

CANADIANA SCRAPBOOK

# THE DEPRESSION YEARS: CANADA IN THE 1930s

Paul Mennill

CITIZENS  
Not  
TRANSIENTS

FOR JOBS  
AND  
FUTURE



# Introduction

The Great Depression was a decade that seemed to go out of control. Canadians did not consciously shape the events of the Depression; rather, they responded desperately to the seemingly uncontrollable forces that sapped the lifeblood of the nation. As the economy crumbled in the winter of 1929-30, hundreds of thousands of men and women fell out of work and faced a hungry, cold, insecure world. In spite of predictions during 1930 and 1931 that the economy would improve, conditions grew worse. In the cities, an overpowering, impersonal disaster called "unemployment" hit the unskilled workers, the factory employees, the young and the old. Unemployed families could not afford to buy goods. Prices and profits fell. Manufacturing slowed down. Unemployment grew worse. And no one was able to stop the vicious cycle.

As if economic slowdown and severe unemployment were not enough, the prairie farms where Canada's wealth had once grown in the wheat fields, faced the worst droughts, the worst dust storms and the worst grasshopper plagues ever. Year after year farmers planted crops only to see them destroyed before harvest time.

Governments and businesses were unable to cope with the immense proportions of the problem. Welfare programs were stretched well beyond their limits. The poverty problem burst onto the political scene with dramatic protest movements like the On-to-Ottawa Trek. Unhappy with the old political parties, many Canadians involved themselves in new social movements designed to rebuild the nation.

Strange as it may seem, not everyone suffered during the decade of the Depression. Those with a moderate but secure income found that a little money went a long way. For some Canadians, the confidence, optimism, and vigour of the 1920s continued into the 1930s. It was a decade of contrasts. The ultimate contrast exploded into reality in September 1939 when the outbreak of the Second World War speeded economic recovery and ended Canada's preoccupation with herself.

This book documents the frustrations and hopes of those Canadians who faced the Great Depression. The scrapbook format presents a unique assembly of photographs, documents, comments, and explanations which compel the reader to observe, to participate, to locate himself in the Depression. Each page reveals the lives of individuals and lays their feelings, passions, agonies and judgements before the reader. The interplay of photographic and print documents draws the reader into the decade.

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*to Sandi, Danny and Sally*

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# THE DEPRESSION YEARS: CANADA IN THE 1930s

PAUL MENNILL

*Saunders Secondary School, London*

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*Prosperity in the twenties*

In my younger days crops were good, prices of farm produce reasonably satisfactory, and an air of prosperity and general well-being pervaded the whole province. My father bought a new car, a new tractor, a new grain separator, a new washing machine and a new radio on the installment plan. No one seemed in the least bit worried about the future.

Then came the terrible stock market crash in 1929 and with it a fall in grain prices, which in succeeding years fell to unprecedentedly low levels. Unfortunately for the farmers, while the prices of farm produce grew steadily less, the freight rates and prices of farm machinery, gas and oil, and other farm necessities remained comparatively high. To add to my father's worries, a series of drought years set in when crops were exceedingly poor, often only averaging eight or ten bushels to the acre. The drought was accompanied by a swarm of grasshoppers which ate the scanty crops we succeeded in producing.

Within a year or so of the stock market crash other effects of the depression began to be felt in our district. Prices of all commodities began to fall, wage cuts became common and fear of unemployment began to affect all of us. Unemployed workers, seeking employment in the cities and in the grain fields, began to drift from one district to another, and transients who "rode the rods" became a familiar sight. Soon the cities were forced to set aside large sums for relief. I remember my mother estimating that during one of the worst years of the depression we must have produced meals for at least a hundred men during the year.

*J. A. Irving, The Social Credit Movement in Alberta, pp. 234-235*

### Some People Lost Everything...

One man, now trying to support a wife and three children on wages that in August average \$15.00 to \$18.00 for 52 hours, had lost his house, a building lot in which he had invested, a 15 year endowment policy and about \$800 of savings. Another, sole support of wife and child with wages averaging \$9.00 weekly, had used up the whole of the \$2,500 he had managed to save during the boom years. Yet another, trying to maintain his mother and unemployed father, reported telephone disconnected and radio repossessed. These are but samples of general conditions—except that we found only a small number of workers who seemed ever to have had insurance. Very few even reported bank accounts. Living expenses use up their week's pay only too quickly.

Here and there we would find workers who were still living tolerably despite poor wages. In

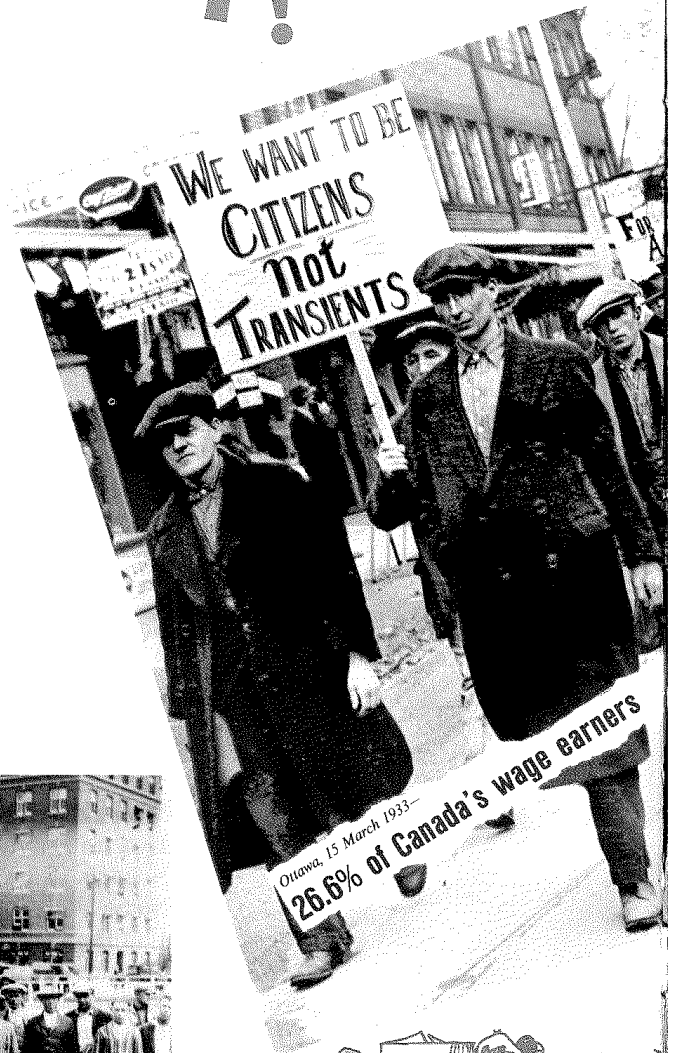
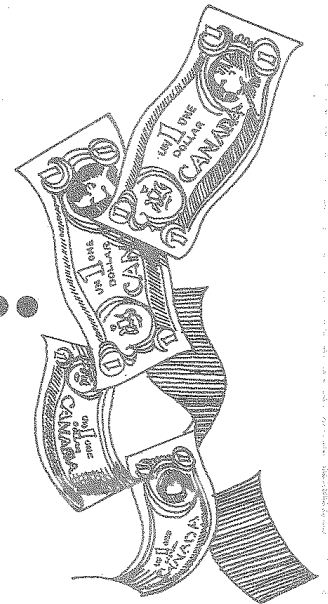
these cases there would usually be a family with several wage-earners, living together and pooling their resources. Often this meant serious overcrowding in rooms.

*F. R. Scott and H. M. Cassidy, Labour Conditions in the Men's Clothing Industry.*



*Many unemployed men became desperate for work*

# FROM BOOM... TO BUST!





Apparently the number of actual evictions for non-payment of rent was small during the first two years of the depression. However, reports from various places during 1932 show a great increase in eviction notices, and many instances of people actually being put out on the street, although in general the social agencies appear to have found it possible to prevent this. H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 244

Conditions were very terrible at Magrath during the early thirties. Wheat was 19 cents a bushel; the best pigs sold at two dollars each, not two dollars a hundred but each. A number of farmers shipped cattle to market, and were billed back for excess freight—the cattle didn't pay the cost of freight charges. Hundreds of people in our area were on relief. Mortgages and interest piled up to excessive rates. I had a quarter section with 100 acres irrigated. Irrigation taxes on my 100 acres piled up to \$9,000. What was the use of paying any kind of taxes when you had \$9,000 against a quarter section? Practically every farmer fell heavily into debt and was also heavily mortgaged.

J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, pp. 239-240

The winter of 1932 was grim and tough. Eggs were five cents a dozen; hogs two cents a pound; cattle around five or six cents a pound. There was great pressure put on by creditors to collect debts for land and machinery. The situation grew desperate in 1933. Evictions for non-payment of debts began to take place. I had to go out north of \_\_\_\_\_ to give a family the bad news that they were to be evicted immediately. On this farm a man and his wife, three or four children, and a bed-ridden mother-in-law lived in an old shack. I had to tell that middle-aged man and his fragile wife, "My instructions are to put you on the road allowance at once." Another time I had to seize all a man's furniture. This man lived in a poor shack on a farm with his wife and children. He owed money for the furniture which he had in his possession. I was ordered to take his furniture away from him. The furniture was removed. J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, pp. 238-239

#### FOOD PRICES IN 1932 IN WINNIPEG

Bread	4c loaf
Butter	15c lb.
Eggs	15c doz.
Hamburger	8c lb.
Milk	6c qt.
Peanut Butter	20c lb.
Potatoes	30c-40c per 100 lb.
Roast Beef	12c lb.
Sausage	7c lb.
Sugar	5c lb.

J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 146

#### INCOMES in 1931

Size of Income	Number of	Per Cent
	Persons Male and Female	of Total
Under \$1,000	1,526,000	56.2
\$1,000-\$1,500	643,000	23.7
\$1,500-\$3,000	448,000	16.5
\$3,000-\$10,000	85,000	3.2
\$10,000 and over	11,000	0.4
Totals	2,713,000	100.0

F. R. Scott, *Canada To-day*, p. 54

Teachers' salaries were drastically reduced. My salary was cut from \$1,050.00 to \$400.00 over a period of years. The number of unemployed teachers rose and salaries even in the most prosperous areas were not more than \$600.00 or \$700.00.

J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 235

#### NOT EVERYONE SUFFERED...

Some Canadians lived well in the 1930s. Prices were very low: by 1933 it took only \$3 to buy goods worth \$4 in 1926. With bread at about a nickel a loaf, hamburg a dime a pound, a good dress shirt costing about a dollar, suburban brick homes on the market at \$4,000 and less, and a thriving market in servants at one or two dollars a day, a family whose head worked steadily at decent wages, say \$20-\$30 a week, got through the decade rather pleasantly. In fact the average factory worker who kept his job in the 1930s enjoyed a slight increase in his standard of living (though his wages dropped, they did not fall as fast as the cost of living), and the full-time Dominion civil servant actually saw his standard of living rise by 25 per cent between 1926 and 1933. For a few people it was a time to make up the ground lost to inflation in the 1920s, buy that first automobile, hire a cleaning lady one day a week to run the new vacuum cleaner and electric washing-machine, take holidays, and relax in the evenings around the radio. They were the lucky Canadians. L. M. Grayson and M. Bliss, *The Wretched of Canada*, p. vi

THE FINEST VALUES IN CANADA

### UNDERWEAR

STANFIELD'S, TURNBULL'S, PENMAN'S

FOR MEN—  
Stanfield's Heavy All Wool Rib Gold Label Shirts, size 36 **1.49**  
to 46  
Drawers, size 32 **1.49**  
to 44  
Stanfield's All Wool Gold Label Combinations, per set **2.49**  
Stanfield's Extra Heavy All Wool Elastic Rib "Red Label" Shirts, sizes 36 to 44 **1.98**  
Drawers, sizes 32 to 42 **1.98**

TURNBULL'S DOUBLE-BREAST AND DOUBLE-BACK.  
This garment, No. E-88, has a famous reputation for long wear and comfort. For those who cannot wear the ribbed wool, this is fit knit **1.59**  
and just as warm. Shirt sizes 34 to 46  
Drawers, with double back for extra protection, sizes 32 to 44 **1.59**

Turnbull's Wool-Tex Combinations for Men **1.39**  
Stanfield's Extra Heavy Wool Fleece Lined Shirts and Drawers, each **89c**

FOR BOYS—  
You can rely on this Underwear for Boys.  
For real comfort—Wool-Tex Combinations, sizes 22 to 32, per Suit **95c**  
Boy's All Wool Combinations, extra long wear and real comfort in this line, per Suit **1.89**

#### A MOTHER WRITES TO PRIME MINISTER BENNETT FOR HELP, 1933:

Toronto, Ont.

I am writing to you because I am in desperate straits. I am not a beggar nor am I a person of nerve, but I am about to lose my home. I have paid \$3300.00 in it and now the mortgage company will foreclose unless I can pay up all that is owing this month. I have three sons, aged 17, 19 and 21, all so willing and anxious to work but can get absolutely nothing at all to do to earn a dollar, they have tried to get in the Camps but have been refused because they have a home in the city, or because they were unfortunate enough to be born in Toronto. I was born in Nova Scotia but have lived here over twenty five years. Yet I must lose all, is there no way, is there not anything that can be done. I am told that I am only one in thousands, does that better my position any? I am forty seven years old and have worked hard for everything I ever had, and it is hard to see it go now.

Mr. Bennett, I believe you to be a good as well as a great man, therefore I am appealing to you to help me save my home. Picture yourself, through no fault of your own, homeless, with sons willing but unable to provide for you.

Mr. Bennett, could you help me by a loan of five hundred dollars. I know times will be better as I realize you are striving toward that very thing as best you can and your great efforts will bring success, but my need is now.

Please help me or what can I do. Bennett Papers

TORONTO, 29 OCTOBER, 1929

# Stock Prices Crash Early!

MILLIONS OF SHARES VALUED IN  
BILLIONS SOLD IN STOCK BREAK

Prices came tumbling down in the greatest crash of all at the opening of the stock markets today and what took hours to accomplish on Thursday was accomplished in minutes this forenoon.

Thursday's crash has been described as the worst in history, but this performance was put into the shade in the first half hour today.

All markets were swamped with selling orders and when the bell rang to start trading, there was a mad rush to get out at all costs.

Prices didn't mean a thing and eyes were shut to values in the wildest scamper to get out of the market the exchanges have ever witnessed.

There was the case of a customer who held a 150 share block of a well-known stock. The quotation showed that it was dropping and at this particular time stood at 56. The holder had suffered a \$3,500 loss up to that time and in despair ordered his broker to sell. In the minute in which it took to get a phone connection and give selling instructions the stock had dropped another two points.

The small speculators unable to put up additional funds were the chief losers. Many of these are young clerks and salaried men with a few hundred dollars for speculation purposes. They were in large part responsible for the frantic unloading when savings were gone and they were unable to raise loans.

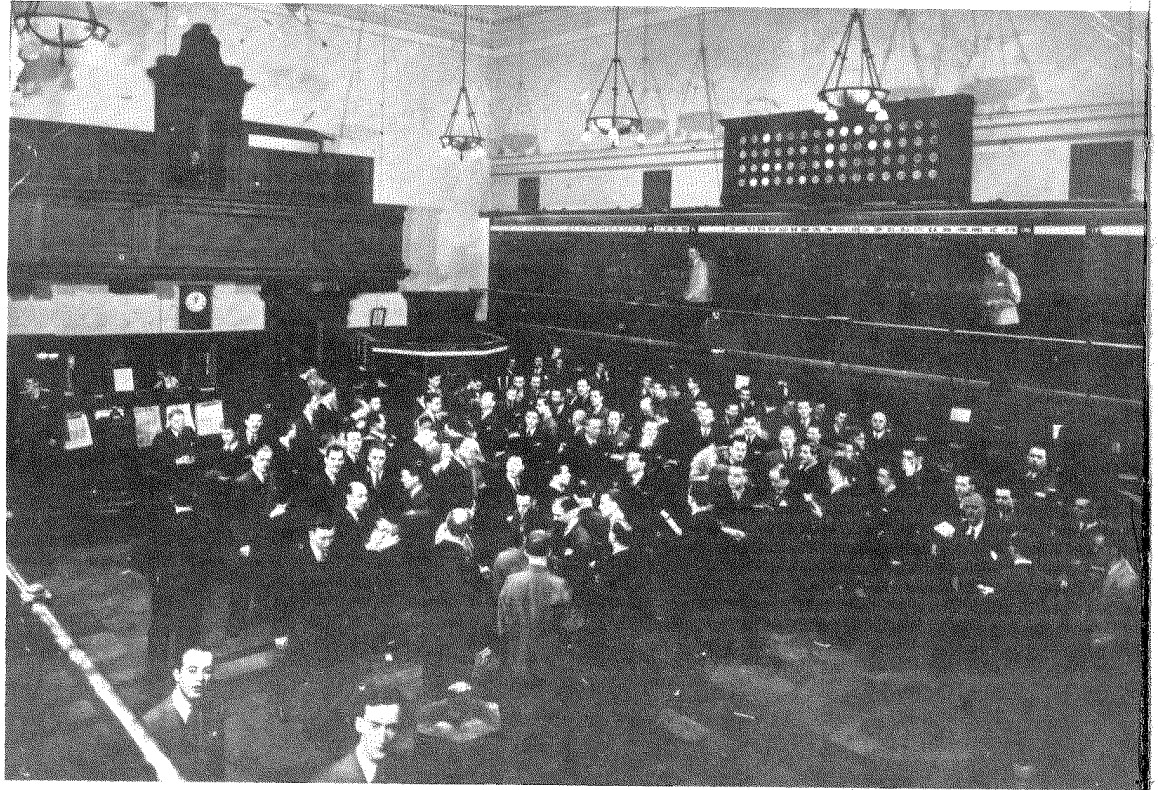
White-faced and distraught and with nerves at breaking point, these youngsters saw their money swept away as they stood helplessly by. One young fellow who had been left \$6,000 by an aunt and had bought several parcels of assorted stock with his newly gained funds was caught in the panic maelstrom and tossed everything overboard. He lost two-thirds of his inheritance without the quiver of an eyelash.

Losses have been enormous and fortunes wiped out overnight. Individuals who were rated millionaires one day are almost paupers today. An estimate of the losses suffered is next to impossible. The shrinkage in New York of listed and unlisted securities in the past five weeks is estimated at \$25,000,000,000.

Sixteen corporations having their securities listed on the Toronto Stock Exchanges have had \$1,100,000,000 lopped off valuations from the high for 1929 and the decline in the same issues on Monday was close to \$300,000,000 alone, or at the rate of almost \$1,000,000 a minute.

*Toronto Daily Star, 29 Oct. 1929.*

# CANADA'S ECO



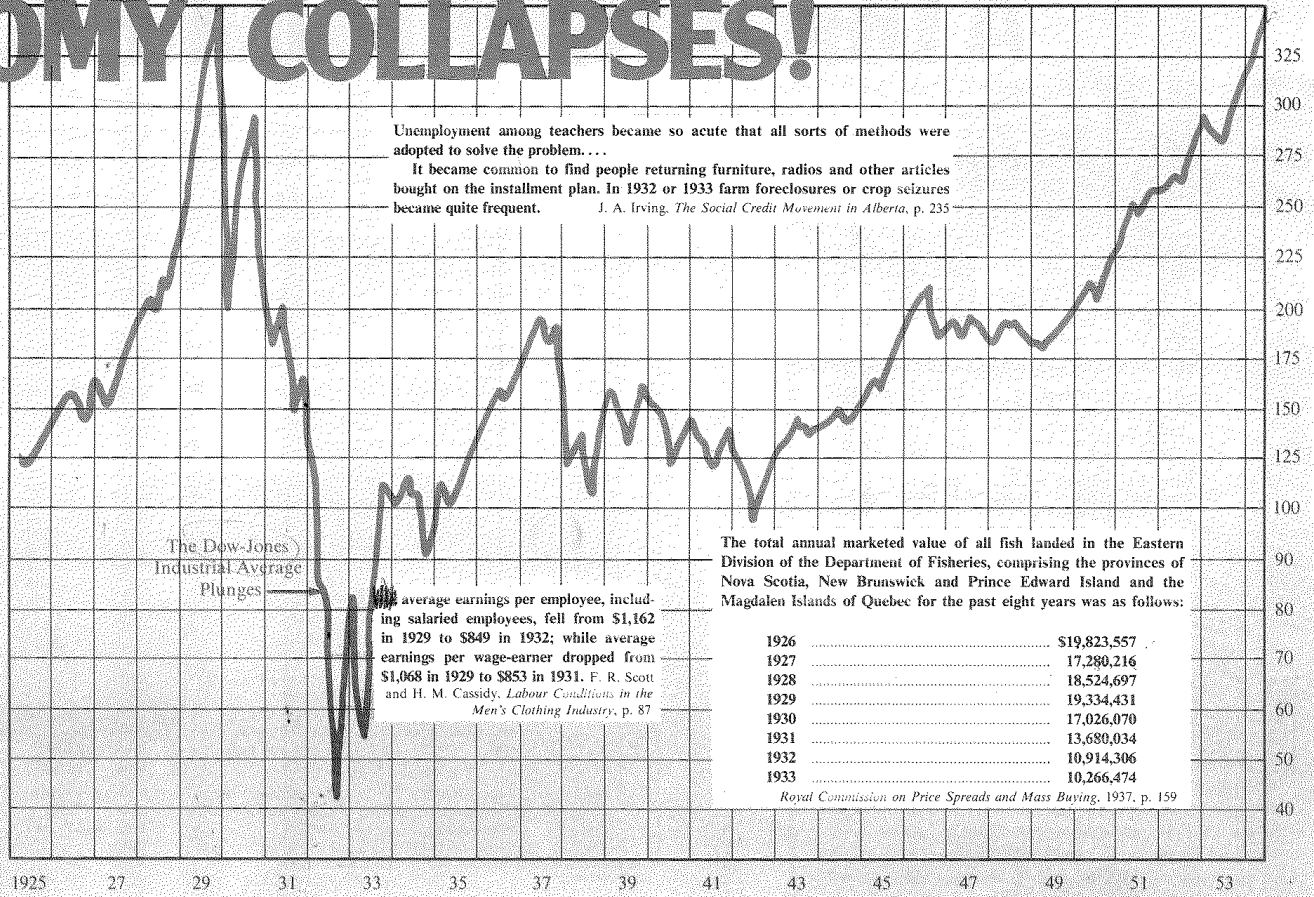
Scene of the Toronto Stock Market Crash

## SAMPLE OF DECLINE IN STOCK VALUES FROM HIGH POINT OF 1929 TO LOW POINT OF 1932

## SAMPLE OPERATING PROFITS 1930, 1932

	1929 "High"	1929 Market Value	1932 (May) "Low"	1932 Market Value	Profits 1930	Profits 1932
			\$ (000,000)	\$ (000,000)	\$ (000,000)	\$ (000,000)
Bell Telephone	183	78	139.3 ✓	59.4	413.6	380.7
Brazilian Traction	82	7 3/4	516.2	52.3	468.9 (gross)	293.5
BA Oil	35 3/8	8 1/2	94.1	21.3	41.1	43.7
Canada Cement	36	2 1/4	21.6 ✓	1.4	51.9 (gross)	26.4
Canada Cannery	28	2 1/4	3.8 ✓	.3	10.2	7.3
CPR	67 1/2	8 1/2	904.5	113.9	1,809.9 (gross)	1,239.4
Consumers' Gas	196 ✓	142	25.9 ✓	18.8	22.2	21.1
Distillers-Seagrams	28 1/2	3 1/2	42.8	5.3	38.2	15.3
Dominion Bridge	117 1/2	9	48.2 ✓	3.7	23.8	12.3
Dominion Stores	55	13 1/2	14.9 ✓	3.6	24.1	23.0
Ford of Canada	70	5 1/2	111.2	9.1	458.6 (sales)	171.7
Hamilton Bridge	79	.2	7.9 ✓	.2	3.0	1.8
Imperial Oil	41 1/4	7 1/2	1,089.9	194.8	205.6	147.1
Inter. Nickel	72 1/2	4 1/2	997.4	56.7	166.8	33.6
Massey-Harris	99 1/2	2 1/2	72.2 ✓	1.8	.9	17.8
Noranda Mines	69	12 1/2	154.5 ✓	27.9	6.1	5.9
Power Corp.	139 3/4	6	55.3 ✓	2.5	37.0 (rev.)	9.9
Sherwin-Williams	65	7	13.0 ✓	1.4	7.8	.7
Steel Co. Canada	69 1/4	11	25.8 ✓	6.0	35.8	18.3
Winnipeg Electric	109 1/2	2	25.1 ✓	.5	24.3	20.9

# NOMY COLLAPSES!



## Why Did It Happen?

### The Economists Say . . .

"The Canadian economy depended very heavily on selling Canadian goods to other nations. When the Depression hit, those other nations stopped buying. It also caused the prices of Canadian goods to fall to low levels, and the whole economy suffered badly."

"After the very successful wheat crops of 1928, there was a surplus of foodstuffs in the world. No-one wanted to buy Canadian wheat."

"By the late 1920s, Canada's primary industries were reaching a limit to their development. But they kept on producing anyway. In 1928-1929, Canada produced more pulp and paper, more metals, and more automobiles than could possibly be purchased."

"The world-wide effects of World War I were being fully felt. The war debts and the reparations payments owed by the defeated nations had severely shaken the world financial system."

"The late 1920s was a period of too much speculation and credit expansion, especially in the U.S.A. Investors were allowed to buy huge quantities of stock on credit (margin). The result was highly inflated values and prices. When people lost confidence in the system, the whole bubble burst."

"When the U.S.A. found that its money had tightened up, there was no more capital to invest in Canadian industries."

"When manufacturers found that they had more goods than could be bought, they laid off workers. Unemployed workers lost their source of income and had no money to purchase goods. This caused manufacturers to lay off more workers. Once begun, the cycle was almost impossible to stop."

### The Hoboes Said . . .

"We wisely listened to each others views on depression. It's due to tariffs, to immigration, the price of wheat, the U.S.A., Russia, war, their "big-bugs", religion, the "bohunks". Nothing but war will bring back prosperity; no cancellation of war debts; no socialism; no God;—let's have the good old days; scrap machinery, to hell with motor cars, deport the Reds, deport the "bohunks," oust Bennett. . . ."

