **Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF)** was created. The government believed military planes could be justified only if they were used for peaceful purposes as well. Early RCAF pilots therefore also conducted surveys, patrolled for forest fires, watched for smuggling along Canada’s coasts, and checked on fishing boats. In 1927, the post office hired pilots to fly mail into remote communities within Canada.

Wilfred “Wop” May, the famous Canadian war ace, started his own airline in Edmonton after the war. He flew stunts at fairs and made some of the first flights hauling mail into the Arctic. In 1929, news of a diphtheria outbreak in the Peace River area of northern Alberta reached May. It was clear that many people would die unless medicine could be flown into the communities.

In the height of winter, May and a co-pilot took off in the freezing temperatures. Their small plane had no heat except for a small charcoal burner at their feet. On the way, the plane’s wings iced up, and the pair had to land in a tiny community called McLennan. People who got word they were coming tramped out a landing strip in the snow since there was no airport. May landed safely, de-iced the plane, and then took off again to complete the journey. The medicine was delivered to the Peace River communities. May and his co-pilot had made one of the first mercy flights, and



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Joseph-Armand Bombardier

Joseph-Armand Bombardier was the son of a prosperous farmer in Valcourt, Quebec. In 1922, when he was only 15, Bombardier built his first snow machine. His father had given him an automobile and young Armand removed the engine and mounted it on the family sleigh. He attached a hand-made propeller to the engine drive shaft. To the astonishment of his neighbours, Armand and his brother Leopold raced this primitive snowmobile through the town.

In 1934, Bombardier's son Yvon died of appendicitis during a raging winter storm. All the roads were blocked with snow. Bombardier's snow machines were lying in pieces in the garage. There was no way to transport his son to the hospital. Spurred on by the death of his son, Bombardier set out to work on developing a machine that would end the isolation of winter.

The next year he travelled through Quebec taking his invention with him. Everywhere he went he became front-page news. He was granted a patent for his snowmobile, which was called the



B7. "B" stood for Bombardier and "7" stood for the number of passengers it could hold. It cost \$7500 and Bombardier sold 50 of them. They were used as buses and for medical transport in the winter.

A later version of the B7 was used during World War II. In 1959, Bombardier introduced a two-passenger sport

model. He wanted to call these snowmobiles "Ski-dogs," but decided to change the name to "Ski-doo." Bombardier's inventions have been used around the world.

1. The photo shows the Model T Ford Bombardier converted into a snowmobile in 1928 with the help of his brother-in-law. What changes did Bombardier make to create this early snow machine?
2. a) Many people suggest that genius is the result of circumstances and environment. Do you agree? How did these two factors contribute to Bombardier's invention?
b) What other factors contribute to genius?

shown the value of the airplane to Canada's remote northern communities.

Eventually, the public and the government began to see the possibilities of passenger air travel. By 1927, small carrier planes were flying people from city to city, but there was no national air service. In the same year, a young American airmail pilot, Charles A. Lindbergh, completed the first non-stop transatlantic flight from New York to Paris. This important event sig-

nalled the possibility of long-distance air travel. American investors wanted to set up transcontinental air passenger service between Canada and the United States. Commonwealth countries saw the possibility of a British around-the-world network. Eventually, in 1937, the Canadian Minister of Transport, C. D. Howe, decided to create an airline owned by the Canadian government. He formed Trans-Canada Airlines, which in 1964 became Air Canada.

Barnstorming pilot Fred McCall at the Calgary Exhibition in 1919. He once crash-landed on top of a merry-go-round, but no one was hurt.



Urbanization

People continued to move into Canada's cities in the 1920s. Many were farm hands and farm children. New farm machinery meant that fewer hands were needed on farms. Also, land was no longer readily available at cheap prices, so children found they could not buy land near their family farms. Many farmers and young people left the countryside and moved to the towns and cities looking for new job opportunities. The high costs of machinery, rising freight rates, and poor wheat crops in the early years of the decade also made farming on the Prairies less profitable for many.

In the Maritimes, rising unemployment forced many to leave the region for cities further west. Many industries had moved to Central Canada. New technology such as the motor boat and refrigeration also meant that fewer fishery workers were needed on boats. Many fishers went to work in city factories.

In the late 1920s, the economic boom and promise of growing industries drew

people into the cities. By 1931, over 52 per cent of Canada's total population lived in cities or towns. Montreal grew by 38 per cent over the decade, Toronto by 32 per cent, and Vancouver by 48 per cent. In fact, Vancouver surpassed Winnipeg as Canada's third largest city. The opening of the Panama Canal helped to fuel Vancouver's growth, since ships could now travel between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans without having to go around South America. Vancouver was emerging as a major port for world trade. In Ontario, thousands of people flocked to Windsor to work in the burgeoning automobile industry.

More skyscrapers began to appear on major city skylines as well. In Toronto, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce moved into a new 32-storey tower, the tallest in the British Empire. The Canadian Pacific Railway and Dominion Bank were also housed in impressive office towers.

The automobile also changed the face of cities. Cars made it possible for people to live farther from their place of work. People sought open green spaces

for their houses, so suburbs started to sprawl on the outskirts of many cities. It became increasingly difficult to sell a house without a garage and a driveway. As more people moved into cities, there were increasing demands for more schools, housing, hospitals, and social services.



Fads, Fashions, and American Influences

In the 1920s, people eagerly took up the latest fads and crazes. For many, the fads were a way to escape from the painful memories of the war and enjoy life again. No one can explain exactly how fads catch on, but suddenly many people become interested in a dance, fashion, game, sport, or other activity and take it up with great enthusiasm. Usually the craze does not last long. Fads are often dropped as quickly as they are taken up.

Most fads came into Canada from the United States in the 1920s. The Twenties saw the beginning of **mass media** advertising in North America. Radio broadcasts, newspapers, glossy magazines, billboards, and movies poured into Canada from the United States. Canadians admired fashions from New York, bought American-made vacuum cleaners and other appliances, and watched American movies. Gradually, some people began to feel uneasy about American influences on Canadian life and culture. But it was not until the

Canada's Urban Population

	1921	1931
Canada	47.4%	52.5%
Maritimes	38.8	39.7
Prince Edward Island	18.8	19.5
Nova Scotia	44.8	46.6
New Brunswick	35.2	35.4
Quebec	51.8	59.5
Ontario	58.8	63.1
Manitoba	41.5	45.2
Saskatchewan	16.8	20.3
Alberta	30.7	31.7
British Columbia	50.9	62.3

Note: Definition of urban (pre-1951), all incorporated cities, towns, and villages.

Source: *Canada Year Book*, 1931.



Vancouver in the 1930s. What key features do you notice about the city?

1930s that the Canadian government took some steps to counter foreign influences.

One of the first fads of the 1920s was the ancient Chinese game of *mahjong*. *Mahjong* is a combination of dice and dominoes. The game caught on quickly across North America. In homes everywhere people were shouting *pungt* and *chow* and other Chinese words connected with the game. *Mahjong* parties became the rage and people even imported Chinese robes, furniture, and decorative objects to add to the atmosphere. But by 1927, the novelty had worn off. It was time for a new fad.

The new fad was the crossword puzzle. Two young American publishers, Simon and Schuster, brought out a book of crossword puzzles with a pencil attached. Suddenly, everyone was crazy about crosswords. Dictionary sales soared. Some railways even provided dictionaries to help travellers solve crossword puzzles.

Long races and contests of every kind also became immensely popular. Non-stop talking, kissing, eating, drinking, flagpole sitting, and rocking-chair marathons were some of the contests in which people tried to establish records.

Of all the marathons, dancing was the real rage. Dancers competed for prizes of thousands of dollars. Couples dragged

themselves around the dance floor with blistered feet and aching backs. One man dropped dead on the dance floor after 87 hours of continuous dancing. Some contestants kept themselves awake with smelling salts and ice packs. Mary “Hercules” Promitis of Pittsburgh took a tip from bare-knuckle prizefighters and soaked her feet in vinegar and brine for three weeks before a 1928 marathon. Her feet were so pickled that she felt no pain at all!

Fads also swept the world of fashion. For young women, the “flapper look” was in. A **flapper** was a young woman who dressed outrageously. In winter, she wore galoshes with buckles unfastened to create the greatest possible flap. Hemlines rose above the knees and silk stockings were rolled down. Long hair was cut and set in a short “bobbed” style. Fashions for a young man were often as outrageous. He sported baggy pants or knickers, a bright snappy hat, and a bow tie. His hair was greased down and parted in the middle to imitate the popular movie idols of the day. While these fashions were the latest craze, they did not reflect day-to-day life for most Canadian women and men. Most Canadians admired from afar those daring and wealthy enough to wear these latest fashions.

*Flappers in 1928.
How did the
style suggest the
outrageous?*



Entertainment

Jazz moved north from New Orleans in the United States and was made popular by such musicians as Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, both Black Americans. The dance of the decade—the Charleston—also emerged out of Black American culture. Its fast and wild pace quickly caught on with the high-spirited younger generation. Members of the Boston City Council tried to have the dance banned, but the Charleston was here to stay. It became the emblem of the roaring “Jazz Age.” Black culture was



IMPACT ON SOCIETY

TWENTIES TALK

Every generation seems to have its own characteristic expressions or slang. “Cool” and “sweet” are just some of the slang words we use today. Slang refers to informal words or phrases. The expressions are often associated with a particular group and represent certain feelings or attitudes. When

these feelings and attitudes change, slang expressions may pass out of use. Our language is always changing. Sometimes slang words become part of common usage and are entered into our formal dictionaries. Do you recognize any of these expressions from the 1920s?

Expression	Meaning	Expression	Meaning
all wet	wrong, mistaken	kiddo	friendly form of address
baloney	nonsense	kisser	lips
bee's knees	compliment meaning a wonderful person or thing	a line	insincere flattery
big cheese	very important person	ossified	drunk
bump off	to murder	ritzy, swanky	elegant
bunk	nonsense	real McCoy	genuine article
carry a torch	to be hopelessly in love	runaround	delaying action
cat's meow	superb, wonderful	scram	to leave quickly
cheaters	eyeglasses	speakeasy	a bar selling illegal liquor
crush	falling in love	spiffy	fashionable
dogs	human feet	swell	marvellous
flat tire	boring person	whoopee	a wild time
gate crasher	an uninvited guest		
giggle water	alcohol		
hip	up-to-date		
high hat	snobbish		
hooch	bootleg liquor		
hooper	chorus girl		

1. Are any expressions in the list above still used today? Which? Why do you think they have survived?
2. Create a conversation between two students using the above expressions. Role play the conversation for the class or other pairs.
3. In groups, develop your own list of current teenage slang expressions. Which modern expressions have similar meanings to those listed above? What does this suggest?
4. Canadian English is different from American or British English. Make a list of words or expressions that can be considered “Canadianisms.” Check your list in a Canadian dictionary.

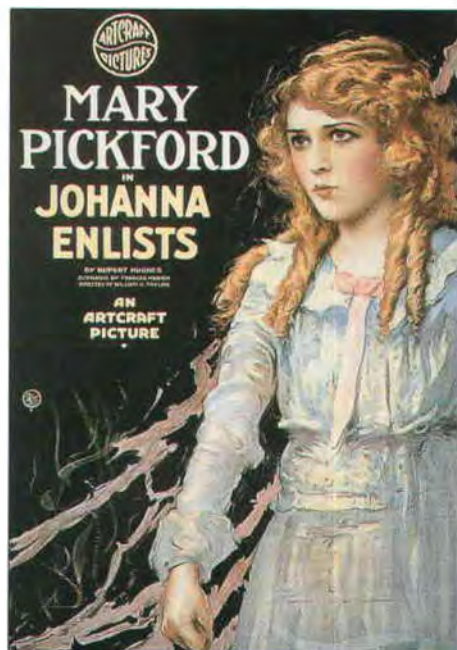
The Charleston became one of the most popular dances in the 1920s.



enjoying a resurgence in the United States and its influences were felt in Canada.

