

#1

Soup kitchens

Photograph taken of a Montreal soup kitchen in 1931.

**PRIMARY
SOURCE**
Consequences of the
Great Depression



"People eating at a soup kitchen," Library and archives Canada, Online MIKAN no. 3192281, 1931.

#2

Parade in Toronto during the Great Depression

Photograph of the Single Men's Unemployed Association parading on Bathurst Street in Toronto taken during the 1930s.

**PRIMARY
SOURCE**

Consequences of the
Great Depression



“(The Depression) The Single Men’s Unemployed Association parading to Bathurst Street United Church,” *Library and Archives Canada*, Online MIKAN no. 3192427, 1930(?)



History Docs



#3

Relief camps

Excerpt from an interview with a Canadian male who spent time in relief camps during the Great Depression.



You've got to realize this, in the relief camps of the Thirties we weren't treated as humans. We weren't treated as animals, either, and I've always thought we were just statistics written into some big ledger in Ottawa

I was one of the several up the old Hope-Princeton Trail, made up of board and canvas tents, and buildings they called cabooses where we slept. There was about 150 of us in this one, guys as young as 16 and up to 35 or 45, I should guess, and the thing was, we were all single and no jobs, stony broke and no future and the politicians considered us as dangerous. Their thinking was that if we were isolated then we wouldn't be hanging around vacant lots and jungles listening to Communist troublemakers

We were paid 20 cents a day. Twenty cents a day. I've told this to people today and they always say, "You mean 20 cents an hour, don't you?" and I'd say no, 20 goddamned cents a goddamned day. There was one guy in charge at that Hope camp who used to call us slaves. 'Okay, slaves, off your asses, we're going to cut trail today,' he'd say, and that was really what we were.

You've got to consider it this way. Across the country, but mostly in the west, there were 10 or 15 thousand men in these camps. I read once that they figured about 200,000 men were in them, all told, in five years. That's 200,000 young men who were really pissed off at society, the government, the politicians, the army way of doing things, and that 20 cents meant slavery

Barry Broadfoot, *Ten lost years, 1929-1939: Memories of the Canadians who survived the Depression* (Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart, 1997), pp. 103-105.

#4

“Detective killed, many injured, as riots flare in Regina”

Excerpt from a newspaper article published in The Ottawa Evening Citizen on July 2, 1935.



Plain clothes officer is pummeled to death in surging melee. Tear gas, batons and bullets used by police in fighting mob of 3,000. Battle continued for three hours in city street. Regina quiet early today Several R.C.M.P. injured.

Ominous quiet settled over Regina today after a night of rioting and bloodshed. One man, Plainclothes Detective Charles Miller, lay dead, fatally pummelled when caught in the surging melee of 3000 relief camp strikers and sympathizers who turned violently upon police as they broke up an open-air meeting in the city's market square.

Another man, identified as Dan McGee, striker, was near death. He was found bleeding from head-wounds after the mob had been driven from the square by tea(r)-gas, batons and bullets.

Five city constables were being treated for less serious injuries ... scores of strikers were in hospitals, treated by doctors called in to aid the emergency.

Behind prison bars was tall, lank Arthur Evans, Toronto-born leader of the "On-to-Ottawa" marchers, recruited from the federal relief camps from the Pacific seaboard and the Prairies

Sam G. Ross, "Detective killed, many injured, as riots flare in Regina: Relief camp strikers battle steel helmeted police when open-air meeting broken up," *The Ottawa Evening Citizen* 93, 11 (1935), pp. 13, GoogleNews.



#5

Tensions in Nanaimo

Excerpt from a letter sent by a resident of Nanaimo, British Columbia, to Canadian Prime Minister R. B. Bennett on February 22, 1932. The original grammar and spelling of the letter have been left intact.



Nanaimo BC
Feb 22nd

Mr. Bennett

Dear Sir

Before we are much older there is going to be trouble in Nanaimo & Cumberland owing to the foreigners having jobs while the men & boys who are borne British subjects & who rightfully belong to the jobs have to go without jobs there fore they have to go without sufficient (enough) food & clothing, in Cumberland you have Japanese & Chinese working in & about the mines also other foreigners from other countrys who can neither read write or speak english & this is breaking the Coal Mines Rules & Regulation Act & they are a danger to both human life & property yet they hold the jobs which rightfully belong to us British although it is against the rules for these people to have jobs in the mines

I wish you could come yourself to the mines at Nanaimo & watch the ammount of foreigners who are employed at these mines & then look at the number of British men & boys who go to these same mines every day begging for a job only to be turned away & they have no money to buy bread & clothing while the foreigner has both

I hope government will take a hand in this before it is too late as there is so much money going out of this town & out of the country & our men & boys are asked to go to government camps & give up their homes to these foreigners ... can you wonder that the Britisher is getting riled (upset) & again very many of these foreigners fought against our men & boys in the big war now they are given our jobs our bread & our homes if government does not take a hand in this at once I fear an uprising of all English speaking people on this Island & it may end in harm to the foreigner & also to property.

