

## SS 11: NOTES FROM COUNTERPOINTS

### CH. 3: CANADA AND THE TWENTIES

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Prompted by the horror and exhaustion of war, young people in particular tried to sweep away the remnants of the old world.
2. This was the "Jazz Age."
3. Bold new music, shocking fashions, and crazy fads spread quickly across the U.S. and into Canada.

#### AN UNEASY ADJUSTMENT

1. Most Canadian soldiers returned in 1919 and found no steady pensions for veterans, no special medical services for those wounded in the war, and few jobs.
2. Many employers had grown rich during the war.
3. During the war, labour unions had reluctantly agreed to reduced pay as their patriotic duty to the war effort.
4. After the war, the cost of goods soared, and workers suffered.

#### Workers Respond

1. Workers' demands for higher wages, better working conditions, and the right to join unions, resulted in numerous strikes in Canada.
2. The coal and steel workers on Cape Breton Island were hit hard by the closing of wartime industries after the war. Many workers lost their jobs or were forced to accept lower wages.
3. Unemployment and long strikes meant economic hardship for everyone in single-industry communities.
4. The union and steel corporation confronted each other in labour wars. When strikes turned violent, the company called in provincial police and federal troops.
5. 1926 – a Royal Commission criticized the labour practices of the British Empire Steel Corporation, but the commission's findings did little to ease the suffering and poverty in the Maritimes.
6. Western union leaders were more **socialist** than union leaders on the East Coast, believing ordinary people should have more involvement in government. Some western union leaders were influenced by the 1917 revolution in Russia, where the Bolsheviks had set up a **communist** regime.

7. At the Western Labour Conference, March 1919, union leaders from western Canada founded **One Big Union (OBU)**, which would represent all Canadian workers in one organization. The OBU's goal was to help workers establish more control of industry and government through peaceful means. The main weapon would be the *general strike*, a walkout by all employees.

## The Winnipeg General Strike

1. May 1919, Winnipeg's metal and building workers walked off their jobs – demanding higher wages, a shorter working week, and the right to **collective bargaining** – allow the union leadership to negotiate with employers on behalf of the union members.
2. 30,000 people went out on strike, even though over half were not union members.

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3. Winnipeg was paralyzed – no firefighters or postal workers, no telephone or telegraph services, no newspapers, streetcars, no deliveries of bread or milk.
4. Business leaders, politicians, and industrialists formed the **Citizens' Committee of One Thousand** – they saw the union leaders as part of a communist conspiracy to overthrow the government.
5. Federal government, fearing spread of disruption and protest to other cities, intervened.
6. The Immigration Act was amended to allow foreign-born union leaders to be deported.
7. The mayor of Winnipeg appointed special police, fired many civic workers, and had strike leaders arrested.
8. June 21 – strikers held a parade to protest the mayor's actions. The parade turned violent when the Royal North West Mounted Police and special police, armed with clubs and pistols, charged into the crowd – known as **Bloody Saturday** – one striker died, 30 injured, scores arrested.
9. Strikers returned to work after 43 days.
10. 7 of the arrested leaders were convicted of conspiracy to overthrow the government & served between 2 months and 2 years in prison.
11. Many striking workers were not rehired; others were taken back only if they signed contracts vowing not to join a union.
12. A Royal Commission set up to examine the strike found that the workers' grievances were valid. Gradually, much of what they fought for was achieved.

13. **J. S. Woodsworth**, a minister and well-known social reformer who was arrested during the strike, went on to found the **Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)**, which later became the **New Democratic Party (NDP)**.

## NEW CHALLENGES TO FEDERALISM

1. **regionalism** – a growing development in Canadian politics, the concern of the various regions of the country with their own local problems.

