The 1930s: A Decade of Despair

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Society & Identity
- What were the effects of the Great Depression on Canadians?
- How did minority groups fare during the Depression?
- How did the Depression affect women?
- How did Canadian social programs evolve?
- How was Québec nationalism expressed in the 1950s?
- What was the government’s response to the Great Depression?

Politics & Government
- What new political parties appeared in response to the Depression?

Economy & Human Geography
- Where were the causes of the Great Depression in Canada?
- How involved should the government be in the economy during a depression?

Autonomy & World Presence
- What were the effects of the Depression on the global community?

TIMELINE

1929
New York Stock Exchange crashes on Wall Street

1930
Severe drought devastates the Prairies (1930–1937)
R.B. Bennett becomes prime minister

1931
City dwellers outnumber rural population in Canada
Statute of Westminster is passed by the British government, making Canada an autonomous state within the British Commonwealth

1932
Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) established
Federal relief camps established

1933
Unemployment hits highest level
Hitler comes to power in Germany
CHAPTER FOCUS QUESTION
What were the causes, effects, and responses to the Great Depression?

James Gray was a young man at the beginning of the Depression. This account of his family’s struggle to survive those difficult years is a vivid picture of the hardships endured by ordinary Canadians in the bleakest decade of the 20th century:

For two months, half a million farm people huddled around stoves and thought only of keeping warm. If food supplies ran low, they ate less. Only when fuel reached the vanished point would they venture to town for a load of relief coal.... Winter ended with a thaw... and presently we were into summer which was much worse.... There was no escape from the heat and wind and dust of the summer of 1936.... From Calgary to Winnipeg there was almost nothing but dust, in a bowl that extended clear down to Texas. Within the bowl was stifling heat, as if someone had left all the furnace doors open and the blowers on.

–James Gray, The Winter Years, 1976

For most Canadians, the 1930s was a decade of despair. In this chapter, you will learn about the causes, effects, and government’s response to the Great Depression.

KEY TERMS
recession
depression
supply and demand
prosperity
recovery
overproduction
tariffs
protectionism
On-to-Ottawa Trek
Regina Riot
New Deal
laissez-faire
welfare state
Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)
capitalism
Regina Manifesto
Social Credit Party
Union nationale
Québec nationalism
equalization payments
Causes of the Great Depression

The end of the prosperity of the 1920s came as a surprise to many Canadians. The stock market crash on October 29, 1929 marked the beginning of a recession, which progressed to a decade-long depression in Canada and around the world. Prior to examining the causes of the Great Depression and what was happening in the economy at the time, a basic knowledge of economic principles is necessary.

Basic Economic Principles

In a market economy, or free enterprise system, the means of production—factories, machinery, and land—are owned by individuals, not the government. Individuals decide what types of goods and services they produce and the prices for their products. People are free to buy what they like from whomever they choose. Canada has a mixed economy, meaning that the government has some involvement in the economy, including the creation of government-owned industries (for example, Canadian National Railways), limitations on workers’ rights to strike, and subsidies to support certain industries.

In a market or mixed economy, production and prices are determined by supply and demand. Supply refers to how much of a product is available. Demand refers to how much people want that product. Usually, when the supply of a product is low, demand makes the price higher; when there is a great supply, the price is lower. For example, at the beginning of the 1920s, a shortage of wheat as a result of the First World War led to a higher price for Canadian wheat. As other countries began producing wheat after the war, increased supply lowered wheat prices.

Market economies regularly go through cycles of growth and decline (see Figure 4–2). Expansion in many economic activities results in a period of prosperity. This eventually is followed by a slowdown in the economy, called a recession. If the slowdown is longer and more severe, it is called a depression. Recovery is when the economy begins to grow again.
Overproduction

During the 1920s, many industries in Canada expanded as demand for their goods was high. But when the economy slowed down, many companies faced overproduction as they produced more goods than they sold. At first, manufacturers lowered prices and stockpiled goods. Eventually, they cut back and produced fewer goods. This decrease in production led to layoffs in factories, which meant people could not afford to buy consumer goods, so sales slowed down even more.

Economic Dependence on Exports

The Great Depression exposed a major weakness in the Canadian economy: its heavy dependence on the export of primary resources. Two exports in particular—wheat from the Prairie provinces, and newsprint from British Columbia, Ontario, and Québec—made Canada extremely vulnerable to changes in world markets. Eighty percent of Canada’s production on farms, and in forests and mines was exported.

In the early 1920s, wheat farmers in Canada and the United States produced record quantities of crops and sold them at record prices. But as more countries, including Argentina and Australia, produced wheat crops, there was more competition on the international market. Wheat was being over-produced and the price of wheat began to fall. As international sales decreased, farmers’ incomes dropped. Soon, many were unable to meet their mortgage and loan payments.

Tariffs and U.S. Protectionism

Canada’s economy was hit particularly hard because of its close ties to the U.S. economy. The United States had become Canada’s biggest trading partner and largest investor. Consequently, when the U.S. economy “crashed,” Canada’s economy was bound to feel the effects.

Since the United States did not need raw materials from other countries, it imposed high tariffs on foreign goods. These tariffs were meant to protect the U.S. domestic market by making foreign items, such as Canadian wheat, more expensive. However, this protectionism led other countries to impose their own tariffs in response to the United States’ actions. Tariffs caused a slowdown in world trade as opportunities for export shrank. Canadian exports decreased substantially as the U.S. and other countries stopped buying Canadian products.
Debt from the First World War

The United States lent several countries money during and after the First World War. Many of these countries relied on trade with the U.S. to raise money to pay these debts. But as protectionism grew, international trade decreased and several countries were unable to pay back the loans. Britain and France in particular relied on German reparations to pay their war debts. After the First World War, Germany’s economy was in ruins. The enormous reparations it was obligated to pay Britain and France under the Treaty of Versailles further stunted its ability to recover (see Chapter 5). Because Germany could not make its reparation payments, Britain and France in turn could not pay their war debts.

Speculation and the Stock Market Crash

Business was booming in the early 1920s. Companies wanted to expand, and in order to raise money, they would issue shares (or stocks). Investors bought these shares believing that the company would do well and the value of the stocks would rise. Between 1922 and 1926, Canadian companies issued $700 million worth of new shares.

During the 1920s, many investors were buying “on margin.” This meant buying shares with only a 10 percent down payment, assuming that when the prices of the stocks increased the remaining 90 percent would be paid. This process is called speculation. Loans for stocks were easy to obtain, and high demand had driven the price of stocks up beyond their real value.

When some investors started selling their stocks in order to cash in on high profits, others rushed to follow their lead. As a result, stock prices fell. People panicked and began to sell off huge volumes of stocks, making prices drop even further. On Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929, the New York Stock Exchange collapsed, followed by the Toronto and Montréal Stock Exchanges.

