

STUDY NOTES: The Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression

Please Note: You are responsible for all the materials we have covered including assignments, handouts and topics covered from the textbook.

ROARING TWENTIES

Canadian History textbook Chapter 4- 103-138

ECONOMY:

Outcome 3.1 - Economic conditions: experiences of returning soldiers, rise of the union movement, urban manufacturing centers, uneven prosperity

Canada experienced an economic slump after the war due to multiple reasons including:

- industries had to change from war production (ex: weapons) to peacetime production (ex: household products), so many people temporarily lost their jobs while the factories switched over o
- Europe started to grow their own wheat again so Canadian farmers lost work as they no longer needed to ship wheat overseas
- price controls (put in place during the war) were removed so prices rose, especially on farm machinery
- soldiers returned home and needed jobs

In order to deal with the lack of work but also the terrible working conditions, unions were formed.

-Unions: groups of people formed to bargain with owners, typically formed to get better hours, wages, work conditions.

-In 1919 many thought it would be better to have one union for all workers so they had a conference in Calgary in March 1919 to form a branch of the One Big Union (OBU). In this conference, general strikes were encouraged in order to win control of the industries for which they worked. The government started to worry that communism was taking over.

-On May 5, 1919, Canada's first general strike occurred in Winnipeg (**Winnipeg General Strike**) because workers were concerned about wages and working conditions. 30,000 building and metal workers went on strike which then sparked strikes throughout the country. The government thought that it was a Communist revolution so they sent troops into Winnipeg to arrest and charge the workers with conspiracy. On June 21, **Bloody Saturday**, there was a fight between the strikers and the police, one man was killed and more injured. By June 29, the strike was over. The government discovered that it was not a communist revolution but rather workers just wanting better pay and working conditions. Although it was a defeat for the workers, it drew attention to the social and economic conditions for working people.

By 1924, the economic slump was over and the economic boom began.

-More and more consumer goods were produced.

-Foreign countries began to buy Canadian goods again – especially wheat.

-With the industry growing, there was an increased demand for iron ore, nickel, zinc, and copper.

- Increased American demands meant pulp and paper mills expanded.

-Automobiles became the 4th largest industry in Canada

-Manufacturing was centred in Toronto and Montreal but other towns grew with the industries, such as Hamilton, Kitchener, and the Windsor area. More and more people started to move into the city.

-Overall, life changed for Canadians, they had higher wages, were living in cities, could buy things on credit, could buy more products, weren't as isolated due to the radio, phone, and car, could travel due to new roads and passenger trains being developed. Due to the prosperity, people began to buy stocks in businesses, which caused the stock market boom.

-A mass consumer culture developed – many Canadians had more money so they spent it on consumer goods and entertainment. This then further increased production of these goods.

However, not everyone enjoyed the prosperity from the economic boom.

-Although wheat farmers made a lot of money, machinery was very expensive. Many went into debt because they could not afford the new technologies.

-Many people in the Maritimes suffered hard times because coal mining was no longer needed, since oil and gas technologies were developed. Many people started to go elsewhere for work.

SOCIETY: Outcome 3.2 - Postwar society: “Roaring Twenties,” women’s rights, social injustices, right to vote

- As the industry and economy boomed, so did society.

-The Roaring twenties was considered the Jazz Age. Big bands were the centre of the music industry.

-There was increased leisure time – radio and moving pictures were developed, fashion changed, great interest in the arts, sporting events, and the expanded use of the automobile (which impacted railway development, continentalism, the development of provincial road systems).

-Women joined organized sports, socialized more, had jobs, and went to university. **‘Flapper’ women** developed, these women wore beaded dresses, cut their hair short, and smoked, drank, and danced in public. Some of the new dances that developed were the **Charleston**, Fox Trot, and Lindy.

-Prohibition ended when the war ended, so alcohol was permitted in Canada but not the USA so ‘rum-running’ developed between the two countries. The Malahat was a famous Canadian Rum Running-boat. Al Capone (Scarface) was a prominent gangster. He was known to visit the city of Moose Jaw in Canada

-The Progressive Party developed in the 1920s. They stood for low tariffs and low freight rates as well as social welfare measures, such as old age pension and widow’s allowance. Some of their measures were introduced into Parliament due to the party’s success

However, prosperity and freedoms were not shared equally, especially in regards to women.

-Education was shorter for girls than for boys and typically focused on training for the home or low paying clerical jobs.

-Once they had jobs, some were paid almost 60% less than men.