### Regional Protest

1. 1920s – maritime provinces found their influence in national politics was declining.
2. Oil was gradually replacing coal as the most used fuel for heating and power. The maritime provinces had plenty of coal but no oil.
3. Prominent business and political leaders formed the **Maritime Rights Movement**, which urged all politicians seeking office to promote policies that would benefit the Maritimes; the movement died away.
4. Farmers in the Prairies were frustrated by the National Policy, in place since 1878. Tariffs or duties were placed on foreign goods imported into Canada. Tariffs protected Canadian industries by making foreign goods so expensive that Canadians would choose to buy goods produced in Canada.
5. Western farmers felt alienated by this policy because it benefited the manufacturers in central Canada while forcing farmers to buy Canadian-made machinery.
6. Farmers wanted free trade, which would abolish tariffs and allow farmers to buy cheaper, U.S.- made machinery. They also wanted lower freight rates and storage fees.
7. When neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives met their demands, farmers formed their own political parties. By the early 1920s, Ontario and the prairie provinces had all elected members of the **United Farmers' Parties** to their legislatures.
8. 1919 – the federal **Progressive Party** was created, led by Thomas Crerar, a former minister of agriculture in Robert Borden's Union Gov.

### Canadians Choose a New Government

1. **William Lyon Mackenzie King** was chosen to lead the Liberals in 1919; he had reputation as a reformer and was an authority on social and

economic issues. He was conciliatory, always seeking the middle path that would offend the least number of people.

2. **Arthur Meighan**, a brilliant debater and long-standing Member of Parliament, was chosen to replace Borden as the leader of the Conservatives. He believed in principles over compromise, and didn't care who might be offended by his stand on issues.
  3. 1921 federal election – Liberals elected 117 members, Conservatives elected 50 members, Progressives elected 64 members, mostly in western Canada. The Liberals were a **minority government** and needed the support of some of the opposition members to pass legislation.
  4. The Progressive Party did not last very long but it was influential in bringing about changes to Canada's social policy.
    - 1926 - Mackenzie King was challenged by the Progressives to set up an old age pension.
    - 1927 – the **Old Age Pension Act** was passed.
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## CANADA'S GROWING INDEPENDENCE

1. 1922 – Mackenzie King refused to support Britain when it announced plans to invade Turkey.
2. 1923 – King insisted that Canada be allowed to sign an international treaty without the signature of a British representative.
3. 1926 – he publicly challenged Britain over its influence on Canada's internal politics.

## The King-Byng Crisis

1. 1925 election – Liberals held 101 seats, the Conservatives 116, and the Progressives 24; Liberals were forced to seek the support of the Progressive Party in order to stay in power
2. Liberals lost the support of the Progressive Party as a result of a liquor-smuggling scandal in the Customs Department.
3. Conservatives called for a **motion of censure** – a vote of strong disapproval – against King's government.
4. King immediately asked Governor General Viscount Julian Byng to call another election. Byng refused on the grounds that, constitutionally, the vote of censure had to be completed first.
5. Byng was eventually forced to call an election. King appealed to nationalistic sentiments by claiming it was undemocratic for an official

appointed by Britain to refuse to take the advice of the prime minister, who was elected by Canadians.

6. King won the election. No governor general since has acted against the wishes of an elected prime minister.

## The Balfour Report

1. 1926 **Imperial Conference** – the dominions of the British Empire (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa) requested formal recognition of their **autonomy** – the freedom to govern themselves.
2. A special committee under the leadership of Lord Balfour, a respected British politician, published the **Balfour Report** which supported the dominions' position.
3. 1931 **Statute of Westminster** was passed by the British government
  - formally turned the British Empire into the **British Commonwealth**
  - Canada was now a country equal in status with Britain, entitled to make its own laws.
  - 2 remaining restrictions:
    - the British North America Act (BNA Act), remained in Britain because the Canadian federal and provincial governments could not agree on an **amending formula** – the procedure for changing the act.
    - The judicial court of appeal for Canadians stayed in Britain until 1949.

