

Canadian history: 1920's

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The 1920's were known as the "Roaring Twenties" because industries shifted to peace time production and experienced an economic boom. The people that experienced the "good times" in the 1920's were predominantly the white males. But other groups weren't so lucky. There were many issues in this era but the main ones were the injustice and inequality of women, Native People and children. During the 1920's the Native People were treated unequally and without justice, due to government policies and practices of assimilation, residential schools and denial of self government.

The culture of Canada's Native People was being cut away by the social policy. The Native People ceremonies had been banned and the children had been taken away to government run schools. These schools tried to assimilate the children by putting a taboo on Native teachings and traditions. The Federal government limited their freedom. Chief Deskaideh of the Six Nations took his case to the new international peacekeeping body - the League of Nations (now UN). "Although embarrassed by the international attention Ottawa refused to give in. (Hundey) Other Native leaders fought for their rights such as right to vote from the government reservation lands. Many rights were lost due to the stubborn government, but they still continued to fight for their freedom. It was difficult for women in the 1920's to receive equal treatment, since women were still considered inferior to men. Although women won political rights they were still not recognized by the representative government as persons under the law. For example, women could not hold a seat under the Canadian Senate.

Some laws changed but the attitude towards women's roles stayed the same. Women were kept back in school, work and politics. It was the same

with young girls. Girls did not stay in school as long as boys did. All they learned was about mothering and nursing. Soon more women started going to university despite the fact that most were held back. " From 1891 to 1930 the percentage of undergraduates that were female grew 11. 9%. " (Hundey). Although the acceptance of women was rising and more women were going to school, society still saw women only as caregivers and mothers.

The exploitation of children was a key issue in the 1920's and was left unresolved for another few decades. Laws allowing child labour passed in the late 19th century were the reason why child labour was widely accepted. Many children tried to stay in school but most left at the age of sixteen to join the workforce. Many farming and fishing families relied on children to help out with the businesses. In the 1920's home children were often exploited. Home children - " British orphans or members of poor families who were sent to Canada to start a new life. (Hudey) Many of them were overworked and neglected, but this inhuman scheme stopped at the start of The Great Depression. In 1929 children under the age of fourteen were prohibited from working in factories and mines. Children were one of many groups that were exploited and used in the 1920's. Although this practice ended in Canada, some countries in the world still use children as cheap labour. Many groups were not socially accepted by the people experiencing the " good times".

Native people, children and women were just a few of many others. Natives were not considered equal to the rest of society in the 1920's and were racially separated through schools and reserves. Women won rights in the

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1920's but still weren't considered persons by society and struggled to receive equality. Many children were exploited in the 1920's as cheap labour, but that ended with the decade. Humans are humans and should be treated no differently than others. Humans are all equal and should not be discriminated.