*Saskatchewan History*, Spring, 1969, pp. 62-63

# A DECADE OF HUNGER...

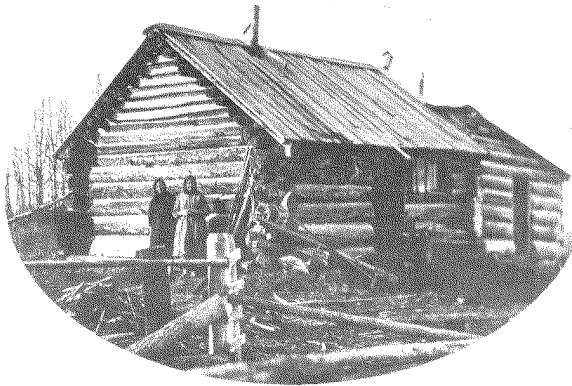


## MONTREAL RELIEF OFFICIALS GIVE ONE WEEK'S FOOD ALLOWANCE AND SUGGEST MENU FOR A FAMILY OF FIVE, 1932:

Food	Weight	Montreal Cost Approx.
Milk	13 qts.	1.30
Tomatoes	3 tins, 6 lbs.	.18
Potatoes	25 lbs.	.25
Carrots or Turnips	4 lbs.	.16
Cabbage	2 lbs.	.05
Onions	2 lbs.	.08
Dried Beans	1 lb.	.04
Dried Peas	1 lb.	.06
Prunes or Figs	1 lb.	.12
Brown Bread	10 loaves, 240 oz.	.60
Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat	3 lbs.	.15
Flour	2 lbs.	.10
Rice or Barley	2 lbs.	.15
Cheese	1 lb.	.15
Chuck Roast	3½ lbs.	.46
Beef or Pork Liver	½ lb.	.08
Butter	1 lb.	.26
Peanut Butter	½ lb.	.08
Shortening	½ lb.	.08
Molasses	1 pt.	.13
Sugar	2 lbs.	.10
		\$4.58

	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper
<i>Sunday</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Chuck Roast Baked Potato Turnip Prunes	Chopped Raw Cabbage Grated Raw Carrot or Cheese Sauce on Toast Hot Water Gingerbread Milk
<i>Monday</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Sliced Meat Tomato Sauce Onion, Potato or/ Stew with Dumplings/ Bread and Butter	Scalloped or Creamed Potatoes Bread and Butter Figs Milk
<i>Tues.</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Split Pea Soup Bread Rice Pudding	Scalloped Rice with Cheese Bread and Butter Milk
<i>Wed.</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Baked Liver Carrots and Onions Potatoes	Soup made with left over meat with barley and vegg. Bread and Peanut Butter Milk
<i>Thurs.</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Baked Beans Bread and Butter Figs	Cream of Tomato Soup Baking Powder Biscuits Milk
<i>Friday</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Scalloped Potatoes/ Cheese Tomato with Bread Crumbs Bread with Peanut Butter	Split Pea Soup or Creamed Bean Soup Prunes Bread and Butter Milk
<i>Sat.</i>	Rolled Oats or Cracked Wheat Molasses Bread and Butter Milk	Scotch Soup (made with Rolled Oats) Onion, Potato, Tomato/ Rice Pudding	Cabbage with Cheese Sauce Bread and Peanut Butter Milk

Bennett Papers

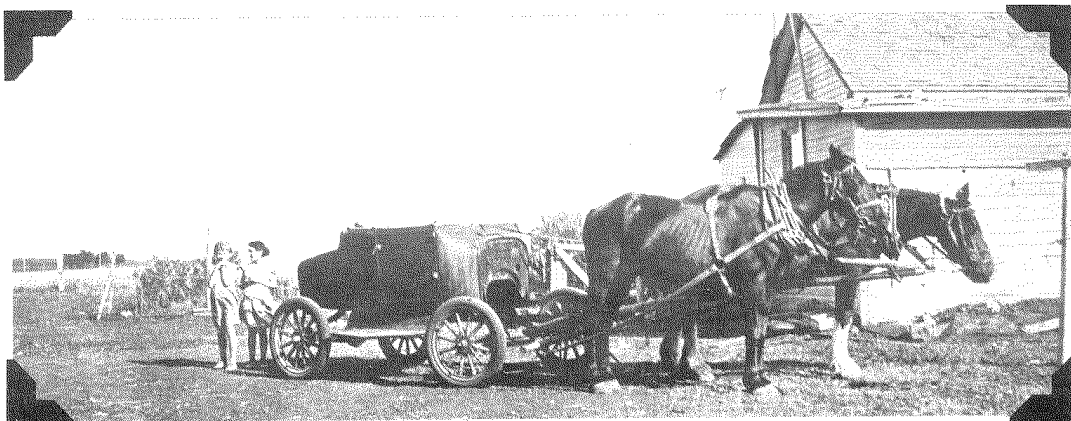
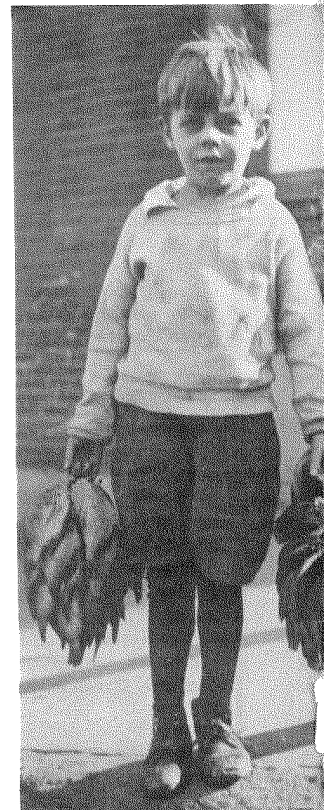


Great numbers of people have moved to poorer quarters, or have "doubled up" with friends or relatives as a means of economizing...

The problem of eviction notices has now become most serious in many communities, and relief organizations, with inadequate allowances for rents, are harassed to keep roofs over the heads of their clients...

A notable instance of deterioration in housing standards brought on by inability of tenants to pay rent and inadequate arrangements for rent relief has occurred in York Township, where during the present summer a tent colony has been set up in a public park to shelter a considerable number of evicted families. H. M. Cassidy.

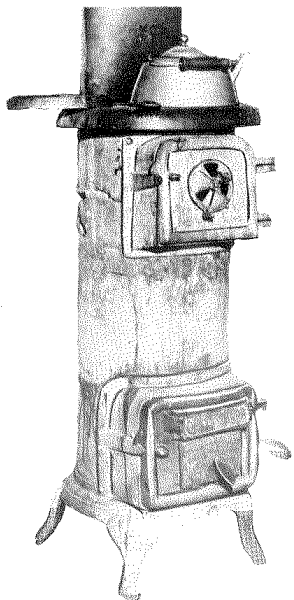
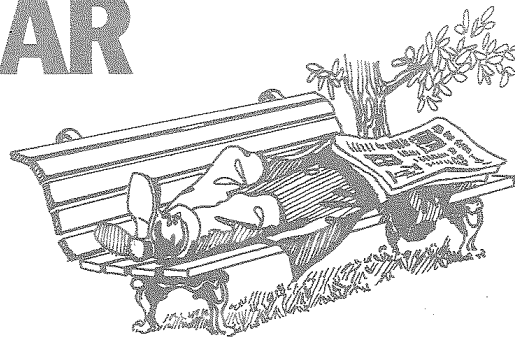
*Unemployment and Relief in Ontario, pp. 244-245*



A Bennett Buggy



# COLD... AND FEAR



## ACTUAL MONTHLY FOOD EATEN BY A FAMILY OF EIGHT IN NEW BRUNSWICK, 1934:

2 Bags Flour	2 Gallons Oil
2 Gallons Molasses	10 lbs. Rolled Oats
10 lbs. Beans	4 lbs. Lard
10 lbs. Pork	2 Small Bags Salt
2 lbs. Tea	
10 lbs. Sugar	

## A PENNILESS FATHER OF THREE LISTS THE AMOUNT OF FOOD IN HIS ALBERTA HOME ON 13 MAY 1931:

Bread: 2 home-made loaves  
Potatoes: ½ bag  
Tea: 2 oz.  
Milk: 2 quarts  
Salt: 5¢ worth  
Dried Raisins: ½ packet  
Oatmeal: 3 lbs.  
Wheat: 3 lbs.  
Eggs: 1 doz.

*Bennett Papers*

## LETTERS TO PRIME MINISTER BENNETT:

*Lambert, Sask., 1934*

... we have three children 2 of School age, one boy is going to School. Some day's he cant go to school as we have no food in the house & I wont let him go those day's. He has one Suit of under wear one pair overalls one pair sock's one pair moccasin rubbers & that all the clothes he has, not even a top shirt or a pair of trousers & the girl she cant go to school as she hasent proper clothing to go with & the little boy five years of age is in bad need of clothing Mr. Warden hasent had a Job sence the Seven Sisters poer house construction job was completed & I'll tell you weve had a hard struggle ever Since. ... we are living in a shack two rooms a bed room Just enough room for two beds & the house is cold theres two inches of Ice freezes on the water in the house cold nights we are shivering in bed at night we have no mattresses on our beds, only gunny Sacks & not enough blankets on our beds. Mr. Warden has no under wear no top shirt no Socks only rags on his feet no trousers only overauls. & they are done for, boots are near don my Self I have no house dresses & no wash tub & when I tell Mayor Veal those thing's he says why dont you go back to Manitoba where you came from ... there are times we live on potatoes for days at a time & its lasting So long I dont see how much longer it can last all I have in the house now is potatoes & there are good meny people the same in this town I am five months pregnant & I havent even felt life yet to my baby & its I feel quite sure for the lack of food.

*Bennett Papers*

*Angliers, P.Q., 1935*

... I am the wife of a return soldier who has served 4 years overseas under the Canadian army and I am a mother of 5 children living. On the 6 of Jan 1934 I took very sick as I was in a family way suffering from so many disease I started to loose my eyesight. And which the Doctor told my husband it was through weakness. So finally in the 16 of Jan when my baby Girl was born I was in real darkness I wasent able to see no one around my bed. And I stayed in bed 3 month Jan Feb & March without no treatment whatever because my husband was without work and which he has been for several years. So the first part of April I started to get up for the first time. On which I wasent able to see nothing with very little food in the house & 6 children it was very hard for me to get better so on the 11 of June my baby got a bad cold & she died. ... we had no money to get even a Doctor. So I half blind & losing a child made it worse for my health. So about the month of Aug it was a Doctor in town so my husband brought him home to examine my eyes. So he told me that he could not do me nothing whatever as I have to go through an eye specialiste. And which I have no money to preciede to the destination which it will be to Toronto or Ottawa so please have mercy on me as I'm only a young mother age 32 and the condition I am I cannot attend to my housework. ...

*Bennett Papers*



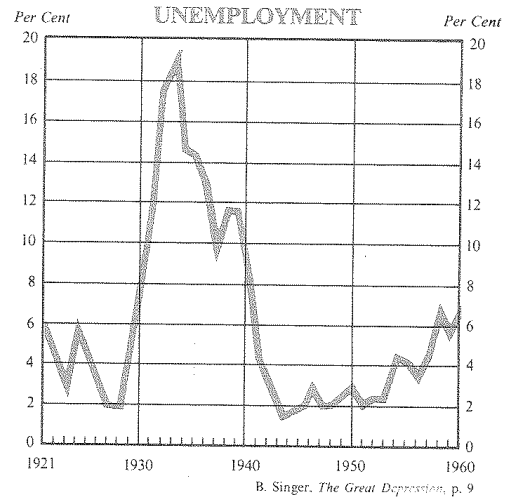
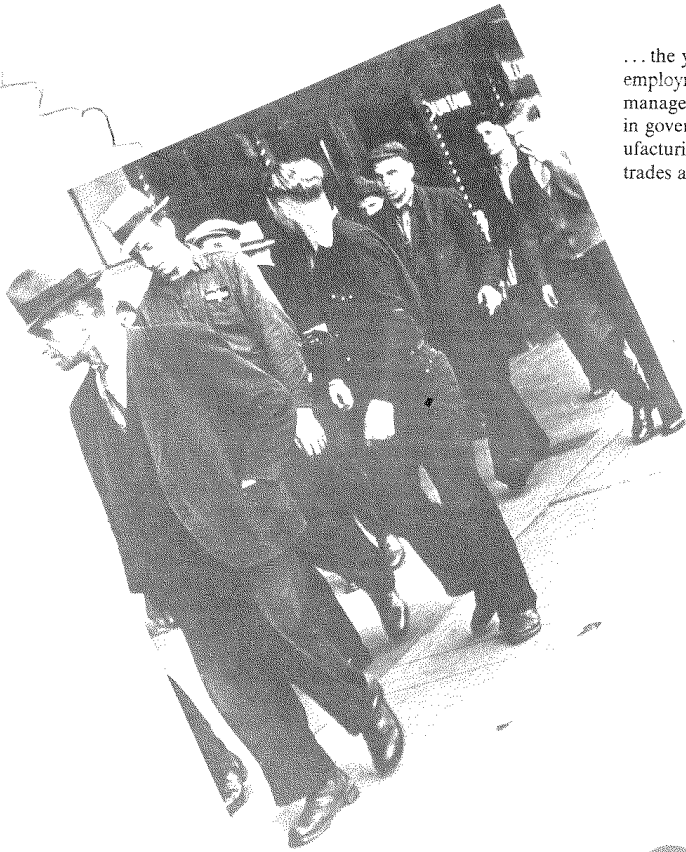
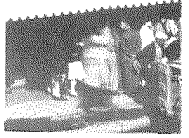
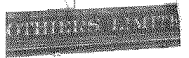
*Squatters in a camp in an Edmonton dump*

The housing situation has also been acute among single men. Last summer hundreds of men in Toronto had no place of abode and slept out-of-doors. One morning at 4 a.m. the writer counted about 60 men lying on the grass, usually with newspapers wrapped about them, in one small park in the downtown section of the city. At the time civic relief officials estimated that nearly 1,000 men were sleeping out-of-doors or in makeshift shelters. Several hundred of them were encamped in a "jungle" at the Don Valley, where they had taken possession of brick kilns that were not being used or of box cars lying on the railway tracks, or had made themselves rude shelters from sheet iron, lumber or canvas they had picked up. Other cities also had jungle encampments of the sort.

*H. M. Cassidy, Unemployment and Relief in Ontario, p. 245*



... the young and unskilled found it very difficult to find permanent employment; unemployment among wage-earners was lightest in managerial, professional and commercial-financial occupations and in government and education; it was heavier in transportation, manufacturing and merchandizing; and it was heaviest in the building trades and export industries, mining excepted. M. Horn, *The Dirty Thirties*, p. 11



# OUT OF WORK!

## FRIENDSHIP?

I worked in this little store on Bloor Street West. A little store but my boss had a good neighborhood business, vegetables, canned goods. Well, it was just a little store like there were hundreds in Toronto. A family store.

I opened up at eight because somebody had to be there for the first deliveries, bread, vegetables, and I stayed to six at night and I got \$7 a week which suited me all right and the owner would let me take home wilted vegetables and things he knew he couldn't sell that day. It wasn't much but my sister was with me and no job. We came from Timmins. So every bit helped and we got by. The room was \$6 a month, the one we lived in.

This girl I went to school with in Timmins, Edith, she looked me up and used to come around to the store sometimes or up to the room to eat. She didn't have a job. Edith and I were girl friends in that I'd known her since I was a kid. You could say we were good friends.

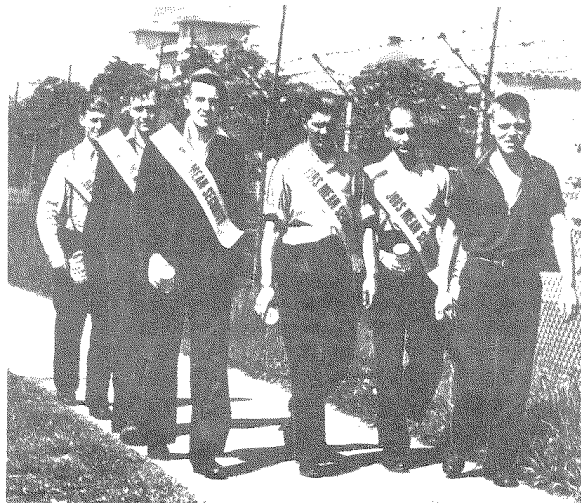
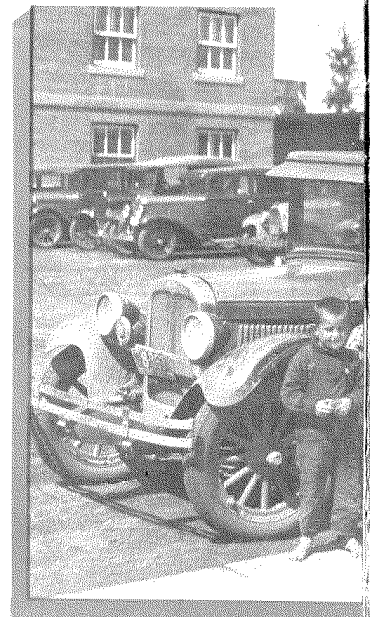
One Saturday afternoon the owner, this Italian, he asks me if I would work for \$5 a week and I said I was supporting my sister so how could I. It wasn't fair, I told him. Wasn't my work good? I didn't steal from him. So he said he was sorry but he'd have to let me go and there I was, one hour I've got a job and the next minute, and without actually saying I wouldn't take the \$2 cut, like a 30 per cent cut, I was out.

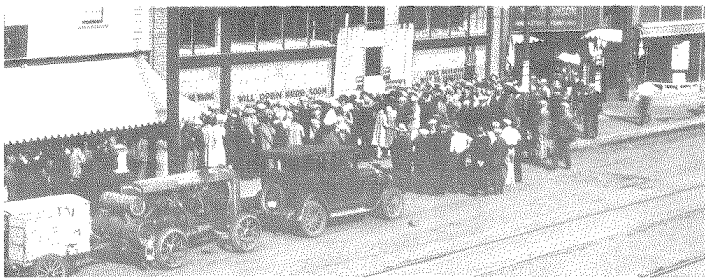
I went back Tuesday to get some things I'd left in the backroom, and guess who was clerking behind the counter? Sure. You don't have to guess too hard. My friend, my wonderful friend Edith. She'd gone around behind my back and told Aiello, the store owner, she'd work for \$5. That happened a lot in those days. When it was between friendship and a job, friendship just went out the window. It was four months before I got another job.

B. Broadbent, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 218

In the town of Sydney and the mining towns... there are approximately 1,500 young men between the ages of 18 and 23 who are unemployed and never as yet have had work. Sydney and Glace Bay each have 400 and 500; Sydney Mines and North Sydney each 200 and another 2 or 3 hundred divided between New Waterford and Dominion. These young men are living with their parents who in practically every instance are receiving inadequate wages and in many cases the parents drawing direct relief. This is a condition which should be rectified if at all possible.

Bennett Papers





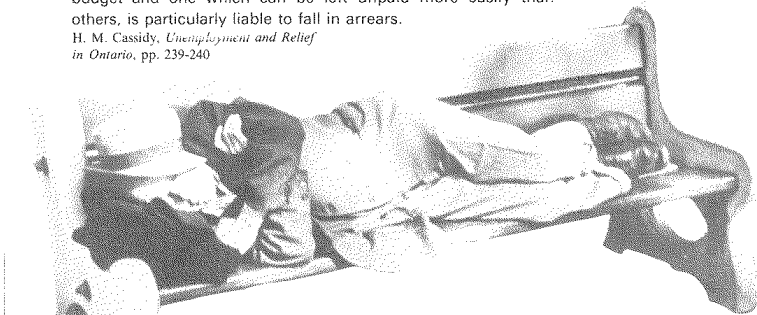
Waiting in line for six jobs in Edmonton, 1934

The first effect of unemployment upon the worker, of course, is to strike at any savings he may have accumulated. . . .

Another result of unemployment is to make impossible payments upon houses, furniture or other goods being bought on the installment plan . . .

When the savings of the unemployed family are depleted, or when there are no savings of any amount to draw upon at the beginning of the unemployment period (which is probably characteristic of the majority of working-class households), debts begin to pile up with landlord, butcher, grocer, baker, doctor, and others. Rent, since it is one of the heaviest items of the budget and one which can be left unpaid more easily than others, is particularly liable to fall in arrears.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, pp. 239-240



Destitute blacksmith and family in Edmonton



### A DESPERATE FATHER EXPLAINS . . .

I have been unemployed for 26 months and am married and have three children all sick ages 4 years, 2½ years and 14 months.

We have lost our home, furniture and all during the 26 months of unemployment.

I was employed by the Manitoba Telephone System for some years since leaving school in 1914.

I was discharged on Feb. 25th 1930

and have not done any work since that time. On the 20th of February the city of Winnipeg refused to give me further assistance. . . the result is that we have had many a hungry day since then and now the Landlord has placed us upon the Street and that is where I am now with my family . . .

We are hungry, tired and desperate and cannot hold out any longer.

Bennett Papers

## WOODSWORTH PROTESTS GOVERNMENT ACTIONS. . .

J. S. WOODSWORTH: . . . How do we actually deal with the large number of people who are today unemployed? May I point out that there is a certain class of them whom we are simply getting rid of. Out of a grand total of deportations for the past year and a half of some 15,368, there were 9,446 who were deported simply because they had become public charges. I am not holding the government altogether responsible for this action because I know that there has been a good deal of pressure on the part of municipalities to have these people deported; but it is not fair that when we have invited immigrants to come to this country, people who very often have broken up their homes and given up jobs in the old land, having torn themselves loose to come here, expecting to find the opportunities which were promised to them, we should, as soon as they find themselves unable to obtain work, simply send them back to the countries from which they came. I do not think it is at all fair. In this land of plenty we should have assumed our obligations to care for them. *House of Commons, Debates*, 22 Nov. 1932

### A LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER BENNETT:

Hamilton, Ontario 1934

Dear Sir:

I am writing you as a last resource to see if I cannot, through your aid, obtain a position and at last, after a period of more than two years, support myself and enjoy again a little independence.

The fact is: this day I am faced with starvation and I see no possible means of counteracting or even averting it temporarily!

I have received a high-school and Business-college education and I have had experience as a Librarian. My business career has been limited to Insurance, Hosiery, and Public Stenography, each time in the capacity of Bookkeeper and Stenographer—briefly, General Office work.

When the Sanderson-Marwick Co., Ltd., went out of business I had saved a little money and there being no work there for me I came to Hamilton. Since then I have applied for every position that I heard about but there were always so many girls who applied that it was impossible to get work. So time went on and my clothing became very shabby. I was afraid to spend the little I had to replenish my wardrobe. Always the fear was before me that I would fail to get the position and then I would be without food and a roof over my head in a short time. Many prospective employers just glanced at my attire and shook their heads and more times than I care to mention I was turned away without a trial. I began to cut down on my food and I obtained a poor, but respectable, room at \$1 per week.

First I ate three very light meals a day; then two and then one. During the past two weeks I have eaten only toast and drunk a cup of tea every other day. In the past fortnight I have lost 20 pounds and the result of this deprivation is that I am so very nervous that I could never stand a test along with one, two and three hundred girls. Through this very nervousness I was ruled out of a class yesterday. Today I went to an office for an examination and the examiner just looked me over and said: "I am afraid Miss, you are so awfully shabby I could never have you in my office."

Day after day I pass a delicatessen and the food in the window looks oh, so good! So tempting and I'm so hungry!

Yes I am very hungry and the stamp which carries this letter to you will represent the last three cents I have in this world, yet before I will stoop to dishonour my family, my character or my God I will drown myself in the Lake. However, I do not hint that I have the slightest intention of doing this for I am confident that you will either be able to help me find employment or God will come to my aid.

But in the meantime my clothing is getting shabbier and I am faced with the prospect of wearing the same heavy winter dress, that has covered me all winter, during the coming summer.

Oh please sir, can you do something for me? Can you get me a job anywhere in the Dominion of Canada. I have not had to go on relief during this depression but I cannot get relief even here. Moreover it is a job I want and as long as I get enough to live I shall be happy again.

I have tried to get work at anything and everything from housework up but I have been unsuccessful and now I am going to starve and in debt to my landlady. I wouldn't mind if I could just lay down and die but to starve, oh its terrible to think about.

Bennett Papers

**TO BE ELIGIBLE TO OBTAIN DIRECT RELIEF PAYMENTS  
IN MOST ONTARIO MUNICIPALITIES (1931), YOU MUST:**

1. Prove that you are not able to support yourself and that no relative can help.
2. Be a man supporting a family.
3. Have been a resident of the municipality for at least one year before applying.
4. Turn in your liquor permit.
5. Turn in your automobile license plates and driver's license.
6. Remove telephone from your house.
7. Register at the unemployment office (to show your willingness to work).
8. Work on municipal projects from time to time.
9. Allow relief office investigators to come to your home to check on these rules.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, pp. 164-176.



The married unemployed had to bring their gunny sacks or some kind of container to a building behind the Daily Province building where they had doled out to them so much beans, macaroni, sugar, meat, soup bones, and so on. It was called by the unemployed the "Gunny Sack Parade" and was a humiliating experience.

People came from every part of the city to this one distributing centre, having to wait for hours in long line ups, then tote home, sometimes miles, the food ration based scientifically on enough calories to keep one alive. There was a campaign going on to have this system for the married people abolished and a system of cash or scrip established.

R. Liversidge, *Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek*, pp. 16-17

# ON THE

## Relief Payments Were Never In Cash

In all Ontario cities for which information is available, relief has been issued in kind or in orders for goods rather than in cash.

Generally the grocery orders which authorized relief recipients to obtain foodstuffs from retail stores were good only for specified items, staple articles such as flour, lard, salt, sugar, rolled oats, butter, stewing meat, potatoes, turnips and soap. The purpose of specifying the articles that could be purchased was, of course, to prevent families on relief from spending their allowances upon luxury foodstuffs. In some places families were left to obtain bread and milk from retail stores with their grocery orders, as they pleased, while in others there were separate arrangements for the distribution of bread and milk. Some cities issued orders on bakeries and dairies which could be exchanged for bread and milk tickets, and others gave out the tickets at their relief offices. Practice also varied with respect to fuel, the most common method being to issue orders for a given amount of fuel which relief recipients could present to the dealers of their choice.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, pp. 189-190



The X family of four persons—a man and his wife and two children—came to Vancouver from a prairie town in 1936, partly because the husband, a skilled tradesman, had lost his job and partly because they were advised to move in the interest of the wife's health. Although they had a fair amount of money on arrival, the husband was unable to find work and they were compelled to apply for relief within six months. Relief was refused, but they were offered transportation back to the town from which they had moved. A Vancouver doctor advised that the wife was not in fit condition to be returned and Mr. X was informed by letter from the authorities of his former home town that he would not be eligible for relief there. The man then refused to return to the prairie and relief was eventually given to him.

L. Richter, *Canada's Unemployment Problem*, p. 212

## FINDINGS OF AN ONTARIO STUDY ON RELIEF 1932:

The chief concern of the relief offices has been to supply destitute families with food and fuel. . . . Most of the cities did not issue new clothing, but a number arranged for the distribution through the relief office of second-hand clothing that was donated. . . . the value of food orders for a family of five varied from \$3.50 to \$8.50 weekly in eleven cities. This is one of the clearest indications of variation in relief policy from place to place that can be pointed out. Certainly it would appear that if a \$3.50 order was sufficient for a family in one Ontario town an order of \$8.50 must have been more than enough elsewhere. Or if the large order was necessary to provide destitute families with sufficient food the smaller order was far too low. . . . the minimum retail cost of adequate food orders in most Ontario cities can scarcely be lower than \$6.00 or \$7.00 per week for a family of five. . . . it would appear that the minimum cost of food and maintenance for a family of this size must be at least \$65 or \$75 per month in most Ontario towns and cities. In view of the fact that the scale of public relief that was issued did not approach this level in any of the cities that were studied, it appears that dependent families which were entirely lacking in private resources must have been compelled to obtain supplementary assistance or to undergo such privations as would lead to deterioration in health, morale and efficiency.

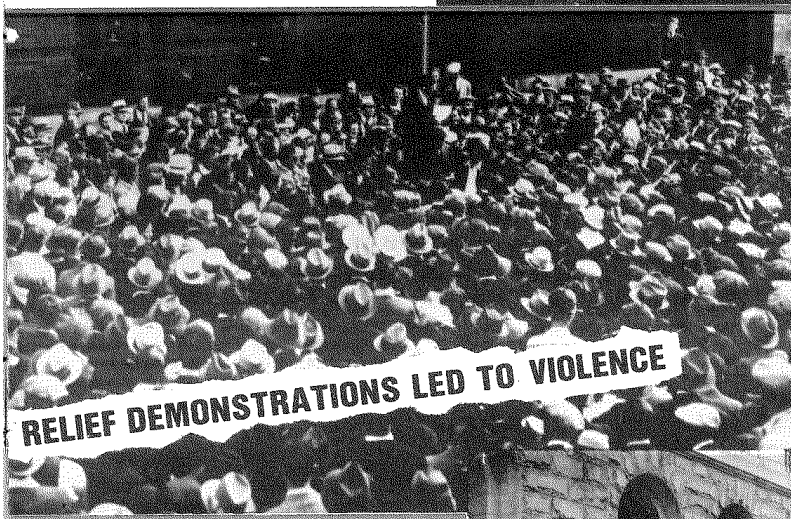
H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, pp. 180-187.

The most revealing statistics measured the numbers of people whose income was too low for them to survive on without public help. In each year from 1933 through 1936 an average of about 12 per cent of the Canadian population received emergency relief. Another 5 percent of the population normally depended on such existing programs as mother's allowances, old age pensions, charitable aid, etc. In the worst year of the depression about two million Canadians, or one in five of the population, were public dependents. These figures ignore the tens of thousands who were too proud to fall back on 'charity' and the millions whose standards of living fell but not quite far enough to force them onto relief. L. M. Grayson and M. Bliss, *The Wretched of Canada*, pp. ix-x.

