



Canada and the Twenties

SS 11


1920s



Team Canada Jersey 1920s



Telephones one of the common sources of communication



Radios - greatest technological advancement of the time

1920s

- "Roaring Twenties" = prosperity, fun & wild living (Great Gatsby)
- "Jazz Age" = New Music, shocking fashion and crazy trends
- Life Improved for many
- But for others...
 - = Discrimination, poverty & lack of political power



Winnipeg General Strike

Winnipeg General Strike

- The WGS, May 25th June 1919, was Canada's best known general strike.
- Contributions to Postwar labour unrest
 - Massive unemployment
 - Inflation
 - Success of the Russian Revolution (1917)
 - Wave of strikes across Canada
 - Rising revolutionary industrial unionism

Life in Canada During the War

- Labour shortages were a constant problem since many workers were off fighting
- Meant higher wages for those "essential workers"
- Also meant higher costs of living (Food, shelter, clothing)
- Workers were very busy and in high demand to keep up with the relentless need for wartime productions (tanks, ships, and other military contracts)

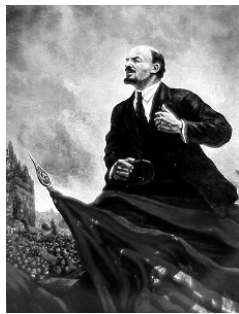
Life for Troops When They Returned

- Business people in Canada "profiteered" from this situation
- When 500,000 Canadian troops came back they were looking for work to pay for the increased costs of goods and services
- Often couldn't find work and joined the ranks of the unemployed



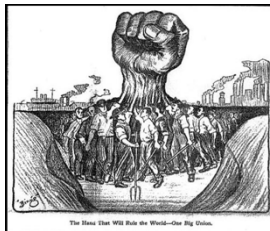
The Red Scare

- High unemployment + high costs of living = people looking for political change
- Inspired by revolutionary theories of Karl Marx, *Bolsheviks* under Vladimir Lenin had established the first communist state in Russia (worker solidarity against Capitalist oppression ie. War profiteers)
- Canada = afraid that fight for improved working conditions



The One Big Union

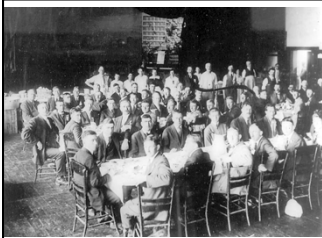
- "Revolutionary industrial Union" formed in 1919
- Goal = organize general strikes (entire cities shut down)
 - All workers would walk off the job at the same time
 - Exercise bargaining power against the powerful and wealthy industrialists
- Fought for:
 - Better Wages
 - Legal Recognition of the union (labeled as illegal)
 - 6 hour work day



City of Winnipeg Shuts Down

- 11 AM May 15th 1919, city of Winnipeg shuts down
- More than 30,000 workers joined a general strike
- Factories closed, streetcars stopped running, telephones didn't ring, even police voted to support the strike but stayed on the job





Committee of 1000

- Made up of Manufacturers, bankers, and politicians who organized to oppose the strike
- Federal Government was also very concerned because "sympathy strikes" were popping up in other major cities (eg. Toronto)

Police Breakup the Strike

- Committee of 1000 put pressure on Minister of Justice Arthur Meighen to break up the strike
- HOWEVER...
- Achieving political and economic change through peaceful means (ie. Strike) was NOT illegal in Canada
- So what did the Government do?
- They changed the law of course.

Police Breakup the Strike

- Series of early morning raids June 17th
- 6 strike leaders arrested and taken to jail
- Four more were arrested shortly after



Things Turn Violent

- In protest, strikers organize a rally in downtown Winnipeg
- On June 21 1919, RCMP on horseback charged into the protesting strikers
- Many more strikers arrested, 30 people injured, 1 person killed
- This event is called "Bloody Saturday"
- On June 25 1919, strikers returned to work



The Strike Ends

- What was achieved?
 - Pros:
 - Greater recognition of the concerns of working people and their new found economic and political power (some see this as the birthplace of the trade union movement in Canada)
 - Workers were no longer defenseless against "big business"
 - Government promised to name a royal commission to study labour conditions
 - Cons
 - Many striking workers were not rehired, others taken back only if they vowed not to join a union
 - Distrust grew between the businesses and working class
 - Set back for the labour movement because leaders were arrested