## THE ECONOMY IMPROVES

1. By the mid-1920s the economy started to improve.
2. Wheat was an important export, there was enormous growth in the exploitation of natural resources and in manufacturing.
3. Demand for Canadian pulp and paper increased: new mills were built.
4. Mining also boomed; lead, zinc, silver, and copper were produced for export, used in the production of consumer goods like radios and home appliances.
5. Expansion of forest and mining industries increased demand for hydro-electric power; new hydro-generating stations were constructed.

## The United States Invests in Canada's Economy

1. U.S. companies invested in pulp and paper mills and mines across Canada. Almost 75% of the newsprint produced in Canada was

exported to the U.S., and most of the metals mined in Canada were used in U.S. -made products such as automobiles and radios.

2. U.S. investors set up **branch plants** businesses owned and controlled by companies in the U.S., but which operated in Canada.
  3. By the end of the 1920s, the Canadian auto industry had been taken over by the “**Big Three**” U.S. auto companies – **General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler**.
  4. U.S. companies also owned a high proportion of Canada’s oil business, nearly half the machinery and chemical industries, and over half the rubber and electrical companies.
  5. The U.S. enriched Canada’s economy by extracting or harvesting raw materials (**primary industries**), but these materials were all transported to the U.S. for processing and manufacturing (**secondary industries**). The U.S. economy benefited most.
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### Bootlegging Across the Border

1. One product that Canada exported in large quantities to the U.S.: illegal alcohol.
2. During WW I, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and similar organizations succeeded in bringing about **Prohibition**, which banned the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages in Canada.
3. **bootlegger** – someone who sold alcohol illegally, or who made “*bathtub gin*,” homemade alcohol.
4. By 1920 Prohibition was too unpopular with most Canadians. From 1921 on, most provincial governments decided to regulate sales of alcohol rather than ban the product.
5. In a series of **plebiscites** (votes on a public issue), Canadians eventually adopted government-controlled liquor outlets.
6. In the U.S. Prohibition continued until 1933, so Canadians saw the opportunity to supply the U.S. with illegal liquor.  
**Rum-running** – smuggling alcohol into the U.S. – became common and profitable.

### Urbanization

1. Canada’s growing manufacturing sector brought more and more people to the cities in search of work in factories.
2. By 1931, city dwellers out-numbered the rural population for the first time.
3. During this period the modern Canadian city began to take shape.

4. City centre – location of businesses and industry, the poor and working-class people's homes; crowded and unsanitary slums; smoke polluted the air.
5. More affluent families moved to tree-lined residential areas.

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN

1. 1920s – new era for women in Canada.
2. 1921 federal election – only 5 women ran for office, only one, **Agnes Macphail**, won her seat. She was the only woman in the House of Commons until 1935.
3. The 4 western provinces elected 9 women to their legislatures, but the federal and provincial governments remained firmly male dominated.
4. The principal role of women was as wives and mothers.
5. Those who weren't married had limited career opportunities – nursing and teaching paid very poorly, a few became doctors, lawyers, professors, or engineers, but most who worked in business or industry were secretaries, telephone operators, or sales clerks.

## The Persons Case

1. **Emily Murphy** – a well-known suffragist, was appointed a magistrate in Alberta in 1929.
2. Her appointment was challenged on the basis that only “persons” could hold this office under the BNA Act, and that women were not “persons” in the eyes of the law.
3. The Supreme Court of Alberta ruled that Murphy did, indeed, have the right to be a judge.
4. Emily Murphy and 4 other women activists challenged Prime Minister Mackenzie King to appoint a woman senator and to clarify the definition of “persons.”
5. April 1928 – the Supreme Court of Canada decided that women were not “persons” under the Constitution.
6. Murphy and her associates, nicknamed the “**Famous Five**,” appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in Britain. On Oct. 18, 1929, the Judicial Committee declared its support for the women.