Man being evicted from Vancouver Post Office



# DOLE



RELIEF DEMONSTRATIONS LED TO VIOLENCE



The aftermath

## The "Moving of Dirt"

The nature of the works undertaken by the municipalities to provide employment was very much alike in most places. First in importance came sewers, water-mains and trench-digging jobs, and then street and highway grading. In addition there were some park improvement and flood prevention works. One of the leading regulations of the governments in giving out grants was that they should be expended upon works that would require a high proportion of expenditure on labour.

All of these jobs involved the "moving of dirt" in large quantities, work that could be done by men without special skill or training for it, and this was the task upon which the battalions of the unemployed, armed with picks and shovels, were concentrated.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 135



## YOU MUST BE WILLING TO WORK...

Faced with heavy relief costs during the summer of 1931 and unwilling that able-bodied men should receive a dole without working, the municipal officials of London hit upon the idea of sending a number of their unemployed to assist farmers in the surrounding countryside who could not afford to employ hired men regularly. The scheme, which was begun in the latter part of June, provided that an unemployed man from the city might be engaged by a farmer to work for board and for "such payment as he feels the employee may earn in excess of his board or as he may be able to pay."

On its side the City agreed to provide relief for the families of married men during their absence on the land... Any able-bodied man refusing farm work under this scheme was to be ineligible for further relief. At the same time an attempt was made to protect the men against unfair working conditions by requiring the farmers to subscribe to a code of simple working rules, including a limit of ten hours' work daily and every second Sunday off duty for the employee.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 177

## LETTERS TO PRIME MINISTER BENNETT:

Upsalquitch, N.B., 1934

Dear Sir as I'm a widow and with five children I have recourse to you I try everything regarding the Parish relief and it is impossible for me to live with what they gave me I suffer with hunger cold etc. listen to this I have a great confidence to you after God you are the only man who can help me, in the month of January they gave me \$3.00 to live 6 persons I don't know how I could give my children three meals a day with so Small quantity. I tell you we are suffering and a great many Upsalquitch I think I have more right than anybody else to complain as I am a widow and I have an awful trouble for the wood.

My husband is dead a year ago he took is death in the Dalhousie Jail or Prison they put him in for an account of \$29 and he took a lung inflammation he ask for the doctor and they told him it was not an hospital the Prison was wet on account of having washed it and he slept in that state I went to a lawyer he told me if I had the money I will have my right but I was to poor to go with that in a process I wrote to the Provincial Government without any Success I hope that you will understand me and help me I don't think its a reason to let your voters die because they are poor a great many are Intelligent people and dies in distress.

Dear Hon. Sir a great many people here understand your Wisdom I am one who respect you and hope in you remain yours in note am in confidence. Bennett Papers

Ferguson, N.B., 1933

Dear Sir,

The respectable people of this country are fed up on feeding the bums for that is all they can be called now. This "free" relief (free to the bums) has done more harm than we are altogether aware of. The cry of those who get it is "Bennett says he won't let anyone starve". They don't consider that the people (many poorer than themselves but with more spunk) have to foot the bill. The regulations (which are only a poor guide after all) were too loose from the start and could be and were easily side stepped many times.

Getting relief has become such a habit that the majority think only of how to get it regularly instead of trying to do without once in a while. Nearly all of them have dogs too which are fed by the country and are of no practical use. One family near me has three and another has two and others one and I know it is the same everywhere. I also know that food enough to keep one dog will keep at least four hens and keep them laying. The family that has the three dogs ate at least 550 pounds of meat from the second week in November until the first part of March. There are the parents, twins 10 years old and four children from one year to eight. Who but the dogs got a good part of that? Also dogs everywhere are chasing and catching deer but if a man tries to get one for the family he is either fined or jailed if found out.

Bennett Papers

This day I walked in, and in the kitchen I heard the most terrible fight. Screaming. Yelling. This is what it was. They were on the dole, money from the county and that was the most terrible and humiliating experience. My friend's father had done the shopping and he had bought a package of tobacco. Ten cents. That was the argument. How dare he buy tobacco! The money should have gone for something else. Yell, scream, curse. To young and quiet little me, this was horrifying. Two people I loved in such a terrible fight over 10 cents.

Finally the father yelled, 'Okay, I'll never buy tobacco again as long as I live, but I won't buy tea either! Not even a dime's worth.'

That ended the argument right there. You see, she was a woman who loved tea, to sit at the table in the living room and sip tea and read, or gossip with a friend or just to contemplate the day, or her life, or tomorrow. He was telling her she'd have to give that up.

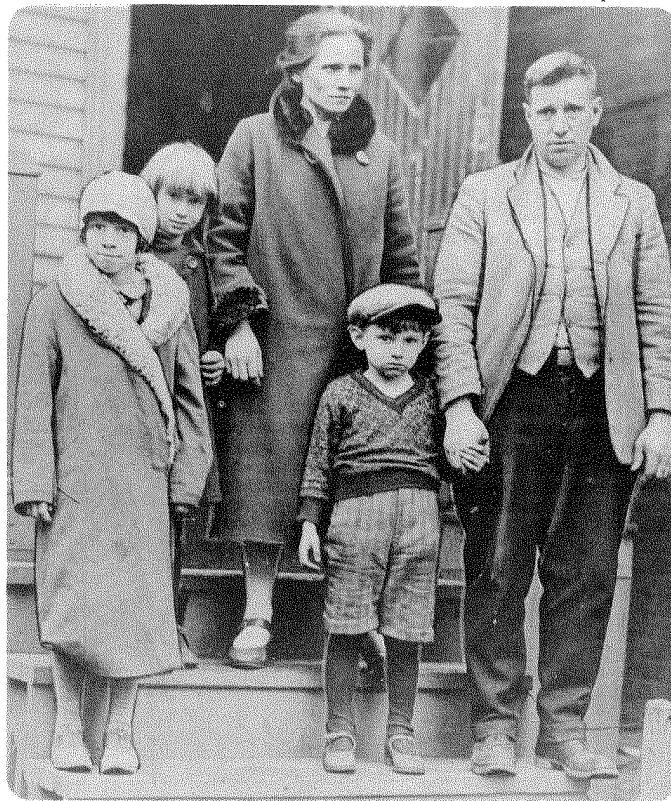
Oh, it is a small story, I imagine, and not very interesting, but here were two lovely people at each other's throats. Their nerves must have been worn raw. They must have been near the breaking point, trying to live on the few cents a day they were given and to keep up a front, keep up a facade of being one of the town's important families.

If he couldn't have his beloved tobacco, then she couldn't have her beloved tea. How sad, and yet that's what the Depression must have been like for so many people.

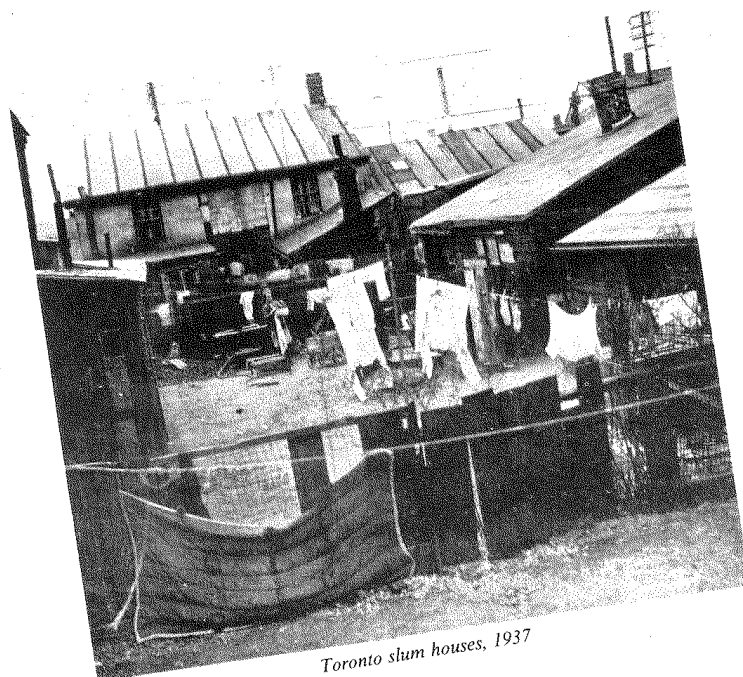
B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 189

Suicides, however, have very definitely grown in number. In 1930, 404 people committed suicide and in 1931, 405, as compared with an average number of about 300 for the three years 1927-1929. One medical officer of health reported that several cases of attempted suicide attributable to mental depression caused by economic stress had come to his attention, and other reports of this nature have also been received. H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 251

Mr. M. Tikarski rescues sleeping family from burning Toronto home, 6 April 1932



# TROUBLED FAMILIES...



Toronto slum houses, 1937

[The Depression has caused] the lowered morale and broken spirits of the unemployed. As a group they are discontented and unsettled in mind. Many have lost confidence in themselves, have lost their feeling of self respect, have developed bitterness towards established institutions, and are living in hopeless despair. In addition, the fact of existing on relief appears to have developed pauper attitudes in substantial numbers of working people. Practically all of the relief officers and social workers who were consulted in the course of this study commented upon the remarkable growth of dependent attitudes. The doling out of relief, it was said, was having a definite pauperizing effect. Fears were expressed by a number of relief officers and social workers regarding the effect of relief upon young children. It was said that in many instances parents were falling into the habit of sending the children to the relief office or the social agency to ask—or demand—food, clothing or other assistance; and it was felt that this experience of getting something for nothing was a very bad one for the children.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 253

## TO MARRY, OR NOT TO MARRY?

... young people who would normally marry and have children have been forced to give up plans of this nature, at least for the time being. In the nature of things this involves a certain amount of mental stress and strain, which is far from wholesome...

Many working-class housewives, in order to obtain some ready cash, have taken in boarders or roomers, a practice which frequently involves serious overcrowding in the home...

Particularly serious is the problem of the boy or girl of 16 or 17 who has left school and who would normally be at work but who is unable to find a job. Such young people have nothing to do with themselves, have no money, and are denied the ordinary opportunities of taking part in various recreations and amusements. In consequence, it is easy for them to develop bad habits. Moreover, they quite naturally (if unjustly) come to feel resentment against their parents who are unable to supply them with money and clothes; and against conditions in general, which deny them an opportunity of earning wages which would bring them in the things which they desire.

H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, pp. 250-251

Year	Number of Marriages	Year	Number of Marriages
1926	66,658	1932	62,531
1927	69,515	1933	63,865
1928	74,311	1934	73,092
1929	77,288	1935	76,893
1930	71,657	1936	80,904
1931	66,591		

L. Richter, *Canada's Unemployment Problem*, p. 141

In addition to all this government provision we have had much direct relief (thanks to the United Church in Ontario) for which no repayment is asked. Rev. T. worked like a Trojan in this distribution, opening a store in the old presbyterian church. The church at Brussels, Ontario, sent us a car of mixed fruit and vegetables, 57,000 pounds of it in all, apples, potatoes, beets carrots, onions, cabbage.... There was quite a quantity of beautiful preserved fruit.... Clothing, mostly second hand, but all good, was also received in immense bales and T. personally handed out every garment. He told me that he had given out 2,430 articles, ranging from fur coats to baby's diapers. There were a number of good fur coats both men's and women's - and much new underwear, donated. T. told me he was very much tempted to grab off a coat for himself which drew my attention to the fact that he did need one badly so I gave him father's old "Coon Coat"....

The United Church surely responded nobly - particularly from Ontario. Over 130 car loads of fruit and vegetables donated to Sask. and the railways transported all free.

M. Horn, *The Dirty Thirties*, p. 99



## A WASTED YOUTH?

As the nights got colder I would build a fire in the fireplace and let the kitchen stove go out. Then I'd pull up my old Boer War rocking chair and sit watching the fire while the cat snoozed at my feet. Sitting there watching the flames, I thought of the future and wondered what it held for me. The economy was in a turmoil and the struggle for jobs uppermost in everybody's mind. If you didn't work you went short on groceries. Unemployment Insurance benefits were not even in embryo then. The big question that confronted young single fellows was how to make a buck. I had quite a lot of grub in my cupboards, no rent to pay and my land taxes were payable in the far distant future. Living this kind of life was ideal for an elderly person with an income, but too serene and placid for me.

J. B. Vaughn, *The Wandering Years*, p. 149

My whole life has been spent in my native town and for more than fifty years I have been connected with the Coal and Steel activities at New Glasgow and Trenton [Nova Scotia]; during all that time I have never seen the situation so grave as at the present time.... There is a great deal more destitution here than we have ever known. My house is besieged front door, back door and side door from early in the morning to long past the dewey eve. A couple of evenings ago I had a visit from three different widows who have boys between the ages of sixteen and twenty years without employment and who are absolutely destitute. My daughter... has given away all the spare clothes we have and I find myself reduced to one pair of trousers and two pairs of shoes.

Bennett Papers

## LETTERS TO PRIME MINISTER BENNETT:

Harney, Saskatchewan

Dear Mr. Bennett.

*I just thought I would write to you Because I thought you would write Santa for me and tell him I was a good girl all the time. and Mamma tells me her and Daddy has no money to give Santa for my little brother and me and we cant hang up our stockings up. Would you send me some money and I will send it to him or do you think Mr. Bennett he would forget Bruce and me my I hope he dont I wish you write and tell him Im here and Imll be so good. but if Daddy has no money to give him he can't come. Will you write and tell me if you wrote to Santy.*

Bennett Papers

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear Sir:

*Sometime ago I wrote a letter to you appealing for help or employment.*

*It is now forty months since I had the pleasure of a pay check.*

*My family, are all undernourished, ill clothed and ill sheltered and are in need of Medical Assistance.*

*How long do you think we can carry on under these circumstances.*

*You stated that there would be no one starve in Canada I presume you meant not starve over night but slowly our family amongst thousands of others are doing the same slowly and slowly.*

*Possibly you have never felt the Pang of a Wolf. Well become a Father have children then have them come to you asking for a slice of bread between meals and have to tell them to wait. Wait until five of humanitys humans sleep all in one room no larger than nine square feet with one window in it....*

*I do not believe I am crazy but am reaching the breaking point.*

*My body, my muscles, my brain are like sodden wood crumbling under this strain. Through the lack of idleness.*

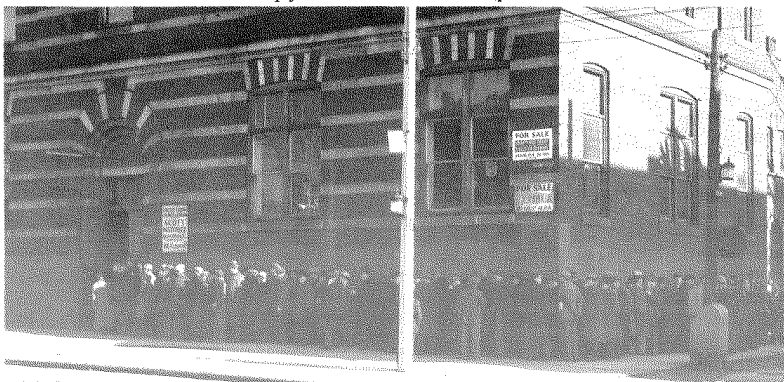
*I have knowledge of Electrical work - Chaffeur - Sailor Telephone and Telegraph work.*

*For God's sake please make a personal endeavour to assist me toward a brighter outlook immediately.*

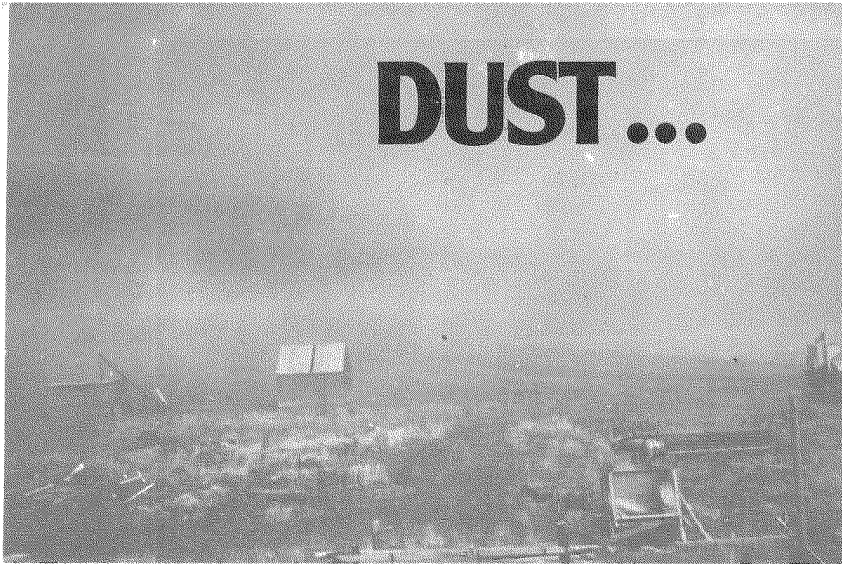
Bennett Papers

# AND HELPING HANDS

Line-up for the Scott Institute soup kitchen



# DUST...



Dust storm blowing across Alberta farm, 1933

## THE WEATHER IN THE DECADE OF "THE DUST BOWL"

- 1930 — Blizzards and bitter cold in winter (-30° F in Calgary).
- 1931 — Lack of snow causes drought in spring; dust storms begin; summer hot and dry; crops fail in Palliser Triangle.
- 1932 — Worst grasshopper plague in 50 years hits Manitoba.
- 1933 — Very severe winters; drought in summers; crops destroyed.
- 1936 — Winter cold reaches -50° F in Edmonton; many cattle frozen to death; prolonged summer heat reaches 108°F in Winnipeg; grain fields wilt.
- 1937 — Worst year ever in the Palliser Triangle; cold, snowless winter; lack of rain in spring and summer causes worst dust storms; prolonged summer heat reaches 110° F in Regina.
- 1938 — Good spring weather followed by summer hail and worst grasshopper blizzards ever; crops destroyed.
- 1939 — Return to normal.

I could go about 10 feet beyond the house fence and pick up a clod of dirt, as big as this fist. I'd lay it on my hand and you could see the wind picking at it. Pick, pick, pick. Something awful about it. The dry dust would just float away, like smoke. Like twisting smoke from that piece of land. If I tightened my grip, if I squeezed and crumbled her, then it would blow faster and right before your eyes in a few minutes that hunk of dry dirt would just blow away, even the bits of dust which collected into the wrinkles of your hand. I used to say the wind would polish your hand shiny if you left it out long enough. B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 38



The land had reached the point where it had been worked and worked and harrowed and ploughed so much that it was very fine. There was nothing to hold it and it just picked up and blew across the countryside. You look out and see this great cloud of dust coming and then you're in it and you can hardly see twenty feet ahead. The grit gets into your nose and mouth and into the houses, drifting in under the doors and windows. By 1936 the sky in Moose Jaw and Regina had a perennial overcast and the sidewalks were gritty with dust under your feet.

J. Patton, *How the Depression Hit the West*, p. 27

# DROUGHT...



## SASKATCHEWAN WHEAT PRODUCTION

Year	Acres	Yield	Production	Value of Wheat Sold off Farms
1928	13,791,000	23.3	321,215,000	\$218,000,000
1929	14,445,000	11.1	160,565,000	134,932,000
1930	14,714,000	14.0	206,700,000	72,293,000
1931	15,026,000	8.8	132,466,000	44,407,000
1932	15,543,000	13.6	211,551,000	56,889,000
1933	14,743,000	8.7	128,004,000	52,301,000
1934	13,262,000	8.6	114,200,000	57,950,000
1935	13,206,000	10.8	142,198,000	68,400,000
1936	14,596,000	8.0	110,000,000	81,000,000
1937	13,893,000	2.7	37,000,000	16,000,000

J. H. Gray, *Men Against the Desert*, p. 56

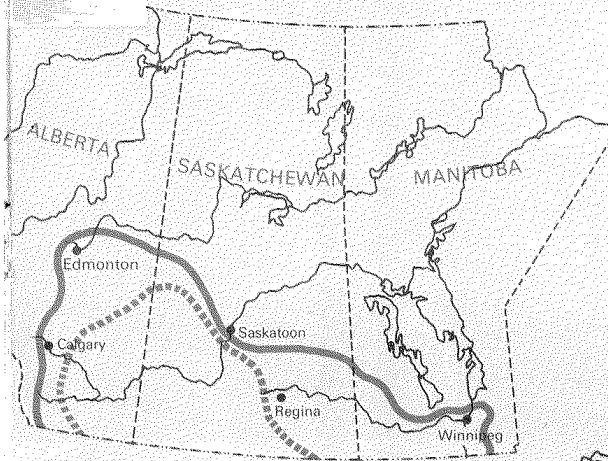


Some farmers claimed their year-old babies cried with fright when they first saw rain. People used to spin yarns about testing how bad the dust storm was. They'd toss a gopher up in the air, and if he fell to the ground the storm wasn't too bad. If he dug a hole up there, it was a bad one. J. Patton, *How the Depression Hit the West*, p. 27



We were all going through grinding poverty in our district. We sold 200 lb pigs at \$3 each; some farmers had to kill their pigs rather than finish feeding them. We sold oats at 8 cents a bushel, after paying 5 cents a bushel to have them threshed. Wheat was around 25 cents a bushel, eggs 5 cents a dozen, cream 12 cents a pound. J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 251

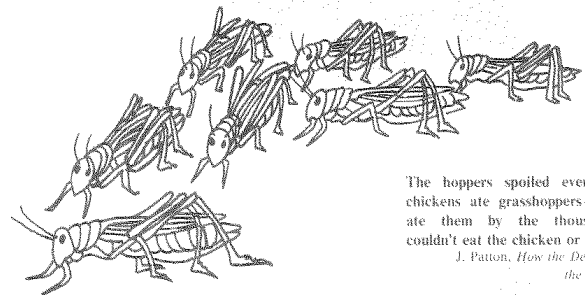
'The most fun', said Billy, 'was last year when it rained, remember, and the water barrels all got full. My Dad pushed the wagon over near the big barrel and Bobby and I jumped into the barrel. Boy, it was keen! We'd jump in and get wet and come out and put soap on and jump in! Boy! My Dad said if it rains again this summer, we can do it again. We sure hope it rains, don't we Bobby?' J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 176



— Limit of agricultural land (including cattle)  
 - - - - - Limit of Palliser Triangle (driest area)

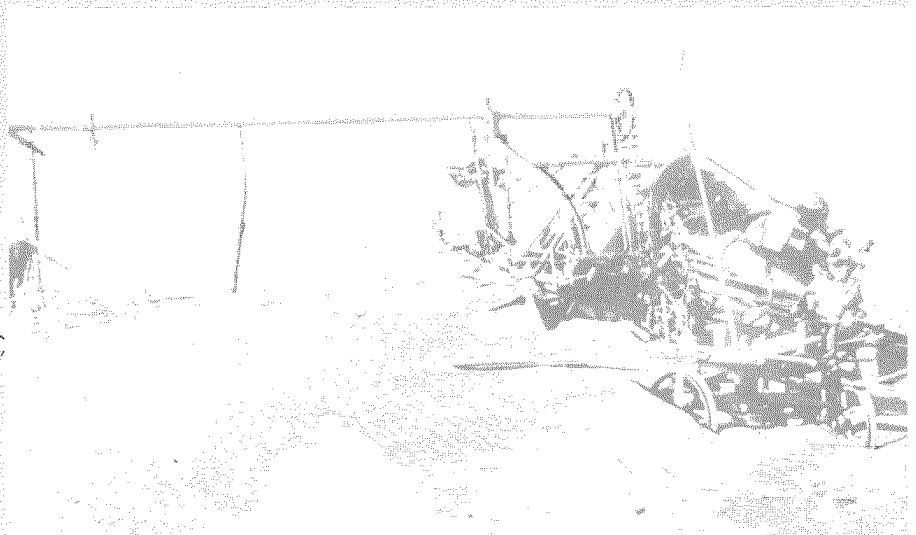
As the depression years hit us we found that good crops only meant more work and not necessarily prosperity. Prosperity, we found, was dependent on "price." By bitter experience we learned that even if we raised No. 2 wheat, top steers, special grade cream and prize-winning hogs and sheep, we were always hard up if the price was low. It did not matter if our hens laid 150 eggs or even 200 eggs per year when the price was 5 cents per dozen, even when the fact that they were a good grade of eggs did not bring in sufficient to even pay for putting straw into the hen-house . . . The mortgage interest began to go unpaid and we tried to make our underwear and overalls last for four years instead of two. J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 255

Sometimes the infestation built up slowly. In other places, a sudden invasion out of nowhere of clouds of hoppers would devour every scrap of garden greenness, strip every leaf from Caragana hedges, and whirl on to devour the heads of a ripening grain crop in a strip a mile wide. In Winnipeg the hoppers even made the golf courses unplayable. J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 105

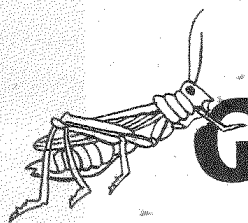


The hoppers spoiled everything. If chickens ate grasshoppers—and they ate them by the thousands—you couldn't eat the chicken or the eggs. J. Patton, *How the Depression Hit the West*, p. 30

But grasshoppers. Trillions. They would black out the sky and when they passed, nothing would be left. I've seen an ordinary kitchen broom leaning up against the side of a granary where we were crushing oats and when the hoppers were finished, all that was left of that broom was the handle and you couldn't tell it had been a handle because it was so chewed up except for the metal band which kept the bristles held together. Grasshoppers didn't eat machinery, but by God, I've seen them eat the leather off the seat of a John Deere tractor. B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 40

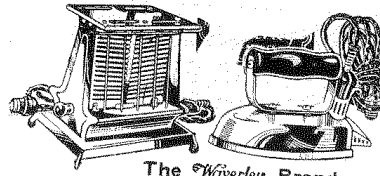


# AND GRASSHOPPERS



One family in five was out of work. Two families were not on relief but so deep in debt and so far into poverty that they would have taken relief if they could have. The fourth family was just getting by, and the fifth family, the merchants, the lawyers, all the professional men, the grain people and the retired people living in town, they were doing very well. Very well indeed.

B. Broadfoot, *Ten Last Years*, p. 68

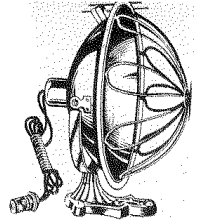


**The Waverley Brand**  
**80-329, Waverley** Nickel-plated  
 Toaster. Element is guaran-  
 teed for one year. Fitted  
 with cord and plug. Price... **2.75**  
**80-330, Waverley** Iron, weight about 5 1/2 lbs.  
 Heavily nickel-plated. Element  
 is guaranteed for one year.  
 With cord and plug. Priced  
 very low... **2.25**



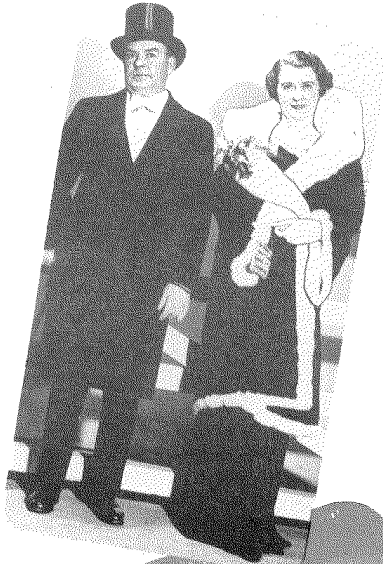
**"Premier Junior"**  
**44.50**  
 Delivered

You will be delighted with the surprising efficiency of this Cleaner and the results obtained by it.