Yours.

A. Nanaimoite

L. M. Grayson, Richard Bedford Bennett and Michael Bliss, *The wretched of Canada: Letters to R. B. Bennett, 1930-1935*, L. M. Grayson, Michael Bliss (eds.) (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1971), pp. 18-19.



#6

Immigration during the Great Depression



Table of statistics showing the number of immigrants accepted in Canada before and after the Depression, published on the Statistics Canada website.

Pre-Depression immigration	Immigration during the Depression
1920: 138,824	1930: 104,806
1921: 91,728	1931: 27,530
1922: 64,224	1932: 20,591
1923: 133,729	1933: 14,382
1924: 124,164	1934: 12,476
1925: 84,907	1935: 11,277
1926: 135,892	1936: 11,643
1927: 158,886	1937: 15,101
1928: 166,783	1938: 17,244
1929: 164,993	1939: 16,994
Total 1920–1929: 1,264,130 immigrants	Totals 1930–1939: 252,044 immigrants

K. G. Basavarajappa and Bali Ram, "Historical statistics of Canada: Section A: Population and migration," Statistics Canada, October 22, 2008

#7

Two letters to Bennett

Excerpts from two original letters sent to Prime Minister R. B. Bennett during the height of the Great Depression. The original grammar and spelling of the letters have been left intact.



Mr. Bennett: I am a Mother left with a little girl 1 year old, and I have nothing, and I am badly in need and unable to work

And as Winter is coming on, and my baby needs everything, I have no warm cloths either, but I think of my baby first.

I was told you would help, so I thought I would write for the babys sake. Mr. Bennett I'd be very grateful if you could send me some money.

Yours Very Truly
Ellen Field

Dear Sir.

I am writting you these few lines asking you your advice or a little help as we are dead broke, between sickness and depression these last six years. We had a little business in groceries and confectionery (sweets). We then bought the building and we paid for it and now it has been sold for taxes so we will be homeless in two months time as we cannot redeem the place and as you know the work is very hard to get so in March we got word that there was work in Timmins Ont. So my husband managed to get money from the council which amounted to fifteen dollars, to get down there and so far he has got nothing. He has got one day's work in three months and I got a letter from him the other day and he says he is penniless and cannot get home. Every place he goes they say that he is too old to work and he has heart trouble which makes it worse. We have four children nearly without food and cloths.

Thanking you for your trouble,

Yours truly
Mrs.C. McKie

L. M. Grayson, Richard Bedford Bennett and Michael Bliss, *The wretched of Canada: Letters to R. B. Bennett, 1930–1935*, L. M. Grayson, Michael Bliss (eds.) (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1971), pp. 167, 178.



#8

Founding manifesto of the CCF

Excerpt from the founding manifesto of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) that was adopted in July, 1933 in Regina, Saskatchewan, at the First National Convention of the CCF party.



We aim to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent [built-in] injustice and inhumanity, by a social order from which the domination and exploitation [abuse] of one class by another will be eliminated, in which economic planning will supersede [take priority over] unregulated [not controlled] private enterprise and competition, and in which genuine democratic self-government, based upon economic equality will be possible.

... Power has become more and more concentrated into the hands of a small irresponsible minority of financiers [investors] and industrialists and to their predatory [greedy] interests the majority are habitually sacrificed.

When private profit is the main stimulus [motivation] to economic effort, our society oscillates [alternates] between periods of feverish prosperity in which the main benefits go to speculators and profiteers, and of catastrophic depression, in which the common man's normal state of insecurity and hardship is accentuated [stressed]. We believe that these evils can be removed only in a planned and socialized economy in which our natural resources and principal means of production and distribution are owned, controlled and operated by the people.