Falling Off the Economic Edge

The effects of the stock market crash were devastating. Investors who had borrowed heavily to buy shares went bankrupt in a single day. While few Canadians actually invested in stocks, the crash affected millions of people. Many companies cut back on production or closed their doors when the prices of their goods dropped. More and more people lost their jobs and could not find work. Without jobs, they could no longer afford to buy such items as cars, radios, or telephones. Without customers, the people who worked in the factories producing these goods also lost their jobs. Within a year, millions of Canadians were out of work.
Industrialization leads to bigger and more complex economies.

Bigger economies need more capital and international loans, making financial arrangements more intricate.

World economy becomes more integrated and reliant on trade.

Consumer spending is reduced.

Production surpasses demand as industries produce more than they can sell.

Prices fall and producers’ profits suffer.

Demand for raw materials declines.

Fewer workers are needed, leading to higher unemployment. People spend less and have more consumer debt.

New York Stock Exchange crash sets off the world financial and economic collapse resulting in the Great Depression.

**FIGURE 4–5** Causes of the Great Depression

---

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. **a)** What factors contributed to the Depression?
   **b)** Explain how a reduction in consumer spending can result in a slowdown in the economy.

2. Why was the Depression so severe in Canada? What part of the country was hardest hit? Why?

3. Explain why Canada’s close economic ties to the U.S. contributed to the Depression.

4. Why were so many people able to invest in the stock market?

5. **Patterns and Change** How was the financial collapse of 2008–2009 similar to and different from the 1929 crash?
The Desperate Years: Making Ends Meet

The Depression affected the entire country, but conditions in the Prairie provinces were particularly severe.

Drought on the Prairies

In the boom years of the early 1920s, many farmers planted wheat to take advantage of world demand and rising prices. But one-crop farming takes its toil on the land. Farmers replaced native grasses with wheat crops, which used up nutrients in the soil. Just after the economic crash in 1929, the Prairies were hit by a disastrous drought that lasted almost eight years. Many farmers could not grow crops and families struggled to survive.

As the drought deepened, the winds began. Millions of hectares of fertile topsoil—dried up by the drought and overfarming—blew away. By mid-spring of 1931, there were almost constant dust storms. Dust sifted in everywhere. It piled in little drifts on windowsills, and got into cupboards and closets. In a bad windstorm, people could not see the other side of the street. The semi-arid area in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan, known as Palliser’s Triangle, was hit especially hard.

As if this were not enough, a plague of grasshoppers descended on the Prairies. They stalled trains and buses and clogged car radiators. The insects effectively wiped out any crops that farmers on the Prairies managed to grow during the drought. This combination of events devastated many farms and forced thousands of families to abandon their land.

FIGURE 4–6 Wheat prices dropped to the lowest level in more than a century in 1932.
Using Evidence Construct a cause and effect diagram (see Chapter 3, page 82) to explain the impact of wheat prices on Prairie farmers in the 1930s.

FIGURE 4–7 Windstorms such as this one turned the Prairies, already suffering from years of drought, into a dust bowl during the Depression years. Overcultivation of fields and poor land-use practices prior to the 1930s contributed to the erosion of the soil.
Using Evidence Describe the impact of the storm on the community in the photograph.
Unemployment

As the Depression deepened, more and more factories and businesses closed their doors and people lost their jobs. In a population of more than 11 million, only about 300,000 Canadians earned enough money to pay income tax in 1939. At that time, married people earning more than $2000 and single people earning more than $1000 paid tax. People were evicted from their homes because they could not afford to pay rent. The loss of a job also meant the loss of respect, as this man explained:

*I never so much as stole a dime, a loaf of bread, a gallon of gas, but in those days I was treated like a criminal. By the twist in some men’s minds, men in high places, it became a criminal act just to be poor, and this percolated down through the whole structure until it reached the town cop or railway bull and if you were without a job, on the roads, wandering, you automatically became a criminal.*

—Quoted in *Ten Lost Years, 1997*

Collecting Pogey

Thousands existed on “pogey,” government relief payments given to those who did not have an alternative source of income, similar to welfare today. The government did not make getting relief easy. The payments were purposely kept low—$60 per month in Calgary to $19 per month in Halifax for a family of five—to encourage people to look for work rather than depend on the payments. People had to wait in line for hours and then publicly declare their financial failure. They also had to swear that they did not own anything of value and prove that they were being evicted from their home. If the applicants met these requirements, they received vouchers that could be exchanged for food and other essentials. The vouchers were never enough to cover expenses, and getting them was a humiliating experience.

Private charities helped by providing used clothing and meals, while soup kitchens were set up to help the hungry and homeless. For some people, the hardships were too much to bear. One Winnipeg man came home to discover that his wife, who had been living on relief, had drowned their son, strangled their daughter, and poisoned herself. The note she left said, “I owe the drugstore forty-four cents. Farewell.”

Fast Forward

Permanent Food Banks

In 2008, Food Banks Canada helped more than 700,000 Canadians in an average month. They reported a 20 percent increase in this number during the recession of 2008–2009. The two largest groups accessing food banks are those living on social assistance and those with low-paying jobs.

While some food banks are government funded, most rely on the generosity of Canadians. People donate money, food, clothing, and their time. Their contributions are an example of active citizenship and help to support the less fortunate.

1. What do permanent food banks reveal about the Canadian economy and the lives of many Canadians?
Riding the Rails

By the winter of 1933, more than one quarter of Canada’s workforce was unemployed. The country was filled with young, jobless, homeless men drifting from one place to another, looking for work. They travelled across the country by “hopping” freight trains. Some men even rode on the roof or clung to the rods underneath the train.

After “riding the rails,” the men would stay a day or two in the many shantytowns that had sprung up in and around cities. These sprawling shantytowns were often referred to as “jungles.” Sydney Hutcheson, a young unemployed man in the summer of 1932, recalls what life was like during these years:

...I made Kamloops my headquarters as there were hundreds of men in the jungles on the north side of the Thompson River right across from town.... I made three round trips across Canada that summer by boxcar.... I carried my pack sack with a change of clothes, razor, a five pound pail and a collapsible frying pan that a man made for me in the jungles in Kamloops in exchange for a pair of socks. I also had a little food with me at all times such as bacon ends, flour, salt, baking powder and anything else I could get my hands on.

–Sydney Hutcheson, Depression Stories, 1976

The Disadvantaged

Canadians who had difficulty earning a decent wage when times were good suffered even more during the Depression. Even with emergency assistance payments, there was discrimination. City families received more than country families because it was assumed that country families had livestock and a big garden. Some groups of people, including immigrants, Aboriginal peoples, and women, were particularly disadvantaged.