**Adds to Comfort**  
**01-332, A Waverley Heater** is a great convenience. It can be carried about from room to room and attached to any socket. Fitted with wire guard and 12-inch concentrating reflector. Element guaranteed for one year. Price... **3.75**

# SOME PEOPLE LIVED WELL



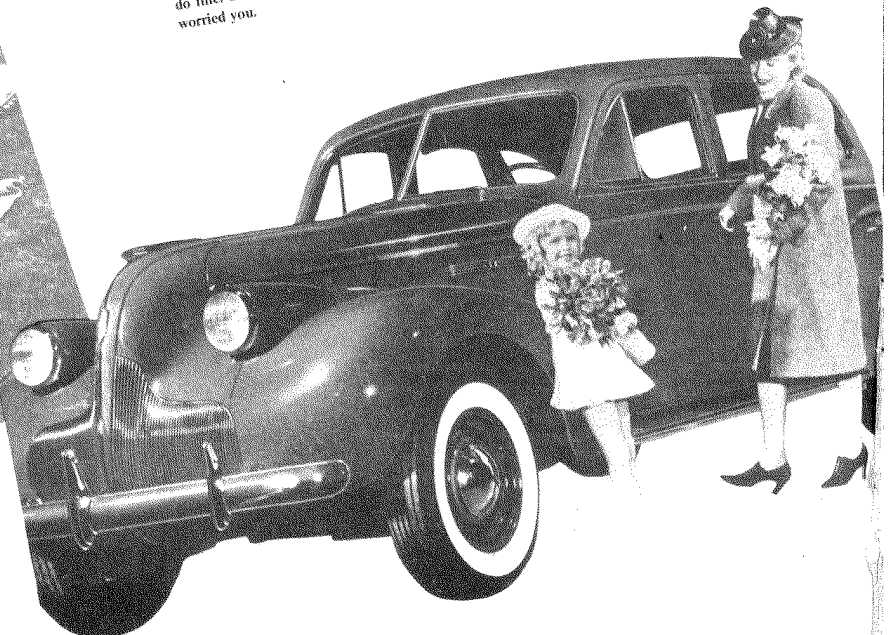
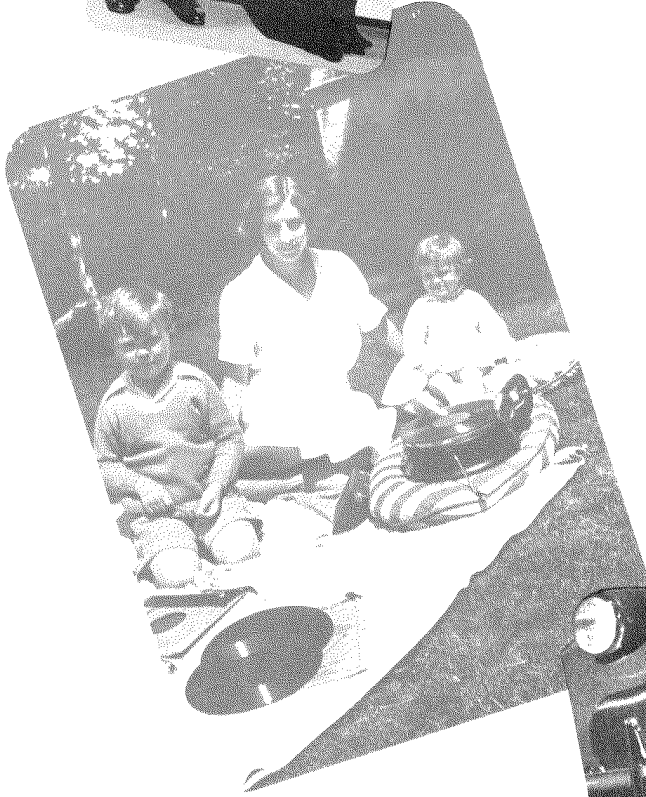
## EASY STREET ...

If you had \$125, you were on Easy Street. Remember, no income tax. None. You had to be making more than \$2,000 to pay income tax, and then it was very little. How the country got along I don't know. Yes, I was making \$1,500, and I was doing well. We had a house, and our payments were about \$35 a month with interest. Of course, it took years and years to pay off, but nobody thought about that. When things got better, after '39, that \$35 was a lot cheaper than rent and everybody who'd bought a house on time felt better. I had those who pool-pooled the whole buy-a-house thing felt lousy. I had a Ford, yes, a Model A and then later, about '37, I bought a 1933 Plymouth and that was a good little car. A little dandy. I drove her to 1948 and then sold her for more than I'd paid for it.

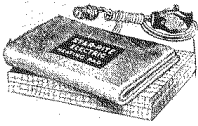
Clothes? I have bought good suits with a vest and an extra pair of pants for \$20, the best cloth. Off the rack, of course, but good, Scottish material. I have bought a good suit, not the best but good, for \$13 which would wear like iron and I still have an old overcoat around that I bought in 1936 and it cost me \$9.95 and I remember that price well, and when I die, that coat will go to the Good Will of the Salvation Army and some down-and outer will wear it for another few years. Underwear, socks, shoes, shirts, man, they were almost giving them away. Shoes, say \$4, and good ones too. Shirts, 95 cents over at Eaton's.

But you mustn't get the idea that everything was rosy. What I meant was that if you shut your eyes to all the misery, then you could do fine. But if you were a man, a person who was concerned, then it worried you.

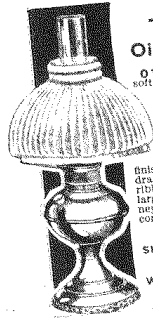
B. Broadfoot, *Ten Last Years*, pp. 236-237



For sale at Eaton's, 1931-1932

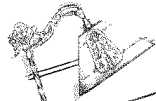


**Heating Pad**  
**80-335.** Handy Electric Heating Pad. A comfort-giving accessory in cold weather and particularly in a sick room. Is this Electric Heat control switch. Low price.  
**Price..... 4.45**



**Table Oil Lamp**

**01-361.** For a soft but sufficiently strong and penetrating light, you can hardly do better than choose this Table Oil Lamp. Has nickel-plated metal and centrifugal burner, 10-inch ribbed shade and large straight chimney. Price, complete. **4.00**  
**01-362.** Extra Shade. Price **1.00**  
**01-363.** Extra Wicks. Each **12c**



**Decorative**

**01-343.** It is not only decorative, but in good taste and superbly ingenious. Twisted Metal Bridge Lamp base, with Lamp, shade and shade. Height about 20 inches. Long cord and plug, without bulb or shade. Price each **1.95**  
**01-344.** The perfect complement to the shade. Shade design, color, sorted the delightful effect produced by the shade.  
**Price..... 20c**



The "Kitchen Queen E"  
 Durable Cast-Iron Construction

**59.00**

Delivered

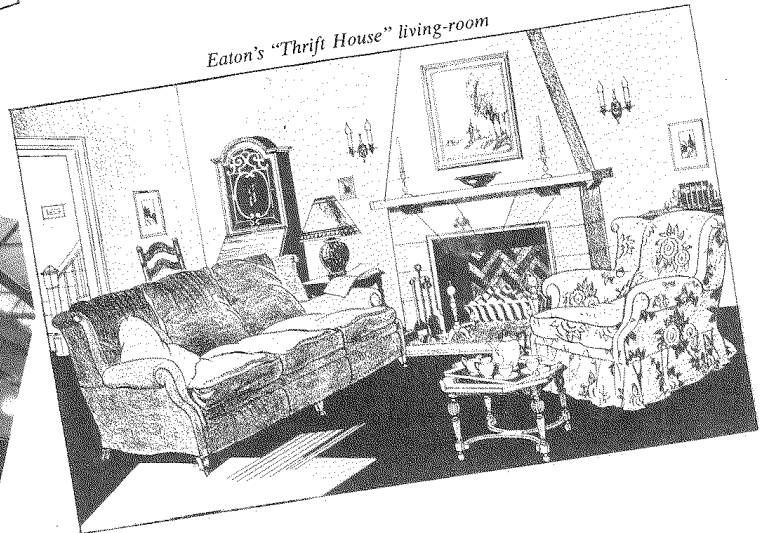
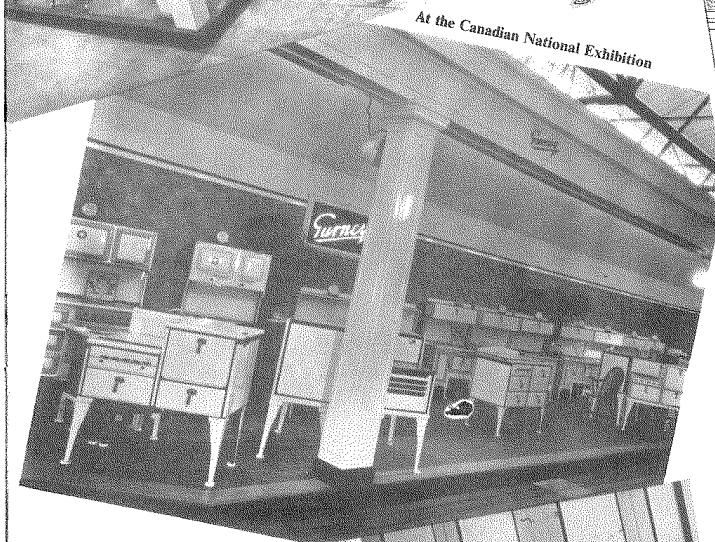
A Cast-iron Range, built to give long service. Has a pleasing appearance and is noted for its fine cooking qualities. An unusually fine baker.  
**Main Top, highly polished,** measures 33 1/2 by 27 ins. and has six 9-inch covers, one sectional. **Oven** measures 17 by 18 by 11 ins. and is fitted with damper for turning heat on and off oven and reservoir. **Warming Cabinet** is convenient and roomy, with nickel-plated drop door. **Body** built of high-grade Cast Iron, securely fitted; measures from floor to main top 30 1/2 ins. and 59 1/2 ins. to top of warming cabinet. **Fire** grate to burn coal or wood. **Reservoir**—Sheet copper, well tinned inside, with damper control; has capacity of four gallons. **White Enamelled** spasher back and oven door. **Nickel-plated Trim.**

Burns Hard or Soft Coal or Wood



Handsome Bridge Lamp

**01-349.** There is a refinement in the comparatively ornamental style of this Walnut finished Bridge Lamp, with its simply turned stem. By contrast the ornamental arm shows up the better. Lamp has adjustable push-through socket, extension cord and plug. Stand only, bulb and shade, **5.15** Price, del'd.  
**01-350.** Shade for above, is lined and interlined with Rayon, covered with Georgette. Trimmed with Metallic and Rayon Metallic edges, trimmed with Metallic trim. Size about 11 by 13 1/2 inches. Colors **Blue and Green, Black and Orange, Taupe** and **Orange**. Price **3.25**



Eaton's "Thrift House" living-room

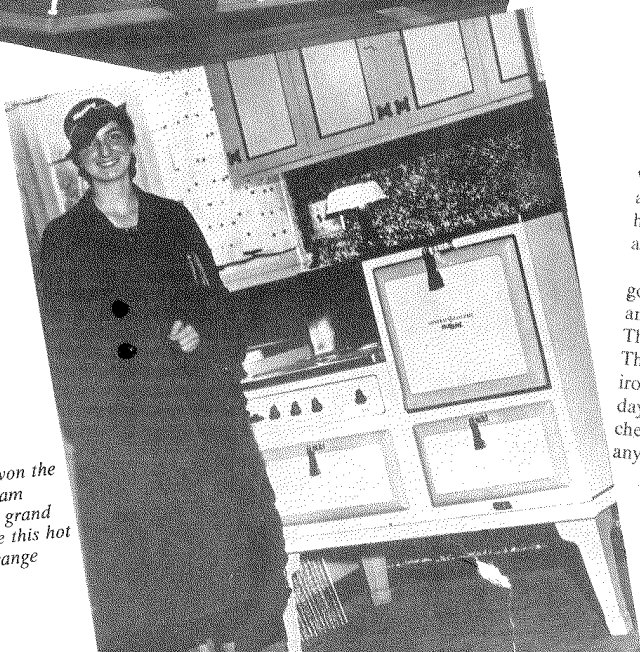
We moved to Montreal in 1933 and we found what we were looking for the first day, a perfectly lovely house in Westmount. There were houses for rent or for lease and you could buy them, everywhere. While we waited for our furniture to come out from the coast we all stayed at the Ritz. A grand hotel then, and it still is.

I phoned an employment agency and told them I wanted some staff and they asked a few questions and the next day a woman came over to the hotel. I told her I knew nothing about running a house and I wanted the best servants she could find. We drove over to the house and she worked it out this way. A chef and a woman who could be my maid and she also serve the meals, and two domestics and a yardman, we had perfectly huge grounds, and a laundress who would come in Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

When our furniture moved in, this agency had people for us. The chef got \$40 a month and his board and room. My maid got \$30 and board and room. The first domestic maid got \$25 and the second maid got \$15. The gardener, and he was the chauffeur too if we wanted it, he got \$25. The laundress got two dollars a day, and she scrubbed by hand and ironed by hand and she lived at home. I paid her carfare too. Ten cents a day. Perfectly ridiculous, isn't it? Buying a human being, an excellent chef, for \$10 a week, or a small maid for 50 cents a day. Nobody thought anything of it.

B. Broadfoot, Ten Last Years, p. 6

Mrs. M. Reed won the Toronto Telegram cooking school grand prize and chose this hot point electric range



# FASHION



*The PUMP*  
Featuring  
A SMART  
NEW BOW  
**2.45**  
PAIR  
DELIVERED

CHOICE OF  
BLACK OR WHITE

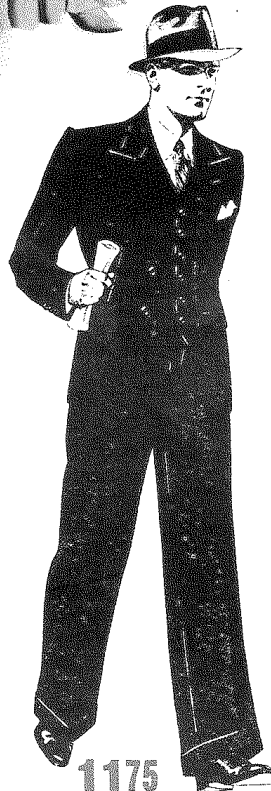
Chic Details Make Smart Shoes  
62S-284, Black. 62S-31, White.

The perky bow set on the vamp adds a decided air of style to these jaunty Pumps of Black Calfskin or fine White Leather - and the price is remarkably low for such quality. The high "stake" heels are full-breasted. D width. Sizes 2 1/2 to 7 (including half sizes). Pair, delivered **2.45**



To Keep White Shoes  
"White"  
52S-074 This dependable White  
Shoe Cleaner is easy  
to apply and effective  
in its results. Bottle **25c**

FROM THE PAGES OF  
**EATON'S**  
CATALOGUES



**1175**  
Delivered  
All-Wool Blue Serge



62G-921  
**1195**  
delivered

62G-221  
**1295**  
delivered

**Fancy Tweed or Blue Botany  
With "Tattersall" Vest**

44-165 **1500** 44-166 **1775**  
Fawn Tweed Over All-Wool Botany Daid

Sizes 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40-inch chest.  
Lap length 28 to 32 inches.

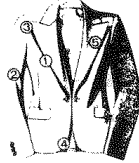
All the style features of the season are embodied in these smart-looking suits for young men. They are made of Fancy Fawn Tweed, about two-thirds Wool, or All-Wool Blue Botany Serge. Cut on popular single-breasted style with two-button front. "Tattersall" vest has pleats and flaps on lap-pockets. Trousers are made with pleated front lap-pockets, belt loops and cuffs.



Wedding In London, Ontario, 1933

**Man TAILORED  
WITH Hand TAILORING**

- ① Jacket front and lapels interlined with authentic Men's Wear Hymo canvas
- ② Sleeve linings fitted by hand
- ③ Shoulders padded like a man's
- ④ All edges taped . . . no sagging
- ⑤ Lapels basted and tacked by hand



**Odd Coats**

Sizes 36 to 46-inch chest.  
44-164, Well-made Odd Coats of All-Wool Fine Blue Botany. Single-breasted style with notched lapels. Three-button front and strongly lined. Each, delivered . . . . . **8.50**

"High Fashion"



78G-228  
**298**  
delivered



*Ayers' All-Wool*  
**WEED**  
**975**  
DELIVERED

**Guards Model for Young Men**

44-160 Fancy Grey. 44-161 Fancy Fawn.  
Sizes 34 to 42-inch chest. Average length 47 inches.  
Well-tailored Top Coat, made from All-Wool Fancy Grey or Fawn Tweed of the well-known Ayers' quality that has a reputation for wear and good appearance. Guards style with one-piece half-belt at back. Well-lap'd collar and welted breast pocket. Body pockets have flaps and coat is half lined with Rayon-faced Satin. All exposed seams neatly piped. Delivered . . . . . **9.75**



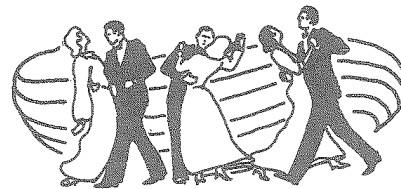
**YOUNG MODERNS ARE CHOOSING THESE**

# SONG AND DANCE

FAMOUS  
AMERICAN DANCE BANDS  
HEARD WEEKLY ON RADIO  
IN CANADA

78 RPM ● BREAKABLE

LES BROWN AND HIS BAND OF RENOWN  
WAYNE KING • CAB CALLOWAY • HARRY JAMES  
BENNY GOODMAN • DUKE ELLINGTON  
ISHAM JONES • FREDDY MARTIN  
COUNT BASIE • TED WEEMS

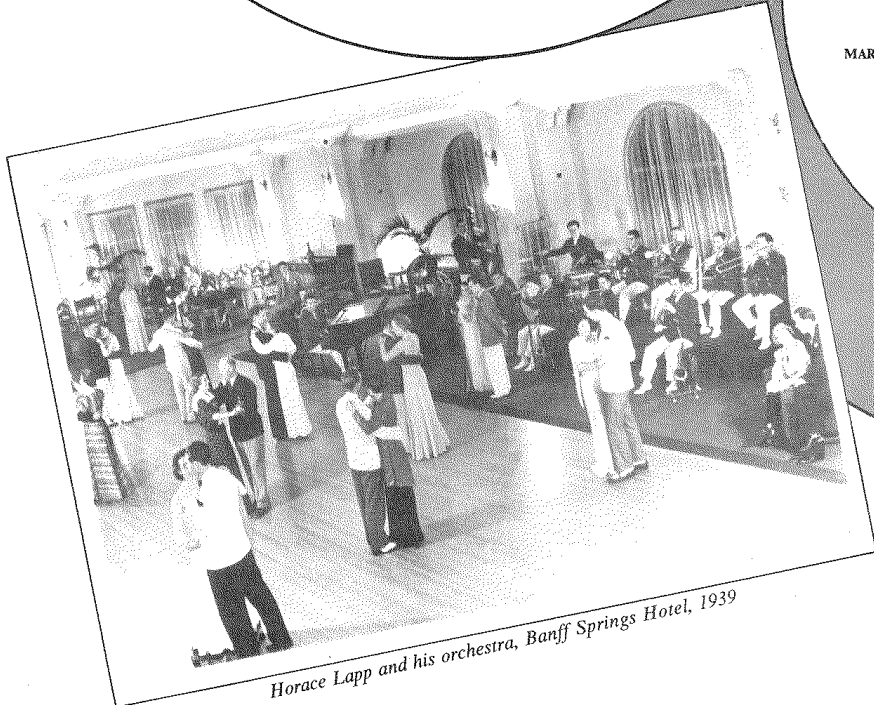


What was important, though Canadians probably did not realize it at the time, was the emphasis that the CRBC, which became the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1936, put on home grown talent. The Mart Kenney band, for one, broadcasting from Vancouver, became known from coast to coast in the thirties.

H. McNamara and J. Lomas, *The Bands  
Canadians Danced To*, p. 10

## FAMOUS CANADIAN DANCE BANDS AND THEIR DANCE HALLS

HARRY BEDLINGTON AND HIS WHISPERING ORCHESTRA—*The Savarin, Toronto*  
FRED CULLEY—*Royal York Hotel, Toronto*  
TRUMP DAVISON—*Club Esquire*  
GLENN GRAY—*Casa Loma, Toronto*  
NELSON HATCH—*The Old Mill, Toronto*  
MART KENNEY AND HIS WESTERN GENTLEMEN—*All of Western Canada*  
HORACE LAPP—*Royal Muskoka Hotel*  
GUY LOMBARDO AND THE ROYAL CANADIANS  
FERDE MOWRIE—*Club Embassy, Toronto*  
BERT NIOSI—*Palais Royale, Toronto*  
DAL RICHARDS—*Panorama Roof Garden, Hotel Vancouver*  
DON ROMANELLI—*Royal York Hotel, Toronto*  
LUIGI ROMANELLI—*King Edward Hotel, Toronto*  
OZZI WILLIAMS—*Club Kingway, Toronto*



Horace Lapp and his orchestra, Banff Springs Hotel, 1939

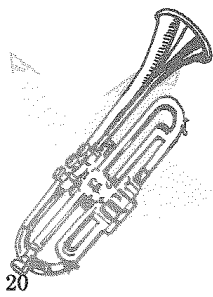
H. McNamara and J. Lomas, *The Bands  
Canadians Danced To*

Toronto Telegram, 17 August 1932—"My nose is too tired" is the excuse girls will be offering if the new "Zulu Grip"—with noses and foreheads in "synchro-mesh"—gets to be a habit in Toronto dance circles. The Dancing Masters of America, convening at the Royal York Hotel, are opposed to the "Zulu Grip" and are publicly denouncing it...Dancers show the anathemized "Zulu Grip" and the proper way to hold a girl while dancing.

"Who is the most popular bandleader to come out of Canada?" The question is unfair. Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians have topped the list since they left for the United States in the twenties.

Guy and his brothers, Carmen, Lebert and Victor, all natives of London, Ontario, arrived at a style that became known as "The sweetest music this side of heaven". Maybe the tunes have changed, but the style? Never.

That Lombardo sound has given its leader and his men some of the highest salaries in the dance band business. H. McNamara and J. Lomas, *The Bands Canadians Danced To*, p. 106

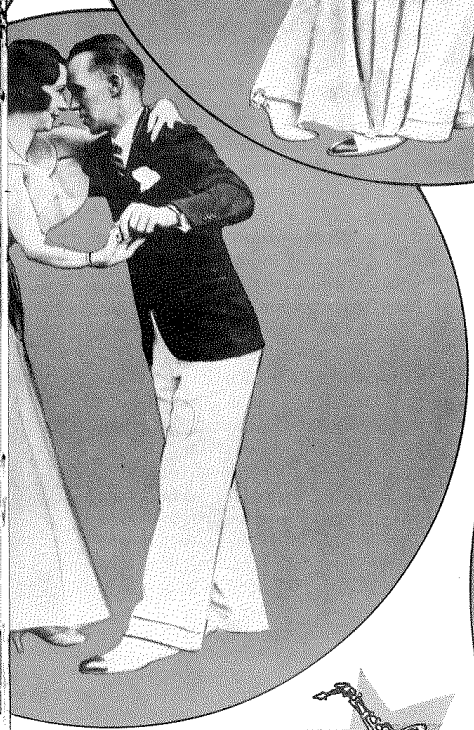
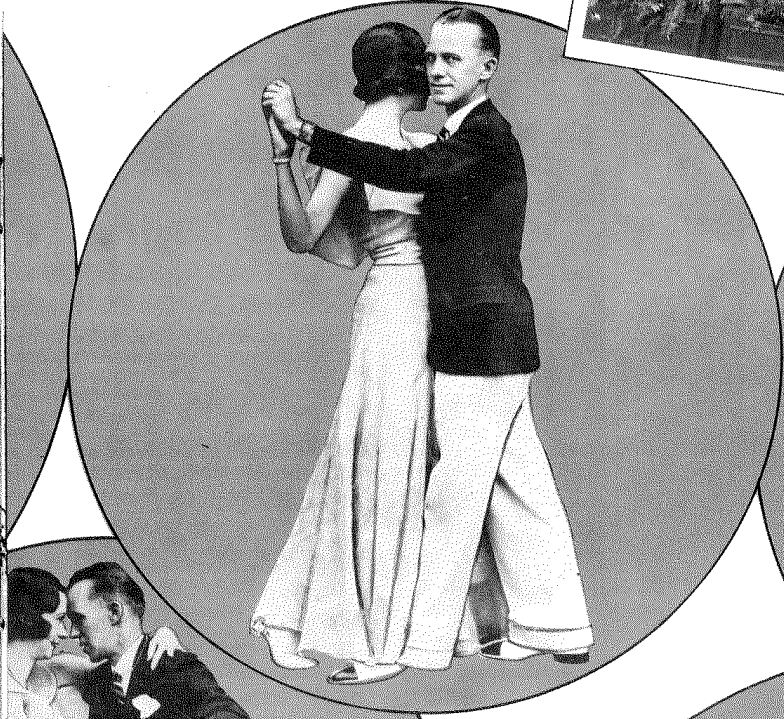
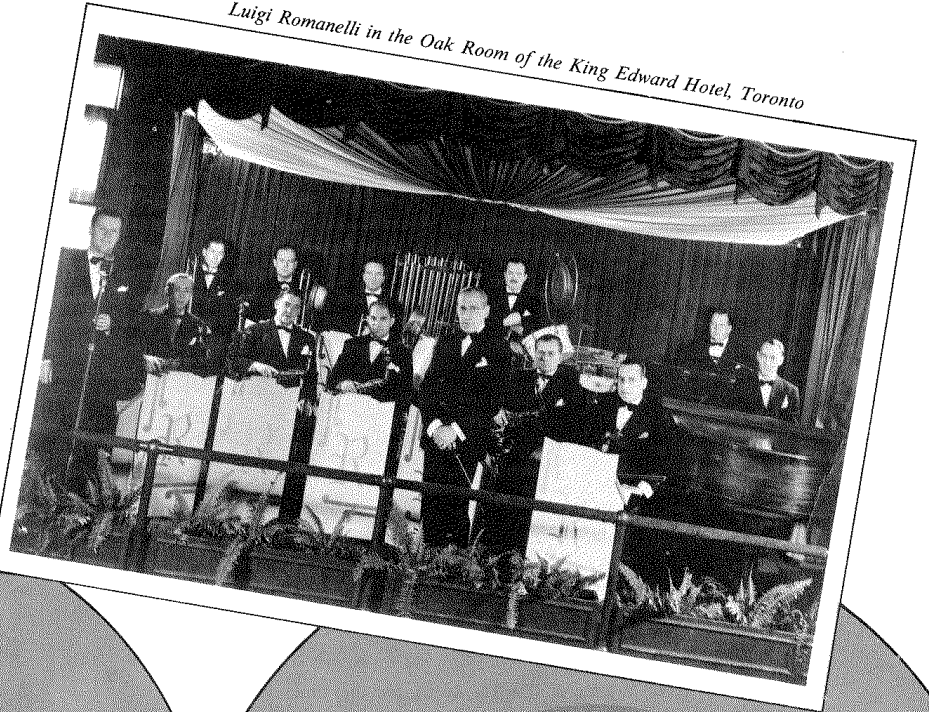




The well-paid Romanelli musicians, an exclusive group that at one time or another included Horace Lapp, who later led his own orchestra, and arranger-composer Johnny Burt, sometimes made as much as \$100 a week, a huge salary for depression days. Sometimes they played non-stop. As Trump recalls those hectic years: "When Eaton's College Street Store opened in the fall of 1930 we played three sessions a day on the main floor, then went on to the King Edward from 10.30 p.m. to 1.30 a.m. We did the same thing when the Bank of Commerce on King street opened the same year."

