

## Canadian History 1202: 4.2 Activity-Letters to R.B. Bennett

### Letters from the Depression

During the Depression, many people wrote letters to Prime Minister Bennett asking for help. The letters express some of the shame and despair people felt.

Ottawa

March the 4th 1932

Dear Sir,

I am just writing a few lines to you to see what can be done for us young men of Canada. We are the growing generation of Canada, but with no hopes of a future. Please tell me why is it a single man always gets a refusal when he looks for a job. A married man gets work, & if he does not get work, he gets relief. Yesterday I got a glimpse of a lot of the unemployed. It just made me feel downhearted, to think there is no work for them, or in the future, & also no work for myself. Last year I was out of work three months. I received work with a local farm. I was told in the fall I could have the job for the winter; I was then a stable man. Now I am slacked off on account of no snow this winter. Now I am wandering the streets like a beggar, with no future ahead. There are lots of single men in Ottawa, who would rather walk the streets, & starve, than work on a farm. That is a true statement. Myself I work wherever I can get work, & get a good name wherever I go. There are plenty of young men like myself, who are in the same plight. I say again whats to be done for us single men? do we have to starve? or do we have to go round with our faces full of shame, to beg at the doors of the well to do citizen. I suppose you will say the married men come first; I certainly agree with you there. But have you a word or two to cheer us single men up a bit? The married man got word he was going to get relief. That took the weight of worry off his mind quite a bit. Did the single man here anything, how he was going to pull through? Did you ever feel the pangs of hunger? My idea is we shall all starve. I suppose you will say I cant help it, or I cant make things better. You have the power to make things better or worse. When you entered as Premier you promised a lot of things, you was going to do for the country. I am waiting patiently to see the results. Will look for my answer in the paper.

Yours Truly  
R.D. Ottawa

May 30/31

Mr. Bennette

Since you have been elected, work has been impossible to get. We have decided that in a month from this date, if things are the same, we'll skin you alive, the first chance we get.

Sudbury Starving  
Unemployed

Passman, Sask.

16 Oct. 1933

Dear Sir,

I am a girl thirteen years old and I have to go to school every day its very cold now already and I haven't got a coat to put on. My parents can't afford to buy me anything for this winter. I have to walk to school four and a half mile every morning and night and I'm awfully cold every day. Would you be so kind to sent me enough money so that I could get one.

My name is  
Edwina Abbott  
[Reply: \$5.00]

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### **Dear Sir,**

I am writing to see if there is any help I could get.

As I have a baby thirteen days old that only weighs one pound and I have to keep in cotton Wool & Olive Oil, and I haven't the money to buy it, if there is any help I could get there will be two votes for you next election

Hoping to hear from you soon

Yours Truly,

Mrs. Jack O'Hannen

Murray Harbour, PEI

### **Reply,**

Her letter to the Prime Minister was Mrs. Jack O'Hannen's last hope. When he received it, Bennett opened his wallet and sent the young mother five dollars - enough money to cover groceries for about a month..

### **Dear Prime Minister RB Bennett,**

It is with a very humble heart that I take the opportunity of writing this letter to ask you if you will please send for this underwear for my husband from the Eaton catalog. I can manage but my husband has arthritis very bad at times in his arms and shoulders. I have patched and darned his old underwear for the last two years, but they are completely done now. If you can't do this I really don't know what to do.

Mrs. Thomas Perkins  
Kingdom Saskatchewan  
Sept 28, 1933

Prime Minister RB Bennett  
Dear Sir received your kind favour of underwear for my husband. We wish to thank you very much for it. We sure are thankful for your kindness  
Mr and Mrs. Thomas Perkins  
Kingdom, Saskatchewan  
Nov 15 1933

### **Dear Mr. Bennett,**

I am a little boy eight years old and I'm in Grade III at school. I've wanted a little red wagon to hitch my dog to for so many years, but daddy has no money. Please, Mr. Bennett would you send me enough money to buy my wagon. Thank you so much.

Your very good friend,  
Maurice Stanley

### **Reply,**

Dear Mr. Bennett,  
Thank very much for the money. I'm going to get the wagon. Mamma said I could.  
Ardath Sask  
Aug 31, 1935

### **Dear Mr. Bennett,**

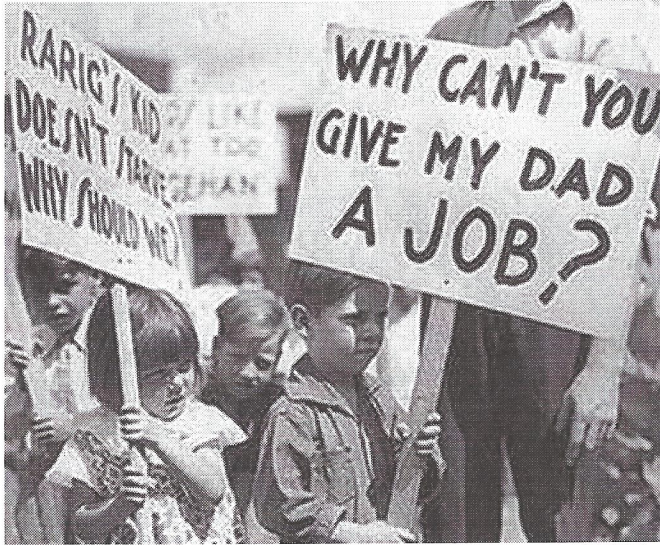
I believe you to be good as well as a great man therefore I am appealing to you to save my home. Picture yourself, through no fault of your own, homeless with sons willing, but unable to provide for you. Please help me or tell me what I can do.

Yours Sincerely and hopefully,  
Laura Bates.  
Toronto Sept 3, 1933

### **Reply,**

Dear Madam,  
I am certainly willing to help you and if you will be good enough to let me know what company holds the mortgage on your home I will look into the matter and see if anything can be done to straighten out your difficulties.  
Yours faithfully,

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**Dear Sir,**

Three little baby boys were born to Mr. and Mrs. Samuels in our vicinity.

Like many others they have had some very bad luck.

The parents are a very fine type, not the kind with the hand out for help.

We hope you will feel toward these unfortunate people the way we do.

Yours truly,  
Elizabeth Ratray  
Welsley Ont,  
Sept. 27,1933

**Reply,**

Dear Mr. and Mrs Samuels,  
I am enclosing herewith a 20 dollar bill, which I trust may be of some little service to you during the Christmas season. I learned the other day that one of the triplet boys had passed away and I extend to you my sincerest sympathy,

With best wishes, believe me I am

yours faithfully  
RB Bennett Ottawa  
Oct 13, 1933