New Canadians

The Canadian government had previously supported immigration because it served the economic interests of Canada. During the Depression, however, immigrants were viewed with hostility when they competed for scarce jobs. Many immigrants who were already employed lost their jobs because they had been the last to be hired. By 1935, more than 28 000 immigrants were deported from Canada.
The Chinese population in Vancouver suffered greatly. Already at a disadvantage due to immigration policies and social prejudice, many Chinese people did not qualify for relief payments. By 1932, many were starving.

By [1932] destitute Chinese men, most of them elderly, were begging in the street.... The first... Chinese deaths from starvation finally forced the provincial government to show some concern. It funded the Anglican Church Mission’s soup kitchen..., but it expected a Chinese to be fed at half of what it cost to feed a white man on relief. Some destitute Chinese said they’d rather starve than accept relief.

—Denise Chong, The Concubine’s Children, 1994

Jewish people in particular were targeted and they faced blatant anti-Semitism. Many professions were closed to them; employers often posted signs forbidding them to apply. Across Canada, many clubs, organizations, and resorts barred Jewish people. These barriers made it particularly difficult for Jewish people to make ends meet during the Depression.

**Aboriginal Peoples**

Aboriginal families on relief were given only $5 a month, compared to the $19–$60 received by non-Aborigina ls. They were expected to live off the land, even though conditions on the reserves were so poor that they had been unable to do so for decades. The government continued to take cut-off lands from the reserves, further limiting Aboriginal peoples’ resources. In one particular case, the government transferred land from the Squamish Capilano Indian Reserve to the company that was building the Lions Gate Bridge without consulting or compensating the First Nation. While visiting Canada in 1939, King George VI and his wife Queen Elizabeth drove over the completed bridge to honour it. A request by the Squamish First Nation that the Royals stop, receive gifts, and meet Mary Agnes Capilano (see Chapter 1) was ignored. Later they were assured that “Their Majesties took particular pains to acknowledge the homage of their Indian subjects, and that in passing them the rate of speed was considerably lowered.”

**FIGURE 4–10** The Lions Gate Bridge was built to provide access to the expensive development on the north shore of Burrard Inlet. A similar plan had been rejected in 1927 because a road would have had to be built through Stanley Park to access the bridge. The proposal to build the road and bridge was approved in 1933.

**Thinking Critically** Why do you think the proposal was approved in 1933 when it had previously been rejected? What considerations would developers have to make today to get a project similar to this one approved? Why might governments overlook these considerations?

**KEY TERMS**

- **transient** an unemployed person who moves from place to place in search of work
- **deport** to send back to one’s country of origin
- **anti-Semitism** discrimination or hostility toward Jewish people
In the 1930s, the primary responsibility of women was seen to be the maintenance of the home and family. Most women were expected to get married and leave the labour force as soon as they could. There were a limited number of jobs considered acceptable for middle-class women. Most were clerical, “pink collar” sector jobs for which women earned 60 percent of men’s wages. The garment industry, involving long hours of piece work, was one of the few occupations open to minority and working-class white women. One woman who had a job at that time remembered:

*My family were very unhappy with my having a job on the [Victoria] Times.... They didn’t feel that either my sister or I should be working in the first place. My father got poison pen letters from people saying “What are your daughters doing taking the bread out of the mouths of starving people.”*

—Illustrated History of British Columbia, 2001

During the Depression, many women who did have jobs were forced into unwanted retirement and married women were fired from their jobs. Most were told that these measures were taken to provide jobs for men supporting families. But Agnes Macphail, the first female Member of Parliament in the House of Commons, claimed that in taking employment, women were doing what they could to ensure the survival of themselves and their families.

Most families suffering economic hardship relied heavily on women’s capacity to find ways to cut household costs. They gave up commercially prepared foods and kept bees to cut down on sugar costs, expanded gardens, and picked wild berries. They found ways to reuse everything, such as transforming old coats into quilts. Flour bags were particularly useful, as this mother recalled: “You’d take an empty sack of flour... give it a good wash and bleach out the lettering... cut two holes for the arms and one at the top for the neck.... You had a dress for a nine-year-old girl.”

For women on the Prairies, the dust bowl added another problem on washday:

*I could never get my laundry white. I’d try and try. The children’s things, the curtains and the sheets, why they all looked as grey as that sky out there. I’d work my fingers to the bone scrubbing.... We were lucky to have a deep well and good water but even down that well... the water came up with dirt and dust in it.... The wind blew that dust all the time. It never stopped.*

—Ten Lost Years, 1997

**FIGURE 4–11** The poster on the left encouraged women to come to Canada in the 1920s. The photograph on the right shows the great deal of physical labour required on washday, particularly the constant hauling of water from a well (most homes did not have running water) and the tiring scrubbing on a washboard.

**Thinking Critically** Compare and contrast the depictions of a farm woman’s life in these images. Think of a present-day example where the media’s portrayal of a situation differs from reality.
Suffragist Nellie McClung lamented the effect of constant work on women:

On the farms before electricity and labour saving devices lightened their loads, women’s work obsessed them. Their hours were endless.... Many broke under the strain and died, and their places were filled without undue delay. Some man’s sister or sister-in-law came from Ontario to take the dead woman’s place.

—The Stream Runs Fast, 2007

Pregnancy and the young offspring it brought added to the household’s difficulties. The sale and advertisement of birth control information and abortion were offences under the Criminal Code, yet couples managed to have fewer children as the Depression deepened. The general fertility rate (the annual number of births per 1000 women) went from 128 in 1921 to 99 in 1931 and to 89 by the end of the decade.

Many single and married women in desperation wrote to Prime Minister Bennett. Barbara Harris, a young woman from Moose Jaw, explained her difficult situation:

Dear Sir-
I am 19 yrs. of age Mr. Bennett, but it really is impossible for me to get work. I haven’t got any shoes to wear & no coat & so I haven’t any home or any relatives here. I'm all alone as it were. Now I tho’t perhaps you could help me a little.... Here... it just seems impossible to get relief unless you go & work for your board & room & I can’t work like that as I need clothes so badly. It’s even a fact that not only haven’t a coat to wear but I haven’t any stockings either. Mr. Bennett if you could just help me out a little bit I would be very pleased & would appreciate it very much & would you kindly give me an answer.

—The Wretched of Canada, 1971

Bennett responded to many of these women by sending them $2–$4 of his own money. This was a lot of money at the time, considering that government relief was $10–$15 a month. Despite this aid, women and their families suffered greatly during the Depression.

