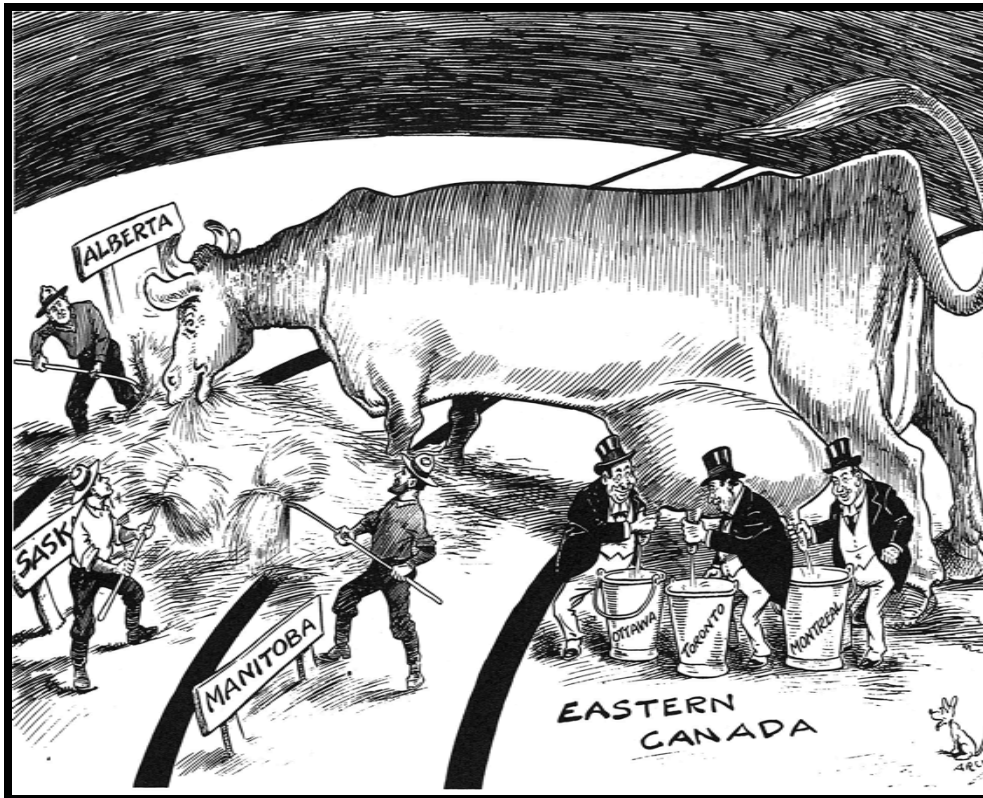


A Decade of Adjustment:
Canada in the “Roaring 20s”



Okanagan College

2 August 2018

The Great War in Canadian Memory

**600,000 Canadians served in the
Great War; 61,000 Died**

**Resentment of the “Military
Exemption Act”: Farmers,
Workers, French-Canadians,
the Prairie West and
Maritimers**

**100,000 Conscripts; 24,000
Served at the Front, 1918**

**Disability Pensions: \$1 Billion
by 1935**

“For what”? *Late 1920s*



For What?, by Frederick Varley, one of the four war artists who later joined the Group of Seven. Varley's bleak painting of a burial party at work makes a horrible statement on the futility of war.

“A Seat at the Table”: Paris, 1919

**Paris Peace Conferences,
Jan-Jun, 1919**

**PM Robert Borden: “A seat
at the table for Canada”
- U.S. Opposition to
Canadian Representation**

**Borden refuses “lesser state”
status
- Representation in British
Empire Delegation**

Versailles Treaty, 28 Jun 1919



When it came to signing the treaty, the British prime minister did so for the entire empire, the Dominions included. Canadians signed the treaty, but in indented version, its name appearing under that of the British Empire.

Demobilization of the C.E.F.

Soldier riots in Canada

- Yonge St., Apr. 1917

**Dept. of Soldiers' Civil Re-
establishment, 1917**

- Land Settlement Scheme

**Ice-Free Ports: Halifax and
Saint John - 20,000/month
rail capacity**

- Ltd British shipping

Kinmel Park Riot, Mar. 1919

- British find "extra" ships

**"Throughout the war
civilians and even some
soldiers had worried about
the impact of carnage and
killing on the characters of
fighting men. Would the
crude indoctrination in
savagery transform men
permanently into uncont-
rolled ferocity? No risk
could be taken."**

The Influenza Pandemic, 1918-19

“Spanish” Flu, 1918-19

- Spain officially neutral**
- No Censorship**

**U.S. Army, Kansas, Winter
1918 - Canada by Sep.**

Death toll:

- 20-40 million worldwide**
- 10 mill. killed in WWI**

Canadian Death Toll:

- Approx. 50,000, 1918-19**



Parade in Calgary celebrating the armistice. Because of the influenza epidemic, the Alberta government had two weeks earlier ordered all citizens to wear masks when outside their homes.