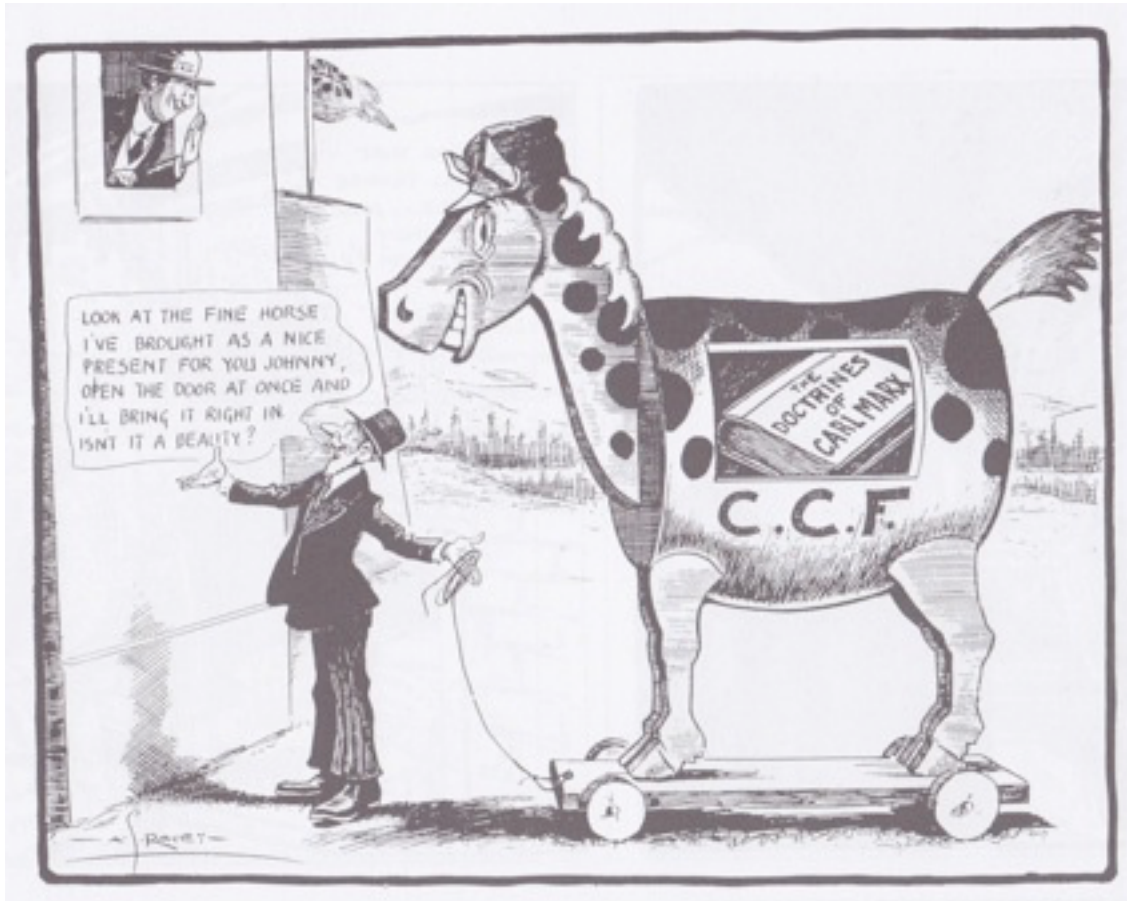
Leo Zakuta, *A protest movement becalmed: A study of change in the CCF* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1964), pp. 140.

#9

The Trojan horse

Political cartoon published in the Montreal Daily Star on September 21, 1933. J. S. Woodsworth leads a Trojan horse to meet Johnny Canuck.

PRIMARY SOURCE
Consequences of the Great Depression



The hoary Trojan horse trick again

J. S. Woodsworth: Look at the fine horse I've brought as a nice present for you Johnny, open the door at once and I'll bring it right in. Isn't it a beauty?

Johnny Canuck: Tut, tut, Woodsworth! I'm surprised that you should attempt to put over such an old trick on me!

Charles Hou and Cynthia Hou, *Great Canadian political cartoons, 1820 to 1914* (Vancouver, BC: Moody's Lookout Press, 1997), pp. 140.

#10

The old order has gone

Excerpt from a speech given by Canadian Prime Minister R. B. Bennett that was broadcast across Canada via radio in January of 1935.



The time has come when I must speak to you with the utmost frankness [honesty] about our national affairs

In the last five years, great changes have taken place in the world. The old order has gone and it will not return. We are living amidst conditions which are strange to us. Your prosperity demands corrections in the old system The right time to bring these changes has come. Further progress without them is improbable [unlikely].

[...]

In my mind, reform means Government intervention. It means Government control and regulation. It means the end of laissez faire There can be no permanent recovery without reform

Free competition and the open market place, as they were known in the old days, have lost their place in the system and the only substitute for them ... is government regulation and control.

... [I]n all times, faults in the system have [been] seized upon by the unscrupulous [dishonest] and greedy as vantage points in their battle for self-advancement. And we will be dealing with the matter in a thorough and practical way if we remove these faults, so as to put a final stop to the unfair practices which they made possible

F. C. Mears, "Economic reform Bennett's slogan," *The Gazette* 164, 3 (1935), pp. 1, 8, *GoogleNews*.

#11

He's heavy on her feet

Political cartoon published in the Halifax Chronicle on September 18, 1935.

PRIMARY SOURCE
Consequences of the Great Depression



Charles Hou and Cynthia Hou, *Great Canadian political cartoons, 1820 to 1914* (Vancouver, BC: Moody's Lookout Press, 1997), pp. 152.