Talking films were another amazing invention of the 1920s. But **"talkies"** did not arrive in Canada until 1927. For most of the decade, films were silent. The stars of Hollywood's silent screen were idolized

Mary Pickford was a major Hollywood star and went on to found United Artists with Douglas Fairbanks, Charlie Chaplin, and D. W. Griffith.



by the Canadian public. They provided excitement that ordinary people sometimes lacked in their daily lives. Charlie Chaplin, affectionately called the "Little Tramp," needed no words to get across his hilarious comic routines. Rudolph Valentino and Greta Garbo were other great stars on the silver screen. When Valentino died in 1926, police had to be called in to control the screaming mob.

The Canadian-born star, Mary Pickford, became one of Hollywood's greatest success stories. Born in Toronto in 1893, she started on the stage at the age of five. At the height of her career, she was earning \$10 000 a week. In addition to being an actor, she was also a successful business woman. With Douglas Fairbanks and D. W. Griffith, she started the film production company known as United Artists.

Movie-going became part of life for many people. By the end of the decade, there were more than 900 movie houses across Canada. Movies were here to stay. Every kid wanted to spend Saturday afternoon at the show, and for many adults Hollywood movies were the most popular entertainment.

But while Hollywood had a great influence on Canadians, Canadians also had a major influence on Hollywood. Mary Pickford was not the only Canadian talent to make a mark in the American movie business. Several other Canadians including Louis B. Mayer, Walter Huston, Jack Warner, Norma Shearer, and Marie Dressler were influential in Hollywood during these early years. Warner and Mayer founded two of Hollywood's major studios. Canada's film industry at this time was focused mainly on newsreels and short documentaries. After Famous Players' (a subsidiary of United Artists) took over the leading Canadian cinema chain in 1923, Hollywood movies dominated cinema screens across Canada.

Canadian Culture

Popular movies, music, dance, and fashions were dominated by American influences, but more Canadians were becoming concerned with creating distinctively Canadian art. The Group of Seven artists in many ways led the way. Group of Seven artist Arthur Lismer wrote, "After 1919, most creative people, whether in painting, writing or music, began to have a guilty feeling that Canada was as yet unwritten, unpainted, unsung . . . In 1920, there was a job to be done."

As more Canadian artists focused on Canadian themes, magazines, journals, and other organizations were formed to promote them. The Canadian Authors' Association was founded in 1921 to back Canadian writers. More art schools opened in cities across the country. Emily Carr became the first woman artist to gain national and international recognition for her painting. Later in her career, she also won fame for her writing. Other organizations to promote Canadian culture would be formed in the 1930s.

Women in the 1920s

Women in the 1920s still did not enjoy all the privileges men had. Although women had won the right to vote during the war, few women were elected to the House of Commons or to provincial governments. In the 1921 federal election, Agnes Macphail was the only woman elected. She found she could not do her job in the House of Commons "without being ballyhooed like a bearded lady." She said, "I was a curiosity, a freak." Despite the obstacles, she strongly supported women's rights, and worked to improve conditions for farmers, miners, and prisoners.

In the 1920s, women were still seen mainly as homemakers. They were expect-

ed to give up the jobs they had in the war and return to looking after their husbands and families. By 1929, women made up 20 per cent of the workforce, but most worked in traditional female jobs as domestic servants, secretaries, sales clerks, or factory workers. The majority of these women were single, since employers expected women to give up their jobs when they married. Since these "female" jobs were considered less valuable than the work men did, wages were low. Women who did the same jobs as men were also paid less. On average, women earned between 54 and 60 per cent of what men earned. There were also still few women in the professions outside teaching and nursing. Only a few overcame the obstacles to become doctors, lawyers, or professors.

Women from minority groups faced even greater challenges. Many employers discriminated against Chinese and Japanese women, and women of colour. Employers simply would not hire them. Many of these women could not find jobs outside their own ethnic communities. Japanese and Chinese were barred from entering Canadian colleges, universities, and hospitals.

The Persons Case

The **Persons Case** underlined the inequality women still faced. In 1916, Emily Murphy was made the first woman judge in the British Empire and she was appointed to an Alberta court. A lawyer in her courtroom challenged her right to judge any case because she was a woman. He said that no woman was a "person" in the eyes of the law. Emily Murphy was supported by the Supreme Court of Alberta, which said that a woman had every right to be a judge. This should have settled the matter, but it did not.

Over the next several years, women's groups asked the prime minister to



Netsurfer

Visit the web site for the Status of Women Canada at www.swc-cfc.gc.ca.

FAST FORWARD



The contribution of the “Famous Five” to Canadian history is still remembered today. In 1999, Edmonton artist Barbara Paterson unveiled her bronze statues of the Famous Five at Olympic Plaza in Calgary. She shows the women in an imaginary scene when they hear the exciting news of the decision that women are “persons” in the eyes of the law. Another set of statues will be placed in the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa, honouring the contribution of these women to Canada’s history.

appoint a woman to the Senate. The British North America Act stated that qualified “persons” could receive appointments. Again the question was raised: Was a woman a “person” in the eyes of the law? Was a woman qualified for an appointment to the Senate?

In August 1927, Emily Murphy and four other prominent women decided to petition the prime minister. The group of women included Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, Henrietta Edwards, Irene Parby, and Judge Murphy. They asked, “Does the word ‘persons’ in Section 24 of the British North America Act include female ‘persons’?” In April 1928, the Supreme Court of Canada decided that women were not “persons” qualified for appointment to the Canadian Senate.

Judge Murphy and her supporters, nicknamed the **“Famous Five,”** were discouraged, but not defeated. They decided to appeal their case to the Privy Council in Britain. After three months of consideration, the judges of the Privy Council announced their decision. They declared that the word “persons” referred to men and women. Women were indeed qualified to sit in the Senate of Canada. Emily Murphy won her fight.

Many of her friends thought that Emily Murphy deserved to be the first woman appointed to the Senate. However, it was two more years before the first woman was named to a Senate seat. When it did happen it was not Emily Murphy, but Cairine Wilson, who received this honour. Senator Wilson of Montreal had worked as an organizer and president of the National Federation of Liberal Women.



Canadian Sports

The 1920s were also a golden age of sport in Canada. Many of the sports heroes of the decade were amateurs. They seemed to come out of nowhere to grab the headlines and establish world records. Percy Williams is an example. This 20-year-old sprinter, almost unknown in Canada, stunned onlookers at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics. In the 100- and 200-metre sprints, he won a sensational double gold victory. Competing athletes acknowledged him as “the greatest sprinter the world has ever seen.”

Canada’s most famous male athlete of the first half-century was Lionel Conacher. He piled up trophies and medals in wrestling, boxing, lacrosse, hockey, football, and baseball. One day in 1922,



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Emily Murphy

Emily Murphy was a writer, journalist, magistrate, reform-er, and famous crusader for women's rights. In her early career, Murphy published a series of popular and delightful books of personal impressions under the pen name "Janey Canuck." Born in Cookstown, Ontario, she later moved west with her family and spent a large part of her life in Edmonton, Alberta. It was there that she developed her interest in law and women's rights.

One afternoon, when Emily was visiting a prairie farm, she met a bitterly distraught woman. The woman's husband had, without warning, sold their land and gone off to the United States. The woman was left penniless and homeless. Women at that time had no property rights. Men could sell land and home without their wives' consent and without giving her any part. It was law. Emily Murphy determined that day to change that law. Seven years later, she had won the fight. In 1911, Alberta passed the Dower Act giving women rights to one-third share of their husband's property.



Emily Murphy went on to become the first woman magistrate in the British Empire. She led the battle to have a woman judge preside over cases involving women and children so that their cases could be fairly heard and their interests protected. She also campaigned against drug addiction and fought to prove that women were "persons" under the law and could therefore be appointed to the Senate.

1. Why do you think it was important for women to win property rights?
2. Today, a "Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case" is given every year on October 18. The Award recognizes the contributions of individuals in both the paid and unpaid workforce to promote equality for women in Canada. Find out about women who have won the Award in the past. Who would you nominate for the Award today? Why?

Conacher starred in championship games in two different sports. He hit a triple in the last inning to give Toronto Hillcrest the city baseball championship. Then he drove across town to play in the Ontario Lacrosse Championship. In this game, he scored four times. Conacher also excelled in football. In the 1922 Grey Cup game, he scored 15 points leading the Toronto Argonauts to a 23-0 win over the Edmonton Eskimos.

Women also enjoyed a golden age in sport. Before World War I, the sports considered "proper" for women included croquet, skating, fencing, cycling, and lawn tennis. Women participated in many other sports, but it was not until the 1920s that it was socially acceptable for women to play body-contact sports. Women began to compete more actively in a wide range of organized team sports.

Sprinter Percy Williams is congratulated for his victory at the Amsterdam Olympics in 1928. He was one of the sports sensations in the "Roaring Twenties."



In the early part of the twentieth century, basketball became popular and was one of the first sports played by women on the world circuit. The Edmonton Grads dominated women's basketball for over 20 years. From 1915 to 1940, the team played 522 games and lost only 20. The Edmonton Grads represented Canada at four Olympics [1924-1936] and won 27 consecutive games. Their conditioning and quick-passing teamwork made the Grads the undisputed world champions of women's basketball. Dr. James Naismith, the Canadian-born inventor of basketball, proclaimed the Edmonton Grads the greatest basketball team that ever stepped out on a floor.

Among individual Canadian female athletes, Fanny "Bobbie" Rosenfeld was one of the best. She excelled in so many sports during her athletic career that she was called the "best woman athlete of the half-century." She was a star at basketball,

The 1920s were a golden age of women's sports. The Edmonton Commercial Grads dominated the world of women's basketball for over 20 years.



hockey, softball, and tennis, but her greatest triumphs came in track and field. During the Amsterdam Olympics of 1928, Rosenfeld won a silver medal in the 100-metre dash and a gold medal in the women's 400-metre relay. High-jumper Ethel Catherwood from Saskatoon also won a gold medal at the Amsterdam Olympics.

Unfortunately, the golden age of women's sports did not last. By the mid-1930s, many educators and medical doctors argued that girls and women were "biologically unfit" for competitive athletics. Competitive sports were considered "unfeminine." Not until the 1960s did Canadian women have the opportunity to regain the glory they won in the 1920s in a wide range of sports.

Professional Sports

Professional sports also flourished during the 1920s. Hockey and baseball were two examples. As cities grew, they could afford

to build larger hockey arenas and baseball diamonds. But since professional teams needed a large market, strong ties developed in both these sports with the United States. The National Hockey League (NHL) was formed in Canada in 1917. In 1925, the Boston Bruins were the first American team to join the League. Other American teams including the New York Rangers, Chicago Black Hawks, and Detroit Red Wings soon followed.