## A NEW PROSPERITY

1. Upswing in the economy caused the decade to be known as the “**Roaring Twenties**.”

2. People bought cars and radios and went to the movies.
  3. Fads from the U.S. spread quickly to Canada: college students swallowing live goldfish, six-day bicycle races, songs like “Happy Days are Here Again” and “I’m Sitting on Top of the World,” dances like the Charleston, the Shimmy, and the Turkey Trot.
  4. American tourists brought their money as well as their fashions to Canada:
    - In 1929 4 million Americans spent \$300 million vacationing in Canada
    - Fashions for men – straw hats, form-fitting double-breasted suits, bell-bottom pants, bow ties, and slicked-down hair
    - Fashions for women – the “flapper” look, “bobbed” hair, hemlines above the knee, silk stockings, and dresses that promoted the flat-chested look
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### **Increased Mobility**

1. Invention of the assembly line in 1913 by Henry Ford meant that cars could be mass produced inexpensively and quickly.
  - Most popular automobile was the Model T Ford; one came off the assembly line every 3 minutes; all identical and cost less than \$300.
  - Henry Ford said, “You can have any colour you like, as long as it’s black.”
2. 1600 km of highways in 1920 increased tenfold by the end of the decade.
  - Canadian Shield and Rocky Mountains delayed construction of the Trans-Canada Highway, so better roads ran south to the U.S.
  - These closer north-south connections led B.C. to change from driving on the left-hand side of the road (British system) to the right-hand side (U.S. system).
3. 1928 – White Spot hamburger chain opened the first drive-in restaurant in Canada.
4. Aviation also expanded.
  - Many veteran pilots became “bush pilots” who flew geologists and prospectors into remote areas to explore mining opportunities.
  - First aerial mineral exploration in Canada was in the Telegraph Creek area of northwestern B.C. in 1925.
  - Bush pilots helped make the rugged coast of B.C. more accessible.
  - Wilfred “Wop” May, a WW I flying ace, and fellow pilot Vic Horner volunteered to deliver an antitoxin to treat a diphtheria outbreak in a northern Alberta community on New Year’s Day, 1929.



- May also assisted the RCMP in one of the greatest manhunts in Canadian history, the hunt for Albert Johnson- nicknamed the Mad Trapper of Rat River, suspected of wounding an RCMP constable who was investigating trap lines. A shoot-out in northern Yukon left Johnson and one Mountie dead; May flew another seriously wounded Mountie to Aklavik.

## Improved Communications

1. The telephone became a standard household appliance.
  - Telephone lines were shared by many neighbours, so eavesdropping became daily entertainment.
2. Use of the radio began to break down the isolation between far-flung communities.
  - By the end of the '20s, nearly 300 000 Canadians were tuning into U.S. stations.
3. At first, movies were silent; an orchestra or piano player would provide sound effects, while subtitles conveyed messages and dialogue.
  - "Talkies" arrived in 1927 with comedians such as Laurel and Hardy and the Marx Brothers.
  - Movies about Canada were made here but Canadian-made films could not compete with productions from the big U.S. studios.
  - Eventually Hollywood dominated the industry; many Canadian actors, writers, and technicians were drawn to the glitter and glamour of Hollywood.
  - Movie star Mary Pickford, born in Toronto, became known as "America's Sweetheart."

## Canadian Inventions, Innovations, and Inventors

1. **electric washing machines, refrigerators, neon signs, and telephones** came into widespread use.
2. **linoleum** covered wood floors.
3. **aluminum** replaced iron for pots and pans.
4. **bobby pins** were invented for shorter hair styles.
5. **Durant** – a low-cost, four-cylinder Canadian car
6. **insulin** – discovered by Frederick Banting and Charles Best; helped millions of people suffering from diabetes.
7. **radio tube** – with alternating current; replaced the noisy, battery-operated model.
8. **snowblower** – invented in 1927.