#1

Great Depression history book

Excerpt from a book written by historian Michael Horn entitled *Great Depression of the 1930's in Canada*, published in 1984.



Fully a third of wage earners, as distinct from salary earners, were estimated to be out of work on 1 May 1933 At that time, some 1.5 million Canadians, almost 15 per cent of the population, were dependent on direct relief for physical survival

Although the economy gradually began to improve after the first quarter of 1933, many continued to be dependent. It is estimated that 2 million Canadians received public relief at some time during 1934, and 1.9 million during 1935. In 1938 the number was still in excess of [greater than] 1.1 million.

These figures represented an appalling pauperization [to turn someone into a person without any means of support] of Canadians, and particularly of the urban working class. In the absence of unemployment insurance, the unemployed had to exhaust [use up] every possible resource—savings, help from family and friends, credit from shopkeepers—before turning to public relief as a last resort. The principle underlying relief was that of “less eligibility,” that is, it should provide less than the wage obtainable from the worst-paid employment. No one, the authorities expected, would be this tempted to go on relief if there were any jobs at all.

Michael Horn, *Great Depression of the 1930s in Canada* (Ottawa, ON: The Canadian Historical Association, 1984), pp. 10.

#2

International affairs during the Depression

Excerpt from a book written by historians Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein entitled *Empire to Umpire*, published in 2000.



The depression had an enormous impact on international affairs. World trade was worth 40 percent less in 1933 than in 1929, and its volume [the amount of goods being traded] declined by one-quarter in the same [time] period. Unemployment in individual countries skyrocketed, reaching at least 27 percent in Canada during 1933. Nations turned in on themselves, pursuing policies of nationalism and protectionism. Bennett [Prime Minister R. B. Bennett, who drastically increased tariffs on international imports] had done so immediately after coming to power in 1930

Economic catastrophe [disaster] undermined democracies and assisted [helped] in the rise of militarism in Japan and Adolf Hitler's National Socialism in Germany ... the depression made Western countries such as Britain, France, the United States and Canada all the more cautious in confronting the new dangers, fearing further disruption of their economies.

Norman Hillmer and J. L. Granatstein, *Empire to umpire* (Toronto, ON: Irwin Publishing, 2000), pp. 117–118.

#3

National unrest

Excerpt from a section of *The Illustrated History of Canada*, written by historian Ramsay Cook, published in 1987.



With almost no protective social-security measures ... farm and urban workers were thrown on the charity of private and public institutions. Many men took to “riding the rods,” hitching rides on freight cars moving across the country in search of work, food, or relief from the boredom of idleness. The Bennett government, in an effort to provide some work and to control these moving gangs of men, established work camps in British Columbia.

By early 1935 deep dissatisfaction had developed and some 1,800 men, organized by the Communist-sponsored Relief Camp Workers’ Union, set off on a trek to Ottawa to demonstrate against a government that seemed unwilling to deal with the unemployment problem. They reached Regina before Primer Minister Bennett agreed to meet their leaders. And that meeting was little more than an acrimonious exchange of abuse. Then, on July 1, the RCMP moved in and arrested the leaders. In the ensuing riot one policeman was killed and many others were injured. The trek was halted the problem remained.

Virtually every urban centre experience unrest and disturbances, usually less serious than the Regina Riot. The Toronto city police were especially assiduous [diligent] in checking every sign of suspected subversion [rebellion], especially if university professors were involved. Uneasy public authorities often acted hastily [rashly], claiming the need to control a growing Communist menace

Nor was it only supposed Communist-inspired activities that governments met with hostility [aggression] during these troubled years. In almost every province, efforts to organize workers, especially the unskilled, or strikes by organized workers, were resisted by employers often supported by governments

Ramsay Cook, “The triumph and trials of materialism (1900–1945),” in Craig Robert Brown (ed.), *The illustrated history of Canada* (Toronto, ON: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1987), pp. 446–447.

#4

Government intervention

Excerpt from a book written by author Will Ferguson entitled *Canadian History for Dummies*, published in 2005.



... the Depression did signal the end of the glory days of unfettered capitalism—in much the same way that World War I brought an end to the allure of European imperialism. After the Great Depression, nothing was ever the same again. The government was no longer allowed to be a mere spectator, sitting on the sidelines as market forces ran their course. Governments were now expected to take an active, interventionist [intervening] approach. Public opinion demanded it. If Canadians today tend to look to the government as both the source of and the solution to society’s problems, the roots of this lie partly in the “ten lost years” of the Great Depression.

Will Ferguson, *Canadian history for dummies* (Mississauga, ON: John Wiley and Sons Canada, 2005), pp. 305–306.