Labour Unrest in Winnipeg

Post-War Recession, 1920-24

- Limited Export Mkts**
- Prairie Drought, 1920**
- US Protectionism**

**Double-digit unemployment;
GNP drops 20.1% in 1921**

O.B.U., Calgary, Mar. 1919

- 1) End of War Measures Act
Restraints**
- 2) Wartime Inflation**
- 3) Post-War Job Security**



“The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people, and the few who make up the employing class have all the good things of life.”

Winnipeg General Strike, 1919

**Winnipeg Metal-Workers
Strike, 1 May 1919**

- Expands by sympathy strikes, including police**
- 30,000 strikers by 15 May**

**Central Strike Committee vs.
Citizens' Committee of
1,000 - Provide services**

**“Bloody Saturday,” 21 June
1919 - 1 man killed**

**Royal North-West Mounted
Police → Reborn as RCMP**





On “Bloody Saturday,” June 21, 1919, a violent confrontation occurred between peaceful marchers and the Mounties and special police during the Winnipeg General Strike.

The Political Landscape Transformed

Laurier d. Feb. 1919

- Succeeded by WLMK

1921 General Election:

**- Conservatives 50 - 2/3
from ON**

- Liberals 116 - all of QB

- Progressives 65 - West

**WLMK's "Path of Least
Resistance" = Longest-
serving Cdn PM**

**- Lib-Prog. Coalition
Government, 1921-26**



"Wooing the West." Cartoonist Donald McRitchie echoes the Maritimers' complaints that the Mackenzie King government favoured the West's regional demands over their own. *Halifax Herald*, October 3, 1925.

WLMK on Canadian Autonomy

**Borden & WLMK opposed
to Article 10
- “Fireproof House”**

**Chanak, 1922: Britain vs.
Turkish Nationalists
- Canadian Contingent?**

King-Byng Affair, 1925

Balfour Declaration, 1926

**Statute of Westminster, 1931
- Canada achieves
legislative independence**

Balfour Declaration, 1926

**Dominions recognized as
“autonomous communities
within the British Empire,
equal in status, in no way
subordinate to one another
in any respect of their
domestic or external affairs,
though united in common
allegiance to the Crown, and
freely associated as members
of the British
Commonwealth of Nations.”**

Canada's Great Depression, 1929-1939



Eviction day in Montreal during the Depression. By 1933 over one-third of the city's francophones were on relief, with many simply forced into the streets.

Return of Prosperity, 1925

British Economic Decline:

- Exports to U.S. surpass those to Britain, 1923**

US Demand for Canadian Resources:

- Canadian Newsprint +300%**
- Lower US Tariffs and Ban on Pulpwood Export**

British Indirect vs. US Direct Investment - US Preference for Direct Ownership

- Branch Plant Economy**
- Gillette, Coca-Cola, Singer**

I'm afraid they will marry American girls and settle down there, almost forgetting their mother – divorces are so common over there. [But] if the Dominion government should raise the Canadian tariffs as high as the American tariff it would be necessary for their company to start a big branch factory in Canada. I guess there would be quite a lot of branch factories started in Canada if the tariff should be raised and there would be lots of work for Canadians at home.

Into the Era of Happy Motoring

**Rising rates of automobile
ownership = Dealerships,
Gas Stations, Repair
Shops, Insurance**

Rural Roads – Road Signs

City Streets – Pedestrians

Horse Stalls – Garages

**Asphalt Roads – x2 1925-30
128,000km**

Cross-border travel!



**Traffic congestion on Yonge Street
in Toronto in 1929. Street cars had
to contend with automobiles in ever
increasing numbers.**

Canadian Women in the 1920s

**Women's Suffrage vs.
Region and Class**

**Agnes McPhail, Ont.
Progressive MP, 1921**

AB "Persons Case," 1929

**20% of Cdn Labour, 1929
- Secretaries, sales clerks,
domestics, and *nursing***

**"Being a mother is the
highest of all professions"**

"When women were given the vote in 1916-17...we were obsessed with the belief that we would cleanse and purify the world by law... But when all was over, and the smoke of battle cleared away, something happened to us. Our forces, so well organized for the campaign, began to dwindle."

**Nellie McClung,
Alberta MLA**



Georgina McKay and friends near Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, each enjoying a smoke. In the 1920s women flaunted smoking cigarettes as a sign of liberation.

Stock Market Crash, Oct. 1929

“Wall St. Sneezed...”