H. McNamara and J. Lomas, *The Bands Canadians Danced To*, p. 4

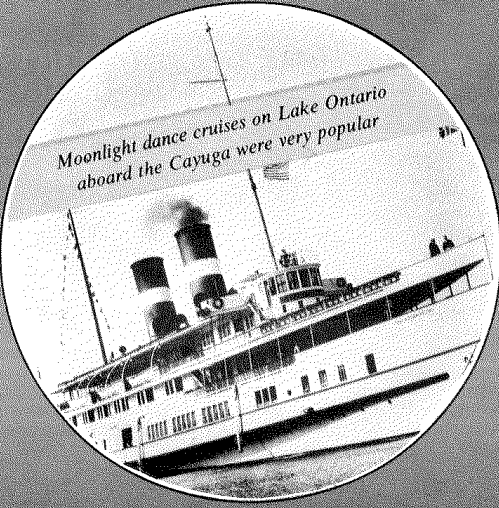
*Luigi Romanelli in the Oak Room of the King Edward Hotel, Toronto*



Beer Barrel Polka  
 Look for the Silver Lining    Stardust  
 September Song    When My Dreamboat Comes In  
 Buddy Can you Spare a Dime?    Pennies From Heaven  
 Flat Foot Floogey with the Floy Floy

**POPULAR SONGS ● IN THE THIRTIES**

I'll Never Smile Again    The Lady is a Tramp  
 Happy Days Are Here Again    Just Around the Corner  
 There's a Rainbow in the Sky    Stormy Weather  
 The World is Waiting for the Sunrise  
 The West, a Nest, and You Dear

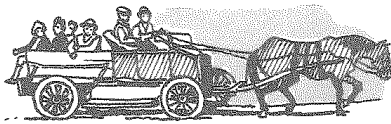


*Moonlight dance cruises on Lake Ontario aboard the Cayuga were very popular*



*Jacking up a Dodge in the Northwest Territories, 1930*

The census gives a total of 288,000 farms for the three Prairie provinces and 192,000 for Ontario, and contains a brief record of farm facilities in all the provinces. Of the 288,000 farms of the Prairie provinces, 5,036 have water piped in the kitchen; or one out of every 57.20 farms in western Canada in contrast with one out of every 9.54 in Ontario. In the west one out of every 72.8 has water piped in the bathroom (it would be interesting to know how many have a bathroom of any kind) as compared with one out of 15.76 in Ontario. One out of every 34.44 western farmhouses is lighted by gas or electricity as compared with one out of 5.95 in Ontario. In proportion to farms Ontario has more than twice as many rural telephones and over 40 per cent more rural automobiles than western Canada. Of these automobiles four out of five in Ontario, four out of seventy-six in western Canada, may travel on paved or gravelled highways, or, 20 per cent. of Ontario farms and 94.7 per cent. of all western farms are located on dirt roads. F. R. Scott, *Canada To-day*, pp. 56-57



Automobiles disappeared from the streets. In the mid-thirties many motorists still laid up their cars in winter. Block-heaters were not in common use, winter-weight oil was unknown, and a common expense of winter motoring was the replacement of antifreeze. The odour of alcohol permeated the cars and those who used ethylene glycol found their cooling systems tragically leak-prone. They were confronted, at the shank end of an evening, with a round pink stain on the snow under their radiator to show where their anti-freeze had gone.

In the rural west, motor transportation was completely immobilized. Most cars and trucks used outside the cities were still crank-equipped. But cranks could not spin frozen engines, and many a desperate farmer seeking to heat his truck engine with a blowtorch succeeded only in setting it afire. For most farmers, there was little point in starting a truck or tractor, for there was no place to go. The sideroads from Winnipeg to the Rockies became blocked by snow drifts. However, in 1936 most farms still had a team or two of work horses and a Bennett buggy—a car with its engine removed, pulled by a team of horses. As long as air could be kept in tires, Bennett buggies were easier to pull than farm wagons. J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 107.



*At the Auto Show, 1931*

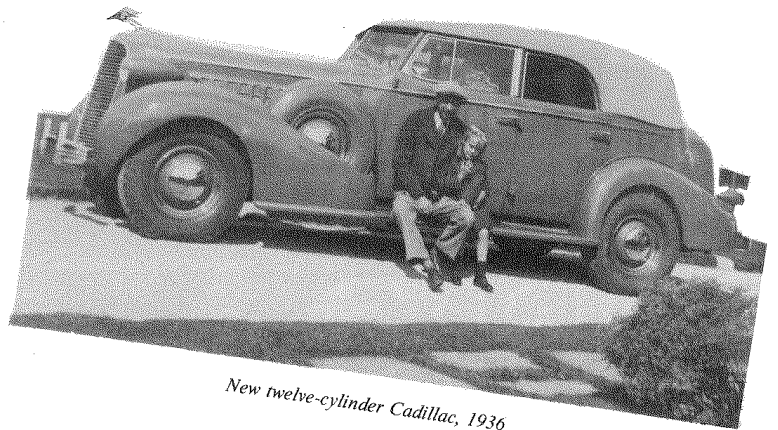
In the days before hard-surfacing, hand-operated graders were pulled by horses, and it took days to grade a small stretch of road. With the pounding of traffic and the winds helping, a wash-board effect was created on these gravel roads, and when you had been driving along on a fair piece of road, and all of a sudden hit a stretch of this wash-board, all hell broke loose. You'd swear that the car was coming apart at the seams. The four fenders would vibrate in agony, while the hood cover danced in glee. Running boards would scream at the pounding gravel, which sounded like a machine-gun as it banged up against them. If you were riding in the front seat, you took the chance of having the windshield collapse in your lap, not to mention the roof caving in on the whole issue. However, if you had led a good life, the chances were that you'd survive, providing you weren't travelling far. If the road had just been graded and a truck passed you, the world would be obliterated in dust. You'd survive all right, but the dust would keep your mouth shut for a while after you'd arrived.

Some drivers who were averse to putting their lives on the line would use a little caution when they ran into one of these wash-board stretches.

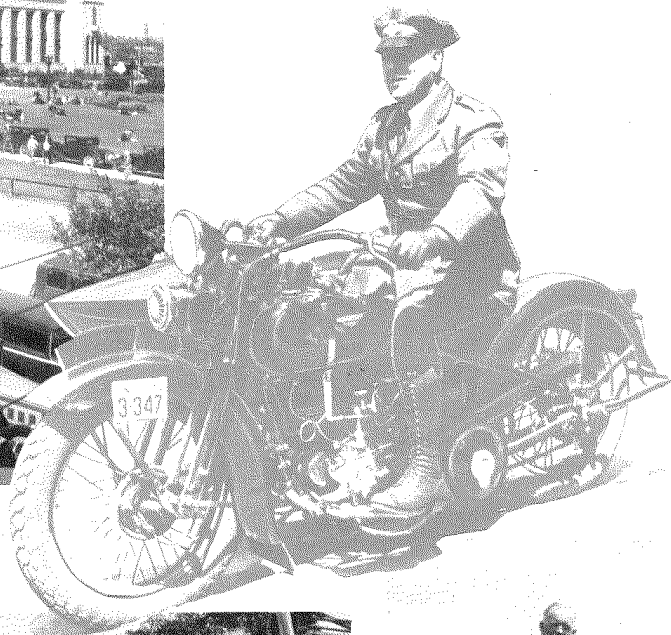
J. B. Vaughn, *The Wandering Years*, p. 218



# AUTOMOBILES

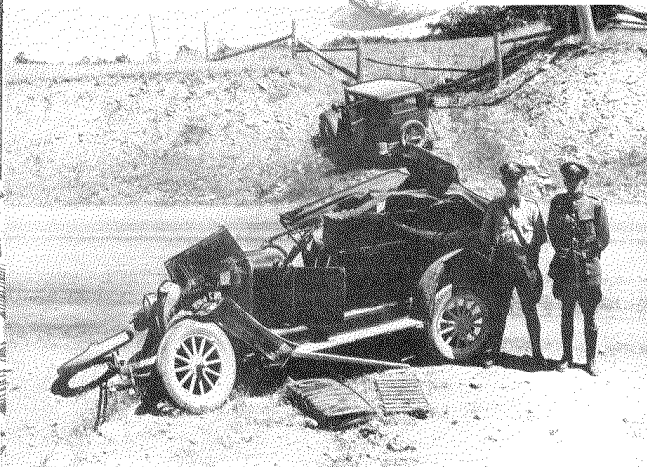


*New twelve-cylinder Cadillac, 1936*

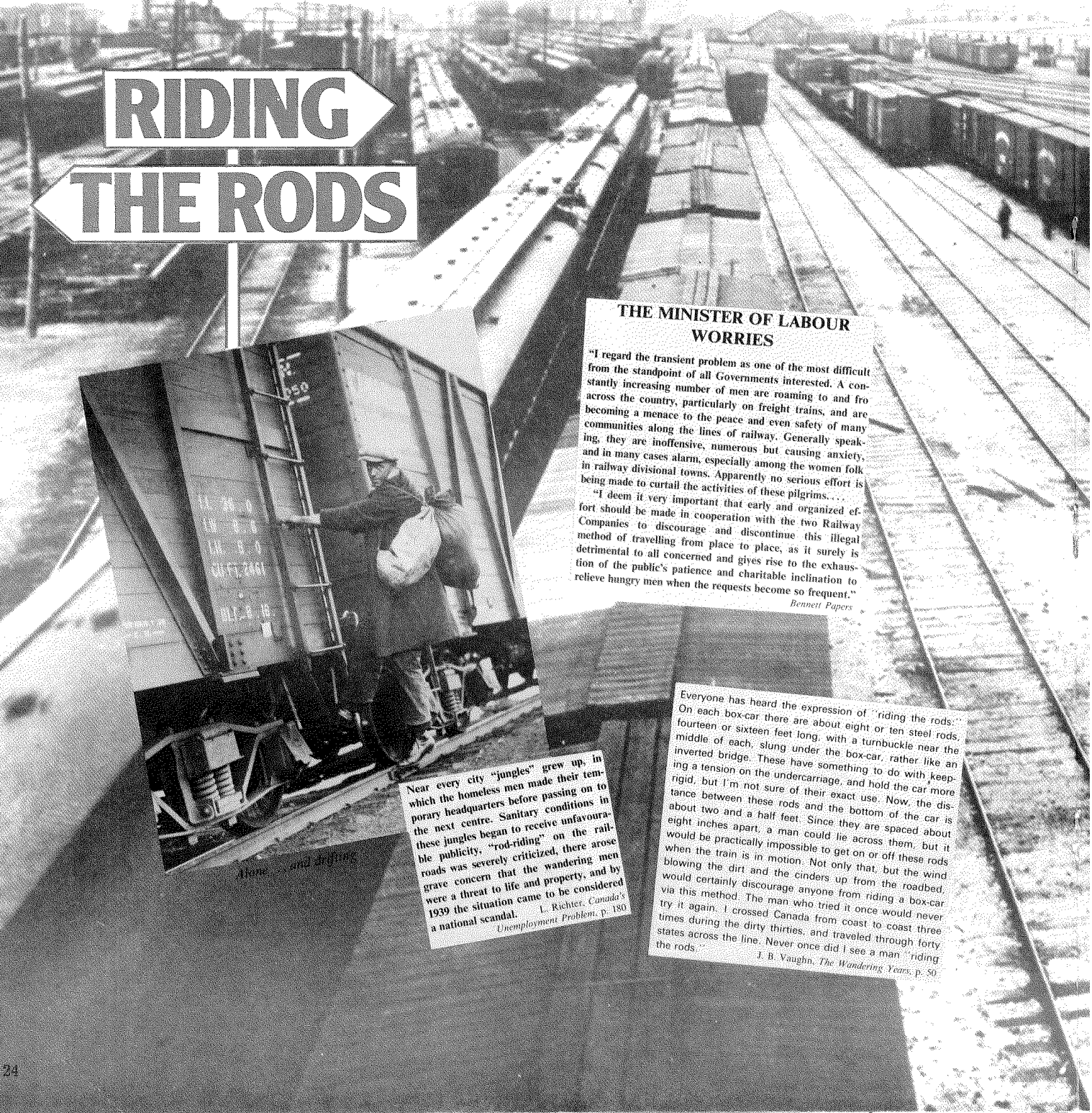


Hitch-hiking in those days was nothing like it is now. There were no paved roads, and the gravel was darn hard to walk on. You could wear out a pair of shoes in no time; that is if you walked far. And the dust was terrible; every time a car went by, great clouds of dust would envelop you. You'd sputter and choke, cursing that driver. I will say, though, that most drivers were very considerate, and if they couldn't stop to pick you up, they'd slow down to avoid making too much dust. These drivers you appreciated. However, most drivers would stop and give you a lift if they had any room.

Furthermore, it was considered an unpardonable sin for one car to pass another and swing back in front immediately. Many windshields were broken this way, not to mention the dents caused by flying gravel. If you saw a car in trouble on the road, you would always stop to enquire if you could help, asking if the fellow needed a jack, some patching, or a pump. Courtesy was prevalent then. J. B. Vaughn. *The Wandering Years*, p. 215



I used to see the freight trains going through that town with the top of the cars loaded with men. Once I counted one hundred and thirty men riding on one freight. Where they were all going, they themselves didn't know. Looking for work was the theme of the day. It was better to be a traveller on a near hopeless journey, than to stay in one place and starve to death. . . .  
 And how better to travel than "riding the rods"? J. B. Vaughn, *The Wandering Years*, pp. 49-50



# RIDING THE RODS

**THE MINISTER OF LABOUR WORRIES**

"I regard the transient problem as one of the most difficult from the standpoint of all Governments interested. A constantly increasing number of men are roaming to and fro across the country, particularly on freight trains, and are becoming a menace to the peace and even safety of many communities along the lines of railway. Generally speaking, they are inoffensive, numerous but causing anxiety, and in many cases alarm, especially among the women folk in railway divisional towns. Apparently no serious effort is being made to curtail the activities of these pilgrims. . . .  
 "I deem it very important that early and organized effort should be made in cooperation with the two Railway Companies to discourage and discontinue this illegal method of travelling from place to place, as it surely is detrimental to all concerned and gives rise to the exhaustion of the public's patience and charitable inclination to relieve hungry men when the requests become so frequent."  
*Bennett Papers*

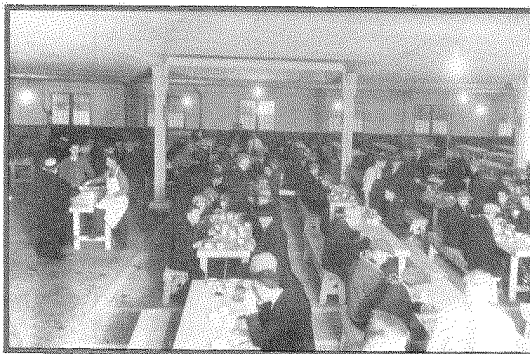
Near every city "jungles" grew up, in which the homeless men made their temporary headquarters before passing on to the next centre. Sanitary conditions in these jungles began to receive unfavourable publicity, "rod-riding" on the railroads was severely criticized, there arose grave concern that the wandering men were a threat to life and property, and by 1939 the situation came to be considered a national scandal. L. Richter, *Canada's Unemployment Problem*, p. 180

Everyone has heard the expression of "riding the rods." On each box-car there are about eight or ten steel rods, fourteen or sixteen feet long, with a turnbuckle near the middle of each, slung under the box-car, rather like an inverted bridge. These have something to do with keeping a tension on the undercarriage, and hold the car more rigid, but I'm not sure of their exact use. Now, the distance between these rods and the bottom of the car is about two and a half feet. Since they are spaced about eight inches apart, a man could lie across them, but it would be practically impossible to get on or off these rods when the train is in motion. Not only that, but the wind blowing the dirt and the cinders up from the roadbed, would certainly discourage anyone from riding a box-car via this method. The man who tried it once would never try it again. I crossed Canada from coast to coast three times during the dirty thirties, and traveled through forty states across the line. Never once did I see a man "riding the rods."  
 J. B. Vaughn, *The Wandering Years*, p. 50.

Boxcars aren't the best method of travel in any day or age, but at that time it was the most economical; that is, if you didn't mind the hardship and danger involved. Travelling this way gets to be an art; it is essential that you know just where to catch a train, get to know the whistles, the lights, the flags on the engines and learn to distinguish between a red-ball freight and a local, etc.

It generally takes a few thousand miles of travel this way before you become adept at being a guest of the railroad. It also takes precise timing to grab the ladder on a boxcar to board a fast freight. Many a man has been swept to his death under the wheels because he didn't judge correctly. In reverse, it requires good timing and judgement to "shake" off a fast freight. If you jump at the wrong time and fail to land on your feet, your riding days may be over sooner than you expect.

J. B. Vaughn,  
*The Wandering Years*, p. 16



*A soup kitchen in Edmonton, 1933*

The plain truth was that soup-kitchen food was usually good... At the wholesale level, where the soup-kitchens bought, the food itself cost less than it cost to move it, so there was no point in buying poor food. The soup-kitchens, however, were always foul-smelling, and that the food was unappetizing cannot be denied. The soup-kitchens always seemed to be located in unsuitable premises that some politically favoured landlord had rented to the government. The odours of the food cooked last year were mixed with the odours of last month and last week. To serve such masses, heavy reliance was placed upon boiled dinner, hash, and cereals. Everything was over-cooked and usually served on metal plates with twisted forks and knives. Nothing about the soup-kitchens was conducive to enjoyment of food, least of all the company of an ill-clad, unkempt, unhappy, and unwashed legion. J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, pp. 146-147

### Stuck in Sudbury for the winter...

The jail where sleeping accommodation was provided was quite a shock. It was a very old, thick-walled stone building, with two stories. Inside, each floor being the same, containing five or six large cells and the corridor. At the end of the corridor, and not enclosed in any way, stood the toilet and one wash basin. No beds or bedding were provided. The floors were black, and seemed to have a dull, oily, sheen on them and the building was swarming with bed bugs, so much so that on entering the heated building at night the stench was almost overpowering, and nobody was allowed to wander around that dreary small town every day, through that severe northern Ontario winter...

At six o'clock in the evening the men would head for the old jail, crowding into that hot, dirty, verminous, smelly old building. The more fastidious would have an old newspaper to spread on the floor to lie on.

...The men were all suffering from gastric trouble due to hunger and the hard boiled beans, weak kidneys from the freezing cold and frozen feet. In consequence, there was a steady line-up all night through at the toilet—two to three hundred men to one toilet...

The turnout in the mornings was a pathetic sight, the long line-up at the one wash basin.

R. Liversedge, *Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek*, pp. 11-13



### CANADA'S UNTOUCHABLES

The municipalities steer them off because if they are arrested as vagrants they become a charge on the municipality and it costs a dollar a day to keep them. So their word is 'Keep them moving'. The C.P.R. police advise the man that it is better travelling C.N.R., and the C.N.R. police return the compliment, and there you are... Wherever they go they feel they are not wanted. There is no work, no hope, no places for them. They are Canada's Untouchables. L. Richter, *Canada's Unemployment Problem*, p. 179



## RELIEF CAMP RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. To be admitted to a government Relief Camp you must be single, male, not living at home, healthy and fit, unemployed, at least 18 years old, and not a political agitator.
2. You will be given free transportation to the camp.
3. If you decide to leave the camp for any reason except to take a job, you will not be allowed to return.
4. On entering the camp you will receive free:
  - a. A set of work clothes
  - b. Soap and towels
  - c. A bunk bed
  - d. Three meals per day
  - e. Use of showers, toilets and laundry facilities.
5. You will work 44 hours per week on projects such as road building and tree planting.
6. You will be given an allowance of 20¢ per day plus 1.3¢ per day for tobacco.
7. No committees of camp workers may be formed. Any complaints must be reported individually to the camp foreman.

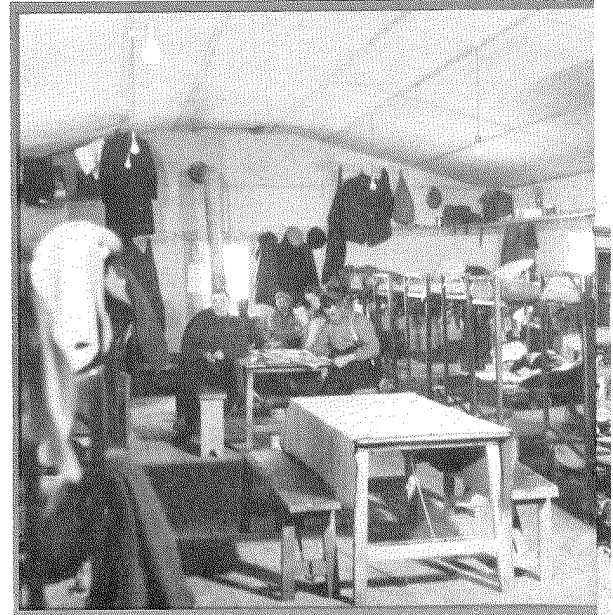
Q. What was the chief complaint you had about the camps?

A. The isolation. The feeling of being a forgotten person. You'd never be able to have any money, or a job, or a home. No music, no entertainment. Just a diet and a bunk to sleep in. Every day the same. V. Hoar.  
*The On-to-Ottawa Trek, p. 6*

Intended initially to handle 2,000 men, a year later the camps supported over 11,000 occupants. By 1936 when they were shut down, the camps had taken in 170,248 of the unemployed of Canada. R. Liversedge,  
*Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek, p. viii*



Ottawa Relief Camp



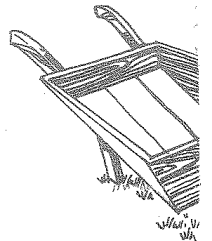
Bunkhouse at Ottawa Relief Camp

### A Winnipeg Man Complains to his M.P., 1931:

"I have been asked by a committee of men, who are working at Riding Mountain park, to bring to your attention the utterly disgraceful situation which exists there. Picture to yourself a tar paper shack 79 feet x 24 with no windows, along each side there is a row of double deck bunks, these are spaced off with 8 x 1 board so that there is room for two men in each bunk. The bunks are filled with straw and you crawl into them from the foot end. Along the front of the lower bunk a narrow board is placed upon which the men may sit. The place is very meagrely [sic] lighted and ventilated by three skylights. There are two stoves in the shack in front of which cordwood is piled up. So narrow is the passageway between the bunks that when the men are sitting on the bench there is scarcely room to pass between them. This shack 79 x 24 houses 88 men. There is a marked resemblance to a hog pen or a dog pound. At all times the place reeks of the foul smell and at night the air is simply fetid. The floor is dirty and at the end of the shack, where there is a trough where the men wash, the floor is caked with black mud. I asked several old-timers their opinion of it and they state in fact that it is without any question the worst camp they have ever seen on the American continent. The toilet is thoroughly filthy, unsanitary, and far too small . . .

"The terrible thing about it is that many of the men who are congregated in this camp are teen aged Canadian boys forced into close association with mature men who have tramped the streets and bummed their way through the country, with the result that the outlook for these boys stands a good chance of being completely warped and their characters so degraded and demoralized that their future is unquestionably seriously menaced."

*House of Commons, Debates, 22 Nov. 1932*



# GOVERNMENT CAMPS: National Relief or National Disgrace?

## Vancouver Police Warn of Communism:

From the inception of the relief camps, the Communist Party concentrated on them to cause unrest, sending able, organizing agitators into the camps for this purpose. This is borne out by the fact that in many instances, these organizers have been uncovered and prosecuted, and have been identified as being members of the Communist Party... Another phase of this work was the sending of propaganda into the relief camps by the Communist Party, which had to be combatted by a censorship by the authorities. V. Hoar, *The On-to-Ottawa Trek*, p. 9



### COMMON COMPLAINTS OF THE RELIEF CAMP WORKERS

"The foreman actually expects us to work 8 hours a day and 4 hours on Saturdays. And we get paid 20¢ a day for that!"

"The camp superintendents are much too severe. It's worse than being in the army!"

"We aren't supposed to form any committees to try to improve conditions. We'll never get anywhere."

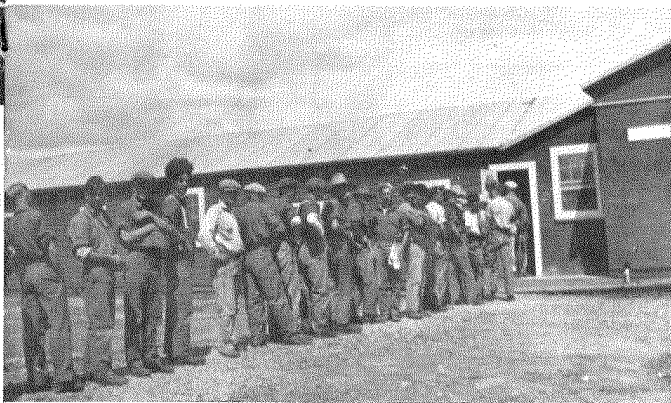
"THE FOOD IS LOUSY!"

"The doctor is never here to take care of the sick and injured. And all the dentist does to any tooth is yank it out."

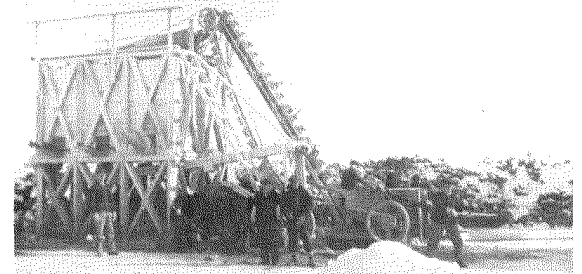
"The tobacco allowance is not enough to pay for the increased cost."

"I don't think we should be denied the right to vote!"

*Digging a filling on a spur, Dundurn, Saskatchewan*



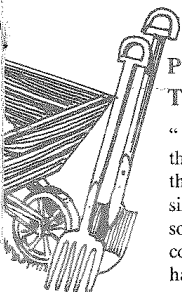
*Waiting for the midday meal*



*Loading rocks at the crusher, Barriefield Relief Camp*

### SOME FINDINGS OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT'S MACDONALD COMMISSION -31 May 1935:

1. The relief camps have reasonably fulfilled their goals and have given many men the intended relief.
2. The camp superintendents have a very difficult job. They are not too severe.
3. Generally the food at the camps is good although milk is often not fresh and the meat is poor quality in many camps.
4. Cleanliness and sanitation at most camps is excellent although washrooms and showers at the Point Grey Camp were disgracefully crude and dirty.
5. The tobacco allowance is insufficient because the price of tobacco has risen.
6. The mental attitude of relief camp workers is very poor. The critical situation is caused by several factors: the men are not paid a wage, many are not suited for physical labour, young men view the camps as a "dead-end", the workers feel forgotten, the camps are isolated from the rest of society.



### PRIME MINISTER BENNETT DEFENDS THE CAMPS, 1935:

"... the camps to which reference has been made have won the warm support and approval of those who have inspected them including people well able to arrive at conclusions how single, homeless, unemployed men might be cared for, and some of the most distinguished social workers from other countries have expressed warm approval of the action that has been taken."

*House of Commons, Debates, 24 June, 1935*

APRIL 4 TO MAY 30  
**THE PROTEST  
 BEGINS IN VANCOUVER**

Throughout April and May, more than 1,500 Relief Camp workers have conducted huge demonstrations in Vancouver. They have held large parades, rallies, public meetings, tag-days, and sit-ins in department stores and in the museum. They have clashed with police a few times, but violent conflict has generally been avoided.

The strikers wish to pressure the city government of Vancouver, the provincial government of

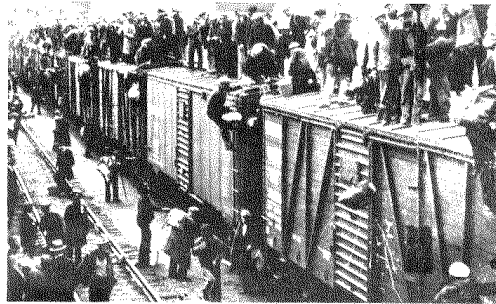
British Columbia, and the Canadian government in Ottawa to improve conditions in the Relief Camps. The city and the province claim they don't have enough money. But Prime Minister Bennett says British Columbia must solve the problem itself.

Many Vancouver citizens support the strikers. But Ottawa and the police seem to think the strike is just an attempt by the tiny communist party to make trouble.