The NHL became the top professional league in North America. Most of the American clubs were owned and managed by Canadians. The players were also almost all Canadians. People across the country tuned in to "Hockey Night in Canada" broadcast over the radio with Foster Hewitt giving the play-by-play. But by 1939, there were only two Canadian teams left in the NHL—Toronto and Montreal. Professional hockey had become centred in the United States, even though most players were still Canadian.



An NHL hockey game in Maple Leaf Gardens 1932, its opening year.



Developing Skills: Creating Multi-Media Presentations

We sometimes think that the only way to communicate history is to write about it. But there are many different ways to present information and ideas about the past. A museum, for example, can mount exhibits or displays on particular periods or themes, such as life during the Depression or the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The curator, a historian who manages a museum's collection, gathers photographs, models, costumes, artifacts, and primary source documents. These items are then organized, carefully labelled, and exhibited so that the story unfolds before the eyes of the museum visitors. Sometimes audiotapes are prepared for people or a tour guide presents the exhibit.

Other people interested in history use film as their medium. Films can feature people reminiscing about what happened to them in the past and how world events affected their lives. Films can also be re-enactments of historical events. Sometimes they include actual footage of past events, carefully edited with voice-overs filling in the story.

Another creative way of communicating history is with a time capsule. A time capsule is a collection of objects representing everyday life, usually placed in the cornerstone of a public building. The idea is that a future generation can open the time capsule and discover what was important to people from another generation.

Suppose you want to show what life was like in Canada during a decade like the "Roaring Twenties."

Step 1

Divide the class into groups. Each group chooses a decade from Canadian history, e.g., the 1920s, the 1950s, or the 1990s to present.

Step 2

Each group should select a different way of presenting their decade. Use the following list for ideas and remember that you can also combine a number of these suggestions in your presentation.

exhibit or display	video	time capsule
bulletin board	photo essay	scrapbook
mural	collection of artifacts	cartoon or comic strip
timeline mural	news program	vertical file
performance	demonstration	artistic creation
computer program	advertisement	brochure/pamphlets
poster	simulation	skit
costumes	game	web pages
puppet show	slide show	docudrama
models	learning centre	book or magazine covers
overheads	project cube	

Step 3

Research information on life in your decade. Besides written work, try to include some or all of the following: music, pictures, artifacts, recorded interviews, models, charts, and graphs. Organize your materials into sub-topics so that they tell a complete story. Accompany your visuals with brief written comments and notes. The emphasis of the presentation, though, should be on the visual and not the written.

Step 4

Each group can set up their presentation at a different station in the classroom. Groups can take turns touring the room.

Step 5

Develop 15 questions for the other groups about your decade. Give other groups time to visit your display and answer the questions about it. Encourage them to ask questions as well.

Step 6

Have others evaluate how useful your visual presentation was in helping them learn about life in Canada during that decade.



Activities

Understand Facts and Concepts

- Add these new terms to your *Factfile*.

radio	mass media
mass production	flapper
assembly line	jazz
Model T Ford	talkies
bush pilots	Persons Case
Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF)	Famous Five
- Imagine that you are living on a homestead in Alberta during the early 1920s. Your farm is a long way from urban centres. Your nearest neighbours are located a few kilometres away. What difference would a radio make to your family's life?
- List 10 jobs that were created as a result of the automobile.
 - What problems did automobiles create?
- What role did airplanes play in the 1920s? Why were these roles important?
- Using a web diagram, outline the major factors that contributed to the growth of cities in the 1920s.
- Quiz a partner on the individuals highlighted in this chapter. Describe their achievements and have your partner tell you who they are.

Think and Communicate

- Create a diagram outlining the benefits and problems that have resulted from the invention of the automobile.
- Since crossword puzzles were a great fad of the 1920s, try making some. Use a sheet of graph paper. The answers should all be words associated with the 1920s. Include clues to help your classmates solve the crosswords.
- Make models or bulletin board displays for a crystal radio, batteryless radio, Model T Ford, or other early car models. Include labels and short notes on how these new inventions worked and the effects they had on life and the economy in the 1920s. Or, create a timeline mural showing the development of radio, automobiles, airplanes, or telephones from their invention to the present.
- Create posters, stamps, or sports cards to celebrate great Canadian athletes of the 1920s.
- Gather recent issues of the following magazines: *Chatelaine*, *Popular Science*, *Maclean's*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Canadian Living*, and *Consumer's Report*. Imagine these magazines were published in the 1920s. In groups, prepare an article for one of these

magazines based on some aspect of life in the 1920s that you have read about in this chapter. For example, you could develop a profile of a prominent athlete for *Sports Illustrated* or report on the latest radio design for *Popular Science*. Include photos, illustrations, or cartoons in your articles.

Apply Your Knowledge

12. a) Hollywood movies in the 1920s reflected life in the United States. When they did include Canadian society, history, or geography, the scenes were often inaccurate. Why do you think Canadians were so eager to accept Hollywood movies in the 1920s?
 - b) Take a class survey. Find out which movies students in your class have seen most recently. Where were these movies made? Where were they set? What were the main themes?
 - c) Discuss the results. Are Canadian cinemas still dominated by Hollywood films? Why do you think this is so? What effects do you think Hollywood has on your life?
13. a) Many people today insist that North Americans are completely dependent on the automobile. In groups, list all the ways you use the automobile in a typical week. Could you live without a car? How would your life be different without the automobile?
 - b) If automobiles had not been invented, how would Canada be different today?
14. Listen to some music of the 1920s. Describe the themes, mood, rhythms, use of lyrics, and major instruments used. Compare them with a form of music of your choice from today. How do you think music reflects the mood and major concerns of an era?
15. a) In groups, go through the sports pages of a national newspaper. How many women and women's sports leagues are featured on these pages? Do women have equality with men in sports today? Why or why not? Give reasons for your answer.
 - b) Do athletes of all races have equality in sports today? Explain.

* Tales of Despair

The economic upswing in the mid-1920s gave many Canadians a new sense of confidence. Industries were growing and more people had jobs. It seemed as if good times had returned and were here to stay. But in 1929, the bubble of prosperity burst. The 1930s were years of despair for many Canadians. This is how two Canadians described their experiences in the Dirty Thirties.

I was always sick two Fridays of every school year, that is when I was in grades 10 and 11. The first Friday was in early October and the second was late in June.

Those two days were when the school had its big dances, the two of the year. Sure, I got asked. But I always had the flu, which translated means I didn't have any clothes. At school we wore a sort of black uniform, all the girls, so that's how I got by there, but at a dance, no way.

Kinda sad, isn't it? I might have met my one true love at one of those affairs.

...

I remember those '30s sunrises, all dirty from the dust in the air, as I walked down to the town office early to get my paper-work done. No matter how early I went in, the men would be lined up, waiting, a long



A painting by Nathan Petroff entitled *Modern Times* (1937) captures the mood of the Depression years.

line in the street outside the office. Not much talk, nothing to say. Nowhere else to go, all the time in the world. Dust in their clothes, dust blowing around them.

We opened the office at nine, and they would come in, one at a time, very orderly. There were farmers from the district, men I knew around town, people I'd known at school. And if they had ridden in on the rods [railways] from God knows where, they were the same kind of people. Decent Canadians who ought to be doing a job every day, not lining up for a dole [relief payments] we didn't have.

I spent the days saying no to them. No, no work on offer. No, no food vouchers this week. No, no housing allotments. No, nothing we could do for their sick baby, nothing

for the cattle they couldn't feed, nothing for the crop they couldn't sell, nothing to stop the bank foreclosing. That was life as a town manager in Saskatchewan in the 1930s. And the ones who knew me would say, 'Right, Cec. Thanks anyway.'



1. a) What do the quotations above tell you about the hardships people faced in the 1930s?
b) What are their reactions to these hardships? How do you think they will cope?
2. a) In the 1930s there was a devastating drought on the Prairies that turned the region into a dust bowl. What effects would this drought have on the economy of Canada in the 1930s? Explain.
b) Do you think a similar drought could happen today? Why or why not?

The Great Depression

Though not everyone shared in the prosperity of the 1920s, there was a general mood of optimism in the country. But this mood changed drastically in the early 1930s. Canada was plunged into the **Great Depression**—the worst economic downturn the country has ever faced. How could prosperity turn to poverty for so many so quickly? What caused the Great Depression?

Many people would say that the Depression was caused by the stock mar-

ket crash of 1929. However, the stock market crash was not the *cause* of the Great Depression. It was only a *symptom*. It was a sign that the economy of North America was very sick. To understand the Depression, it helps to understand a little about how our economy works and what was happening in the 1920s.

The Business Cycle

Economic conditions are constantly changing. There are good times when the economy is on the upswing, and bad times when business declines. Economists who chart the upswings and downswings

of the economy over a period of years call these ups and downs the **business cycle**. The business cycle includes four basic stages: Prosperity, Recession, Trough or Depression, and Recovery.

The economy of North America in the late 1920s is a good example of the prosperity stage in the business cycle. In this stage, prices and wages are high. Few people are unemployed. Businesses are making high profits and production is booming. The general mood is optimistic and people are willing to take risks.

When a recession sets in, business begins to slow down. Companies that have produced too many goods begin to realize they cannot sell everything. Therefore,

they lay off some workers and cut production. Unemployment rises. Workers who have been laid off have less money to spend. Others who still have jobs are more careful about how they spend or invest their money. Sales begin to fall.

If the recession continues and becomes very serious and widespread, it is known as a depression. Businesses are forced to lay off many more employees. Unemployment reaches very high levels. Many businesses go bankrupt. Stock markets crash. The economy does not always fall into a depression. Sometimes it just hits a low point known as the trough, and then slowly begins to recover. A depression is the worst case scenario.



As T. C. Douglas, the first leader of the New Democratic Party once said:

A recession is when a neighbour has to tighten his belt. A depression is when you have to tighten your own belt. And a panic is when you have no belt to tighten and your pants fall down.

The economy goes into the **recovery** stage of the business cycle when a shortage of consumer goods develops because of the cutbacks in production. People want and need more goods than are being produced. To meet the demand, businesses begin to increase production again and to call back workers. Wage earners now have more money to spend. Eventually prosperity returns.

The Great Crash

“**Black Tuesday**”—the day the stock market crashed in October 1929 was one of the most dramatic events signalling the Depression. In the 1920s, many people played the stock market. People dreamed of getting rich overnight. How do people make a fortune on the stock market? The

24 October 1929
Stock speculators shaken in wild day of panic

29 October 1929
New York stock market crashes

30 October 1929
Greatest collapse ever witnessed in Canada

1933
One in five Canadian workers have no job

answer is simple: buy plenty of stocks when their price is low and sell those stocks when their price is high. It sounds easy, but a great deal of knowledge, skill, and good luck are needed to make a fortune! Many people who invested in the stock market lost everything in the crash.

Panic on Wall Street outside the New York stock exchange in 1929. The panic quickly spread to Canada.





Developing Skills: Using Simulation Games

What was “Black Tuesday” really like? How did the investors, stockbrokers, and company owners react when the stock market crashed?

One way to gain insight into the past is through historical simulation games. A simulation is a situation game. It involves you in a real-life situation and you must decide how you will act. The Stock Market Game outlined below gives you a chance to experience the thrills and defeats of the stock market in the late 1920s.

The debriefing process is crucial to any simulation game. A simulation helps you to think critically and to make judgements. Debriefing means that at each stage of the game, you stop and think. Why did you act as you did?

It doesn't matter if the game doesn't duplicate exactly what happened in reality. What matters is that it helps you to understand the complexity of events in the past, why people acted as they did, and the decisions they faced. After the game, you can compare what happened in the game to actual historical events.