A young mother from Manitoba described her dilemma:

Dear Sir-
I am a young mother of two small children a girl (6) and a boy (4) now in worst of hard times an accident happen'd, my girl was playing & fell and cut her face very badly. so out off this got a blood poison in her face, she’s in hospital now. Just at present I have no money to pay the doctor or fare for the train to go and see her... Now Mr. Bennett what I want to say is if you can lend me some money for a period of 3 or 4 months when my cows will come fresh I’ll turn you the money; everybody here is broke and no where to get.... So please lend me some money... and a couple of dollars wouldn’t mean as much as one cent means to me. I’d make you a mortgage for horses and cattle.

—The Wretched of Canada, 1971

Looking Further

1. What were the social attitudes toward women during the 1930s? What were the objections to women working during the Depression?

2. Evaluate the impact of the Depression on married women compared to married men, and on single women compared to single men.

3. Make a list of three to five lessons that we should learn from the difficulties faced by women and families during the Depression. Share your list.

4. What roles do you think women would have preferred during the 1930s?
The Plight of Women

For women, there were few jobs other than domestic work, which paid just a few dollars a week. Some critics believed working women actually contributed to the Depression. Médéric Martin, a former mayor of Montréal, summed up the attitude of many toward working women:

Wouldn’t national life be happier, saner, safer if a great many of these men [the unemployed] could be given work now being done by women, even if it meant that these women would have to sacrifice their financial independence? Go home to be supported by father, husband, or brother as they were in the old pre-feministic days?

–Chatelaine, September 1933

Most unemployed single women did not qualify for government relief and had to rely on charities to get by. In Vancouver, women’s groups such as the Women’s Labour League campaigned for more support. As a result, the city provided milk for babies, clothing allowances for women and children, and medical care for pregnant women during the Depression.

The Fortunate Minority

While the majority of people suffered during the Depression, wealthy Canadians with secure jobs noticed little change in their lifestyle. Gray Miller, for example, earned $25 000 a year as chief executive officer of Imperial Tobacco. In contrast, clerks in the company’s United Cigar Store earned only $1300 a year working 54 hours a week. As deflation led to falling prices, money was worth more and the living conditions for those with secure jobs improved. A young reporter in Victoria who was paid only $15 a week found that he could live well. Saturday night dances at the Empress Hotel were easily affordable. “For two dollars a couple, a three-course dinner was served with full valet service at tables arranged in cabaret style around a magnificent ballroom.” For the majority of Canadians, however, this lifestyle was an impossible dream.

1. What part of Canada was hardest hit by the Depression? Explain.

2. a) What seemed to be the government’s attitude toward people who had lost their jobs? Why do you think this was the case? Do you think this attitude exists today toward the unemployed?
   b) Compare the possible attitudes of people who received social assistance in the 1930s and those who receive assistance today.

3. What did people have to do to qualify for “pogey”? Why do you think people were given vouchers instead of cash?

4. Reread James Gray’s description of the 1930s on page 89. Write a first-person account of the summer of 1936 on the Prairies.

5. Write a paragraph describing conditions in Vancouver’s Chinese district during the Depression. Explain why conditions were so harsh. Include information you have learned from previous chapters.

6. Provide specific evidence explaining how minority groups fared during the Depression.
Responding to the Depression

Prime Minister Mackenzie King was unprepared to deal with a crisis on the scale of the Depression. He believed the situation was temporary and that, in time, the economy would recover. When desperate Canadians turned to the federal government for financial help, King told them this was the responsibility of municipal and provincial governments. The financial strain of the Depression, however, had bankrupted many municipalities. When the Conservative Opposition asked why some provincial governments were not being helped by the federal government, King said he would not give “a five-cent piece” to a Conservative provincial government.

King never lived down this impulsive remark. The Conservatives used his statement to build support during their 1930 election campaign. King lost to Richard Bedford Bennett and his Conservative majority government.

The Government’s Response

Prime Minister Bennett was no more in favour of government relief than Mackenzie King had been. He once told a group of students that “one of the greatest assets a man can have on entering life’s struggle is poverty.” Nevertheless, Bennett’s Conservative government introduced several measures to help Canadians through the Depression.

- Bennett’s government introduced the Unemployment Relief Act, which gave the provinces $20 million for work-creation programs. In spite of this spending, the economy did not improve.
- Bennett tried to “use tariffs to blast a way” into world markets and out of the Depression. He raised tariffs by an average of more than 50 percent to protect Canadian industries, which provided protection for some businesses. In the long run, it did more harm than good, as other nations, in turn, set up trade barriers against Canada.
- The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act was introduced in 1935 to help farmers build irrigation systems and reservoirs. But by this time, drought and poverty had forced many families to leave their farms and move elsewhere.
The growing number of jobless, homeless men drifting across the country frightened many middle-class Canadians. The “Red Scare” was still dominant in Canada, and Prime Minister Bennett feared these men would come under the influence of the Communist Party. In 1931, Bennett introduced a law outlawing communist agitation. Communist Party leader Tim Buck was convicted in defiance of this law, and spent two years in prison.

**Working for Twenty Cents a Day**

In addition to relief payments and soup kitchens, Bennett created a national network of work camps for single men in an attempt to provide relief from the Depression. In British Columbia, the provincial government had already established work camps, and these were absorbed into the federal camps. Work camps were usually located deep in the woods, so the men were completely isolated. Men worked on projects such as building roads, clearing land, and digging drainage ditches. They were paid $0.20 a day and given room and board. The food was terrible, and the bunks were often bug-infested. More than 170,000 men spent time in these camps.

**The On-to-Ottawa Trek**

In 1935, more than a thousand men left the relief camps in the interior of British Columbia in protest against camp conditions and to demand higher pay. They gathered in Vancouver, holding rallies and collecting money for food. Under the leadership of the Relief Camp Workers’ Union, the men decided to take their complaints directly to the prime minister in a protest that became known as the **On-to-Ottawa Trek**. Crowding into and on top of freight cars, the trekkers rode through the Prairies. Many people supported them by donating food and supplies, while others joined the trek. By the time they reached Regina, Saskatchewan, there were more than 2000 trekkers and their protest had gained national attention.

Bennett responded to the trekkers by calling in the RCMP to stop them in Regina. The protesters were confined in a local stadium, and only the leaders were allowed to continue on to Ottawa. The union leaders who met with Prime Minister Bennett had great hopes of being heard, but Bennett attacked the leaders as communist radicals and troublemakers.

Back in Regina, the RCMP were ordered to clear the trekkers from the stadium. The trekkers resisted, battling the RCMP and the local police for hours. The incident became known as the **Regina Riot**. One officer was killed, many were injured, and 130 men were arrested.
Trouble in Vancouver

When the federal government closed relief camps in 1936 and the provincial government reduced relief payments, many men were left destitute. In protest against the lack of government support, these men would conduct “sit-ins” at various buildings until the government responded to their complaints. In April, 1600 protesters occupied the Vancouver Art Gallery, the main post office, and the Georgia Hotel. Most of the protesters were convinced to end their sit-in without incident. At the post office, however, the men refused to leave; they were eventually evicted with tear gas.