-Although women had a lot more freedom, they were still under represented in government. In the 1921 election, four women ran for election to the House of Commons, only one female, Agnes Macphail, was victorious and she was the only female member for 14 years.

-They were not considered “persons” under the law so they couldn’t hold nonelected office positions, such as in the Senate. **Emily Murphy**, the 1st female judge in the British empire, decided to challenge the British North America Act which described how women were not considered “persons.” In 1927, in the “Persons” Case, she and four other female activists from Alberta petitioned the Supreme Court to rule whether the word “persons” in the British North America Act included women, in 1928 the court ruled that women were not persons. The “Alberta Five” then appealed to the Privy Council in Britain (the highest court of appeal for Canadians), in October 1929 they ruled that women were persons and therefore they were eligible for appointment to the Senate. In 1931, Prime Minister King appointed Cairine Wilson as Canada’s first female senator.

Other groups were also mistreated, including children, immigrants, and First Nations people.

-In 1929, children under 14 were no longer legally allowed to work in factories or mines. However, it often still occurred, especially in the cases of ‘Home Children.’ These were British orphans or members of poor families who were sent to Canada to start a new life. Many of these children were mistreated and forced to work.

-Immigrants, especially those who were non-English and non-Protestant, were discriminated against. Many believed that immigrants were taking jobs from Canadians. The KKK was present in Canada and they exerted political influence against the French and Roman Catholics. The Immigration Act of 1919 limited those who could come into Canada.

-First Nations people were forced into the policy of assimilation. Cultural expression was banned such as their cultural dress and dances. The Indian Acts were amended so that traditional forms of government were also banned. The League of Indians was established to push for the right to vote.

-All of these groups faced job barriers and intolerance.

Entertainment:

-Popular comedic actors: Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton (did all his own stunts).

-Other Popular Actors: Mary Pickford was popular Canadian actor and silent film star. Douglas Fairbanks was married to Pickford. He was considered an action star and swashbuckler.

-Famous horror film Nosferatu.

The Great Gatsby was a novel that showed off the flash and excess of the Roaring Twenties.

POLITICS: Outcome 3.3 - Growing political independence during the interwar period • The 1920s was a time of growth of national identity, an increased Canadian role on the international stage, and increased separation from Britain.

-In 1919, Canada had its own seat at the Paris Peace talks and independently signed the Treaty of Versailles; it also became a member of the League of Nations. O

The King-Byng Crisis – Prime Minister King wanted to have a new election in 1926 after not winning a majority in 1925 and losing the support of the Progressives. Governor General Lord Byng refused to call a new election so King resigned, he was protesting against a British appointed official rejecting the request of a Prime Minister. Arthur Meighen was appointed Prime Minister and formed a Conservative government, but Meighen lost the vote in the House of Commons so Byng had to call for another election. In the 1926 election, King won more seats for the Liberals and had a majority government. He then promised to loosen ties with Britain and ensure that the British Governor General could no longer override the democratically elected Prime Minister.

-1921 – Imperial Conference – Conservative Prime Minister Arthur Meighen opposed a British plan for renewing an alliance between Britain and Japan, due to strong American opposition for such a treaty.

-1922 – Chanak Crisis – Liberal prime minister King made it clear to Britain that only the Canadian Parliament would decide whether to send troops if Britain went to war, not Britain. This happened after Britain requested Canadian support for a possible war in Turkey after Turkey occupied the Dardanelles neutral zone. Canada did not send support and the war eventually was resolved by negotiations. It was the first time Canada showed diplomatic independence from Britain.

-1923 – Halibut Treaty – the Canadian minister of fisheries signed a treaty with the USA governing fishing rights between the two countries. This was the first time a Canadian, not a British, official signed an international agreement for Canada.

-1923 – Imperial Conference – Prime Minister King proclaimed that the Canadian Parliament had the right to make decisions for itself on all issues, domestic and foreign.

-1926 – The Balfour Declaration – It stated that Britain, Canada, and the other dominions were self-governing countries having equal status. The Governor General was only a representative of the British monarch.

-1927-1929 – Diplomatic Posts – in 1927 Canada appointed its first ambassador to a foreign country, the USA. In 1928, Britain appointed a high commissioner to Ottawa. Communication between Britain and Canada would be through this diplomat rather than the Governor General.

-1931 – Statute of Westminster – this British statute gave legal status to the Balfour Declaration of 1926. It specified that Britain could not pass laws binding on the dominions, or disallow the dominions' own laws. What had been known as the Empire was referred to in the statute as a free association of nations – the British Commonwealth of Nations