The Stock Market Game

1. Choose three class members to be stockbrokers. The brokers set up their offices in the corners of the classroom. Brokers are given a supply of stock certificates and a stock record page.
2. The rest of the class are investors. Each investor keeps an expense sheet.
3. The purpose of the game is to gain experience in playing the stock market. Your aim as investors is to make as much money as possible. You start with \$5000 that has been left to you as an inheritance in your grandmother's will. You may invest any amount of money in one company or all three. For the purpose of the game, you cannot sell your stock during the first three stages. Investors must carefully record each purchase on their expense sheets.

A Stock Market Glossary

Stock: a share in the ownership of a company (e.g., if you buy 100 shares in a company at \$25 a share and the company has a total of 10 000 shares, you own 1/100 of the company)

Investor: a person who buys shares in a company

Stockbroker: a person who buys and sells stocks on the stock exchange for people who want to invest in the stock market

Stock Exchange: a marketplace where stocks are bought and sold

Stock Certificate: a paper proving ownership of a stock or share

Capital Gain: the profit or money a shareholder earns by selling stocks at a higher price than he or she bought them (e.g., if you buy 100 shares at \$25 a share, your total investment is \$2500; 3 months later if the stock price rises to \$35 a share and you sell your 100 shares, then you receive \$3500—your profit or capital gain is \$1000)

Dividends: the share of a company's profits paid to shareholders

Stage 1 Year 1925

Stocks for the following three companies are for sale:

Consolidated Mining and Smelting of Canada	at \$50 a share
Atlantic Electric Light	at \$30 a share
International Nickel	at \$25 a share

Investors are given time to visit the stockbrokers, make their purchases, and record their investments.

Stage 2 Year 1927

Two years have passed. The economy of the country has been strong and the stocks have increased in value. Each investor calculates the profits made on these stocks if they had been sold in 1927. Your teacher will tell you the amount of the increase.

Stage 3 September 1929

Each investor calculates the profits made on the stocks if they had been sold in 1929.

Debriefing:

- If this were real life, how would you feel?
- What would investors do with their profits?
- What would companies probably do with their profits?

Stage 4 29 October 1929—"Black Tuesday"

Each investor calculates the losses on these stocks. Investors should be given an opportunity to sell stocks to the teacher if they wish.

Debriefing:

- How do you feel about your losses?
- What would you do if this were real life?
- How would your actions affect the economy of the country?
- How would companies suffer?

Stage 5 Year 1932

Investors who have held on to their stocks must calculate their losses.

Debriefing:

- What alternatives are open to investors?
- Who would be buying stocks in 1932?

Causes of the Great Depression

There seem to be as many explanations for the Depression as there are experts to diagnose the illness. However, some of the major causes are as follows.

1 Over-Production and Over-Expansion

During the prosperous 1920s, agriculture and industry reached high levels of production. Many industries were expanding. Large amounts of profits were spent adding to factories or building new ones. Huge supplies of food, newsprint, minerals, and manufactured goods were produced and simply stockpiled. Automobile centres such as Oshawa and Windsor manufactured 400 000 cars in 1930. Canadians already owned over a million cars and in the best year ever had purchased only 260 000.

Even in the general prosperity of the 1920s, Canadians could afford to buy only so many goods. As a result, large stocks of newsprint, radios, shirts, shoes, and cars

piled up unsold in warehouses. Soon factory owners began to panic and slowed down their production. They laid off workers. Laid-off workers and their families had even less money to spend on goods. Sales slowed down even more.

Industrialists seemed to have forgotten a basic lesson in economics: produce only as many items as you can sell. In the 1920s, wages were simply not high enough for people to buy all the products turned out by the factories.

2 Canada's Dependence on a Few Primary Products

Canada's economy depended heavily on a few primary or basic products, known as **staples**. These included wheat, fish, minerals, and pulp and paper. These goods were Canada's most important exports. As long as world demand for these products was strong, Canada would prosper. However, if there was a surplus of these goods on the world market, or if foreign countries stopped buying from Canada, our economy would be in serious trouble.

Regions which depended largely on one primary product found themselves in deep economic trouble during the Depression. The Depression had hit countries around the world and demand for Canada's products fell. The Maritimes, which depended heavily on fish, and the West, which was geared toward wheat production, were especially hard hit.

In the late 1920s, for example, Canada faced growing competition from other wheat-exporting countries including Argentina and Australia. With a surplus on the world market, the price of wheat began to fall. To add to the problem, western farmers were faced with terrible droughts in the summers of 1929, 1931, and 1933-1937. Without adequate rainfall, crops failed. With little income, farmers could not purchase machinery and manufactured goods from eastern Canada. Many could not afford to pay the mortgages on their farms.

Secondary industries such as flour mills, which process primary products, also suffer from any slowdown in production. With no wheat to be shipped and no flour to be ground, railways and flour mills lost business. The farmers' problems had caused a chain reaction in many parts of the Canadian economy and society.

3 Canada's Dependence on the United States

The economy of Canada in the 1920s was closely linked with that of the United States. In those years, we bought 65 per cent of our imports from the Americans. Forty per cent of our exports were sent to the United States. The United States was our most important trading partner. It had replaced Britain as the largest buyer of Canadian products and the most important supplier of investment funds for Canadian industries. It was not surprising that when the American economy got sick,

Canada also suffered. One comedian said, "When the United States sneezed, the rest of the world got pneumonia."

When the Depression hit the United States, banks closed. Industries collapsed and people were out of work as factories shut down. No longer did Americans need to buy our lumber, paper, wheat, and minerals. It was inevitable that Canada's economy would suffer too.

4 High Tariffs Choked Off International Trade

In the 1920s, Europe was recovering from a devastating war. Europeans needed many of the surplus manufactured goods that the United States and Canada produced. Unfortunately, European countries were heavily in debt from the war and often could not afford to buy the goods they needed.

At the same time, many countries adopted a policy known as protective tariffs. To protect their home industries from foreign competition, they placed high tariffs on foreign imports. Country X, for example, would find that its goods were being kept out of country Y by high tariffs. Soon country X placed high tariffs on imports from country Y. Thus trade between nations began to slow down around the world. Surplus goods in one country were kept out of another country that needed them because tariffs were so high. While high tariffs were used to protect home industries, they choked off international trade.

5 Too Much Credit Buying

All through the 1920s, Canadians were encouraged by advertising to "buy now, pay later." A famous comedian, Will Rogers, said that the way to solve the traffic problem was to remove from highways all cars that hadn't been paid for. He meant that so many cars were bought on

credit, very few would actually remain on the road. Will Rogers was only joking, but his remark points out that by 1929, credit buying was a well-established custom. Why wait to buy a washing machine or a phonograph or a tractor when you could have it immediately with only a small down payment?

Many families got themselves hopelessly into debt with credit buying. The piano that cost \$445 cash was purchased with \$15 down and \$12 a month for the next four or five years. With the interest payments, it ended up costing far more than it was worth. Sometimes by the time the purchases were paid for, they were ready for the junk pile. One radio comedian joked that he had said to his wife, "One more payment and the furniture is ours." To this she replied, "Good, then we can throw it out and get some new stuff!"

If the wage earner became sick or was laid off work, it was often impossible to keep up the payments. If you fell behind in your payments, the person who sold you the goods had the right to repossess them. As the Depression worsened, many

people lost everything. Their refrigerators, stoves, washing machines, cars, and even their homes were repossessed by their creditors.

6 Too Much Credit Buying of Stocks

For many people in the 1920s, the stock market seemed an easy way to get rich quickly. People in all walks of life gambled on the stock market. Rich business tycoons invested in shares, but so did their chauffeurs and the typists in their offices. Feelings of confidence were at an all-time high.

It was not even necessary to have a lot of money to play the stock market. You could buy stocks on credit just as you could buy a phonograph or a washing machine. All that was needed was a small cash down payment, usually about 10 per cent. The broker loaned you the rest of the money at a high interest rate, of course! To buy \$1000 worth of stock you needed only \$100 cash. The idea was that as soon as your stocks went up in value, you could sell them. Then you paid back your loan

People who could not pay their rents were evicted from their homes, like these people in Montreal.



to your broker and pocketed the profits. This risky process was called “buying on margin.”

Buying stocks on margin did not require a large outlay of cash if stocks kept rising quickly in value. But what if your stocks didn't go up? Or, worse still, what if they went down? How would you pay back your loans? You would have to sell your stocks or risk financial ruin.

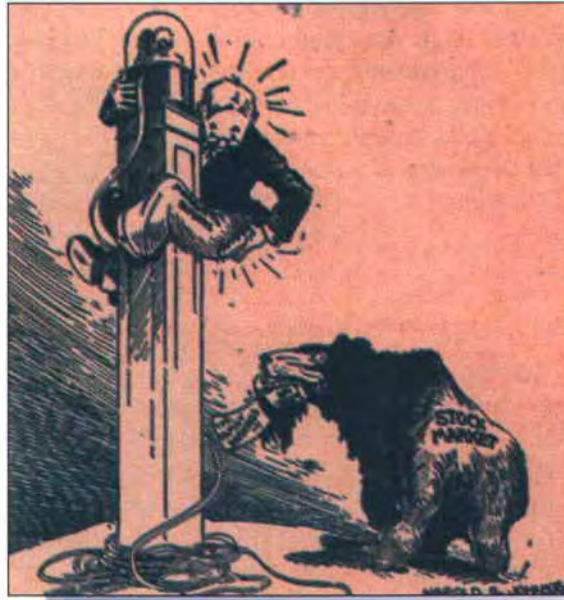
This is exactly what happened in October 1929. When the value of stocks started to drop, people panicked. They decided to sell and get out of the market. Prices fell even lower as more and more stocks were dumped. The market was like a giant roller coaster racing downhill. Nothing could stop it. In a few hours on 29 October 1929, the value of most stocks on the Toronto and Montreal stock exchanges nosedived by more than 50 per cent. Shareholders lost millions. Many big and small investors were wiped out in a few hours.

At first, few people imagined that devastating economic times were around the corner. But slowly, it began to dawn on people that hard times were upon them. The Great Depression had begun.

The Worst Years

Few people were prepared for the conditions they faced in the worst years of the Depression. By 1933, almost a third of all Canadians were out of work. People roamed the country, hitching rides on trains, trying to find odd jobs wherever they could. With no income from jobs, there was often no money for food, clothing, and other necessities. Many people lived near starvation and suffered from malnutrition. In the 1930s, there was no unemployment insurance, no family allowance, and no government sponsored medical care.

Not everyone was in such dire straits. Those with jobs and the wealthy lived



quite comfortably, especially since prices of goods were low. But for many others, the only prospect of help was government relief. **Relief** was emergency financial assistance given to some of the unemployed to keep them from starving.

Governments and Relief

In the past, city governments and private charities had provided help for the poor and needy. But when the Depression hit, city governments were overwhelmed with the numbers of people seeking help. It was clear that the federal and provincial governments had to pitch in.

The federal government was slow to act. Except during wartime, Canadian governments were reluctant to become involved in the economy and in people's individual lives. When the stock market crashed in 1929, William Lyon Mackenzie King was prime minister. King was not the only one to think that the best way to deal with the Depression was to wait it out. He believed the Depression would be short-lived and that better economic times were not far off. But the masses of unemployed

What does this cartoon suggest about playing the stock market?