**Trading on Margin = Banks
Fail**

Canada dependent on US

Industry -33%, 1929-32

**GNP -40%, Imports -55%,
Exports -25%**

**20% Unemployment by 1933
- Seasonal,
Underemployment**

The Dow Jones industrial average dropped more than 11 per cent, with a record trade volume of 16 million shares. The crash heralded the beginning of the Great Depression of the 1930s and it did not surpass the 1929 average again until 1954. It was estimated that Canadian stocks lost a total value of \$50-billion on paper in 1929. By mid-1930, the value of stocks for the 50 leading Canadian companies had fallen more than 50 per cent from their peaks in 1929.

“...Not a Five-Cent Piece”

Laissez-Faire, Invisible Hand

**PM R.B. Bennett (Con.),
1930-35 - 137 vs. 91 Lib.
Seats - C.P.R. Lawyer**

**US Smoot-Hawley Tariffs, 1930
- “Buy American” 2009**

Canadian Response

- Tariffs and protectionism**
- Urges British “Imperial Preferences” at the Ottawa Economic Conference, 1932**



Richard Bennett was a wealthy businessman who served as Canada's PM from 1930-35 during the worst of the Great Depression years.

“The Dustbowl”

Southern AB, SK, MB

**Dryland Farming and
Rising Prices (1920s)**

**Wheat Monoculture
- Gov’t Warnings**

Drought = Duststorms

**Argentina, Australia
- Prices Collapse**

**Net Farm Income Losses,
1931-33**



**Dust storm near Lethbridge,
Alberta — a familiar sight in the
Canadian Prairies during the
“Dirty Thirties.”**

Per Capita Income by Province

	1928	1933	Decline
BC	\$594	\$314	- 47%
ON	\$549	\$310	- 44%
AB	\$548	\$212	- 61%
SK	\$478	\$135	- 72%
MB	\$466	\$240	- 49%
QC	\$391	\$220	- 44%
NS	\$322	\$207	- 36%
NB	\$292	\$180	-39%
PEI	\$278	\$154	-45%

Richard Bennett, 1930-35

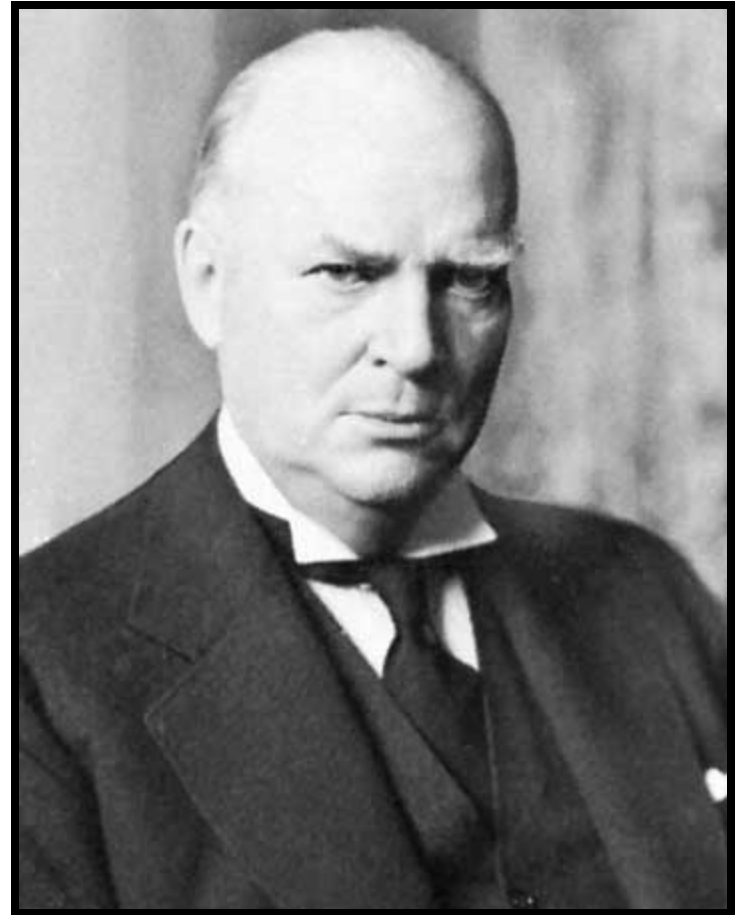
**“Destitute responsible for
their own plight”
- Food and Rent Stamps**

Poor Relief - Municipalities

**Morality: Single Women,
Never Married Women
with Dependents**

**Race: ½ for Asian-origin
residents in Vancouver**

**Bennett’s Unemployment
Relief Act, \$20 Million**



P.M. Richard B. Bennett

Prime Minister Bennett presiding over his cabinet, every face his. From the Winnipeg Free Press, 1935. During the 1930s there was a popular story that a tourist observed a solitary figure walking toward the Parliament buildings talking to himself. When he inquired who the person was, he was informed that it was the Prime Minister holding a Cabinet meeting.