Roosevelt’s New Deal

When Franklin Roosevelt became the U.S. president in 1933, he introduced a “New Deal” that created public work programs for the unemployed and for farmers. His most drastic action was the introduction of the Social Security Act. This Act provided several social assistance programs, such as old age pension, unemployment insurance, and financial assistance for dependent mothers and children. Under the New Deal, the U.S. federal government spent billions of dollars to get the economy working again. The New Deal did not pull the United States out of the Depression. It did, however, help millions to survive, and it gave hope for the future in a time of national despair.
Bennett’s New Deal

Bennett was initially reluctant to spend government money on relief. But in his radio addresses prior to the 1935 election campaign, Bennett surprised listeners and his Cabinet colleagues by introducing his own version of Roosevelt’s New Deal which included:

- fairer, progressive taxation so that people who earned more money paid more tax
- insurance to protect workers against illness, injury, and unemployment
- legislation for workplace reforms that regulated work hours, minimum wages, and working conditions
- revised old-age pensions to help support workers over 65 years of age
- agricultural support programs to help farmers and the creation of the Canadian Wheat Board to regulate wheat prices

Many voters saw Bennett’s change in policy as a desperate attempt to win votes and not as a true shift in his views. They questioned the value of social insurance programs for people who did not have a job and so could not make a claim. For most people it was too little and far too late.

KEY TERMS

- *laissez-faire* an economic condition in which industry is free of government intervention
- *welfare state* a state in which the government actively looks after the well-being of its citizens

FIGURE 4–15  U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt priming the New Deal pump

Interpreting a Cartoon What is the message of this cartoon? Why has the cartoonist chosen the image of priming a pump to describe Roosevelt’s New Deal?

FIGURE 4–16  To combat U.S. influence on Canadians, a public radio service was created, which became the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1936. The CBC ran Canadian-produced music and entertainment programs in French and English. French programming in Québec was very popular, but many English-speaking listeners still tuned in to popular U.S. shows.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What actions did governments take to deal with the Depression? Explain.
2. What were the main complaints of relief camp workers?
3. Do you think the On-to-Ottawa Trek was a success or failure? Provide evidence to support your opinion.
4. Which three of Bennett’s New Deal proposals do you think had the greatest impact on Canadians? Support your choices.
How involved should the government be in the economy during a depression?

Before the Great Depression, governments generally did not interfere in the economy. Instead, they relied on a laissez-faire approach, letting the free enterprise system regulate itself. During the 1930s, the public pressured governments to create work programs and to provide money for those who could not help themselves. Some governments, most notably the U.S., followed the advice of British economist John Maynard Keynes who believed that governments needed to jump-start the economy. He supported spending money on programs that would put people back to work. Once they were working, people would spend money. The increased demand for goods would mean more jobs and more spending.

Opposition in the U.S. criticized Roosevelt’s New Deal as a “...frightful waste and extravagance.... It has bred fear and hesitation in commerce and industry, thus discouraging new enterprises, preventing employment and prolonging the depression.” In Canada, Prime Minister Bennett’s campaign during the 1935 election promised his version of the New Deal. He said, “In my mind, reform means Government intervention. It means Government control and regulation. It means the end of laissez-faire.” Mackenzie King, who won the election, believed that the economy would improve on its own in time. He warned that

_A house is not built from the top down. It is constructed from the ground up. The foundation must be well and truly laid, or the whole edifice will crumble. To seek to erect an ambitious program of social services upon a stationary or diminishing national income is like building a house upon the sands._

—W. L. Mackenzie King, 1935

Many of the social programs created by the New Deal are part of today’s “social safety net” in Canada and the U.S. These programs help to protect people and businesses during an economic crisis. Since the Depression, people have debated the role of the government in Canada’s economy. Most Canadians believe that even if the country is not experiencing a depression, it is the government’s duty to provide basic services, such as education, health care, unemployment benefits, and other kinds of social assistance. This is referred to as a welfare state. Other people support a competitive state in which the government creates an atmosphere of competition for businesses by cutting spending on social programs and reducing taxes. Most Canadians believe in a mixed economy, where the government provides a certain level of social services, but is not overly intrusive in planning and running the economy (see Figure 4–17).

During the 2008 economic crisis, many governments referred to the lessons learned during the Depression to support intervention in the economy. With little opposition, the Canadian government provided $12 billion of economic stimulus. In the U.S., which was harder hit by this recession, the government supplied $787 billion to bail out failing industries and curb rising unemployment.

---

**Counterpoints**

**How involved should the government be in the economy during a depression?**

Before the Great Depression, governments generally did not interfere in the economy. Instead, they relied on a **laissez-faire** approach, letting the free enterprise system regulate itself. During the 1930s, the public pressured governments to create work programs and to provide money for those who could not help themselves. Some governments, most notably the U.S., followed the advice of British economist John Maynard Keynes who believed that governments needed to jump-start the economy. He supported spending money on programs that would put people back to work. Once they were working, people would spend money. The increased demand for goods would mean more jobs and more spending.

Opposition in the U.S. criticized Roosevelt’s New Deal as a “...frightful waste and extravagance.... It has bred fear and hesitation in commerce and industry, thus discouraging new enterprises, preventing employment and prolonging the depression.” In Canada, Prime Minister Bennett’s campaign during the 1935 election promised his version of the New Deal. He said, “In my mind, reform means Government intervention. It means Government control and regulation. It means the end of laissez-faire.” Mackenzie King, who won the election, believed that the economy would improve on its own in time. He warned that

_A house is not built from the top down. It is constructed from the ground up. The foundation must be well and truly laid, or the whole edifice will crumble. To seek to erect an ambitious program of social services upon a stationary or diminishing national income is like building a house upon the sands._

—W. L. Mackenzie King, 1935

Many of the social programs created by the New Deal are part of today’s “social safety net” in Canada and the U.S. These programs help to protect people and businesses during an economic crisis. Since the Depression, people have debated the role of the government in Canada’s economy. Most Canadians believe that even if the country is not experiencing a depression, it is the government’s duty to provide basic services, such as education, health care, unemployment benefits, and other kinds of social assistance. This is referred to as a **welfare state**. Other people support a competitive state in which the government creates an atmosphere of competition for businesses by cutting spending on social programs and reducing taxes. Most Canadians believe in a mixed economy, where the government provides a certain level of social services, but is not overly intrusive in planning and running the economy (see Figure 4–17).