Link to Today

- J.S. Woodsworth who was a strike leader (was arrested) would go on to found the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation or the CCF that would later become the New Democratic Party or NDP



Winnipeg General Strike

- Video 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDXOOX-DpGI>
- Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FcIhVLUPTD0>

New Challenges to Federalism

- **Regionalism** = Concern/focus of the various regions of the country with their local problems (**Regional Protest**)
- Maritime Provinces
 - Influence in national politics declined
 - Small population = less representation
 - Businesses/banks move to Ontario or close
 - Maritimes Rights movement fails (forced politicians to promote policies beneficial for the Maritimes)
 - Coal industry changes to oil
 - Economy falters

Regionalism

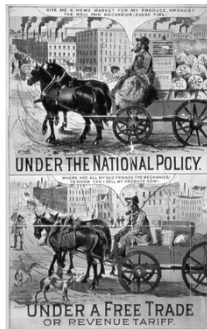
- Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Co5Q2rsFru8>

Farmers

- Prairies/Ontario
- Angry at National Policy
- Tariffs/duties placed on foreign good imported into Canada = too expensive for Canadians to buy = buy local
- Canadian economy is stronger but...
- This policy benefits manufacturers (business) not farmers

Farmers

- Farmers want:
 - Free trade to buy US made machinery (cheaper)
 - Lower freight rate and storage fees
- Canadian Government wasn't able to help farmers
- Farmers create political party - United Farmers' Parties
- Becomes part of provincial governments



New Government - 1921 Election

- William Lyon Mackenzie King (Liberal Leader)
 - Reformer
 - Authority on socioeconomic issues
 - Always compromised to offend the least number of people
- Arthur Meighen (Conservative Leader)
 - Brilliant debater, long-standing MP
 - Believed in principles over compromise (did not care who he would offend)



1921 Federal Election

- Still suffering from Conscription fallout, the Conservatives lose the election to the Liberals
- New Liberal leader William Lyon Mackenzie King heads Canada's first ever Minority Government



Prime Minister King

- Strongly believed Canada needed to have an independent voice in international politics, free of the influence of London
- Was trained in social work and is credited with taking the first steps towards our modern social welfare state
- Would battle for this throughout his first term (1921-1925)
- Most progressive leader to date

Canada through the 20s

- Borden had raised Canada's profile internationally
- King wants great independence
 - 1922 refused to support Britain in its plans to invade Turkey (Chanak)
 - 1923 insisted that Canada be allowed to sign international treaties without British representative (Halibut Treaty)
 - 1926 publicly challenged Britain over its influence on C's internal policies (King-Byng Crisis)

The Chanak Crisis (1922)

The Chanak Crisis

- Turkey (formerly the Ottoman Empire) threatened to attack British and French troops stationed at neutral port (Chanak)
- Britain calls for Canadian troop support, Mackenzie King refuses unless a full-blown war is declared
- The first time Canada flat out refuses to support British imperial policies

The Halibut Treaty (1923)


- ## The Halibut Treaty
- Negotiations began between the US and Canada regarding fishing rights in the Pacific
 - WLMK again defies Britain and refuses to allow them to sign the treaty alongside Canada, as was conventional practice
 - Becomes the first treaty negotiated and signed independently by Canada

The King-Byng Affair (1925)

1925 Federal Election

- Prime Minister King's LIBERALS win fewer seats than Meighen's CONSERVATIVES

100 **115**



The slide features a title '1925 Federal Election' at the top. Below it is a bullet point stating that Prime Minister King's Liberals won fewer seats than Meighen's Conservatives. Two arrows point from this text to the numbers '100' and '115'. Below '100' is a portrait of a man in a suit, and below '115' is another portrait of a man in a suit.

Progressive Party


- King's government gains their support to stay in power



The slide has a title 'Progressive Party'. Below it is a bullet point with a downward arrow pointing to a portrait of a man with a mustache. To the right of the portrait is a poster for the Progressive Labor Party (P.L.P.) featuring a fist and the text 'Power To The Working Class' and 'FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM'.

Scandal ensues!

- King's Minister of Customs is discovered to have taken bribes and allowed liquor to flow freely to the US!



The slide has a title 'Scandal ensues!'. Below it is a bullet point describing a scandal involving the Minister of Customs and liquor. Below the text is a black and white photograph showing several men in uniform standing around a large number of crates and barrels, likely in a warehouse or port.