9. **snowmobile** – developed by Armand Bombardier of Valcourt, Quebec, in 1922, when he was just 16.
10. Reginald Fessenden – “Canada’s great forgotten inventor”
  - Made the first public broadcast of music and voice in 1906.
  - Redesigned Thomas Edison’s light bulb to its present shape and material.
  - Invented the **depth sounder**, which was used by sea vessels to indicate the depth of the ocean floor.

## A New Canadian Art

1. **Group of Seven** – group of painters who wanted to interpret Canada’s rugged landscape as they saw it, using broad, bold strokes and brilliant colours.
2. **Emily Carr**
  - Painted scenes of West Coast forests and Aboriginal life
  - Won a Governor-General’s Literary Award for **Klee Wyck** (“laughing one”), a collection of stories of her life with B.C. Aboriginal people.

## Sports as Popular Entertainment

1. Baseball, professional boxing, rugby football, curling, and golf were popular.
2. Hockey came into Canadian homes across the country when sportswriter Foster Hewitt made the first hockey radio broadcast in 1923.
3. Canadian athletes also excelled internationally.

## Did Canada Become More or Less Independent in the 1920s?

1. At the Imperial Conference in 1923, Prime Minister Mackenzie King reflected the growing support for Canadian autonomy when he said: *“The decision of Canada on any important issue, domestic or foreign, we believe should be made by the people of Canada, their representatives in Parliament, and the Government responsible to that Parliament.”*
2. The Group of Seven painted Canadian scenes that celebrated Canada’s wilderness.
3. Canadian magazines and literature reflected a growing sense of national identity.
  - *Canadian Forum* – political debates and works of Canadian poets and writers appeared regularly.

- *Maclean's* magazine published Canadian stories and articles from across the country, being careful to use only Canadian spelling.
  - Canadian novelists such as R.J.C. Stead, F.P. Grove, Martha Ostenso, and Morley Callaghan wrote novels about Canadians and their experiences.
  - Poets such as A.J. Smith and Frank Scott wrote passionately about Canada and Canadian issues.
4. Canada was developing much closer economic ties to the U.S.
- 1922 – U.S. investment in Canada topped that of Britain's investment for the first time.
  - By 1929, nearly 60% of foreign investment in Canada was from the U.S.
  - Close to a million Canadians moved to the U.S. for better jobs and higher pay.
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- Most Canadians listened to U.S. radio stations, read U.S. magazines, watched Hollywood movies, and drove American-designed Model T Fords.
  - Fashion from the U.S. became Canadian fashion
  - American service clubs, such as the Rotary, the Lions, and the Kiwanis became popular in Canada.
  - Even Canadian sports teams were bought up by U.S. interests – the National Hockey League became Americanized as smaller Canadian cities were unable to compete following the inclusion of U.S. teams.
  - A different language and a fiercely protective church (R.C.) helped to ensure that most *French Canadiens* remained outside the sphere of U.S. influence.
  - Concern about U.S. cultural and economic domination made some Canadians even more determined to protect their identity.
  - A Royal Commission in 1928 recommended that the Canadian government regulate private radio to ensure that Canadian content remained on the airwaves.

## Two Canadian Sports Heroes

### 1. Lionel Conacher

- Began his sporting career as a wrestler, but went on to become a baseball player, a star at lacrosse, a football player, and an NHL all-star.
- Nicknamed the "Big Train;" known for his power, stamina, and speed.
- 1950 – named the best Canadian male athlete for the first ½ -century.

## 2. Bobbie Rosenfeld

- at age 13, she beat the reigning Canadian champion in the 100-yd sprint.
- Went on to become a star at basketball, softball, hockey, tennis, and track and field.
- She won a gold and silver medal in the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam; became a national hero and best-known Canadian woman of her time.
- She went on to become a sportswriter, and in 1949 she was elected to Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.
- 1950 – named the best Canadian female athlete for the first ½ - century.