During the 2008 economic crisis, many governments referred to the lessons learned during the Depression to support intervention in the economy. With little opposition, the Canadian government provided $12 billion of economic stimulus. In the U.S., which was harder hit by this recession, the government supplied $787 billion to bail out failing industries and curb rising unemployment.

---

**Analyzing the Issue**

1. Draw a flow chart to illustrate Keynes’ theory of how government spending could lift a country out of a depression.

2. In a two-column organizer, summarize the arguments for and against government intervention in the economy during an economic slowdown and during a period of economic growth.

3. Why do you think there was little opposition to government intervention in the economy during the 2008 recession?
Politics of Protest

As Ottawa struggled to find ways to cope with the Depression, some Canadians looked to new political parties for solutions.

The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)

The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), founded in the Prairie provinces in 1932, was Canada’s first socialist party. The CCF believed that capitalism breeds inequality and greed and had caused the Depression. The CCF supported a socialist system in which the government controlled the economy so that all Canadians would benefit equally. Their ideas appealed to a wide variety of people who were dissatisfied with the government’s response to the Depression. At the CCF’s convention in Regina in 1933, J.S. Woodsworth was chosen as party leader. The party platform, known as the Regina Manifesto, opposed free-market economics and supported public ownership of key industries. It advocated social programs to help the elderly, the unemployed, the homeless, and the sick. Woodsworth also urged the government to spend money on public works to create employment. By 1939, the CCF formed the Opposition in British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

The Social Credit Party

The Social Credit Party was another political party from Western Canada that offered an alternative to Canadian voters. The party’s leader, William “Bible Bill” Aberhart, was a charismatic preacher. Social credit was based on the belief that capitalism was a wasteful economic system. Under capitalism, banks hoarded money, preventing customers from buying goods that capitalism produced. Aberhart felt that the government should release money into the economy so that people could spend it. The theory of social credit appealed to many people from Alberta because the Depression had devastated their economy and they resented the power and control of the banks in Central Canada. Under Bible Bill’s leadership, the Social Credit Party won 17 seats in the federal election of 1935 with nearly 50 percent of the popular vote in Alberta. Aberhart promised each citizen a “basic dividend” of $25 a month to buy necessities. The federal government challenged the right of a province to issue its own currency, and social credit was disallowed by the Supreme Court. Despite this setback, the Social Credit Party remained in power in Alberta until 1971 under Aberhart’s successors, Ernest Manning and Harry Strom.
Union nationale
In Québec, Maurice Duplessis, a former Conservative, joined forces with some disillusioned Liberals to form the Union nationale, a party that supported Québec nationalism. The Union nationale relied heavily on the support of the Roman Catholic Church and rural voters. Duplessis blamed many of Québec’s social and economic problems on the English minority in Québec, which controlled the province’s economy. The Union nationale’s political platform was based on improved working conditions, social insurance programs, publicly owned power companies, and a system of farm credits. During his first term, however, Duplessis’ promises of reform evaporated, and he did little to improve economic and social conditions in Québec. Despite this, he remained premier until 1959 with the exception of one term from 1939 to 1944 (see Chapter 6).

Provincial Solutions
During the Depression, voters expressed their dissatisfaction with government inaction by voting out ruling provincial parties. As the CCF and Social Credit parties gained momentum in Western Canada, and the Union nationale gained power in Québec, voters in other provinces also made their voices heard by electing new governments.

In Ontario, the provincial Liberals came to power in 1934 for the first time in 29 years. The Liberal leader was a populist farmer, Mitchell Hepburn, who won wide support by championing the causes of “the little man.” He railed against big business and was fond of flamboyant gestures, such as auctioning off the provincial government’s fleet of limousines. Although Hepburn tried to improve Ontario’s economy, he did little to help the unemployed and was against unionization.

In British Columbia, Dufferin Pattullo was elected premier in 1933, returning the Liberals to power in that province. Pattullo was a strong believer in greater provincial spending power. He introduced reforms to shorten the workday, increase the minimum wage, and increase relief payments by 20 percent. Public works projects were launched, most notably the Fraser River bridge at New Westminster and a new city hall for Vancouver. Pattullo’s projects were short-lived, however, as the federal government challenged his authority to introduce programs that were considered to be in the federal domain.

KEY TERMS
Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) Canada’s first socialist party founded in the Prairies in 1932; advocated government control of the economy
capitalism an economic system in which the production and distribution of goods are owned privately or by shareholders in corporations who have invested their money in the hope of making a profit
Regina Manifesto platform of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation party; it supported public ownership of industry and social programs to assist those in need
Social Credit Party political party founded in Western Canada; opposed to capitalism
Union nationale nationalist French-Canadian political party led by Maurice Duplessis
Québec nationalism a movement advocating for the protection and development of Québécois culture and language
unionization the formation of labour unions
Building Your Skills

Decoding Photographs

Photographs convey information and provide insights into many areas of study in this textbook. Historical photographs are a useful primary source of information about past events. To make use of a photograph as a historical source, you must do more than look at the photograph; you need to interpret the information it provides. This is called decoding.

A photograph is an image created by a photographer. As such, it reflects that person’s world view. In the same way, any meaning you take from it will be influenced by your world view (see Chapter 1, Chapter Review). It is important that you try to be open-minded when looking at photographs.

Paintings do not claim to represent reality. Photographs do, but they can be manipulated. Images can easily be altered with today’s digital technology, so you must be aware of the intention of the photographer and how the photograph is being used when you try to decode its meaning.

Steps to Decoding Photographs

1. Examine the photograph carefully and describe what you see. Does the image have clues as to when it was taken and where? Who is in it? What is happening? Why was the image taken? Does the caption help to answer these questions?

Examine Figure 4–20. How many of the previous questions can you answer?

2. Analyze the image and ask questions. It may help to divide the image into sections to examine details. What are people in the image doing? Do their facial expressions and body language suggest anything? Are there signs, buildings, landmarks, or other clues visible? Analyze Figure 4–20 using these questions and any others you think are relevant.

3. Evaluate the photograph as a source of information. Do not simply accept the image as showing what happened. Is it reliable and credible? Is there bias in the presentation? (Review Building Your Skills, Chapter 1.) What is your evaluation of Figure 4–20?

4. Draw conclusions based on the information you have collected and consider what information is missing. The photographer frames the image and the story by focusing only on a part of what he or she can see. Does outside information help you to better understand the contents of the picture? Read about the circumstances of the On-to-Ottawa Trek on page 102. Does this change your interpretation of the picture? Why or why not?

