

The 1930s: A Decade of Despair Questions

Use the Counterpoints textbook to answer these questions – pages 89-115

1. James Gray was a young man at the beginning of the Depression. "I was not yet twenty-five," he wrote in a memoir, "then my number came up and I was confronted with the ego-shattering discovery that there wasn't a single employer in all Winnipeg who would give me a job. It was my own fault. I couldn't feed my family." Read his account of the Depression on page 89 and explain what you would do if you were in his situation.

2. Explain why Canada has a mixed economy.

3. What usually happens to the price of a product when the supply is low? What usually happens to the price of a product when the supply is high?

4. Study figure 4-2 on page 90. How do you think governments might try to change this cycle?

5. What weakness in the Canadian economy was exposed by the Great Depression?

6. How did the United States try to protect its domestic producers after its economy crashed? How did this affect Canada?

7. How did German war reparations affect Britain and France?

8. Look at figure 4-4 on page 92. Saskatchewan's average per capita income decreased 72%. Why do you think Saskatchewan's per capita income declined more than any other province?

9. What effect did the stock market crash have on Canada's economy?

10. Describe conditions on the prairies in the early 1930s.

11. Look at figure 4-6 on page 94. What happened to wheat prices in the 1930s? Why do you think this happened?

12. What did people have to do to qualify for relief payments (pogey)?

13. What were soup kitchens?

14. What was the unemployment rate in the winter of 1933?

15. Why did young men “ride the rails”?

16. What happened to recent immigrants who lost their jobs during the depression?

17. How were poor Chinese Canadians treated in Vancouver during the depression?

18. What discriminatory actions were taken against Jewish people in Canada during the depression?

19. How were Aboriginal families on relief treated differently from non-Aboriginals?

20. Read “Faces of Despair: Women in the 1930’s” on pages 98 and 99. What steps did many women take to stretch the resources of their families during the depression?

21. Read "Faces of Despair: Women in the 1930's" on pages 98 and 99. Why do you think the birth rate declined during the 1930s?

22. Deflation made life easier for some people with secure jobs during the depression. How was this possible?

23. What was Prime Minister Mackenzie King's response to the Great Depression?

24. Who became Prime Minister in 1930? Identify three measures his Conservative government took to deal with the Great Depression and describe their effect.

25. What did the government ban in 1931? Why?

26. What were work camps?

27. What was the "On-to-Ottawa Trek"? What was the reaction of people along the Trek's route? What do you think the Trekkers hoped to accomplish by going to Ottawa?

28. How did Prime Minister Bennett respond to the trekkers?

29. What happened in Vancouver after the relief camps were closed in 1936?

30. Read the side bar on page 103. Which do you think is Prime Minister Bennett's most important achievement? Why?

31. Use the chart to list details of Roosevelt's New Deal and Bennett's New Deal.

Roosevelt's New Deal	Bennett's New Deal

32. How was Bennett's New Deal seen by voters?

33. Use the chart to list details of the CCF, Social Credit Party, and Union nationale political parties.

Political Party	Leader	Party Platform/Promises
Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)		
Social Credit Party		
Union nationale		

34. Who returned as Canadian Prime Minister in 1935? Why did he not want to introduce new social programs during the depression? Do you agree or disagree with his view? Why?

35. Why was Germany unhappy after the First World War?

36. How did Japan deal with the effects of the depression?

37. What effect did the Great Depression have on Russia?