

Canadian History 1201

Great Depression Assignment

Part A: Read the following letters and answer the following questions:

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]**

Murray Harbour, P.E.I
March 24 1935

Premier Bennett:

Dear Sir:

I am writing you 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 it in Cotton Wool & Olive Oil, and I haven't the money to buy it, the people bought it so far and fed me when I was in Bed. If there is any help I could get I would like to get it as soon as possible. There is five of a family, Counting the baby. Their will be two votes for you next Election Hoping too hear from you soon.

Yours Truly.
Mrs. Jack O'Hannon
[Reply: \$5.00]

Craven, Alberta
Feb 11-1935

Dear Sir,

Please don't think I'm crazy for writing you this letter, but I've got three little children, and they are all in need of shoes as well as underwear but shoes are the most needed as two of them go to school and it's cold, my husband has not had a crop for 8 years only enough for seed and some food, and I don't know what to do, I hate to ask for help. I never have before and we are staying off relief if possible. What I wanted was \$3.00 if I could possibly get it or even some old cloths to make over but if you don't want to do this please don't mention it over radios as every one knows me around here and I'm well liked, so I beg of you not to mention my name. I've never asked anyone around here for help or cloths as I know them to well.

Yours Sincerely,
Mrs. P.E. Bottle
[Reply: \$5.00]

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 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 what's to be done for us single men? do we have to starve? Or do we have to go around 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 can't help it, or I can't 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

Answer the following Questions:

1. These letters contain some grammatical and spelling errors. Suggest reasons why.

2. Who are the authors of the letters? What does your answer suggest about the types of people who were most affected by the depression.

3. a) What kinds of problems did people write about to Prime Minister Bennett?

b) What emotions are expressed in the letters?

c) What solutions were available to solve the problems? What did Prime Minister Bennett do?

4. a) What were the special problems faced by the number of young single men?

b) Was it right that married men got work or relief while single men did not?

c) Why did the government give special preference to married men?

5. Why would a woman who wrote to Bennett beg him not to mention her name?