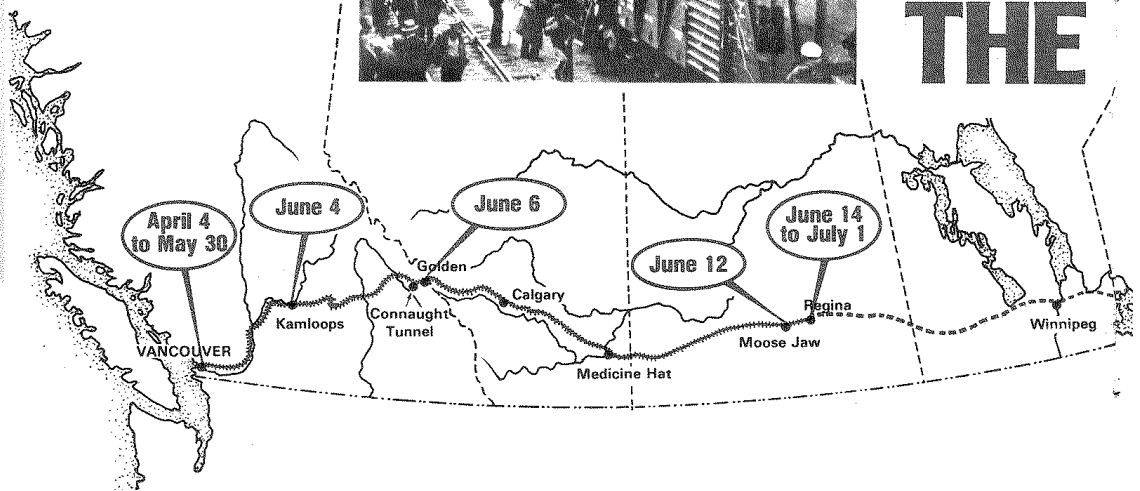
**THE SIX DEMANDS OF THE OTTAWA TREKKERS:**

1. That work with wages be provided at a minimum rate of 50 cents an hour for unskilled labor; union rates for all skilled labor. Such work to be on the basis of a five-day week, six-hour working day, and minimum of 20 days' work per month.
2. All workers in relief camps and government projects be covered by the Compensation Act. Adequate first aid supplies on all relief jobs.
3. That a democratically elected committee of relief workers be recognized by the authorities.
4. Relief camps be taken out of the control of the department of national defence.
5. A genuine system of social and unemployment insurance in accordance with the provisions of the Workers' Social and Unemployment Insurance Bill [be provided].
6. That all workers be guaranteed their democratic right to vote.

*Bennett Papers*



**THE**



MAY 30  
**Strikers Decide to  
 Ride Freight  
 Trains to Ottawa!**

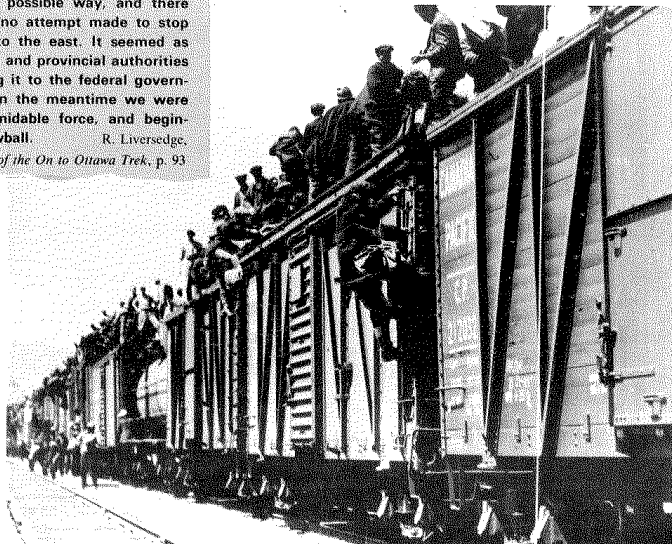
Last night the Relief Camp strikers decided that they could accomplish little more by staying in Vancouver. They now plan to lead the biggest and most dramatic parade ever! They will ride CPR freight trains the entire distance of 3,000 miles to Ottawa to put direct pressure on Mr. Bennett's government!

JUNE 4  
**TREK ARRIVES  
 KAMLOOPS**

The train crews were cooperating with us in every possible way, and there was as yet no attempt made to stop our march to the east. It seemed as though local and provincial authorities were leaving it to the federal government, and in the meantime we were quite a formidable force, and beginning to snowball.

R. Liversedge.

*Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek, p. 93*



*Hundreds of trekkers on a freight in Kamloops*

JUNE 6  
**TREK ARRIVES GOLDEN**

We very soon marched on to a large expanse of park-like land, richly grassed, with large shade trees scattered here and there. A truly sylvan setting, but what was more to the point, under a half dozen of those huge shade trees were cooking fires, and suspended over the fires were various kinds of make-shift cooking vessels full to the brims, with simmering, bubbling, thick, heavenly-smelling beef stew. The cooking pots were make-shift because they had to be big. Over one fire (and this is the gospel truth) was suspended a full size bathtub, also full to the brim with beef stew. There were long trestle tables with thousands of slices of golden crusted bread. Around each fire were just two or three quiet, smiling women, salting, peppering, and tasting.

It was incredible, it was heartwarming, it was beautiful.

The column of men halted, a thunderous cheer arose, and the men broke ranks and rushed over to embrace those quiet smiling, wonderful women of Golden.

The people of Golden knew about us, and our struggles, they knew about the relief camps. Their welcome of us was the welcome of pioneers, heartfelt, deep, and sincere. Golden stood out in the memory of the trekkers as the most restful, tranquil episode of the whole trek. R. Liversedge, *Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek*, pp. 91-92

JUNE 22

### TREK REMAINS IN REGINA WHILE 8 LEADERS TRAVEL TO OTTAWA —TALKS WITH BENNETT FAIL

In your agitating propaganda you have made it perfectly clear that you were going to illegally take possession of trains if you had to march to Ottawa. But I say, for what purpose?

*Mr. Evans:* The purpose is to demand from you this programme of works and wages.

*Mr. Bennett:* And we have made it perfectly clear so far as we are concerned that these camps were not established for that purpose.

*Mr. Evans:* That is passing the buck. We want work and wages.

*Mr. Bennett:* Just a moment—

*Mr. Evans:* You referred to us not wanting work. Give any of us work and see whether we will work. This is an insidious attempt to propagandize the press on your part, and anybody who professes to be Premier and uses such despicable tactics is not fit to be premier of a Hottentot village.

*Mr. Bennett:* I come from Alberta. I remember when you embezzled the funds of your union and were sent to penitentiary.

*Mr. Evans:* You are a liar. I was arrested for fraudulently converting these funds to feed the starving, instead of sending them to the agents at Indianapolis, and I again say you are a liar if you say I embezzled, and I will have the pleasure of telling

the workers throughout Canada I was forced to tell the Premier of Canada he was a liar. Don't think you can pull off anything like that. You are not intimidating me a damned bit.

*Mr. Bennett:* I know your record in the penitentiary at New Westminster, your record in the penitentiary elsewhere.

*Mr. Evans:* I was never in penitentiary at New Westminster. You do not know what you are talking about.

*Mr. Bennett:* That is good enough. . . . You ask for a programme of work and wages. That will not be carried on as far as these camps are concerned for that is not the purpose for which they were prepared. They were prepared for the purposes I have indicated [to provide food, shelter and clothing for unemployed, homeless men - ed.] and to relieve the provincial government [s] of their responsibility. . . .

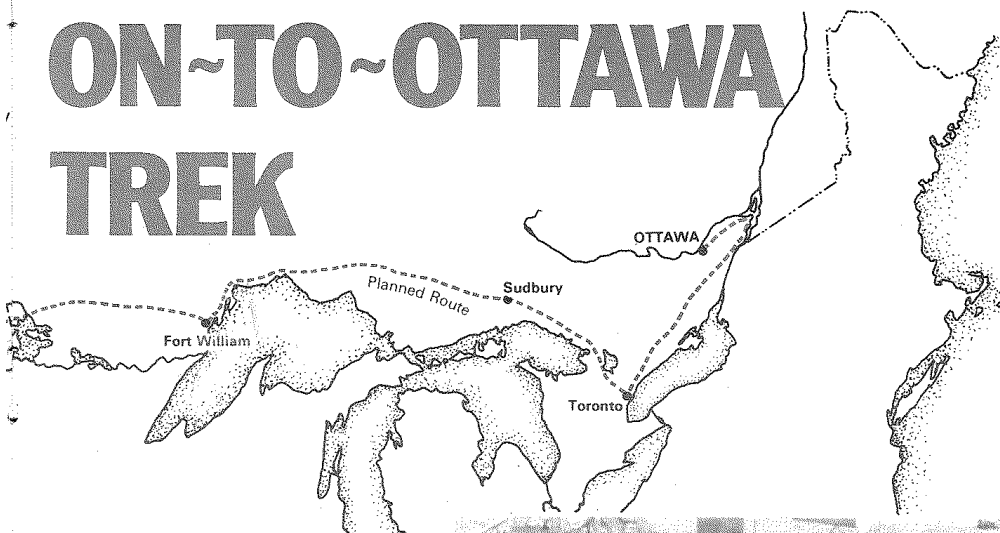
No young men have ever been treated in better circumstances than these camps provide. Everyone knows that. . . . a continuance of illegal trespassing upon the property of the railways involving the interruption of mails, the loss of life, and injury to property will not be tolerated. Good-day, gentlemen.

*Report of the Regina Riot Inquiry Commission, Vol. II, pp. 116-126*



R. B. Bennett

# ON~TO~OTTAWA TREK



JUNE 14

### Prime Minister Bennett Orders R.C.M.P. to Stop Trek in Regina

"... the present movement of these marchers upon Ottawa in defiance of the law is in reality an organized effort on the part of the various communist organizations throughout Canada to effect the overthrow of constituted authority in defiance of the laws of the land. The government is determined to maintain law and order by all the means within its power and calls upon all law abiding citizens to assist to

that end. Definite instructions have been given to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police at Regina to assist the officials of both railways in preventing further trespasses upon railway property or upon railway trains and the marchers have been notified that they will not be permitted to continue their eastward journey by the unlawful use of railway transportation."

*House of Commons, Debates, 24 June 1935*

JUNE 8

### CONNAUGHT TUNNEL

There was one bad spot on this lap of our journey, the Connaught tunnel, a few miles east of Golden. This tunnel, which spirals through the heart of a mountain, is, I believe, about seven miles long. The grade through the tunnel is fairly steep, and it is up-grade going east, and a slow, hard pull for a long freight train. . . . It was a nightmarish trip.

I think the two locomotives pulling the train were coal burners. At any rate, the tunnel was filled with a dirty, brown, billowing, gritty, warm smoke. The acrid sulphurous stench was overpowering, and gave one a choking sensation. We all lay on top of the boxcars, covering our mouths and noses with handkerchiefs or rags. Some of the boys covered their heads with blankets.

The trip through the tunnel took about thirty minutes, and it was a wonderful sensation to finally emerge into the fresh air.

*R. Liversedge, Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek, pp. 93-94*



JUNE 12

### MOOSE JAW

Moose Jaw, a railroad divisional town, was then a small place, but the people wanted to welcome us, wanted us to rest up overnight in their sports ground, which we did. We marched for the people there, they provided refreshments for us, and they were the acme of kindness. They were our sort, of the same family, and we merged well.

There was a meeting, and we bivouaced that night, in the Moose Jaw sports ground.

*R. Liversedge, Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek, p. 104*

JUNE 14

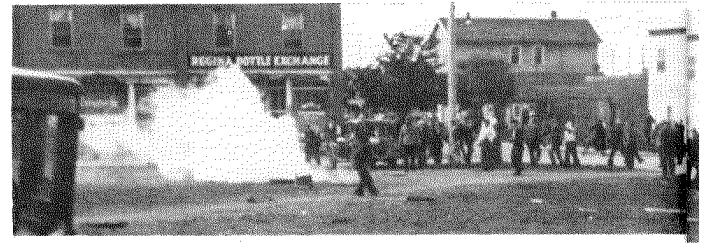
### TREK ARRIVES REGINA

Our entry into Regina was something of a triumph. We had been successful up to now, had built our forces up, and we were a proud little army. As we marched through the city streets, throngs of people lined the sidewalks to give us a rousing welcome. At the Exhibition Grounds we were to stay as usual, and an official welcome had been prepared for us.

*R. Liversedge, Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek, p. 105*



The arrested strike leaders



# WHO CAUSED THE REGINA RIOT?



## The Case for the Strikers:

"I wouldn't say it was a riot, not at first. We were behaving peaceably enough there in Regina, and then the police on one side and the Mounties on the other started to pull the guys, our speakers, off the platform. There was whistles blowing and horses charging and you could say it was the police doing the rioting, clubbing and charging. We took it for a few minutes and then we let go, against them."

B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 363

### MP's of all parties score Bennett's Regina tactics

*Toronto Star*, 3 July 1933, p. 3

### Iron hand of dictatorship is seen in Bennett's Regina tactics

*Toronto Star*, 2 July 1933, p. 1

The meeting wasn't long under way. Evans was speaking when four large furniture vans backed up, one to each corner of the Market Square. A shrill whistle blasted out a signal, the backs of the vans were lowered, and out poured the Mounties, each armed with a baseball bat.

They must have been packed very tightly in those vans for there were lots of them. In their first mad, shouting, club-swinging charge they killed Regina City Detective Miller, who had evidently come onto the Square to help them. In less than minutes the Market Square was a mass of writhing, groaning forms, like a battlefield...

The surprise was complete, and it was a victory for the Mounties, the only one they had that night. Even at that, they were unable to follow up, as there were also not a few Mounties writhing on the ground, and it took about half of their number to arrest Evans and the few boys on the platform...

It was to be a squeeze play. We were not going to be allowed to get out of town. We were to be smashed up. How incredibly stupid. Immediately orders were given us to build barricades, and there was plenty of material to work with.

The street was lined with parked cars and we simply pushed them into the street, turned them on their sides, and piled them two high...

Our defense was simple: in front of the barricade, two lines of us formed, one behind the other, right across the street, each with a good armful of big rocks. As the line of horsemen charged, we waited until they were quite close, and then the front rank let go a barrage of rocks, and as soon as their rocks were finished, down on their knees they would go, and the row of men behind had a clear field to let go their barrage.

R. Liversedge, *Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek*, pp. 112-114

### Police Raid Started Riot Gardiner Wires Bennett

*Toronto Star*, 3 July 1933, p. 1

The trouble at Regina which has resulted in death was apparently precipitated by an attempt on the part of the police to break up an orderly meeting at which the trekkers were preparing to raise funds. Premier Gardiner, of Saskatchewan, makes a plain statement about it in a telegram to Ottawa:

"While we were meeting to consider their proposals and any suggestion we might make to you (the federal government) the trouble started downtown between police and strikers without notification to us of police intentions... While the Saskatchewan government considered action, the police raided a public meeting to arrest the leaders, precipitating a riot."

*Toronto Star*, 3 July 1933, p. 5

### J. S. Woodsworth said in the House...

"I would say that these men were assembled in a perfectly peaceable way; there was no disorder whatever until the two forces of the police came upon them and ruthlessly drove into them. The minister gives us the impression that it was the strikers who started the difficulty. I say they were having a peaceable meeting, attempting to secure further funds with which to carry on their own work in their own way, because they were almost at the end of their resources, and at that legitimate meeting they had the police come upon them..."

"It may be quite true that the leadership of these men has largely come into the hands of communists. The other day I admitted, from the best information I could get, that this was true. I am sorry it is true; I think they would have been better led if they had followed other advice, but may I point out that only a comparatively small number of these people are communists. The great majority of the men are not communists; only a small proportion of them are, and unless there were very great grievances on the part of the men it is inconceivable to me that some sixty or seventy leaders, as I think the Minister of Justice (Mr. Guthrie) put it, could control these two thousand men. That statement in itself is ridiculous. If a large number of the men wanted to return to their homes; if they found that they had been misled, they would throw overboard the sixty or seventy men whom the Minister of Justice says are in a position of leadership."

*House of Commons, Debates*,  
2 July 1935





Regina, July 1 (CP)—Gun-fire blazed out in riot-torn Regina tonight leaving one policeman dead and a striker dying as steel-helmeted Royal Canadian Mounted Police clashed with 3,000 relief-camp deserters and sympathizers.

City Detective Miller was seized by the strikers and beaten to death, eyewitnesses said. Sticks were battered over his head as a group of men seized him at the Market Square behind the police station.

Scores were injured by flying rocks and any other missiles the milling strikers could lay hands on. Tear gas sent men, women and children fleeing from the Market Place when a meeting, called for the purpose of raising funds for the stranded strikers, was broken up...

For more than two hours violent fighting continued between the camp deserters and police.

Shots were fired by R.C.M.P. constables as the riot raged out of control beside the police headquarters. One unidentified striker fell wounded.

For blocks surrounding the Market Square windows were shattered. Property damage, as yet unestimated, was considered extensive.

Hospital staffs were too busy attending the injured to estimate the people hurt.

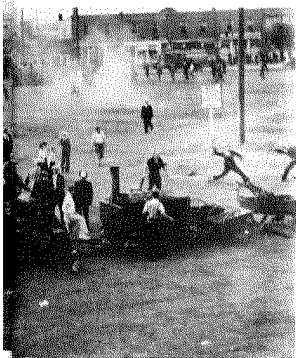
At least fifty were receiving treatment. Doctors were called to give assistance to the wounded...

First outbreak occurred when the helmeted mounted police swooped down upon the strikers and supporters meeting in the Market Square. They appeared as a spokesman began to plea for funds to aid the strikers, ordered by authorities to remain in Regina. They have camped here since June 14, when they were first halted on their "on-to-Ottawa" trek from Western relief camps.

A score of men were taken into custody as police reinforcements were rushed by truck and on horses after the meeting broke up.

Five Royal Canadian Mounted Police constables were hurt by rocks and other weapons...

*The Canadian Press, 2 July 1935*



## WANTED FOR MURDER \$2000.00 REWARD

The Province of Saskatchewan and the City of Regina each offer a REWARD of \$1000.00, making a total sum of \$2000.00 for information leading to the conviction of any person or persons responsible for the murder of DETECTIVE CHARLES MILLAR, of the Regina City Police Department, who was killed about 8.30 p.m. on July 1st, 1935, when assisting in suppressing a riot of Relief Camp Strikers in the City.

According to witnesses Detective Millar was attacked by three men with clubs, receiving a fractured skull, from the effects of which he died within a few minutes.

### DESCRIPTION OF SUSPECTS

No. 1. About 5 ft. 10 inches; slender; with tapering shoulders; medium complexion; 145 or 170 lbs.; clean shaven; wore a dirty white or fawn colored shirt; no trousers; vest or coat; peaked cap.

No. 2. Young man; fat face; mouse colored hair which was rather long; wore grey suit and khaki shirt.

No. 3. About 5 ft. 10 inches; 155 lbs.; clean shaven; dark red hair; fair complexion; wore a dark shirt and grey and black tweed trousers.



## The Case for the Bennett Government:

### THE R.C.M.P. POSITION ...

Colonel Wood himself was of the opinion that, if the leaders were to be arrested, action should be taken immediately because he believed that the strikers were preparing to make some desperate move; this was also the belief of Inspector Chesser and Major Murison of the Canadian Pacific Railway Police. The foundation for the belief was confidential information which the police officers had from a source which they considered thoroughly reliable, to the effect that the strikers were making clubs and preparing for battle with the police, ... he feared that they were planning demonstrations in the city which might result in riots and he believed that quick action in arresting the leaders might prevent the disturbances and make it easier to negotiate with the men for their return to the camps or to their homes. *Report of the Regina Riot Inquiry Commission, pp. 109-114*

### THE PRIME MINISTER SAID ...

"To suggest that anyone on this side of the House [of Commons] desired ... to use force against individuals is ... false ... It is equally true that so long as we are charged with responsibility ... we will discharge it."

*House of Commons, Debates, 2 July 1935*

Millar, who was in plainclothes, was on reserve and was inside the police station when the disturbance on Market Square began. While the fray was still going on, but after the Square had been partly cleared, a number of strikers, apparently coming from near the south end of the Square, went to a tool box standing a short distance north of the fire hall, with the purpose of procuring weapons. This tool box formed the rear unit of a train of implements attached to a steam roller, and used in street repair work. They began to break into the tool box and evidently were seen by Millar, who rushed out of the police station garage, where he had been standing, and went towards them. Before he was able to reach them they had succeeded in getting some of the implements out of the box. Millar apparently attempted to drive them off, and was almost immediately struck over the head with a heavy club.

There is some evidence that he may have been hit at the outset with a shovel, but there is no doubt that it was the blow from the club which killed him. It landed with terrific force on his bare head, not only causing extensive fractures to the skull, but lacerations of the brain ...

*Report of the Regina Riot Inquiry Commission, pp. 109-114*

### THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE CLAIMED ...

"Prior to the opening of proceedings at the market square meeting a number of plainclothes men of the mounted police proceeded to the platform and arrested others of the leaders, making the total arrests on the two occasions about twenty-four. At the time these arrests were made the city police of Regina, who are under the control of the municipality, came up upon one side of the platform, and the mounted police on the other side. The crowd which had gathered, both strike marchers and onlookers from the city of Regina, on the arrival of the police immediately cleared the square or the space, and it was thought that the crowd had permanently dispersed. However, after the lapse of a few minutes the strikers, having armed themselves with stones, clubs and various kinds of missiles, returned to the scene and made an attack upon the city police. The attack was made in the first instance by the strike marchers, and the city police were called upon to defend themselves. Subsequently the mounted police joined for the purpose of maintaining order. Shots were exchanged. Shots were fired by the strikers, and the fire was replied to by shots from the city police. No shot whatever was fired by the mounted police. They were armed with batons.

"Peace and order was restored at about eleven o'clock last night, and the men were herded back to the exhibition grounds."

*Report of the Regina Riot Inquiry Commission, pp. 109-114*

### The Aftermath

The conditions of settlement were that any man on the trek could proceed to his home, or wherever he wanted to go, with transportation provided, and that the originals from B.C. would be provided with two chartered passenger trains, one C.P.R. and one C.N.R. with adequate food for the journey back to Vancouver.

All this was accepted. Many men took advantage of the offer to go back to their own provinces, some as far away as Nova Scotia.

Gradually the situation straightened out for us; the camps were absorbing the men under a new jurisdiction at forty cents per hour. Most of the camps were under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Forestry Department, with men employed building park and camping sites. R. Liversidge, *Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek*, pp. 118-120

# HOW TO SURVIVE?



## T. Tyler in the Orillia Jail

(Toronto Telegram, 20 March 1930)

This seventeen year old wanderer whose one source of solace in the jungles and jails of his living is the battered old phonograph and more battered records he carries wherever he goes from his native Montreal.



## The Soup Kitchen. . . .

At the police station, after an interrogation and some verbal abuse, I was given a ticket for the soup kitchen which was my guarantee for two meals a day, but the ticket had to be renewed every two weeks during the winter. My two meals at the soup kitchen were a tin plate of white beans boiled in water only, two slices of dry bread, and a mug of tea or coffee maybe, it was hard to judge. The meals were always the same (with one exception) and always served at eleven a.m. and five p.m. The exception was the shooting of a bear by a Sudbury businessman who gave the bear to the city, who then sent it to the soup kitchen with the result that a few hundred men suffered violent diarrhea for two days.

Yes, there were six hundred men on so-called relief in Sudbury during that winter, and I found out later the cost per day of maintaining each person was four cents.

The process of obtaining a meal at the soup kitchen was truly an ordeal. The long line-up of hundreds of men in sub-zero weather, slowly, very slowly, moving ahead, a few steps, and then a wait. Sometimes it took an hour to reach the house in the middle of a short row of dwelling houses (near the C.P.R. station) where the beans were boiling in the water. The line-up was worse on days when there had been a rise in temperature and a slight thaw, then one shuffled slowly ahead through a foot and a half of frozen slush. In the case of myself and many others shod only in broken-down oxford shoes, it was a very unpleasant experience.

Arriving at the house, one entered the small room just large enough to hold the stove with the two big pots, a short counter and room in front of the counter for the boys to file past. After receiving the food, the boys proceeded to the top of the stairway which led to the basement and our dining room.

On reaching the dining room, I at once realized the reason for the slowness of the whole procedure. In this dimly lit small basement were three short trestle and plank tables around which the men stood to eat. Each man coming down from the kitchen had to wait on the stairs with his rapidly cooling plate of beans, for a stand-in at this veritable feast of the passover.

The atmosphere in the basement was like that in a chilly mouldy crypt. The tables were covered with ice, and beans, and pieces of wet bread. The floor was ankle deep in sludge, and at the out-door into the alley at the back, there was always a spic-and-span young Mountie on guard to see that nobody threw the valuable food into the garbage can.

R. Liversedge.

Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek, pp. 9-10



## Eating Gophers. . . .

We were all poverty-stricken by the depression in our district, even though we had good land and most of us had worked hard. We didn't have to wear gunny sacking for clothing and eat gophers as they did down in the dried-out Youngstown area. But I had neighbours who were living on skimmed milk and potatoes. The telephones were taken from one farm home after another, until we were finally the only farm with a telephone. . . . The poverty was incredible.

J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 241

## THE TRANSIENT LIFE. . . .

In the morning these boys are given a bowl of porridge each, a cup of coffee, some dry bread and a little syrup. The only other meal they receive is in the evening, when they get a bowl of thin soup, more dry bread, and a cup of coffee. . . .

It is frankly admitted by some of the Winnipeg aldermen that their purpose in giving the transients such meagre food and these horrible sleeping quarters is to force them to leave town and run the risk of being jailed in some other town for a violation of the government's order prohibiting riding on freight trains. *House of Commons, Debates*, 22 Nov. 1932



Miss M. Williams, charged with vagrancy

## CHEATING

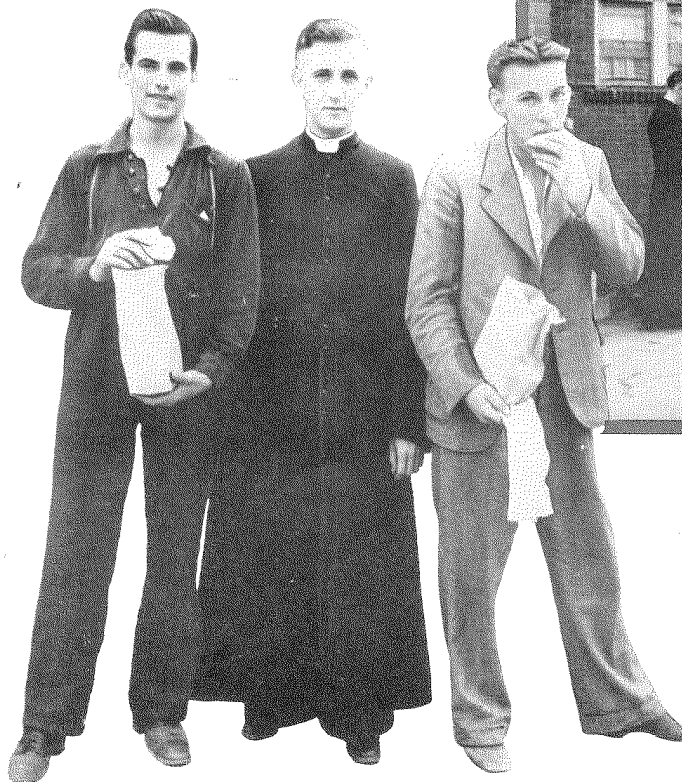
Street car tickets for children were 12 for a quarter. We'd use a razor blade to start and then we'd peel each one in half. So then we'd have 24. We used to pray that when they dropped in the box they'd land right side up. Some kids had the idea that if you plastered the opened side with spit they'd fall right side up.

B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 200

## The Aged. . .

It seems to be generally agreed that there exists a serious employment problem for persons between sixty and seventy years of age, and that a large proportion of those on relief are in the higher age groups. British Columbia states in a report to the Department of Labour that forty per cent of its relief recipients are fifty years of age and over.