King reacts

- King fires the minister, but then appoints him to the Senate



- (Jacques Bureau)

Progressive Party reacts

- Slowly, they withdraw their support of the Liberals

Mackenzie worries...

- ...that he'll be defeated in parliament, so he asks Governor General Byng (remember him?) to "dissolve" parliament in order to have a new election



Byng reacts...

- He felt that King should have resigned when he didn't gain a majority of seats, so he REFUSES to dissolve parliament

King is forced to resign

- Byng invites the Conservatives to form the government



- (Meighen)

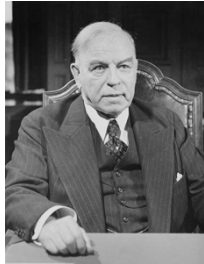
Meighen loses a vote of confidence by one vote!

- So Byng now HAS to dissolve parliament and another election is called.



The new Prime Minister is...

- Mackenzie King! Elected in with a clear majority...



King seeks change...

- In the role of Governor General! Claiming that the appointed official of Britain should never refuse the Canadian Prime Minister's advice!
- Seeks to address this and does at the Imperial Conference in 1926
- Result of the King-Byng Crisis: limited the role and power of our Governor General

Today's governor general:



Michaëlle Jean
(until 2010)



David Johnston
(since 2010)

David Johnston



King Byng Crisis

- o Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImixAG21zIU>

The Imperial Conference (1926)



1926 Imperial Conference

- 1926 was the Ninth Imperial Conference, called by King George V
- The imperial leaders at the conference (led by King) agreed upon the "Balfour Declaration"
- The Declaration stated that all dominions were henceforth considered equal to Britain and in no way subordinate
- KGV agrees to this concept

****The Statute of Westminster (1931)****

- The Statute officially puts the Balfour Declaration into law
- Formally gives Canada full control over its international affairs
- Establishes the British Commonwealth





****Americanization****

U.S. Invests

- Britain was deeply in debt so new trading partner = USA
- US companies invested in mills and mines
- Almost 75% of the newsprint produced in Canada was exported to the US and most of the metals were put in products made in the US

Pesky Tariffs?

- To get around tariffs on American made products, the US set up BRANCH PLANTS = businesses owned and controlled by companies in the US but were operated in Canada
- Ex. GM, Ford and Chrysler "Canada"



Branch Plants

- Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iz-lhKmyEQ>

Autonomy or What?

- US also owned a high proportion of Canada's oil business
- Nearly half of the machinery and chemical industries
- And over half the rubber and electrical companies

Good Thing?

- Many Canadians were pleased with the investment in their goods, and it did enrich the economy...
- But the US was taking raw materials (primary industries) from Canada and using them to create finished products (Secondary Industries) (and then selling them back to Canada...)
- In the long run it did more to strengthen the US economy than Canada

Bootlegging Across the Border

- During the War, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) succeeded in bringing about PROHIBITION
Prohibition = banned the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages
- But the rich could still get access to alcohol
- Not successful during 1920s
- War veterans used to relaxed European drinking habits did not like the idea of Prohibition
 - From 1921 = a provincial regulation rather than banning it completely

Not for the southern neighbour...

- After PLEBISCITES (votes on a public issue) Canada adopted liquor outlets that the government controlled
- US still had prohibition (until 1933)
- Rum-running-smuggling alcohol to the US = very profitable
- Government (Canadian) turned a blind eye



Urbanization

- Canada's growing manufacturing sector brought more people out of rural areas and into the city to work in factories
- By 1931, City dwellers outnumbered rural populations for the first time
- The centre of the city is where the poor and working class lived
- The inner city became slums, as pollution from factories attributed to health problems



Urbanization

- More affluent families moved to the residential areas surrounding the inner city
- Automobiles made it possible for them to commute to the inner city for business



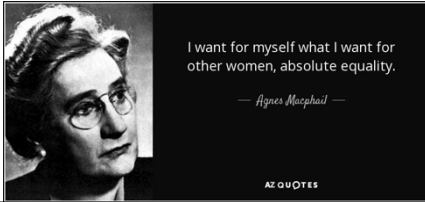
Role of Women

Conditions for Women

- 1920s is often seen as the decade of "The Woman"
- Hopes were high after receiving the vote in 1918, and there were new expectations from women after their participation in the war effort
- However, many men felt that now that the war was over, life should return back to "normal"