Netsurfer

For an overview of the Depression including photographs, descriptions, and quizzes, visit http://204.244.141.13/writ_den/h15/direct/htm

Picture Gallery

Windows on Life in the Thirties

In the memory of living Canadians, nothing like the Great Depression had ever happened before. What was it like? The pictures and memories presented on these pages will give you an insight into some of the social conditions. The memories have been collected from interviews with people who remember those times. As you look at each picture and read the quotation, consider the following questions:

- Why did people ride the rails across the country?
- What were conditions like on the Prairies?
- What help was available for people?
- How did they feel about accepting government help? Why?
- In what ways did they try to help themselves?



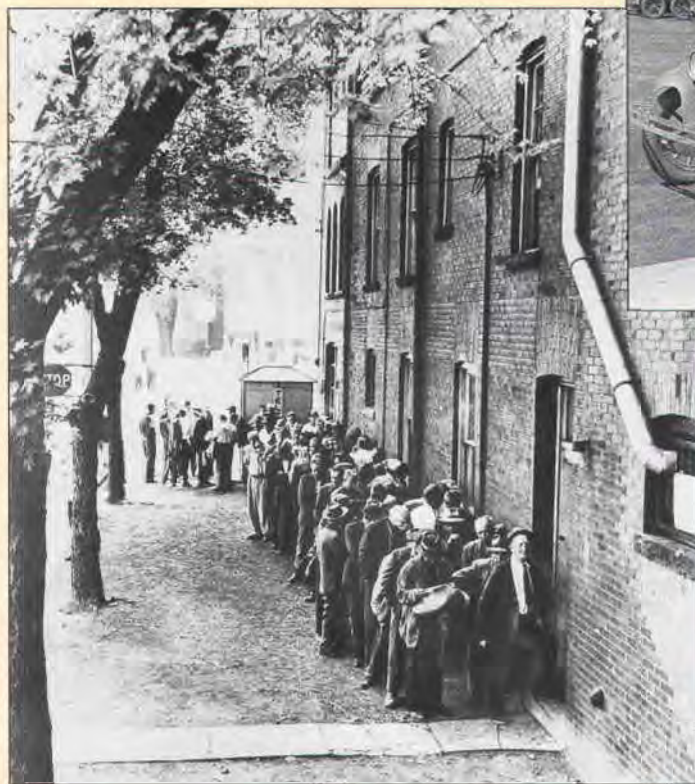
◀ *Many unemployed people drifted from town to town across Canada looking for jobs. They rode “free” on the railways by hiding in boxcars, perching on their roofs, or riding the rods underneath the trains.*

▶ *Nature added to the problems of the West by turning off the tap. The resulting drought meant that large sections of the prairie topsoil just blew away during the “Dirty Thirties.” Black blizzards of dust buried fences and drifted up to eaves of houses.*

Another disaster to hit the West was grasshopper plagues. The insects ate the crops as soon as they popped out of the ground. They even ate clothes hung out to dry on the line. In the 1930s, the Saskatchewan government paid children a penny for each gopher tail they turned in. It was an attempt to save the parched wheat from the hungry rodents.



Many penniless prairie families simply gave up in despair and abandoned their farms. The desperation and poverty can be seen on the faces of this family, which is heading for the Peace River country. Between 1931 and 1937, 66 000 people left Saskatchewan, 34 000 left Manitoba, and 21 000 left Alberta.



◀ “Pogey” was hobo slang for food, clothing, and shelter provided by public relief agencies. A Manitoba judge, George Stubbs, observed of relief, “It’s not quite enough to live on, and a little too much to die on.” The unemployed were never given cash, just vouchers. The vouchers could be exchanged for food, rent, and other necessities. This photo shows a soup kitchen line-up in Toronto.

In the Twenties, farmers bought automobiles. Then came the crash and the drought and nobody had any money for gasoline, let alone repairs ... Somebody got the idea of lifting out the engine and taking out the windshield and sticking a tongue onto the chassis ... and that’s where old Dobbin and Dolly got back to work again. Two horsepower. Eight kilometres an hour, but those oat burners got you there. Then somebody got the idea ... to call these contraptions **Bennett Buggies**. Poor old R. B. Bennett. All over ... there were these carved up cars, named after him, and a constant reminder that he’d been prime minister when the disaster struck.

(From *Ten Lost Years* by Barry Broadfoot, Doubleday, 1973.)



*R. B. Bennett was
Canada's prime
minister during the
Depression years.*



were not willing to accept government inaction. In 1930, King made what many people believe was the biggest political mistake of his career. He insisted that social welfare (which included providing relief) was the responsibility of the provinces. King also declared that he would not give a “five-cent piece” to any province that did not have a Liberal government.

In the election of 1930, those words came back to haunt him. The voters refused to forget King’s **“five-cent piece” speech**. The Liberals were voted out of office, and the Conservative party came into power. The prime minister who replaced Mackenzie King was Richard Bedford Bennett. Bennett accused King of ignoring the plight of the unemployed and the problems caused by the stock market crash.

During the election campaign Bennett declared, “I will find work for all who are willing to work, or perish in the attempt.” He also promised to give the provinces \$20 million in emergency funds for relief payments. To deal with foreign trade policies that were choking off Canadian exports, he

promised to “blast our way” into world markets. By raising tariffs on imports, Bennett believed he could boost Canadian manufacturing and provide Canadian businesses with better trading opportunities.

But when Bennett came to power, his policies did little to ease the economic crisis. He did transfer money to the provinces for relief. He also introduced the highest tariff in Canadian history to protect Canadian businesses from foreign competition. Unfortunately, none of these acts had any great impact on the Depression. These measures were like first-aid treatment, but they could not cure the Depression.

There was no uniform system of relief across the country. Federal money went to the provinces. Provinces contributed some additional funds, but passed the problem of how to distribute relief on to local municipalities. Each town and city government administered relief programs in its own way. Even with federal and provincial funds, cities struggled to deal with the vast numbers of needy. During the Depression, people in cities were often worse off than farmers. Farmers who had decent land could at least grow their own food. Some young people who had left farms for jobs in the cities drifted back to their family homesteads.

To cope, many city governments laid off city workers, cut expenses, raised taxes, and borrowed money. Some cities, such as Montreal, went into serious debt. Others insisted that people prove they had lived in the city for a period of time before they could collect relief. This measure was meant to eliminate drifters and to avoid attracting people from areas that had no relief money left to give. To get relief, people often had to prove that they could not pay their rent, and that their phone, water, and electricity services had been cut off. In Ontario, they had to turn in their driver’s



A relief camp for single unemployed men during the Depression. Some men called them “slave camps.”

licences. Some women found it difficult to get relief. In Montreal, unmarried mothers, widows with young children, and women whose husbands were in jail were at first not allowed to receive relief. This measure was not changed until after women protested in front of the city hall.

In 1932, the government set up a number of relief camps across the country for single unemployed men. The camps were operated by the Department of National Defence. Many were located in isolated northern areas of the country. Single men 18 years of age and older worked eight hours a day in the camps cutting brush, moving rocks, and building roads. In return, they were given food, shelter, clothing, and pay of 20¢ a day. The camps were meant to provide drifters and unemployed men with useful work. The government also hoped to keep any unrest and discontent in check. But the wage of 20¢ a day was considered no better than slave labour by many.

In June 1935, thousands of men fed up with life in the British Columbia relief

camps boarded freight trains bound for Ottawa to protest to the government. Their journey became known as the **On-to-Ottawa Trek**. As the trekkers moved eastward, they were joined by other men. The trekkers wanted clear economic reforms such as minimum wages and a genuine system of social and unemployment insurance. The men got as far as Regina, where they were stopped by the Mounted Police. Prime Minister Bennett claimed the trekkers were disobeying the law and were part of a plot to overthrow the government. A riot broke out, in which dozens of people were injured and a police officer was killed. The trekkers' complaints fell on unsympathetic ears in the Canadian government.



Coping With the Hardships

People often found ingenious ways to cope with the shortages during the Depression. The Bennett Buggy was an example. People also remade old clothes

Typical Prices in 1932

Milk	10¢ a quart
Cheese	33¢ a kilogram
Bread	6¢ a loaf
Rolled oats	11¢ a kilogram
Flour	11¢ a kilogram
Rice	16¢ a kilogram
Tomatoes	6¢ a tin
Potatoes	2¢ a kilogram
Carrots, turnips	9¢ a kilogram
Onions	9¢ a kilogram
Cabbage	5¢ a kilogram
Dried beans	4¢ a package
Prunes	12¢ a package
Chuck roast	29¢ a kilogram
Beef liver	35¢ a kilogram
Butter	57¢ a kilogram
Peanut Butter	35¢ a kilogram
Shortening	35¢ a kilogram
Sugar	11¢ a kilogram

Source: *Historical Atlas of Canada, Vol. III.*

and helped each other when they could. Having to go on relief was often a last resort. Many people saw applying for relief as an admission of failure. They put off asking until they were desperate. One study showed that unemployed men in Toronto waited 10 months after becoming unemployed before they applied for relief.

Usually relief came in the form of vouchers rather than cash. The vouchers could be exchanged for food or other goods at certain stores. Merchandise bought by voucher was seldom wrapped. Merchants did not feel obliged to wrap shoes or clothing when the customer was in no position to complain about it.

In many cases, relief provided barely enough to live on. Payments were kept low to discourage people from applying for them. In 1932, relief for a family of five in Montreal was \$4.58 a week. In Vancouver,

family relief was \$5.75. In Newfoundland, it was 42¢ a week. The chart showing typical prices in 1932 gives you an idea of just how little relief payments could buy.

As times became more difficult, people began to blame Bennett for their problems. Cars that could not run for lack of gas were hitched up to farm animals and called “Bennett buggies.” The shacks where the unemployed camped around cities were called “Bennett boroughs.” “Bennett coffee,” made from roasted wheat or barley, was a cheap substitute for the real thing. Newspapers used as covers by homeless people on park benches were known as “Bennett blankets.” A “Bennett barnyard” was an abandoned farm. The following testimonies express some of the hardships people faced.

Did you have a job during the Depression?

No, but my brothers in Kingston worked for 15¢ a day by driving tractors. I was on relief. They gave us prunes [to eat] and a pair of boots once a year. We got pants but no suits—just salvage, surplus clothes. I once asked Mayor Kaiser for food but he said no. That guy [the mayor] had butter on his table. Everyone else had fatty, lardy margarine. To get my relief, I killed rats in the dump on Gibb Street and dug sewers and ditches.

What was life like for you during the Depression? Did your husband have a job?

I remember my husband was very sick for the first few years of the Depression. He worked for a farmer and got \$19 a month. We had to try to get by on it, but if his parents hadn't helped us, I don't know what we would have done. The doctor in Beaverton was really good and I remember he operated on my husband right on our kitchen table. He was really

sick for a while there, but the doctor had us pay him only \$100. We owed him well over \$500, but he told us he would wipe his books clean of what we owed him.

Where did you get your clothes?

Mother made all the clothes for us from old clothes that had been given to us. I remember she knitted wool stockings because it was so cold. Mother's relatives would send us old clothes and many of these had moth holes in them. I was embarrassed to wear the old clothes. It seemed mine were the worst of all the kids in the school.

How did you feel about the railroad riders?

A lot of them came to our place asking for food. We gave them meals, but we made sure they washed first because they were all so dirty. We couldn't turn away these hobos since we had something to eat ourselves.

How did your family make a living? What was life like for you during the Depression?