L. Richter, *Canada's Unemployment Problem*, p. 40



## FED JOBLESS AT DELHI ONTARIO

(Toronto Telegram, 10 August 1939)

Answering that he would carry on in the face of any criticism, Rev. Father John Uyen, parish priest of the Roman Catholic Church of St. John de Brebeuf at Delhi continues his task of feeding the hungry transients who are seeking work in the tobacco fields. Reeve Albert Wilbur declared yesterday he didn't think Fr. Uyen should feed the jobless, as it would keep them in town, where they are not wanted, for a longer period. Pictures show children of the parish making sandwiches and Fr. Uyen with two of the workers after they had been given their meal.

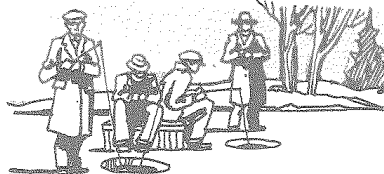
## ODD JOBS. . .

People who lived near cemeteries could cadge jobs cutting the grass on the graves, at so much per grave per season. However, it was a sadly overcrowded field of enterprise, and unless a prospective grave attendant was at the door soon after the funeral he would discover a rival had taken the job. Considerate people who hesitated to barge in on the sorrowing survivors did poorly in this business.

Every winter dozens tried their hands at fishing through the ice on the Red River, but the hazards far outweighed the few cents a day's catch would yield. The only satisfactory place to fish was near open water at sewer outlets. Any sharp change in the temperature of the water made the ice unsafe. A lot of time was lost by the fishermen having to halt operations to fish one of their competitors out of the river. One dip in the Red River in January, however, was likely to discourage the dippee from further operations for the year.

Those living on the fringes of the wealthier south end of town could earn odd quarters shovelling snow off walks and driveways. The house-to-house canvassing racket played out early in the depression, but not before the unemployed by the thousands had taken a crack at it. Everything that could be carried—from home-knit socks to wax flowers, pastry, dill pickles, embroidery, patented can-openers, and shoe-laces—was hawked from door to door.

J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 31



### Pete and Billie Play for Pennies

(Toronto Telegram, 15 January 1932)

"Times are hard," said the master as he ground out his merry tunes on his 150-year-old organ. "Times are hard. People don't seem to have money anymore. But so long as we have blue skies overhead, what does it matter?"

# SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Those who became most sensitive to the depression were not the politicians but the school teachers and the preachers. Both had their own financial crosses to bear. They were underpaid at the best of times, everywhere in western Canada. School boards advertised for teachers for \$500 and \$600 a year and were flooded with applicants. In every city, teachers began with submarginal salaries and took all the pay cuts inflicted on everybody else. The urban teachers, however, at least collected their pay. In the country, teachers often ended a school year with nothing but promissory notes to show for a year's work. Yet the shattering blow to the teaching profession was to the heart rather than to the pocket. It was the sight of the vacated seat of the brightest pupil in the room, the seat that most of all should have been occupied....

It became increasingly difficult to maintain interest in class in face of the clamorous unspoken question: What good was an education to anybody? Attention wandered from the decline of the Roman Empire to the holes in the soles of shoes, and to whether there would be any meat to go with the potatoes for supper. The teachers lived with life on relief every day, and they lived it with an intimacy that was deeper even than that of those who were on relief, because their 'families' were so much larger and their experience so much broader. J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, pp. 82-83



One day two pupils arrived on horseback almost frozen. One of the boys took off his windbreaker and loosened his shirt. His skin was blue with the cold. He had no winter underwear and no overshoes.

"Where is your winter underwear?" Taylor asked the boy, who replied that he didn't have any and that the Relief Office would not give them any.

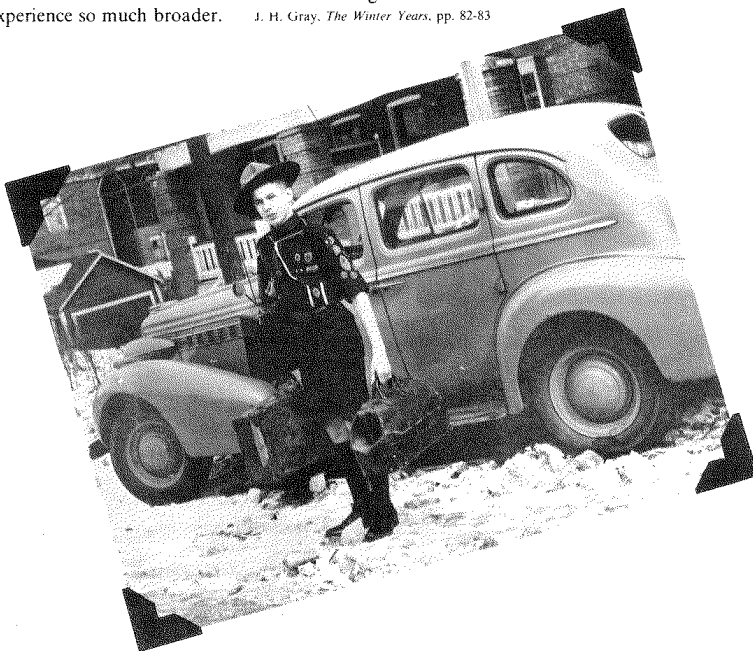
A very angry Taylor that night went to visit the welfare officer in Drumheller. He was advised he would have to contact Edmonton.

"The father of this boy is a drunkard," the relief officer told him, "and I have orders not to issue clothing to him."

*Bennett Papers*



*Victory School for the hard of hearing, Guelph, Ontario*



## School Boards Save Money. . . .

Every device has been used to secure economical management during the current year. Drastic cuts have been made in teachers' salaries in all classes of districts. The average salary of rural teachers will show a decrease from \$1100.00 to \$780.00 per annum. Teachers are taking notes instead of money but banks will not cash the notes. A considerable proportion of teachers are in arrears with respect to salaries. Salary schedules built up by the teachers after many years of careful publicity are almost completely disregarded. Trustees are writing and wiring that schools must close unless aid is forthcoming and questioning the advisability of retaining their teachers beyond the end of June without definite assurance of financial aid from the Government.

In addition to salary decreases, further economies have been effected. Janitors, secretary-treasurers, assessors and collectors are in many cases not being paid while in consolidated districts rate-payers are requesting the privilege of conveying the children to school themselves, receiving the Government grant alone as payment therefor. This grant is normally one-third of the cost of this service. Furniture and equipment are not being replaced, necessary repairs to property are not being made. The regulation requiring the purchase of library books to the amount of \$10.00 per annum per room is in abeyance. Schools are to be closed during the winter months to save the cost of fuel.

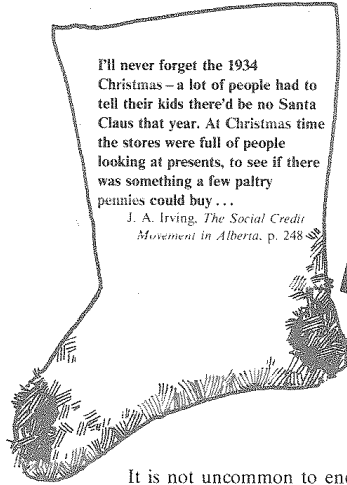
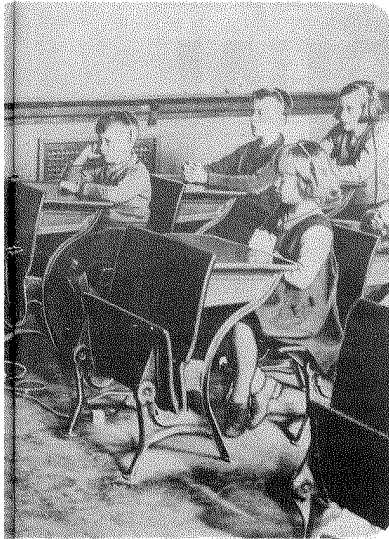
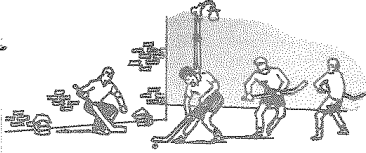
Debenture payments are in default to an amount far exceeding the worst of former years, notwithstanding the most satisfactory conditions in this respect up to the middle of 1930. Debentures are not saleable. New buildings, urgently needed, cannot be erected.

M. Horn, *The Dirty Thirties*, pp. 186-187

The subject matter in Canadian schools suggests a respect for inherited traditions. Canada may have been a North American country but Canadian students spent little time on the history or the institutions of the United States. Even the history of Canada was not taught as national history but as part of the history of the British Empire. The emphasis was on British traditions and British institutions; the American myth of a new and unfettered society in the new world never appeared in Canadian textbooks. The "love of freedom, justice and democracy" came, not from the frontier, but from the Mother of Parliaments.

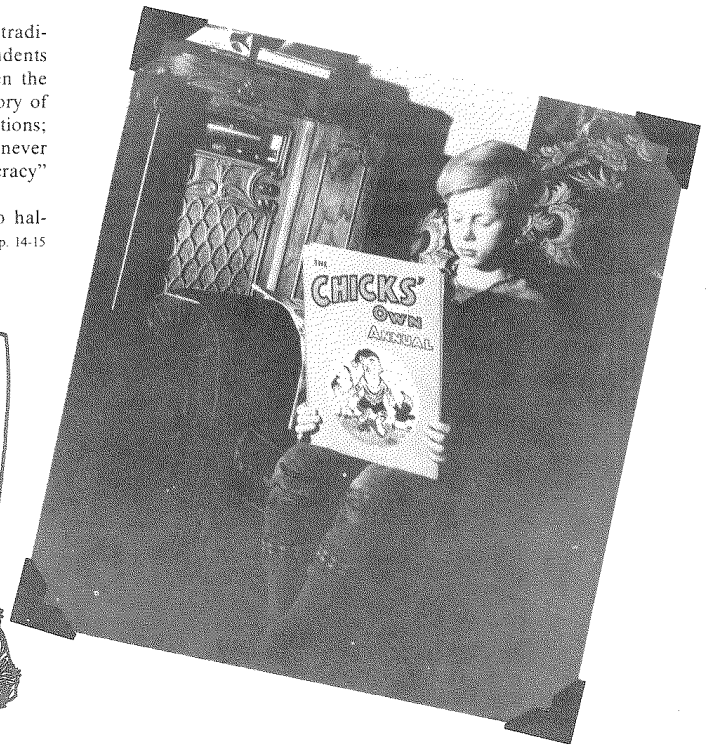
Canadian universities were, if anything even more strongly committed to hallowed traditions.

H. B. Neatby, *The Politics of Chaos*, pp. 14-15



I'll never forget the 1934 Christmas - a lot of people had to tell their kids there'd be no Santa Claus that year. At Christmas time the stores were full of people looking at presents, to see if there was something a few paltry pennies could buy...

J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 248



It is not uncommon to encounter students who are apparently careless and disinterested in their work and who consistently fail classes with a minimum of compunction and remorse. When they are brought to task for their inattention and neglect, the answer elicited is often along these lines: "Why should I speed the day of my graduation? Why should I dissipate my energies in the accomplishment of a task which holds so little promise of reward for the effort involved?" Nor are these the fanciful imaginings of a cynic mind - they are actual observations based upon teaching experience in secondary schools.

But there is still another influence at work which is largely accountable on a basis of youth unemployment. There are in our schools at the present time hundreds, yes, thousands, of boys and girls who remain there for the sole reason that they have nowhere else to go.

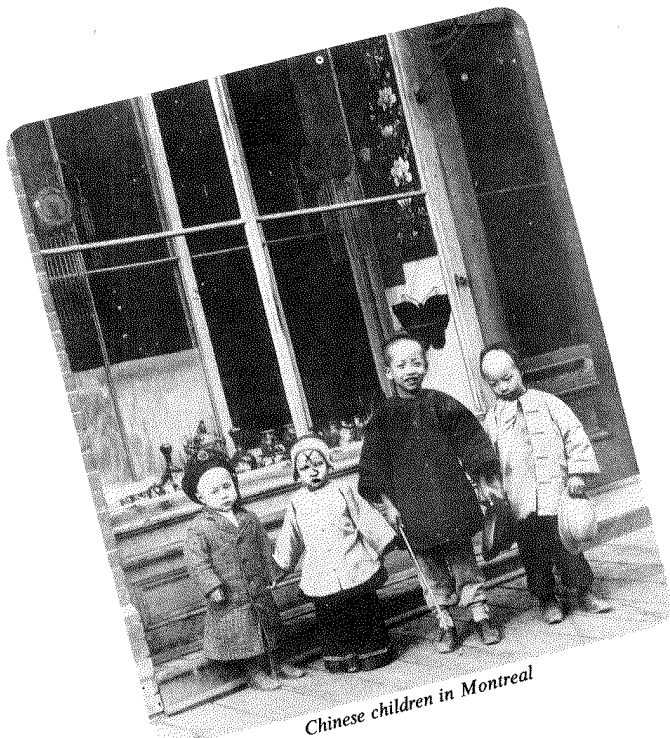
L. Richter, *Canada's Unemployment Problem*, p. 138



Knox Church Young People's Society, Stratford, Ontario



Knox Church Formosa Band, Stratford, Ontario



*Chinese children in Montreal*

In a city or town where there were a lot of French and a lot of English it was usually bad for the French. Take Moncton. It is now the centre of French culture in the Maritimes and the French-English split, you could say it is about even. Fifty-fifty.

But in the Thirties, in what we call the Depression, Moncton was pretty much of an Anglo, well, an English-speaking city. At that time all the commerce was done in English and consequently all the work went to the English-speaking people. The split might have been 35 per cent French and the rest English, but all the jobs, the good ones in the city, were for the English.

B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, pp. 158-159



*Polish family, Benito, Manitoba*



*Ruthenian settlers in Alberta*

## THE CANADIAN ETHNIC BALANCE 1931

Origin	Number (1931)
French .....	2,927,990
English .....	2,741,419
Scottish .....	1,346,350
Irish .....	1,230,808
German .....	473,544
Scandinavian .....	228,049
Ukrainian .....	225,113
Hebrew .....	156,726
Dutch .....	148,962
Polish .....	145,503
Indian and Eskimo .....	128,890
Italian .....	98,173

F. R. Scott, *Canada To-day*, p. 14

# SOME WERE LESS EQUAL...

## IMMIGRATION

Immigration into Canada is now very restricted. Chinese immigration was ended by the Dominion Chinese Immigration Act of 1923; between 1925 and 1936 only 7 Chinese were admitted. Japanese immigration is governed by the "gentleman's agreement" of 1907, as revised in 1928, under which the number of Japanese entering the country does not exceed 150 a year. The total number admitted between 1929 and 1936 was 813. Other immigration is governed by the new regulations laid down in the Order-in-Council of March 21, 1931, which limits immigration to the following four classes:

1. A British subject entering Canada directly or indirectly from Great Britain or Northern Ireland, the Irish Free State, Newfoundland, the United States of America, New Zealand, Australia, or the Union of South Africa, who has sufficient means to maintain himself until employment is secured, provided that the only persons admissible under the authority of this clause are British subjects by reason of birth or naturalization in Great Britain or Northern Ireland, the Irish Free State, Newfoundland, New Zealand, Australia, or the Union of South Africa.
2. A United States citizen entering Canada from the United States who has sufficient means to maintain himself until employment is secured.
3. The wife or unmarried child under 16 years of age of any person legally admitted to and resident in Canada who is in a position to receive and care for his dependents.
4. An agriculturist having sufficient means to farm in Canada.

F. R. Scott, *Canada To-day*, p. 20

## THE CANADIAN PECKING ORDER

Ours was a society with a well-defined pecking order of prejudice. On the top were the race-proud Anglo-Saxons, who were prejudiced against everybody else. On the bottom were the Jews, against whom everybody discriminated. In between were the Slavs and Germans. By the mid thirties the Germans had become deeply infected with Hitler's poison and discriminated against Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews. The Poles hated the Russians, Ukrainians, and Jews, and both the Ukrainians and Jews subdivided again into 'Reds' and 'Whites' who endlessly refought the Russian revolution.

In all groups there were naturally many exceptions to the ruling prejudices. Nevertheless, racial discrimination was so much a fact of life that it drove the minorities into economic ghettos. Jews tried to live off the trade of other Jews; and Ukrainians, Poles and Germans tried to live off other Ukrainians, Poles and Germans. The drive to survive in a prejudice-ridden community produced the rash of small industry and of bootstrap manufacturing that developed in Winnipeg.

J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 132

*Hutterite women and a child on the prairies*



## Winnipeg

In my search for employment I was free to range over the whole of commercial Winnipeg and nobody denied me a job from any ulterior motive. This did not hold true for the Ukrainians, Poles, and Jews. For them, Winnipeg was far from being a city of 250,000 in which they too were free to search for work. As much as two-thirds of it was barred and bolted against them.

None of the city's chartered banks, trust companies, or insurance companies would knowingly hire a Jew, and anyone with a Ukrainian or Polish name had almost no chance of employment except rough manual labour. The oil companies, banks, mortgage companies, financial and stock brokers, and most retail and mercantile companies except the Hudson's Bay Company discriminated against all non-Anglo-Saxons. For the young Ukrainians and Poles, there was a possible solution if they could beat the accent handicap. They could change their names. So they changed their names, sometimes formally and legally, but mostly informally and casually. Caroline Czamecki overnight became Connie Kingston, Mike Drazenovick became Martin Drake, and Steve Dziatkewich became Edward Dawson. But, for the Jews, a name change was not enough. It was not even enough to leave the synagogue, as did many of the young Jews who became Communist converts. In the minds of anti-Semitic Winnipeggers, there was no way in which a Jew could escape from Judaism. In plain truth, the unhappiest Jew in town would have been one who managed to sneak into a job in any of the Anglo-Saxon companies.

J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, pp. 126-127



*Doukhobor women at Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan*

## DEPORTATION

Under our immigration laws, any person not a native of Canada, who has spent less than five years in this country, is liable to deportation if he becomes a public charge. This means that large numbers of immigrants, English, Scotch and Irish, as well as European, are now liable to deportation, even though their only sin is that they have become destitute on account of lack of work.

Deportations have become much more numerous since the beginning of the depression, and this is undoubtedly a result of present economic conditions. H. M. Cassidy, *Unemployment and Relief in Ontario*, p. 252

## THREE LETTERS TO PRIME MINISTER BENNETT:

*Nanaimo, B.C., 1933*

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 these jobs have to go without jobs therefore they have to go without sufficient 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 and 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.

The same applied to Nanaimo only the Chinese are working on the surface here & not below but there are a very large number of foreigners working in the mines at Nanaimo who can neither read write nor speak English & apart from that besides having our jobs & getting the wages which is ours by right the money is not only going out of Nanaimo but it is going out of the country & that is not good for this country.

*Bennett Papers*

*Grimsby, Ontario, 1933*

... Why not put some of these foreigners and Indians in their own country and give a white man some show, as they are taking work away from the Canadian men and I would think the Government could do something to prevent all of this. And the people wonder in Canada why so much robbing and bootlegging is carried on: Now why is it? If we have any government at all, why not look into it as our country is overrun by foreigners.

*Bennett Papers*

*Galahad, Alberta, 1935*

... I would like to suggest my... system, of how to help solve the unemployment... First I would suggest a method or a law, whereby Females would not be allowed employment as long as a Male can fill that or those positions...

*Bennett Papers*

## 1935—Alberta—"Bible" Bill Aberhart Leads Social Credit to a Stunning Victory over United Farmers of Alberta

### PROGRAM OF THE ALBERTA SOCIAL CREDIT MOVEMENT, 1935

1. A basic dividend of \$25 per month must be given to every citizen to buy the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter. It will be based on the natural wealth of the country which belongs to everyone.
2. Control of the monetary system must be taken away from the small, privileged group of bankers and financiers. It must be returned to the common people.
3. Prices must be controlled so that both producers and consumers pay a fair price, and so that inflation stops.
4. By giving every citizen a \$25 dividend, we will put more money in circulation. This will cause increasing prosperity which will, in turn, create more jobs and solve the unemployment problem.
5. The government must assist in marketing agricultural and dairy products and in stimulating the agriculture industry.
6. Government departments must be re-organized to reduce waste and inefficiency.



*William Aberhart forged the Alberta Social Credit Movement almost single-handedly*

I supported Mr. Aberhart because I was convinced he would guarantee us a just price. The U.F.A. people had been in for fourteen years and we were all starving. I never expected to get \$25 a month. But Mr. Aberhart promised us a just price. I sold a bull in 1935 for five dollars. I voted for Social Credit because I wanted a just price for the next bull I sold. J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 255

You can strip down the appeal of Social Credit to the \$25 a month. All of us farmers were in desperate straits. Here was William Aberhart promising \$25 a month, and he was a minister of the gospel. I asked him about that \$25 after one of his meetings, and he told me I must have faith. J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 252

The secret of Mr. Aberhart's appeal to us was his wholeheartedness and sincerity for religion. He loved us common people because of his religion. We felt he was a born leader, with something great to do in the world. It seemed to us as if God had picked Mr. Aberhart and then prepared an audience for him in Alberta first as a religious leader and then as leader of the Social Credit movement. The life of Mr. Aberhart in Alberta was a fulfillment of a Divine Plan. J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 259

# CAN THE NEW POLITICIANS SAVE US?

## e 1938—Fascist Parties Claim to have 100,000 Members!

Canadian Fascism at the moment is divided into two groups. In Ontario and the West the official title of the organization is The Canadian Nationalist Party, and its membership for the most part is made up of English-speaking Protestants. Joseph Farr is a North of Ireland man, and a member of the Orange Order. In Quebec the movement is headed by Adrien Arcand and is called the National Social Christian Party. Its membership is ninety-nine per cent French Canadian and Roman Catholic.

The movement is frankly anti-Jew, anti-Communism, and is opposed to the Masonic Order, which its leaders claim is controlled by Jews. The official "Program and Regulations" of the Party states: "Only members of the great races which have formed since its beginning as a country the population of Canada, and the other Aryan members of the population

who will agree to identify themselves with the mother races, can be Canadian citizens." That is, Jews, negroes, and Asiatics would be denied the franchise.

Arcand insists that "we don't attack Jews, we simply defend our country and civilization against their conspiracy." Joseph Farr says the same thing in different words. "We are not Jew haters. We do say that Christian people have a right to live decent lives." Both men support the British Fascist plan for handling the problem of what to do with the Jews after they have been thrown out. The idea is to set up an all-Jewish State on the Island of Madagascar, and leave them to work out their own destiny in their own way.

*Maclean's Magazine*, 15 Apr. and 1 May 1938



## 1935—C.C.F. Wins 500,000 Votes in General Election!

### PROGRAM OF THE C.C.F., 1934 (CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH FEDERATION)

1. All banks and financial institutions including the central bank must be owned by the people, not by private individuals.
2. The C.C.F. will prevent mortgage companies and banks from foreclosing on farmers.
3. The C.C.F. will begin a large-scale program of public works, especially housing, to relieve unemployment.
4. The C.C.F. will establish a national minimum wage and will regulate hours of work. It will guarantee the right to work and to organize workers' unions.
5. The C.C.F. will start at once a national system of social insurance.
6. The C.C.F. will develop cultural and technical education and will generally assist all people to fit into the re-organized, co-operative, socialist society.



*J. S. Woodsworth became the first national leader of the C.C.F. in 1933*

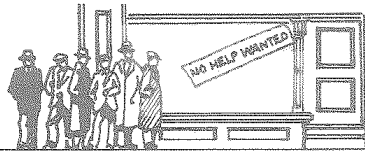
## 1936—Quebec—Union Nationale, Led by Maurice Duplessis, Defeats Liberal Government 76 Seats to 14!



*Maurice Duplessis attracted huge crowds throughout Quebec*

### PROGRAM OF THE UNION NATIONALE—1936

1. To protect and preserve the French language, religion, and institutions in Quebec, and to ensure the survival of the French culture.
2. To struggle against the English capitalists' exclusive control of Quebec industries and natural resources.
3. To improve the economic status of French Canadian workers by raising wage levels, controlling hours of work, and improving working conditions.
4. To sweep out the corrupt, inefficient, and wasteful government of the Taschereau Liberals.
5. To co-operate closely with the church and to destroy the communists in Quebec.
6. To enlarge the rights and powers of the provincial government to accomplish the above goals.



# FINANCE,



## LAYING OFF WORKERS...

When the large employers—the railways and mail-order houses in particular—set the fashion for laying off staff *en masse*, other businesses followed the leaders. There was no longer any risk of permanently losing good employees to other jobs. There were no other jobs. So long as unemployment relief was available, there need be no concern about hardship to laid-off workers. When business picked up again they could be called back, so the cost of keeping a staff over slack periods became changed to the taxpayers instead of against company profits. Though the city council railed against the practice, it spread and spread, and the process gave rise to other practices that sharpened the unemployment crisis.

J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 34

Within a few years, however, the prestige of businessmen had sunk to abysmal depths. Somebody was to blame for the depression and businessmen became the scapegoat. Former pillars of society were now seen as plutocrats, closing factories and foreclosing mortgages, worshipping profits with callous disregard for poverty and suffering. Business ethics had not changed but public opinion had. By 1931 the successful entrepreneurs of the Beauharnois Corporation were seen as corrupt although they had broken no laws. By 1935 a relatively minor political figure like H. H. Stevens on the Price Spreads Commission could win sudden popularity by impugning the integrity of J. S. Maclean of Canada Packers and C. L. Burton of Simpson's. Men on the breadlines, farmers in the dustbowl and even the middleclass in their white collars equated profits with profiteers and turned elsewhere for leadership.

*Canadian Forum*, April-May 1970, pp. 18-19



### HONOURABLE H. H. STEVENS, FORMER MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE, PROTESTS UNFAIR DEPRESSION BUSINESS TACTICS, 1934

Here are a few typical "mark-ups" of a great concern:

Furniture:	32% to 101%	Overcoats	43% to 143%
Clothing:		Men's suits	38% to 111%
		Ladies' Coats	34% to 231%
Toilet Goods:		Misses' Dresses	25% to 287%
Drugs:	60% loss (loss leader) to 150% profit		
Groceries:	27% to 134%		
	an average of 34%		

...The idea that because a concern is big and tells you through thirteen pages of advertising that it is cheaper, is false, a delusion and a snare.  
H. H. Stevens, *Papers*, Vol. 41



The Eaton family at the opening of the Edmonton Eaton's store, 1939

... He [J. D. Eaton] can remember the Depression, a time when the company spent millions to shield its employees from the desperation of unemployment. That was a good time for John David Eaton, and he remembers it with affection. "Nobody thought about money in those days," he said, "because they never saw any. You could take your girl to a supper dance at the hotel for \$10, and that included the bottle and a room for you and your friends to drink it in. I'm glad I grew up then. It was a good time for everybody. People learned what it means to work." *Maclean's Magazine*, June 1968, p. 15

# BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

## AN ALBERTA BANKER FORECLOSES . . .

I was dealing with the big wholesalers and the bankers on the one hand and these poor farmers on the other hand. The farmers around Brooks began to get more and more hard up; and then the merchants, too, for they had extended credit and couldn't get at it. One of the hardest working farmers in the district had borrowed \$1,300 from the bank, and he had got hauled out and couldn't pay. Then he had to borrow more. The next year he owed the bank about \$2,400. The bank manager went out to his farm and asked for a bill of sale and promised to "take care" of him. He believed the banker. But the banker then cleaned that farmer out completely! I saw that farmer standing up against the corner of my store with the tears running down his cheeks! When the depression got worse the wholesalers and bankers put the squeeze on the merchants.

J. A. Irving, *The Social Credit Movement in Alberta*, p. 242

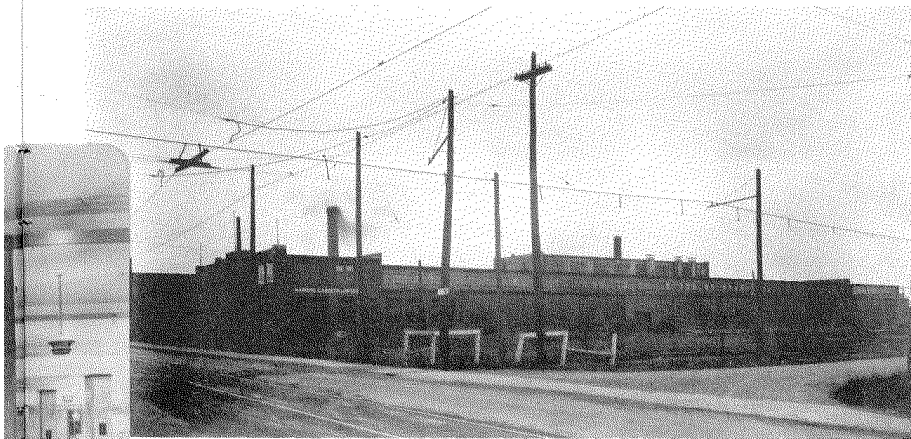
## Respectable Poverty . . .

