

Canadian History 1201

Fighting the Depression : *(text pages 169-177)*

- Before the Depression there was no system of government support in place because:
 - Canadians believed the economy would fix itself
 - People believed that if others were poor it was their own fault
 - By the end of the 1930s, this attitude had changed, but for many it was too late.
 - There were measures taken during the Depression but many of them were ineffective for most Canadians.

RELIEF: Financial aid from the government, paid for by public funds.

Private and Public Relief Organizations:

- Churches and charitable organizations
- Soup kitchens
- Clothing, shelter, milk for mothers and babies
- Municipalities began welfare payments (the dole)
- For many “living on the dole” was seen as embarrassing. People didn’t want to admit they couldn’t take care of themselves or their families

What PM King Did: (William Lyon Mackenzie King was Liberal Prime Minister from 1926 – 1930)

- He felt the provinces and municipalities should deal with their own problems, and he didn’t want to help conservative provinces.
- His government did take some action: they increased tariffs on imported steel, fruits and vegetables; and decreased tariffs on British goods. Both did little to help.

What PM Bennett Did: (Richard Bennett was Conservative Prime Minister from 1930 – 1935)

- **1931:** Relief Acts – gave money to provinces and municipalities provided they matched the amount and used them for public works projects. Not much went to individuals and the acts didn’t do much to help the poor. The money was given based on population, which wasn’t effective.
- **1932:** Abandoned public works projects and focused on relief.
- **1935:** 10% of Canadians were on relief. It helped but wasn’t guaranteed for single men and women.

Reasons Bennett’s Government Failed: (King was re-elected PM in 1935 - 1938)

1. Bennett waited too long before acting aggressively.
2. Bennett hadn’t convinced Canadians that he cared about their personal misfortunes, despite answering many letters personally.
3. King ran a strong campaign, which pointed out the problems with Bennett’s New Deal.
4. The rise of new parties - people had more choices for leaders/ideas.