All during the twenties my father was a bricklayer in Toronto, but by the mid-1930s he no longer had a job... My parents figured that the only solution was to go and live on a farm where we could get enough to eat. As a result, my family sold our home in Toronto and moved to a farm near Ashburn, Ontario, in the fall of 1930. There was an apple orchard and we raised various farm animals such as cows, chickens, and pigs. To earn money for our family, my parents travelled to Toronto in their old Durant [a make of car] and sold the farm goods there. We only had the car for a few years because it broke down and we could not afford to have it repaired. My parents went from house to house trying to sell apples and

eggs. They did not make much money selling their farm produce because few people would buy, or could afford to buy, the goods.

The reason people wouldn't admit poverty was because they were too proud. I remember people brought coal sacks uptown to get relief. It was very humiliating for people to be seen with these. Not everyone got relief though, because there wasn't enough to go around.

An Aboriginal elder, Ike Hill, recalled: *Oh, I remember them days, them dirty thirties. But the missus and I managed to keep the kids fed. That was the thing having a farm. You could always have the seeds and grow your food, and we used to do the hunting or the trapping so we'd have meat. But them folks up there in the city, they didn't have [anything]. Well, neither did we, but we [were] used to not having anything.*

Effects on Canada's Regions

People in all parts of Canada suffered as the worldwide depression tightened its grip. But western Canada was especially hard hit. Between 1929 and 1933, income per person declined in Saskatchewan by 72 per cent and in Alberta by 61 per cent. In Manitoba, the decline was 49 per cent.

Why was the West hit so hard? The economy of the West was largely dependent upon wheat. A severe drought and plagues of grasshoppers destroyed crops in the 1930s. But the biggest problem faced by western farmers was not too little, but too much wheat. Worldwide, there was a glut of grain on the market that no one could afford to buy. Wheat prices crashed from \$1.60 a bushel in 1929 to 38¢ a bushel in 1932.



IMPACT ON SOCIETY

LETTERS FROM THE DEPRESSION

During the Depression, many people wrote letters to Prime Minister Bennett asking for help. Bennett was a multimillionaire from Calgary who did not like the idea of giving out government relief, but he nevertheless personally tried to help many people in need. The letters on these pages express some of the shame and despair people felt.

Ottawa

March the 4th 1932

Dear Sir,

I am just writing a few lines to you to see what can be done for us young men of Canada. We are the growing generation of Canada, but with no hopes of a future. Please tell me why is it a single man always gets a refusal when he looks for a job. A married man gets work, & if he does not get work, he gets relief. Yesterday I got a glimpse of a lot of the unemployed. It just made me feel downhearted, to think there is no work for them, or in the future, & also no work for myself. Last year I was out of work three months. I received work with a local farm. I was told in the fall I could have the job for the winter; I was then a stable man. Now I am slacked off on account of no snow this winter. Now I am wandering the streets like a beggar, with no future ahead. There are lots of single men in Ottawa, who would rather walk the streets, & starve, than work on a farm. That is a true statement. Myself I work wherever I can get work, & get a good name wherever I go. There are plenty of young men like myself, who are in the same plight. I say again whats to be done for us single men? do we have to starve? or do we have to go round with our faces full of shame, to beg at the doors of the well to do citizen. I suppose you will say the married men come first; I certainly agree with you there. But have you a word or two to cheer us single men up a bit? The married man got word he was going to get relief. That took the weight of worry off his mind quite a bit. Did the single man here anything, how he was going to pull through? Did you ever feel the pangs of hunger? My idea is we shall all starve. I suppose you will say I cant help it, or I cant make things better. You have the power to make things better or worse. When you entered as Premier you promised a lot of things, you was going to do for the country. I am waiting patiently to see the results. Will look for my answer in the paper.

Yours Truly

R.D. Ottawa

May 30/31

Mr. Bennette

Since you have been elected, work has been impossible to get. We have decided that in a month from this date, if thing's are the same, We'll skin you alive, the first chance we get.

Sudbury Starving
Unemployed

Passman, Sask.

16 Oct. 1933

Dear Sir,

I am a girl thirteen years old and I have to go to school every day its very cold now already and I haven't got a coat to put on. My parents can't afford to buy me anything for this winter. I have to walk to school four and a half mile every morning and night and I'm awfully cold every day. Would you be so kind to sent me enough money so that I could get one.

My name is

Edwina Abbott

[Reply: \$5.00]

Craven, Alberta

Feb 11 1935

Dear Sir,

Please don't think I'm crazy for writing you this letter, but I've got three little children, and they are all in need of shoes as well as underwear but shoe's are the most needed as two of them go to school and its cold, my husband has not had a crop for 8 years only enough for seed and some food, and I don't know what to do. I hate to ask for help. I never have before and we are staying off relief if possible. What I wanted was \$3.00 if I could possible get it or even some old cloths to make over but if you don't want to do this please don't mention it over radios as every one knows me around here and I'm well liked, so I beg of you not to mention my name. I've never asked anyone around here for help or cloths as I know them to well.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs. P.E. Bottle

[Reply: \$5.00]

Murray Harbour, P.E.I.
March 24 1935

Premier Bennett:

Dear Sir:

I am writing you to see if their is any help I could get. As I have a baby thirteen days old that only weighs One Pound and I have to keep it in Cotton Wool & Olive Oil, and I havent the money to buy it, the people bought it so far and fed me when I was in Bed. if their is any help I could get I would like to get it as soon as possible. their is five of a family, Counting the baby. their will be two votes for you next Election Hoping too hear from you soon

Yours Truly,

Mrs. Jack O'Hannon

[Reply: \$5.00]

1. These letters contain some grammatical and spelling errors. Suggest why.
2. Who are the authors of the letters? What does your answer suggest about the types of people who were most affected by the Depression?
3. a) What kinds of problems did people write about to Prime Minister Bennett?
b) What emotions are expressed in the letters?
c) What solutions were available to solve the problems? What did Prime Minister Bennett do?
4. What were the special problems faced by the number of young single men? Was it right that married men got work or relief while single men did not? Why did the government give special preference to married men?
5. Why would a woman who wrote to Bennett beg him not to mention her name?
6. What help would be available today for a woman who gave birth to a one pound (450 gram) baby? What help was available to her in 1935? Do you think it was the duty of the government to help her? Why?
7. Imagine you were living through the Depression. Write your own letter to Prime Minister Bennett.

As agricultural income dropped in the West, other regions of the country were affected as well. Factories in Central Canada that produced farm machinery, for example, had to cut back production and lay off workers. Imagine the effect this drop in tractor sales would have:

1928 17 000 tractors sold in Canada

1932 892 tractors sold in Canada

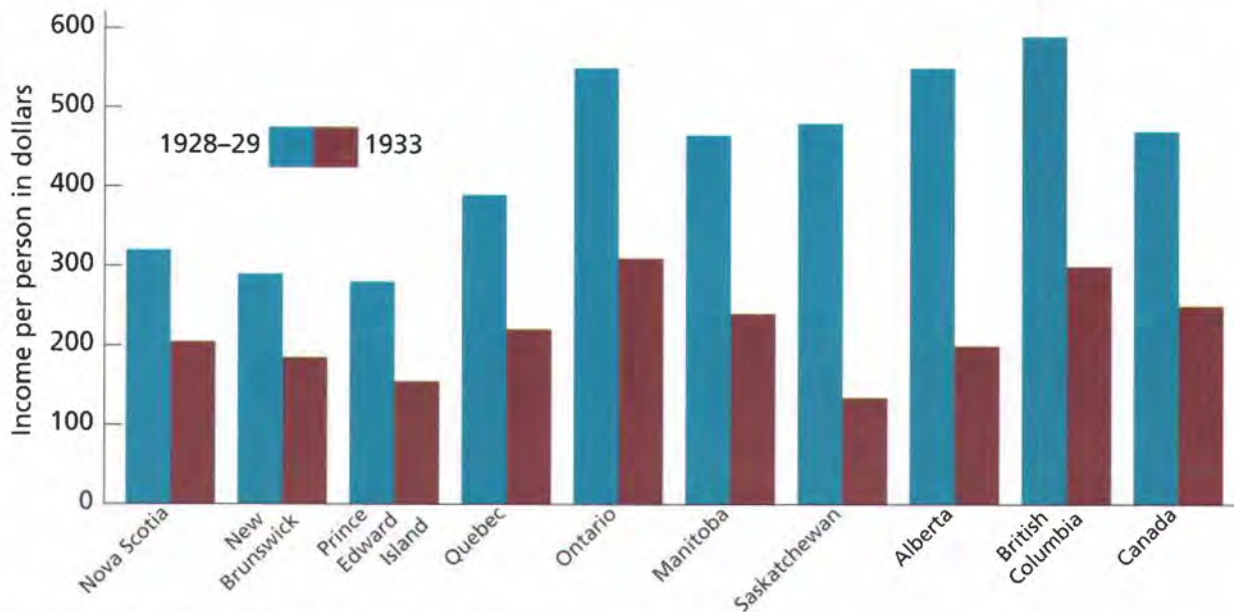
In Central Canada, small businesses and those that depended on world markets were hardest hit. Companies that produced goods for sale in Canada fared a little better. Some survived by drastically cutting back workers and wages. Large corporations had the best chance of riding out the Depression because they had the most resources to fall back on. In Canada, major corporations still recorded profits in all but one year during the Depression. Many workers suffered, however, from the wage cutbacks and increased workloads. Many farmers also could not pay their mortgages and lost

their land. Those that survived grew enough for their families to eat and sold a little to cover expenses.

The Maritimes had not benefited as much from the boom of the late 1920s, and so the economic decline did not seem so severe there. But conditions were difficult nonetheless. The Maritime Provinces depended on exports of fish, timber products, and coal. When markets for these products declined, the Maritime Provinces suffered. Workers in fish processing plants were laid off, or their work hours were reduced. Some had their wages cut. For the thousands of fishers, there was no point in going out to sea. Farmers also saw their incomes drop, but not as much as the incomes of prairie farmers. Farmers in the Maritimes grew a wider variety of products, and many were able to grow enough to survive. Not as many farmers were forced to abandon their land in the Maritimes as on the Prairies.

Which areas of Canada suffered most during the Depression?

Decline in Incomes (per person) by Province, 1928–29 and 1933 (average)



Source: Rowell Siros Report, Book I: Canada 1867–1939

In Newfoundland conditions were desperate. Newfoundland was not yet part of Canada. It was an independent dominion within the British Commonwealth. During the Depression the government went deeply into debt and could borrow no more. The economy almost collapsed. A British commission took over the government to help Newfoundland through the worst period.

The Great Escape

Faced with a daily struggle to survive and little hope for the near future, many people looked for a way to forget their hardships. The 1930s were the “golden age” of Hollywood. For the price of a 25¢ ticket, people could forget the dust storms and relief vouchers and enter the make-believe world of the Hollywood stars. The films, radio shows, songs, and magazines of those days provided a brief escape from reality.

Great film extravaganzas such as “Gone With the Wind” and Walt Disney’s “Mickey Mouse” were popular box office attractions. Though all the films came from Hollywood, at least a dozen stars were Canadians. These included Beatrice Lillie, Marie Dressler, Norma Shearer, Deanna Durbin, Raymond Massey, and Walter Huston.

The radio, which had become a common form of home entertainment in the 1920s, also provided a vital escape from the dreariness of ordinary life. The most popular radio shows came from the United States. They included “Jack Benny,” “George Burns and Gracie Allen,” “The Lone Ranger,” and “The Inner Sanctum.”