## MISSING THE ROAR

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- While economic and social conditions generally improved, many Canadians still battled discrimination, lack of political representation, and poverty.

## Aboriginal Nations

1. After the war, Aboriginal people were still not classified as “persons” under the law.
2. They could not vote in provincial or federal elections.
  - In B.C. they didn't win the right to vote until 1949.
  - In federal elections they could not vote until 1960.
3. Social and economic conditions on reserves were poor, many who looked for employment in cities faced discrimination and hostility.
4. Residential schools – students were traumatized by the separation from their families, the foreign surroundings, and – in some cases – the physical and emotional abuse they suffered.
5. In the early 1920s, Aboriginal people in B.C. challenged the federal and provincial governments on three issues:  
the *potlatch ceremony*, *cut-off lands*, and *Aboriginal title*.
  - **Potlatch** – important cultural ceremony among certain peoples of the Pacific coast for births, deaths, marriages, and other significant events. It was a way of establishing status in tribes. Missionaries and the government saw it as an obstacle to assimilation, and it was forbidden in 1884, but the government began to enforce the ban only after WW I.

➤ **Aboriginal title** (land claims)

- B.C. was unique in Canada in that only a few First Nations on Vancouver Island had negotiated land treaties. This meant that most of the land in the province had not been signed away to the government.
  - Although large tracts of land had been set aside as reserves for Aboriginal people, the federal government had been taking land from reserves without the consent of the Aboriginal bands – these were known as **cut-off lands**.
  - The Allied Tribes of B.C., an organization made up of several tribes, appealed the federal government's actions. They claimed the removal of this land was contrary to the Indian Act.
  - The federal government changed the Indian Act so that Aboriginal consent was not required for the transfer of reserve lands.
  - The Department of Indian Affairs defended the government's actions, stating that money spent on Aboriginal people had compensated them for the land they lost.
  - The parliamentary committee agreed with the government and recommended that there was no need for treaties in B.C.
  - The Indian Act was amended to forbid the raising or acceptance of money to pursue land claims.
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## **African-Canadians: Undisguised Racism**

1. In Nova Scotia, the Education Act of 1918 provided for separate schools for "blacks" and "Europeans," a policy that remained unchanged until 1954.
2. 1921 – the Superior Court of Quebec ruled in favour of racially segregated seating in Montreal theatres
3. 1929 – a black delegation to a World Baptist Convention in Toronto was denied hotel rooms.
4. There were also instances of tolerance.
  - In 1924, Edmonton City Council refused to support an attempt to ban African-Canadians from public parks and swimming pools.
  - In 1919, the Brotherhood of Railway Workers accepted black porters as members, becoming the first Canadian union to abolish racial discrimination.

## Immigration

1. Immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe were often accused of being socialist revolutionaries, and the government was constantly petitioned to deport them.
2. The government adopted immigration restrictions, giving preference to applicants from Britain and the U.S.
3. Farmers, railway owners, and some other businesses welcomed immigrants because they would work for low wages in jobs that Canadian workers didn't want.
4. Labour groups supported the restrictions because unions saw the willingness of some immigrants to work long hours for low wages as "unfair competition."
5. 1923 – the federal government passed a law that virtually excluded Chinese immigrants to Canada until 1947.
6. A Canada – Japan agreement in 1922 restricted immigration from Japan to 150 servants and labourers a year.
7. In 1925, when the economy improved, the government relaxed restrictions on immigration from many countries.
  - The goal was to increase the population so that businesses would have a larger domestic market for their goods.
  - Many lived in company towns or city slums, working in terrible conditions for pitiful wages.

## THE STOCK MARKET CRASH

1. On October 29, 1929, the New York Stock Exchange collapsed.
2. Prices of all stocks fell quickly
3. More than 23 million shares changed hands, but prices continued to fall.
4. The stock market crash marked a shift from the prosperity of the 1920s to the crushing poverty of the **Depression** of the 1930s.