FIGURE 4–20 Police and On-to-Ottawa trekkers during the Regina Riot of July 1, 1935
Applying the Skill

1. Apply the four-step decoding process to the images below and then answer the questions accompanying each image.

**FIGURE 4–21** Relief camp in the 1930s. Compare and contrast the description of relief camps on page 102 with this photograph. Do you think the picture was staged? Which details do you consider most significant and why? Is it a fair representation of a bunkhouse in a 1930s relief camp? Why or why not?

**FIGURE 4–22** Protesters at the free-trade Summit of the Americas held in Quebec City, 2001. What point of view does this photograph represent? Why do you think so? What evidence is there in the image that the protesters were aware that the media were covering the event? Compare and contrast this image with Figure 4–20. Which image is a better source of information? Why?
A Change in Federal Government

By 1935, five years after Bennett was elected prime minister, voters were frustrated by his inability to deal with the crisis of the Depression. In the federal election, they returned Mackenzie King to power. King did not support government intervention in the economy. He believed that in time, the economy would improve on its own. King also felt that spending money on social programs during a depression did not make economic sense, and that it was better to wait until the economy was strong before introducing these expensive programs.

King’s views clashed with the findings of the National Employment Commission, which he had set up in 1936 to examine the state of unemployment in Canada. The commission recommended the federal government spend millions of dollars on job creation and training programs. King ended up spending only a fraction of what was recommended.

Federal-Provincial Tensions

In 1937, King created the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations to examine the thorny issue of federal-provincial relations and to look into the responsibilities of the different levels of government. The unemployment crisis of the Depression had caused a great deal of tension between the federal and provincial governments. There was disagreement over which government had the right to collect tax money and which government should pay for social and unemployment assistance.

The Commission’s findings, referred to as the Rowell-Sirois Report, recommended that the federal government give the poorer provinces grants, or equalization payments, to ensure that every province was able to offer its citizens the same level of services. The Commission also recommended that the federal government bear the responsibility for unemployment insurance and other social benefits such as pensions.

The wealthier provinces did not like the idea of equalization payments because they did not want their tax dollars going to other provinces. The provinces also felt that many of the Commission’s recommendations would mean a loss of provincial power. By the time the Commission made its report, the economy had started to turn around. More people were finding jobs, and there was a mood of cautious optimism. Canada’s involvement in the Second World War meant most of the Commission’s recommendations were either pushed aside indefinitely or adopted later.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. List the political parties that were started during the Depression. Identify the supporters, leader, and policies of each party. Where on the political spectrum would each party sit?
2. What difficulties did provincial governments encounter in dealing with the problems of the Depression? Give examples from British Columbia and Alberta.
3. What were Mackenzie King’s views on government involvement in the economy?
4. What were the main recommendations of the Rowell-Sirois Report? Why did the wealthier provinces dislike these recommendations?
During the 1930s, a number of Canadians pushed the boundaries of science and technology. As the government looked for ways to ease the economic suffering, Canadians tried to find ways to improve the lives of others, especially in the areas of health and medicine.

**Innovations**

**Medical Advances**

**Pablum stands the test of time** In 1930, doctors at Toronto’s Hospital for Sick Children created Pablum, the first pre-cooked, vitamin-enriched cereal for infants. For 25 years, the hospital received a royalty for every package sold. In 2005, H.J. Heinz Company acquired the Pablum brand. How does the development of Pablum reflect the social conditions of the Depression?

**A revolutionary brainwave** Canadian doctor Wilder Penfield founded McGill University’s Montréal Neurological Institute in 1934, which became an international centre for education and research on the brain. Penfield is most known for developing a surgical treatment for epilepsy known as the “Montréal Procedure.” He used a local anesthetic so patients remained conscious during the operation, and then probed their brains to locate the site of the seizures. Doctors today still use maps of the sensory and motor sections of the brain that were drawn from these operations.

**Saving lives on the front lines** Norman Bethune was a Canadian doctor, inventor, and political activist. As a dedicated physician in Montréal during the Depression, Bethune provided free medical care to the poor and advocated for a social system of health care. He also volunteered for the Spanish Civil War (see Chapter 5). He was the first to set up a blood bank close to the front lines and organize a mobile blood-transfusion team.
During the turbulent years of the 1930s, Canada was led by two men who were studies in contrast. William Lyon Mackenzie King and Richard Bedford Bennett both had a profound effect on Canada. Yet history’s judgement of each man has been vastly different.

King, one of the most dominant political leaders in Canadian history, was prime minister of Canada for almost 22 years, from 1921 to 1930, save for a few months in 1926, and from 1935 to 1948. One historian has called him the “...greatest and most interesting of prime ministers.” Bennett led Canada for five years going from landslide victory in 1930 to disastrous defeat in 1935 after one term in office. Bennett’s negative historical reputation comes from what was seen as his failure to find a solution to the Depression. He eventually left Canada and died in England as a member of the House of Lords, forgotten by Canadians and generally ignored by historians.

Bennett’s One-man Show

In 1930, there were high hopes that the energy and competence Bennett displayed as leader of the Opposition would help the new prime minister find solutions to the economic crisis. However as the Depression worsened, so did his reputation. Bennett lacked the common touch and never wavered in his conviction that he was right. Even his supporters agreed that he liked to hear himself speak, paying little attention to the opinions of others. Members of his Cabinet accused him of running a one-man show, seldom informing them of important decisions. It was joked that when Bennett was mumbling to himself, he was holding a Cabinet meeting. This insensitivity toward the opinions of others and his unwillingness to compromise hindered Bennett’s efforts to deal with the worsening Depression.

Bennett was a millionaire bachelor who made his home in Ottawa in a suite occupying a whole floor of the luxurious Château Laurier Hotel. It was small wonder that poverty-stricken Canadians felt little affection for him. However, they did not see the private man who, according to Bennett, between 1927 and 1937 gave nearly $2.5 million to charities from his own income. Sometimes this was in response to the many letters he received from Canadians asking for his help (see the letters on page 99). Bennett secretly sent many of these people money. His generosity was uncovered in his private papers after his death.

King: The People Pleaser

King was a pragmatic and cautious politician who avoided making decisions if he could. He had a feel for the mood of the country and unlike Bennett, he was patient, willing to wait for events to unfold. He claimed that “it is what we prevent, rather than what we do that counts most in Government.”
King was notorious for dull and ambiguous speeches that blurred the issues and seemed to promise everything to everyone. These speeches infuriated many listeners. In fact, King was a skilled negotiator who wanted desperately to keep Canada united—French and English, the different regions and social classes—and his vague manner was a deliberate technique to try to please everyone. His successes seemed to result from being the leader who divided Canadians the least.