Protecting Canadian Culture

Because Canadian airwaves were being filled with American radio shows, Prime

Minister Bennett felt something had to be done. In 1928 a royal commission was set up to look into the broadcasting situation in Canada. The commission was headed by a Canadian banker, Sir John Aird. In 1929, the Aird Report showed that most radio programs came from outside Canada and that advertising was becoming hard-hitting. Also, since Canada’s radio stations were concentrated in urban centres, large parts of the country were not receiving the benefits of radio broadcasting. To solve these problems, the commission recommended that a national, government-owned company should own and operate all radio stations in Canada.

In 1933, the government created the **Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC)**. It was meant to counteract American domination of the airwaves and to encourage the development of Canadian programs. The government built more stations across the country to improve the quality and coverage of Canadian broadcasting. In 1936, the commission became the **Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)**. In 1939, the CBC covered the royal tour to Canada by the new king, George VI, and Queen Elizabeth. The first visit of a reigning monarch to Canada was carried by radio to even the most remote areas. The CBC was proving that it could be a



Canadian Nell Shipman was one of the writers and stars of films in the 1930s.

powerful force in establishing a sense of national unity across Canada.

The **National Film Board (NFB)** was also established in 1939. Its goal was “to promote the production and distribution of films in the nation and in particular . . . to interpret Canada and Canadians to other countries.” The government felt Canada needed its own film production company to counter the influence of Hollywood. The first commissioner of the NFB, John Grierson, was a pioneer documentary filmmaker. His early influence helped to make Canada a world leader in the production of documentary films. In 1941 the famous animator, Norman McLaren, joined the NFB. McLaren’s work contributed to the NFB’s reputation for producing superb animation films. Over its long history, the NFB has gained worldwide recognition for its film work and contribution to Canadian culture.

To promote Canadian writing, the **Governor General’s Awards** were established in 1937. Pressure from the Canadian Authors’ Association persuaded Governor General John Buchan (himself a famous Scottish novelist) to create the awards. At first, the awards were given only for literature in English. This was changed in 1959 to include works in French. Until the 1980s, when other literary awards were created, the GGs were the most prestigious literary prizes in Canada.

Over time, Canadians have debated the effects of these cultural organizations. On the one hand, people argue that they protect Canadian arts from American domination and foster the development of Canadian talent. On the other hand, some people say that government protection has hindered the arts by sheltering them from the richness of outside creative influences. Other critics claim that government funds have not been distributed equally to all groups in Canadian society.

The Search for Solutions

By 1935, Prime Minister R. B. Bennett knew that Canadians were growing increasingly angry with the government over the economy. The Depression was dragging on and conditions were getting no better. The government seemed to be doing nothing. In 1935, just before an election, Bennett introduced radical reforms. He wanted to establish unemployment and social insurance, set minimum wages, limit the hours of work, guarantee the fair treatment of employees, and control prices so that businesses could not make unfair profits.

The people called this **Bennett’s “New Deal.”** The program was similar to one introduced in the United States by President Roosevelt. Roosevelt’s idea was to use all the government’s resources to get the economy going. Large-scale federal public works projects such as road building were funded to provide jobs.

Most people were startled by Bennett’s radical new ideas. His political opponents suggested that the New Deal was nothing more than a plot to win votes in the forthcoming election. They felt that Bennett had left his reforms too late to do any good. In the election of 1935, King and the Liberals swept back to power in a landslide victory.

People were also dissatisfied with provincial governments throughout the Depression. Like the federal government, they seemed to have no effective schemes for dealing with the economic and social problems. In many cases, the provinces simply pushed for more money from the federal government to deal with the problems. Some provinces such as Ontario passed laws to raise wage rates, but these measures had no real effect on the massive economic problems.

New Political Parties

Neither the federal nor the provincial governments seemed to have fresh ideas for solving the country's economic troubles. People were frustrated and fed up by the lack of leadership. Protest parties sprang up in various regions of the country, especially in the regions hardest hit by the Depression. Often in tough economic times, new regional political movements have appeared in Canada. In the 1930s, people were looking for strong local leaders who understood the problems they faced in their own region. They also wanted dramatic action to deal with the problems of the Depression.

Social Credit

One new regional party was **Social Credit**. In 1935 the Social Credit party swept to power as the government of Alberta. Its leader was William Aberhart, a school principal who had a reputation as a solid and responsible citizen. Aberhart was also a deeply religious man who was well known in Alberta as a popular radio preacher. In 1932, Aberhart vigorously attacked what he called the "Fifty Big Shots." These were leading bankers and industrialists whom Aberhart accused of ruling Canada. In part, Social Credit was a movement of regional protest—the West against Central Canada.

The theory of social credit was based on the writings of Major C. H. Douglas. According to Douglas, the basic problem of the economy was that people did not have enough money to spend on the goods that were being produced. Douglas suggested a simple solution. Every citizen should be given a "social credit" or cash payment. With this extra cash, people would spend more and the economy would improve.

Aberhart embraced the theories of Douglas. He promised to give a "social credit" of \$25 per month to every adult in Alberta. To farmers whose fields were blowing away and whose cattle were dying of thirst, this money seemed like a windfall. Aberhart wanted people to spend the extra cash so that businesses would have to increase production. Eventually the economy would recover and the Depression would end.

Aberhart's prosperity certificates were often called "funny money" because they were declared illegal by the courts and were never paid out. The Social Credit party remained in power in Alberta for 35 years. Social Credit also came to power in British Columbia in 1952. Eventually, it became a federal party and won some seats in Alberta and Quebec in a number of federal elections. Social Credit was a political presence in Quebec (where it was known as the *Ralliement des Créditistes*) from 1961 through the 1970s.

Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)

Another new political party was the **Co-operative Commonwealth Federation**. The CCF was formed in 1932 by farmers, labour groups, university teachers, and a few Members of Parliament. Its founders wanted social and economic reforms to end the human suffering caused by the Great Depression. Each word in the party's name explained part of what the party stood for. "Co-operative" stood for the farmers' belief in joint action. "Commonwealth" represented the hope for a new social order in which wealth would be shared more equally. "Federation" meant that the party was made up of a loose collection of various economic and social groups.

The party's first leader was James S. Woodsworth, the passionate social reformer and labour leader. Woodsworth



James Woodsworth
was the first leader of
the *Co-operative*
Commonwealth
Federation (CCF)
political party.

had been arrested for his involvement in the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919. Later, he was elected as a Member of Parliament from Manitoba. In 1933, the CCF set out its policies in a document called the Regina Manifesto. The Manifesto called for the public ownership of banks and major services such as transportation and electric power. It demanded improved health and social welfare services. It strongly called for more government support of agriculture and conservation. To meet the existing economic emergency, it suggested an immediate start on slum clearance and the extension of electricity services to rural areas. These projects would provide jobs and be of permanent benefit to Canadians.

The CCF was a democratic socialist party. Socialists believe that government should own and control the means of production. The CCF stood for more govern-

ment control of the economy. But the Regina Manifesto specifically rejected revolution and stated that it intended to bring about changes by free elections and the parliamentary system.

Members of the CCF were often accused of being communists by their opponents. But they differed from communists in Russia or China because they rejected armed revolution. The CCF wanted to bring change through election to government. The party made slow headway in the early years. Meanwhile, Mackenzie King and the Liberals quietly adopted some CCF ideas. The new party did gain some seats in provincial elections in British Columbia and Saskatchewan in 1933-34. In the 1940s, the CCF attracted some support in Ontario. In 1944, it came to power in Saskatchewan.

Over the years, both Liberals and Conservatives adopted policies first proposed by the CCF. These included welfare insurance, family allowances, unemployment insurance, and compensation for injured workers. By 1961, the CCF reorganized itself under a new name, the New Democratic Party. Today the New Democratic Party is still active in Canadian political life, in both federal and provincial governments.

It was during the Depression that the idea of the welfare state took root in Canada. This was the belief that society should support its citizens to prevent extreme economic hardships. Today, there is unemployment insurance so that no one suffers severe hardship because a job is not available. People over 65 years of age are provided with pensions and injured workers receive compensation. But in the 1930s, these reforms had not yet taken hold and political solutions were not enough to end the Depression. The Depression was ended by World War II. The outbreak of war in 1939 provided jobs for many in the

armed forces and in the factories producing war munitions.

Union Nationale

Quebec society had changed in the 1920s. More people left farms to work in the large hydroelectric, mining, and pulp and paper industries. By 1921, for the first time, more Quebecers were living in towns and cities than on the farms. Quebec was gradually becoming industrialized. But the province's natural resources, industries, and finances were largely in the hands of English-speaking business owners.

When the Depression hit, economic problems in the province reached a crisis. By 1933, 30 per cent of Montreal's workforce was unemployed. The economic and social grievances felt by many French Canadians led to the formation of a new political party, the **Union Nationale**. The party leader was a lawyer, Maurice Duplessis. Duplessis claimed the English-

speaking minority and the federal government were the cause of Quebec's economic and social problems. He vowed to defend the French language, Roman Catholic religion, and culture against English-speaking businesspeople, the federal government, and communists. He was determined to secure more provincial power for Quebec so that it could follow its own economic policies. The Union Nationale promised to improve working conditions, find new markets for farm products, and build affordable housing.

In 1936, Duplessis and the Union Nationale swept to power in the provincial election. From then on, except during World War II, Duplessis dominated Quebec politics until his death in 1959. But once in power, the Union Nationale changed direction. Duplessis' government passed anti-strike laws to put down labour unions. Foreign investors continued to be attracted to Quebec for its bountiful nat-



A protest against Duplessis's Padlock Law in Quebec.

ural resources and large workforce. In 1937, the government passed the Padlock Law. It gave the Duplessis government the right to padlock the premises of any “subversive” organizations. The law was apparently aimed at communists, but in fact went further. Labour unions, Jewish people, and Jehovah Witnesses were also targeted. Despite these measures, Duplessis remained popular with many Quebeckers. They admired his nationalism.



Immigration

Over the years, Canada has had a kind of “tap-on, tap-off” approach to immigration. In good times, the government opens the tap to admit more immigrants. In bad economic times, the tap is closed to slow down the flow. That is exactly what happened during the Great Depression. The federal government grew tired of being blamed by the provinces for causing further unemployment by bringing in immigrants who could not find work. Feelings of xenophobia, which arose in the 1920s, seemed to become even stronger during the Depression. One Toronto suburban newspaper wrote: “The taxpayers have enough to do to look after their needy citizens and should be protected against foreigners coming here to seek relief—Deport them at once!” Once again, Ottawa responded to public pressures.

The government began to deport (send back to their home countries) any “foreigners” who were seen as “trouble-makers” or suspected of being communists. The government was still nervous

that workers were planning a revolution to overthrow the government. Not all Canadians were hostile to immigrants, but during the Depression it seemed that Canada had nothing left over to give newcomers. Sometimes just applying for relief before they had been in the country for five years was enough to get an immigrant deported. There was no trial, and they had no lawyer or jury to hear their case. The immigrants were hustled to an Atlantic port, usually Halifax, and put on ships bound for Europe. One Manitoba politician said: “In our town (Winnipeg), when those foreigners from across the tracks apply for relief, we just show them a blank application for voluntary deportation. Believe me, they don’t come back. It’s simple, but it has saved the city a lot of money.”