You talk about exploitation! The banks have always been among the worst employers of all, poor salaries, and a man of 25 with several years service, working 10 hours a day, Monday to Friday, and half day Saturdays and some night work every month, a man of 25 could be paid seven or eight dollars a week.

Farm hands got five dollars a month, and grub. Maids got five or six dollars a month. I've seen newspapers where the only jobs offered were for domestics. Pure laborers got ten bucks or so, winter and summer, and lucky to have a job. Don't tell me about store clerks. Paid practically nothing and expected to dress neat, look neat, always smile and go to church every Sunday. Mail men and people who worked for the government didn't do too bad, and their jobs were fairly secure.

The banks were the worst, I think, and they kept their people in a form of slavery. Respectable poverty. You even had to get permission to marry, and I know one young fellow who was fired because he played golf every Sunday. With his father. His bank manager saw him on the course and didn't think it was right that a young fellow should be wasting away his time on a Sunday. Hard to believe, isn't it? The insurance companies weren't far behind, paying wages you couldn't keep a reasonably-sized dog now in Gaines Dogburger. I mean it.

B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 117



### Imports Into Canada From Great Britain Which Increased 1932-1934

	1932 (\$)	1934 (\$)
Confectionery	2 892 000	4 105 000
Leather	577 000	810 000
Cotton Fabrics	2 972 000	4 377 000
Corduroys	242 000	409 000
Cotton Lace	302 000	426 000
Flax, Hemp, Jute Yarn	311 000	430 000
Worsted Tops, Wool	2 172 000	3 756 000
Woollen Yarn	2 238 000	2 930 000
Woollen Dress Goods	602 000	1 338 000
Tweeds	494 000	1 083 000
Castings & Forgings	289 000	408 000
Cast Steel Bars	242 000	364 000
Sheets for Galvanizing	408 000	720 000
Tin Plate	2 949 000	7 634 000
Engines & Boilers	288 000	462 000
Cutlery	346 000	520 000
Textile Machinery	439 000	833 000
Tin	180 000	515 000
Coal	6 183 000	7 793 000
Common Window Glass	24 000	269 000
Acids	240 000	349 000
Paints and Varnishes	750 000	1 162 000
Sodium Compounds	585 000	775 000

*Industrial Canada*, Jan. 1935, p. 96

### Exports From Canada To Great Britain Which Increased 1932-1934

	1932 (\$)	1934 (\$)
Apples, Fresh	5 593 000	11 524 000
Fruits, Canned	414 000	1 092 000
Vegetables, Canned	356 000	725 000
Cereal Foods	2 183 000	2 994 000
Cattle	1 467 000	3 504 000
Fish, Fresh	344 000	723 000
Fish, Preserved	3 724 000	4 554 000
Leather	1 761 000	2 491 000
Bacon and Hams	3 167 000	17 611 000
Meats, Canned	62 000	204 000
Poultry	68 000	360 000
Wool	365 000	530 000
Wood, Unmfd.	4 819 000	17 066 000
Doors, Sashes, Blinds	3 500	664 000
Paper Board	608 000	1 370 000
Pig Iron, Ingots	000	509 000
Farm Implements	274 000	432 000
Wire Nails	1 200	444 000
Automobiles	495 000	2 563 000
Aluminum	999 000	4 979 000
Copper	3 381 000	13 204 000
Nickel	1 433 000	9 600 000
Zinc	2 401 000	5 106 000
Asbestos	162 000	429 000
Soap	334 000	497 000

*Industrial Canada*, Jan. 1935, p. 94

There are not many points of difference between the Ontario and the Quebec factory laws. The 10 hour day prevails in both provinces for women and children, but their maximum per week in Quebec is 55 whereas in Ontario it is 60 hours. Both provinces may grant permits for a 72 hour week. On the other hand the Ontario working day ends at 6.30 p.m., whereas in Quebec it may continue until 9.00. This means that women, girls and boys in Quebec may lawfully be brought back to the factory after supper for night work, and this practice we found to be quite common in the country and in the poorer city shops. In both provinces boys and girls may be employed at 14.

F. R. Scott and H. M. Cassidy, *Labour Conditions in the Men's Clothing Industries*, p. 62

While our investigations of shop conditions were not extensive or detailed, they did serve to show that in Toronto there is a distinct tendency for conditions to be worse in the non-union than in the union shops. It is quite clear that in these establishments, where low wages, irregular work, and occasional spells of long hours prevail, there is frequently little or no concern for the ordinary physical amenities. Nothing that is not absolutely necessary is done to advance the health, the comfort or the welfare of employees. F. R. Scott and H. M. Cassidy, *Labour Conditions in the Men's Clothing Industries*, p. 69

When the slump in buying came, its implications were immediately dumped on the factory employees. Where a dressmaker would earn \$3.60 a dozen for her work on a particular voile dress, in 1933 her rate of earning was knocked down to \$1.75 for the same dress, and the same work. For an eight-hour day she would, if she worked very hard, take home \$2.50. Even in the depression, this bordered on the outrageous....

With styles becoming more complicated, and the dresses harder to make, the rates were not raised but drastically lowered and the women expected to produce more, not less. Witnesses speak of being "badgered and harassed" and "threatened if you did not make the \$12.50 you would be fired." They were clocked by stop watches, disciplined for slow work by being sent home to sit out a week and no wages. If they came five minutes late for work, they were frequently locked out of the plant and forced to go home without earning anything that day.

*Last Post*, Vol. 1, Feb. 1930, pp. 14-17

T. Eaton Co. Ltd., Toronto, Annex #4, Factory 6



The Eaton Knitting Company, Hamilton, Ontario

# WORKING IN A FACTORY

The larger establishments and many of the smaller ones in Toronto are located in well-constructed modern or semi-modern factory buildings which generally provide basic conditions of work, such as light, ventilation, heating, toilets and lavatory facilities, that are satisfactory. And in most of them, particularly the union shops, those conditions of work that come very directly under the control of the employer appear to be fairly good, so far as our inspection of a number of establishments and the information obtained from workers could reveal. But conditions were found in several non-union shops that were distinctly bad.

Workers from two non-union shops made serious complaints about working conditions. Those from the first, a large establishment, said that in some parts of their shop machines were placed so closely together that there was serious crowding of the workers. They claimed also that the elementary physical amenities were lacking—that neither towels nor soap were provided in the washroom, that there was no drinking fountain and that no cups were provided, so that workers had to bring their own glasses or pop bottles, and that there was not even toilet paper in the lavatories. They complained also that the ventilation in some parts of the factory was bad, that the air was often contaminated with gas which escaped from leaking gas pipes, and that when windows were opened there were serious drafts. A number of them also stated that there were cockroaches in the shop and that some employees had found it necessary to stop bringing their lunches to work because the cockroaches got into their food.

F. R. Scott and H. M. Cassidy, *Labour Conditions in the Men's Clothing Industries*, pp. 19-20

# OSHAWA STRIKE 1937: ONTARIO PREMIER FAILS TO KEEP AMERICAN UNION MEN OUT!



Premier and Mrs. Mitch Hepburn

In January of 1937 General Motors announced record profits for 1936 of two hundred million dollars. In the same month, its employees in Oshawa suffered their fifth consecutive wage cut in five years. Worse than the low wages was the lack of job security. Periodic examinations by doctors of the insurance company used by General Motors, weeded out the "bad risks," that is, those men over fifty. In this way the company maintained a steady supply of young and strong workers. Because of these grievances, in February of 1937, when the company posted new work schedules speeding up production, the overworked, underpaid men of the body shop walked out. One of them took it upon himself to phone the United Autoworkers headquarters in Detroit for help. [The UAW was connected with the newly founded Committee for Industrial Organization, the CIO, which was organizing industry-wide unions in the U.S.A.]

However, Mitch Hepburn, the Ontario Premier, was determined to prevent the American CIO from operating in Ontario... He announced that the time had come for a "showdown" with the CIO before its demands could damage the economy of the province... There seemed to be no limits to Hepburn's attempts to crush the CIO...

Meanwhile the strike continued in a peaceful, almost serene atmosphere. Hepburn had taken upon himself the rather unlikely role of mediator, but his behaviour was anything but mediatory. Whenever a settlement seemed imminent he would either ask the company to break off negotiations, or else chase the union negotiators out of his office... To defend his rather partisan behaviour Hepburn again took to the air waves and claimed that his opposition to the CIO in Oshawa had "greatly handicapped the CIO's drive to dominate Canadian industry." In any case he admitted that he was "more concerned about the CIO threat in the minefields than in the automobile industry... for Oshawa is only an attempt by the CIO to pave the way for the real drive against the fundamental wealth of the province and its mine fields." Unashamedly, he then warned, "... let me tell Lewis here and now, that he and his gang will never get their greedy paws on the mines of Northern Ontario, as long as I am Prime Minister."... For the two weeks of the strike Hepburn was in absolute command...

General Motors management had, however, had their fill of Hepburn's interference, and over the Premier's protests an agreement was signed recognizing the UAW as the sole bargaining agent for the G.M. workers in Oshawa. Hepburn was dismayed. In the words of the partisan *Financial Post*, he had hoped to demolish the CIO in one great stand, but had succeeded merely in "holding it at arm's length"...

The achievement of the Oshawa strikers in fighting and defeating both the power of big business and government inspired workers throughout Canada. It gave the CIO the impetus it so desperately needed to begin organization in the mass production industries of the country.

Canadian Historical Association, *Historical Papers*, 1969, pp. 114-122

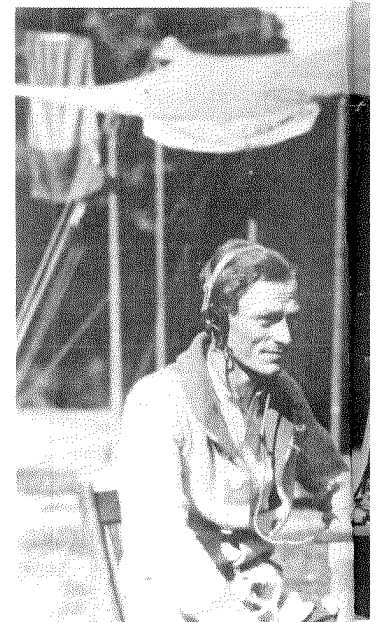
## Union Members are Few in Number...

The total membership in Canadian unions in 1931 was only 310,544 out of a total wage-earning group of 2,570,000. Even excluding from this latter figure the professional and higher paid salaried workers, there would remain at least 2,000,000 whom a trades-union might hope to organize. This means that more than 85 per cent of the workers were unorganized. In 1936 union membership had only risen to 322,473, which is less than it was in 1919-20 despite the increase in population. — J. R. Scott, *Canada Today*, p. 57

## PRIME MINISTER BENNETT SPEAKS OUT, 1935:

"There must be an end to child labour. There must be an end to sweat shop conditions. There must be an end to the reckless exploitation of human resources and the trafficking in the health and happiness of Canadian citizens. There must be an end to the idea that a workman should be held to his labour throughout the daylight hours of every day." — R. B. Bennett, *The Premier Speaks to the People*, p. 14





Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, 1933

### DON'T MISS THE SPITTOON!

I knew the lobby of the hotel was always open, and I also knew the night man quite well, so thought I might as well spend the rest of the night in the lobby. After half an hour swapping lies with Billy the night man, I settled down in one of those big comfortable leather chairs you never see any more, and went to sleep.

There were three rows of chairs in the lobby, one along the wall by the bar, and two back to back, facing the front windows and the desk. At the toe of every third chair, Jim (the proprietor) had placed a spittoon. Maybe you don't remember this type; they were about twelve or fourteen inches high, brass, with a high polish.

Most of the old timers, once they got limbered up in the morning, could zero in on one of these spittoons from three chairs away with no effort at all. It used to fascinate me, just watching those artists at work. It was considered, locally, that old Bo Drane was the accepted champion of the art. With a large chew of Old Stag, he could hit the jackpot from four chairs' distance, not three.

God help you if your aim strayed and old Jim happened to see, he'd tell you to get out of there, go home and practice some more or quite chewing. With this admonition he'd hand the offender the mop. What was worse, you went down several notches on the other old timers' totem pole. Imagine missing a spittoon at that range!

J. B. Vaughn, *The Wandering Years*, p. 144

### Newspapers Covered Only the Exciting Events. . .

We never really covered the news. Here it was, this Depression busting about all around us, and Canadian newspapers didn't cover it. They didn't ignore it, but they didn't send reporters out to hustle, and I think there was a couple of reasons for this. First, The Depression, especially in the Maritimes and in the West, was part and parcel of everyday life, woven right into the fabric. What was the point in sending a reporter out to cover an eviction or a bread line dispute? Remember, even in the hardest-hit places, say Saskatchewan, life went on and on and on. There was still police court to cover, and city hall, the courts, the hotels-and-rails beat because people still travelled, and newspapers had a lot more sacred cows than they have now and they were reported, and the papers were filled up with much more social news, and sports was big, very big, the World Series, the Stanley Cup, the big Joe Louis fights, Jimmy McLarin from Vancouver, and then it was a crazy time. There were fads, and six-day bike races, and dirigibles crossing the Atlantic, and expeditions up the Amazon, the newspapers then were just jammed with all that stuff.

We never covered the rooster towns, the shack towns, the places with living quarters made of cardboard and wooden boxes. We never covered, not on any paper I was on, the hobo jungles, or only did if there was a murder or the cops cleaned one out. The trains hauling in box cars of clothing and fruit and vegetables from Ontario, they didn't get any play. I think nobody wanted to admit the West was on a charity basis with the East. No reporter that I know of was ever sent to live on the slop handed out at soup kitchens.

B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, pp. 351-352

I ever tell you about the preacher in Flin Flon? He had this service at eight o'clock and, correct me if I'm wrong, but that was when Fred Allen came on and he wasn't getting too much of a congregation. So he switched it to quarter to seven to quarter to eight and that gave the congregation 15 minutes to hightail it for home and hear Fred Allen, and he got in his licks at the devil too. Nobody seemed to mind. The fact, is, it just sounded like a good bit of business on the part of the preacher.

Radio was king for quite a number of years. B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 254

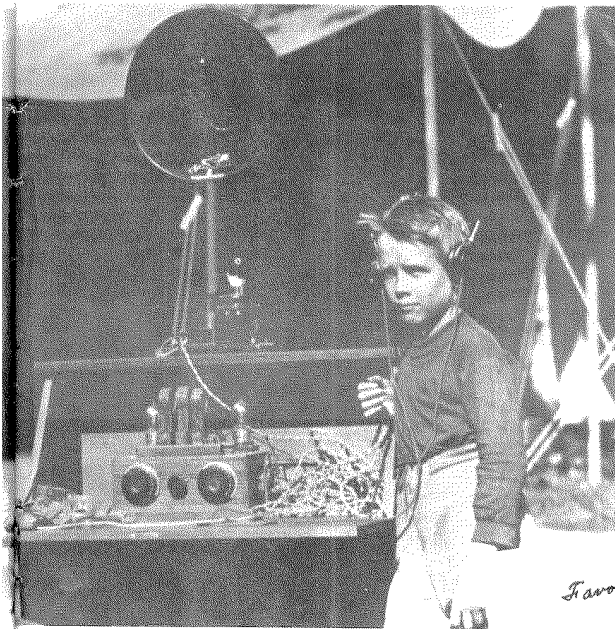
I've often thought of this. Do you remember Jack Benny—his name always comes first because he really was good—and Fred Allen and Fibber McGee and Molly and Singing Sam and Amos and Andy and all those famous radio personalities we used to listen to as if our life depended on it? Do you recall any one of them, just once, ever mentioning the Depression, that times were tough, millions out of work, kids sleeping in ditches and barns? Can you ever recall one of them mentioning just once all these terrible things which were happening around them? Think about it. Kind of scary, isn't it? There were two worlds in those days, the real one and the fantasy world.

B. Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years*, p. 250



Announcer's booth, station CKNC, Toronto

Life itself could never be a bore as long as there was a working radio within earshot. Radio-listening was a passion that the unemployed shared with the employed, the rich shared with the poor, and all the rural West with all the urban West. For the farm families, a radio in working-order was a categorical imperative. It broke the barrier of isolation that had held the prairie West in its grip for almost fifty years. The radio was not only entertainment, it enabled the farm people to shut themselves away from the depression itself, from the dust, and from the wind that blew night and day with its incessant, deranging whine. J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 53



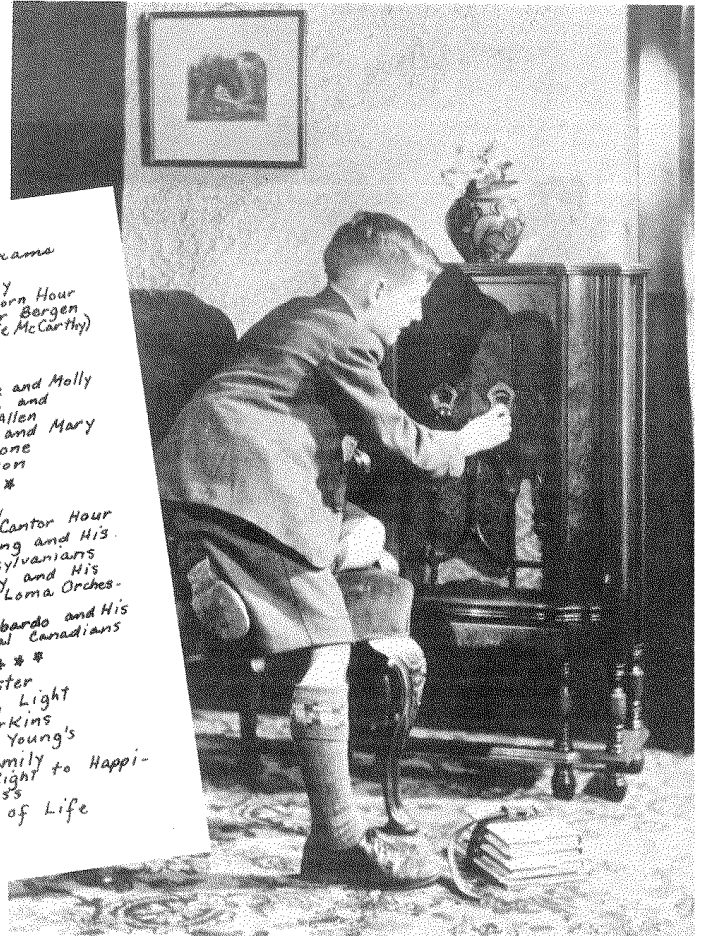
## ENTERTAIN YOURSELF!

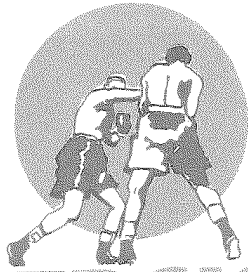
With boundless leisure, there was an almost infinite variety of things to be done. Along north Main Street, all the neighbourhood stores were equipped with chess tables, and the unemployed Jews and Ukrainians in the stores outnumbered the customers four and five to one. In the summer everybody had a garden, and puttering around a garden could kill the better part of a day. The service stations around town operated with staffs who were mainly volunteers—men who filled gas-tanks because they had nothing else to do....

Walking itself became great fun. So was hunting mushrooms, which we did after every rain; or was sitting in the park where Patty played in a wading pool or made castles in the sand. Kay was an indestructible movie-fan and would go to occasional shows with her mother or sisters. Sometimes we would go up town and drop in at auction sales. The sales were not only an important source of revenue for people on relief, but they constituted a popular form of entertainment as well. There was one auctioneer on Carlton Street whose store was always jammed. So many people came to be amused, however, and so few came to buy, that the enterprise eventually went broke. The auctioneer worked harder to get a ten-cent bid than most of the tribe worked to get a dollar....

The pool-rooms and brokerage offices were all crowded throughout the depression, though seldom with customers. The brokerage offices supplied free newspapers and the pool-rooms furnished both recreation and heat. In the downtown rooms, the unemployed congregated in such numbers that the players often had to complain to the management in order to get elbow room for their cues. J. H. Gray, *The Winter Years*, p. 52

- Favourite Radio Programs*
- Comedians*
  - Amos and Andy
  - Chase and Sanborn Hour (with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy)
  - Ed Wynn
  - Fanny Brice
  - Fred Allen
  - Fibber McGee and Molly
  - George Burns and Gracie Allen
  - Jack Benny and Mary Livingstone
  - Red Skelton
  - \*\*\*
  - Musicians*
  - Bing Crosby
  - The Eddie Cantor Hour
  - Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians
  - Glen Gray and His Casa Loma Orchestra
  - Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians
  - \*\*\*
  - Song Operas*
  - Big Sister
  - Guiding Light
  - Ma Perkins
  - Pepper Young's Family
  - The Right to Happiness
  - Road of Life





# DIVERSIONS AND SPORTS

In 1935 Winnipeg footballers bring the Grey Cup west for the first time. In 1936 western champions Regina Roughriders can't raise \$5,000 for the trip to Toronto, and the cup goes back east by default. *Paton, How the Depression Hit the West, p. 21*

## Hockey Cut-Backs...

New York, May 11. - The times being what they are, the National Hockey League has set a limit of \$7,500 on individual player salaries and reduced the player limit to 14.

Action to reduce expenses was deemed necessary at the semi-annual meeting yesterday after it was revealed that only three of the eight clubs had not finished "in the red." Figures for each club were not made public, but it was understood that the New York Rangers, Boston Bruins and Montreal Canadiens did make money.

Not only was the individual salary limit cut to \$7,500, but it was decided each club should be limited to a total expenditure of \$70,000 for player salaries next season. To help in this latter respect, the player limit was fixed at 14. Some clubs last season carried as many as 20 players on the payroll, although the league rules provide that not more than 16 may be used in any one game.

No action was taken on the franchises held by the Pittsburgh Pirates and Ottawa Senators, both inactive last season. These two outfits have until July 2 to decide whether they will organize teams and return to the league or sell their franchises.

*Toronto Daily Star, 11 May 1932*



Charlie Conacher, Sylvanus Apps, and "Busher" Jackson



## FADS...

... there was this craze for miniature golf. It was stupid, really, but it did have a few things going for it. You just needed a city lot, that size, and one man could put together 18 holes and they were only made of sand or hard packed crushed gravel or dirt. Not grass, it wouldn't stand up. You got pipes and tiles and cans and it was all like one of those Rube Goldberg inventions, hit the ball, and it goes along and plops into a hole and runs down a pipe and knocks aside a wooden arrow and then drops into a cup. Foolishness.

But a guy, or at least his wife and him, could build one and buy a couple of dozen old putters and some beaten up balls for a few bucks and you were in business. Yeah, miniature golf.

My Dad and his brother had one in Toronto and in one season they made a fortune. On Saturday and Sunday it would be going from 10 in the morning until, yeah, until it was too dark to see and then they had these Christmas tree lights, yeah, the blue and yellow and red ones, and people would keep going until midnight. Nothing to do you see, and a dime to play, a couple could spend a twenty cents and have some fun.

I'm telling you, my old man would come home on a Saturday midnight with dollars, quarters and dimes weighing him down. Sixty, seventy a day, and all clear, was nothing. But how could it last? Next year there were dozens and my old man and his brother got smart and sold their layout, yeah, for \$500 or so.

So that year everyone went broke. People were doing something else, bike races, contract bridge, fads were the things in them days. Chain letters. Hopes and dreams.

*B. Broadfoot, Ten Lost Years, p. 252*



**THE BROWN BOMBER . . .**

Radio was the big thing and boxing was radio. It was entertainment, sometimes the only entertainment there was. Joe Louis was the big one in those years. The Brown Bomber. There must be millions of guys my age, guys who were kids in the Thirties who can remember Joe Louis better than they can remember any of the modern fighters, except Ali because he's something special.

There was Joe Louis and then everybody else about half a mile down the road, Braddock, Schmeling, Galento. Half the people called him Joe Looee. Couldn't pronounce his last name right but they sure knew him, and yet not one of us ever had a chance to see him fight. New York, now there was the fight town. Madison Square Garden, and all the whoop-de-doo that went with it. The sports pages were full of Joe Louis and what they called his Bum-of-the-Month Club. He was fighting everybody and knocking them over, and I can still hear the announcer. Forget his name, but I should remember it. We know now that Joe never threw that many punches but the announcer threw a lot for him, to make the fight more exciting and sell more Gillette razor blades, Blue Blades. He would say, 'Louis has him in the corner, and it's a left, another left, a left, a right, one to the mid-section, a hard one to the head, a left, two lefts, a right . . . HE'S DOWN!!!!!!' and if the poor guy got up, that was his problem. It's hard to think they were fighting a world champion for a couple of thousand. *B. Broadfoot, Ten Lost Years, pp. 257, 258*

*At the Prince's Gate, Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, 1935*



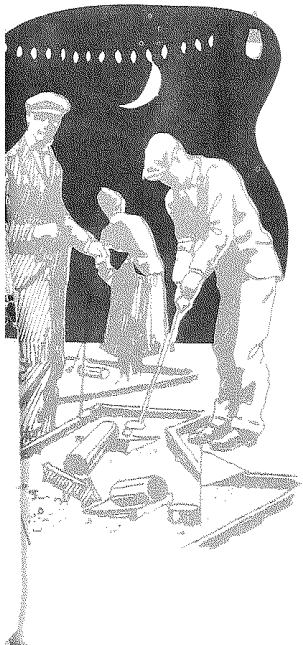
*General A. C. MacDonnell and friends playing golf*



*Bathing at Port Dalhousie, Ontario*



**All Across Canada, Enthusiastic Crowds Greeted The Royal Tour of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1939**



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# Time Line

- 1837 Economic depression contributes to Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada
- 1847 Economic depression followed by great prosperity
- 1857 Financial panic and depression
- 1861 American Civil War stimulates prosperity in Canada
- 1867 Confederation
- 1873 Beginning of 20 years of economic depression
- 1878 Macdonald re-elected Prime Minister and raises the tariff to combat the depression
- 1896 Laurier elected Prime Minister; coincides with the end of the depression. 18-year boom begins.
- 1913 Depression
- 1914 First World War begins
- Economic growth returns
- 1918 First World War ends
- 1919 Winnipeg General Strike
- 1920 Post-war slump
- 1921 Liberal leader W. L. M. King first elected Prime Minister
- 1923 Economic boom begins
- 1929 Stock market crash; the Great Depression begins
- 1930 Progressive Conservative leader R. B. Bennett elected Prime Minister
- 1931 Drought begins on prairies  
New restrictions placed on immigrants
- 1932 Stock market values reach lowest point  
Government relief camps first established
- 1933 Unemployment reaches its height  
C.C.F. founded at Regina Conference
- 1934 Liberal leader M. Hepburn elected Premier of Ontario
- 1935 Liberal leader W. L. M. King re-elected Prime Minister  
Social Credit leader W. Aberhart elected Premier of Alberta  
On-to-Ottawa Trek and Regina Riot
- 1936 Union Nationale leader M. Duplessis elected Premier of Quebec  
Government relief camps closed
- 1937 Joe Louis wins World Heavyweight Boxing Championship in Chicago  
Worst year of prairie drought  
Oshawa strike  
Birthrate declines to its lowest level
- 1939 Second World War begins  
Economic growth returns  
King George and Queen Elizabeth tour Canada
- 1944 C.C.F. wins Saskatchewan election
- 1945 Second World War ends  
The expected slump does not occur and the economy expands spectacularly
- 1949 Newfoundland and Labrador join Canada
- 1967 Canadian Centennial

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