After King’s death, it was discovered that this apparently colourless man had, as he wrote in his diary, "a very double life." He had kept a detailed personal diary from his student days in the 1890s to his death in 1950. The nearly 30,000 pages in the diaries revealed that King was a believer in spiritualism, obsessed with clocks and mystical numbers. He held seances in which he communicated with the dead, especially with his mother, Wilfrid Laurier, and others.

1. Why was King a more successful politician than Bennett? Do you think his reputation as an effective leader is justified? Explain.

2. What were the strengths and weaknesses of each leader?

3. How was Bennett perceived by Canadians during the Depression? Do you think this image of him was justified? Explain your answer.

4. Is it necessary to know private details of the lives of our politicians to evaluate their role in Canadian history?

5. Should we judge politicians based on their accomplishments or personalities?

![King as Wobbly Willy](image)

Interpreting a Cartoon Mackenzie King was known for his reluctance to make decisions. Is the cartoonist effective in conveying this idea? Why or why not?
The Depression and Global Politics

During the 1930s, many countries around the world were suffering from an economic slowdown. As in Canada, many people lost their jobs and were destitute, and governments looked for solutions to the economic crisis.

Germany After the War

Germany, in particular, suffered the effects of the Depression. Since the end of the First World War, Germany had grown increasingly unhappy with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. It bitterly resented the “war guilt” clause that required it to pay $32 billion in reparations to other countries. These payments put a great strain on the German economy, which had been ruined by war. To meet the payments, the government printed large amounts of money in the 1920s, which in turn lowered the value of the German currency. As German money became worth less and less, the price of basic goods continued to rise.

To control this inflation, Britain, France, and the United States agreed to give better terms for Germany’s reparation payments. Germany made a modest recovery. However, when world stock markets collapsed in 1929, the weakened German economy was affected more than most countries. As you read at the beginning of this chapter, Germany’s inability to make its reparation payments affected the economies of other countries and contributed to the causes of the global Depression.

FIGURE 4–25 This photograph, taken in 1923, shows a German woman using several million marks to fuel her stove.

Using Evidence What can you conclude about the value of German currency from this photograph?
The Depression in Asia

The Empire of Japan, the only independent Asian nation with a colonial empire, developed a strong manufacturing industry after the First World War. Tariff barriers and the decline of international trade during the Depression greatly affected Japan’s economy, which relied on raw materials from the United States and other countries. To deal with the slowdown, Japan adopted Keynesian economics and increased government spending to stimulate the economy. It also put into action an aggressive plan to expand its territory to gain resource-rich lands by invading China’s northern province of Manchuria in 1931 (see Chapter 5).

Russians Embrace Communism

After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Russia experienced a series of political upheavals that led to a civil war. In 1922, Russia joined with several other communist countries to form the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) or Soviet Union. During the Depression, the Soviet Union’s communist economic system insulated it from the economic slowdown experienced by other countries. It appeared to many as though the communist system worked, while the capitalist system had failed. This in turn increased people's interest in communism. But the people of the Soviet Union paid a price for their economic progress. Joseph Stalin’s ruthless dictatorship robbed the Soviet people of their political and social freedom, and his economic and agricultural policies led to the deaths of millions of people (see Chapter 5).

Prelude to War

The economic crisis of the 1930s resulted in social and political instability around the world. As you will learn in Chapter 5, this instability was the perfect breeding ground for dictators who gained power by offering solutions and hope to desperate people. Ambitious plans to expand territories and resources led to a global military conflict, which had a profound impact on Canada’s development and its reputation on the world stage.

Practice Questions

1. Explain why Germany was affected so deeply by the Depression.
2. How did other countries try to help Germany during the Depression?
3. What effect did the Depression have on Japan? How did Japan respond?
4. Why did communism gain attention during the Depression?
CHAPTER REVIEW

CHAPTER FOCUS QUESTION
What were the causes, effects, and responses to the Great Depression?

For most people, the Great Depression of the 1930s was a decade of hardship and despair. Formative historic events such as the Great Depression often lead to conflict. As you have seen in this chapter, the Depression highlighted weaknesses in the Canadian economy and its close ties to the United States. As the government struggled to provide relief to many suffering Canadians, regional political parties were created that offered new ideas and hope to Canadians. The Great Depression was a national crisis that, in many ways, divided the country: the rich and poor, the immigrants and non-immigrants, men and women, and Western and Central Canada.

1. Create an organizer such as the one below. Provide as many examples as possible for each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Cycle</td>
<td>New Political Parties</td>
<td>New Social Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vocabulary Focus

2. Review the Key Terms on page 89. Then, go to the Pearson Web site and complete the activity.

Knowledge and Understanding

3. Continue the ongoing timeline assignment. Write the name and date of each event that occurred in this chapter on the timeline, and explain how the event contributed to Canadian independence.

4. What were the major weaknesses in the Canadian economy from 1919 to 1939? How did these weaknesses make the Depression in Canada particularly severe? How did Canada’s economic problems compare to those of other countries? Why was there a reluctance on the part of many governments to take aggressive action to correct these problems?

5. a) In what ways did the federal and provincial governments respond to the needs of Canadians during the 1930s?
   b) What does this response say about the values that were held by society at the time? Use the personal memories in this chapter to support your answer.
   c) How successful were the government responses?

6. Suggest three actions that could have been taken to prevent the Depression. Why do you think these were not done?

7. Why were Aboriginal peoples, Asian men, and women in a particularly desperate situation in the 1930s?
8. In your view, which political party would each of the following have supported during the Depression? Explain your choice.
   a) owner of a small business
   b) single unemployed person
   c) farm wife
   d) hourly paid worker

Critical Thinking

9. Construct a cause-and-effect diagram for the Great Depression. Refer to Building Your Skills on page 82. Use your diagram to list and explain three key lessons that today’s governments should learn from the Great Depression.

Evidence

10. Choose three images from the chapter that you think best illustrate the impact of the Great Depression on Canadians. Explain your reasons for choosing each of the photographs.

Judgements

11. With a partner or in a small group, imagine you are the founding members of a new political party in the 1930s. Your party is dedicated to solving the economic and social problems of the Depression. On a single page, write your party’s name, a summary of the country’s major problems, and a five- to ten-point declaration of your party’s program. Include a catchy slogan or statement that sums up what your party stands for.

Document Analysis

12. Use Figure 4–26 and Figure 4–27, and the content of this chapter, to answer the following:
   a) Which were the two worst years of the Depression? List and explain the evidence you used to reach your decision.
   b) What might explain Saskatchewan and Alberta’s steep decline in per capita incomes from 1928 to 1933?
   c) Which provinces do you think were least affected by the Depression? Explain your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>1928–1929 Average $ per Capita</th>
<th>1933 Average $ per Capita</th>
<th>Percentage Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Québec</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 4–26

FIGURE 4–27 Average per capita incomes, 1928/1929 and 1933