Agnes Macphail

- In the 1921 election only 5 women ran for office, and only one won a seat: Agnes Macphail
- Macphail was the only woman in the House of Commons until 1935
- She was very interested in helping the sick, handicapped or disadvantaged
- She fought hard for women's rights and pioneered much welfare legislation



The Home



- New labour saving devices such as the refrigerator, vacuum, cleaner, washing machine and electric iron allowed women to achieve a “new level of cleanliness”
- Married women were expected to stay at home and raise a family
- Single women worked, but their careers were still limited to things like nurses, teachers, secretaries, telephone operators, or sales clerks



Ms. Jones' Teacher's Contract

- Not to keep company with men
- To be at home between the hours of 8pm and 6am unless she is in attendance at a school function
- Not to loiter downtown in ice cream parlours
- Not to lave town at any time without the permission of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees
- Not to smoke cigarettes. This contract becomes null and void immediately if the teacher is found smoking.
- Not to drink beer, wine or whiskey. This contract becomes null and void immediately if the teacher is found drinking beer, wine or whiskey
- Not to ride in a carriage or automobile with any man except her brothers or fathers

Ms. Jone's Teacher Contract Continued

- Not to dress in bright colours
- Not to dye her hair
- To wear at least two petticoats
- Not to wear dresses more than two inches above the ankle
- To keep the schoolroom clean; to sweep the classroom floor at least once daily; to scrub the classroom floor once a week with hot water and soap; to clean the blackboards at least once daily; to start the fire at 7am so that the room will be warm by 8am when the children arrive; to carry out the ashes at least once daily
- Not to use face powder, mascara or paint the lips

The Person's Case

- 1929, Emily Murphy (well known suffragist) was appointed a judge in Alberta
- Her appointment was challenged due to the fact that under the BNA act, only "persons" could hold this office and women according to this, were not persons in the eyes of the law
- Supreme court of Alberta ruled that Murphy had the right to be a judge



The Person's Case

- Emily Murphy and four other women activists challenged PM King to appoint a woman senator to clarify the definition of a "person"
- In April 1928, the Supreme Court of Canada decided women were not "persons" under the constitution



The Famous Five

- These 5 women, nicknamed the Famous Five appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in Britain, where the committee agreed, that yes, a woman was a person



Emily Murphy

- Video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uuYtOWJ_UM

“Hey, we missed the Roar”

- In Canada, despite economic and social improvements, discrimination was still rampant
- Aboriginals had no political representation
- Were stuck in poverty
- They were also not classified as “persons” under the law
- They could not vote in any elections and it was not until 1960 that they got the federal vote
- They challenged the federal government on three main issues: the potlatch ceremony, cut-off lands, and aboriginal title



Potlatch

- This ceremony was banned as it was seen as an obstacle to assimilation
- The government felt that these community feasts were barbaric and dark
- In 1920, chiefs were arrested and sentenced to jail for holding several potlatch ceremonies



Land Claims: Aboriginal Title

- Many aboriginal groups in BC did not have treaties and had not signed away their land to the government
- When the government took land from reserves without permission, these were known as cut-off lands this was against the Indian Act
- However, the government responded by changing the Indian Act so they didn't need permission
- Aboriginal people were also forbidden to raise funds to pursue land claims further

African Canadians

- Education Act of 1918 separated schools into black and white
- 1921 in Montreal, movie theatres were segregated
- African Canadians were even sometimes denied hotel rooms
- Gains made however, were the acceptance of African Canadians into the Brotherhood of Railway Workers, becoming the first union to abolish racial discrimination

Other Immigrants

- Laborers were opposed to immigrant workers because they could work for lower wages, therefore they were sought after by employers
- Asian immigrants were severely restricted, Chinese exclusion until 1947 and Japanese restricted to 150 a year
- Jobs for immigrants were in terrible conditions with no protection and they often lived in slums

Ku Klux Klan set up in Canada - 1920s



Writing

- Individually, in 3-4 sentences each, answer the following discussion questions
 - How were the changes in the 1920s affecting women both positively and negatively?
 - How does the teacher's contract compare to the person's case?
 - Why do you think teachers had such a strict code of behaviour?
 - What does the existence of the Ku Klux Klan in Canada show about Canadians in the 1920s?
 - Why do you think the government of Canada worked towards cultural assimilation in the 1920s?
 - Why do you think that Asian immigration had essentially stopped during the 1920s?
 - What is the current official definition of feminism? Based on this, do you see yourself as a feminist? Why or why not?