The government changed the immigration law “to prevent persons coming into the country who will not be able to find work” and “who could become a burden on the people of Canada.” In effect, the law still discriminated against people who were not either British or Americans. Immigration dropped from 1 666 000 in the decade 1921-1931 to only 140 000 in the years 1931-1941. In 1913, the peak year for immigration, Canada had received more than 400 000 new people. At the height of the Depression in 1935, immigration had slowed to a trickle of 11 000. Canada also shut its doors to Jewish people attempting to escape persecution in Nazi Europe. You will read more about Canada’s response to Jewish refugees in the next chapter. This action would come back to haunt Canadians after World War II.



Developing Skills: Interpreting Graphs in History

Newspapers, magazines, and atlases frequently present information using graphs. A graph can make information clear that would take many words to explain. Graphs are visual pictures or summaries of key information. You are probably already familiar with various types of graphs, such as bar, pie, and pictographs from your math, science, and geography classes. Graphs are useful in history too. Each type of graph is especially useful for presenting a particular kind of information.

Line graphs are useful when you want to see how something changes under certain measurable conditions, such as over time. Line graphs are also useful to show the development of similar items, so that you can compare them. In the line graph on page 204, for instance, you can see how the number of unemployed and the number of people on direct relief changed over a period of time. The line graph also makes it easy to compare the two.

Step 1

Read the title of the graph to find out exactly what information is being presented. The line graph on page 204, for example, illustrates the number of people unemployed and the number on direct relief over several years—from 1926-1940. From what you have learned in this chapter, you know that these years cover the Great Depression.

Step 2

Check the legend. A legend tells what the lines, colours, symbols, or other elements in a graph mean or represent. In this graph, the blue line shows the number of unemployed and the yellow shows the number on direct relief.

Step 3

Read the numbers along the bottom of the graph. In this graph, they tell you the years being reported. The numbers along the side of the graph represent the number of people and are shown in thousands. The numbers go from zero at the bottom to 800 000 at the top.

Step 4

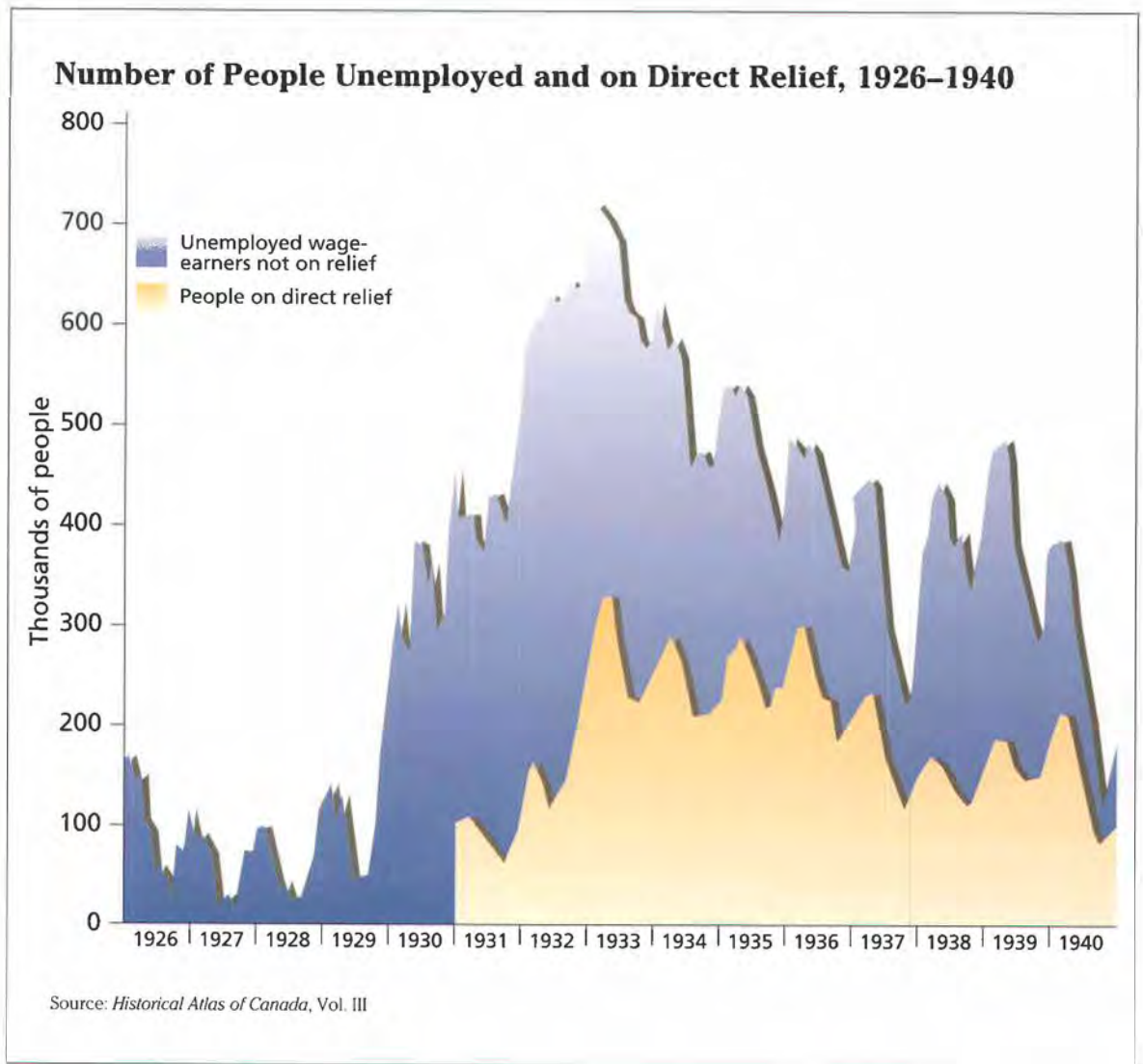
Study the graph. What can it tell you? What conclusions can you draw? Consider the following questions:

- When was unemployment at its highest level? When was unemployment at its lowest level?
- What were the rates of unemployment at the end of the 1920s in Canada? What happened to the rate of unemployment after the stock market crashed?
- In which year did direct relief begin?
- Which number is always larger, the number of people on direct relief or the number of unemployed?
- Hypothesize. From the information you have read in this chapter and found on this graph, suggest some reasons for your answer in d).

Total Production (Gross National Product) in Canada, 1926-1939

Year	Total Production (billions of dollars)
1926	5.1
1927	5.6
1928	6.1
1929	6.1
1930	5.7
1931	4.7
1932	3.8
1933	3.5
1934	4.0
1935	4.3
1936	4.6
1937	5.2
1938	5.3
1939	5.6

Source: Statistics Canada, Cat. 13-531, 13-201.



Practise It Further!

Use the data in the table on the previous page to construct a line graph. Gross National Product or GNP represents the total value of all goods and services produced in Canada in a year. When you have completed your graph, answer these questions.

- What pattern or trend does the graph show in Canada's total production from 1926 to 1939?
- In which year was total production lowest? What can you note about the number of unemployed in this year from the graph above?



Activities

Understand Facts and Concepts

1. Add these new terms to your *Factfile*.

Great Depression

business cycle

Black Tuesday

staples

Bennett Buggy

relief

“five-cent piece” speech

On-to-Ottawa Trek

Canadian Radio Broadcasting

Commission (CRBC)

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
(CBC)

National Film Board (NFB)

Governor General’s Awards

Bennett’s New Deal

Social Credit

Co-operative Commonwealth Federation

(CCF)

Union Nationale

2.
 - a) Explain how overproduction led to factory slowdowns in the 1930s.
 - b) Why did Canadian families stop buying as many products?
3.
 - a) Why do countries put high tariffs on foreign goods? Who benefits from high tariffs? Who suffers?
 - b) Why was international trade important to Canada in the 1920s and 1930s?
4. Which regions of Canada were hardest hit by the Depression? Provide evidence for your answers.
5.
 - a) Why were relief vouchers for food and rent given out during the Depression instead of cash?
 - b) Do you think vouchers were a good or bad idea? Why?
6.
 - a) What measures did R. B. Bennett take to combat the Depression?
 - b) How effective were these measures?
 - c) What would you suggest Bennett could have done to reduce the horrible effects of poverty and unemployment?

Think and Communicate

7. Create a mind map outlining the major causes of the Depression. Remember that a mind map shows connections between ideas and their importance in relation to one another.
8. Analyze the cartoon on page 187. Refer back to the “Developing Skills” section on page 49 for key questions to guide you.
9. Search out other photographs of life during the 1930s. Organize and display the photographs with captions to create your own photo essay on life during the Depression.

10. Imagine you are a family of five on relief in 1932. You are given \$6.93 a week. Suppose you can spend \$4.00 of that on food. Refer to the list of typical prices for food items on page 192. Buy food for a week from this list with your \$4.00. Are you able to buy enough food to feed your family?
11. In groups of three or four, prepare and present a role play for one of the following. The time is the 1930s, at the height of the Great Depression.
 - a) a family discussing the fact that they must go on relief
 - b) people in a boxcar riding the rails in search of work
 - c) a group of young mothers gathered together to write a letter to Prime Minister Bennett
 - d) a group of single men in a relief camp
 - e) western farmers and workers at a meeting for the new Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
 - f) a group of wealthy business owners discussing the economic situation
12. Compare economic conditions in the 1920s and 1930s. Complete a comparison organizer like the following. You could also do further research and create a bulletin board display including graphs, charts, and photographs to illustrate your comparisons.

Economic Conditions	1920s	1930s	Reasons
Growth of industries			
Farm production			
Amount of unemployment			
People's ability to buy goods			
Amount of world trade			

13. Write a human-interest story based on a photograph in this unit or create an illustration of your own to describe your feelings about the Depression.
14. Do some research to gather information on how the rich lived in Canada during the 1930s. Include facts on automobiles, holidays, clothing styles, etc. Write a report or create a bulletin board display on "How the Other Half Lived."

Apply Your Knowledge

15. Imagine that your family's income dropped suddenly because the wage earner was unemployed. Make a list of the possessions you would sell to raise money. Rank the items in order from those you would be most willing to sell to those you would be least willing to sell. How do you think your situation would compare with a family in the 1930s?

16. Debate one of the following statements.
- a) Any person who is unemployed and receiving relief should be required to work at some project, such as sweeping the streets, to earn the relief money.
 - b) The government is expected to provide too many services for Canadians today. People should not expect the government to look after them from the cradle to the grave. People should care for themselves.
 - c) Kids today have got it too easy. If they had lived through the Depression, they would have known hard times but would be better for it.
17. a) The jobless rate in Canada fluctuates from year to year and from region to region. Do some research to discover how many people are unemployed in Canada today. Compare this number with the jobless rate in Canada during the Great Depression.
- b) What are the causes of unemployment today? Which regions suffer most? Is there a difference between the unemployment problem today and the one during the Depression?
 - c) What measures are taken to deal with unemployment today?

Get to the Source

18. A famous author, Caroline Bird, said that everybody who lived through the Depression carried a permanent invisible scar on their minds. What she meant is illustrated in the comment of a teenager who lived through the Depression:

I would never again like to live through a depression. It makes a person want to cry remembering how horrible life was back then. My parents had to work so hard and they suffered a great deal. Me, I never buy a thing on credit. I always wait until I can afford to pay for everything in cash. We hang on to our money because in 1929 everyone was in the stock market and everybody lost. I want to have some money to put away for a rainy day.

- a) Do you think all survivors of the Depression would feel the same way? Why or why not?
- b) Would their children and grandchildren feel the same? Explain your views.