1930's

DECADE OF DESPAIR:

CONDITIONS DURING THE DEPRESSION

DESPERATE YEARS

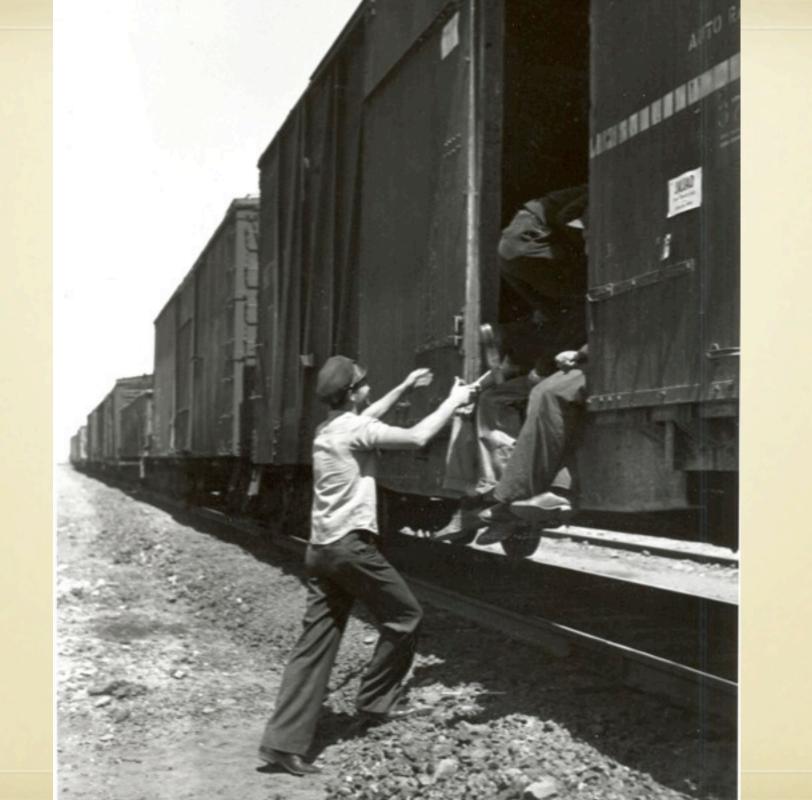
- Some wealthy and middle-class didn't experience hardship during the Depression
- The working class suffered the most
- Evictions, job loss, loss self respect
- Thousands lived on "pogey"- relief from government difficult to receive
- Pogey difficult to receive long line ups, proof of financial failure
- Offered vouchers for food purchases if granted "pogey"
- Private charities offered support through soup kitchens
- For some the economic hardships were humiliating and unbearable
- Winter 1933 25% of workforce was unemployed
- Homeless men crisscrossed the country on the rails looking for work



Destitute family returning to Saskatoon from the north during Great Depression (courtesy Glenbow Archives)



Unemployment victims during the Depression resorted to the soup kitchens like this one in Montreal in 1931, operated by voluntary and church organizations. After a meal, most people returned to the alleyways, parks, or flop-houses for the night (National Archives of Canada/PA-168131)



	1928–1929 Average \$ per Capita	1933 \$ per Capita	Percentage Decrease
Canada	471	247	48
Saskatchewan	478	135	72
Alberta	548	212	61
Manitoba	466	240	49
British Columbia	594	314	47
Prince Edward Island	278	154	45
Ontario	549	310	44
Québec	391	220	44
New Brunswick	292	180	39
Nova Scotia	322	207	36

DROUGHT ON THE PRAIRIES

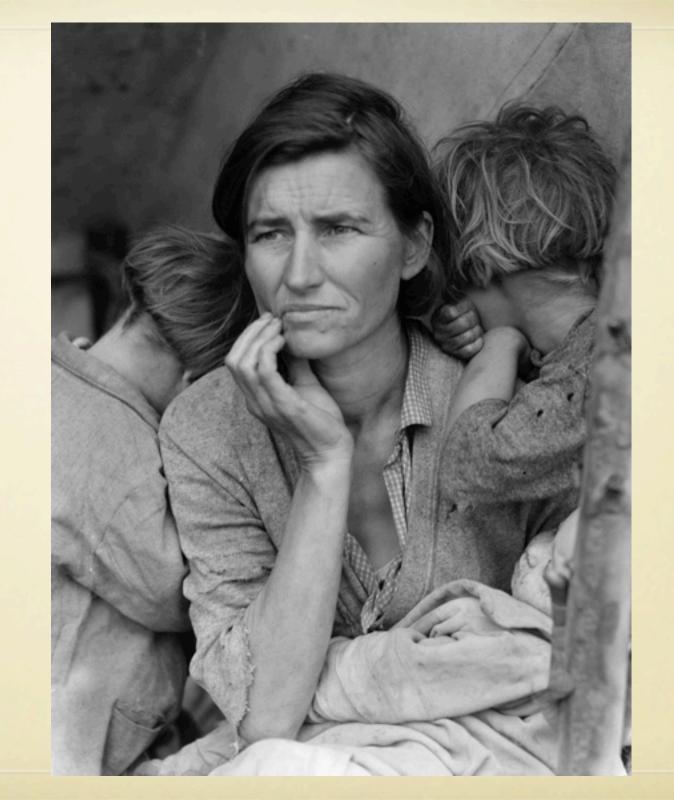
- Conditions in the prairies were severe, worse than in other parts of the country
- Collapse of wheat market left many people destitute
- Drought hit prairies 1929 lasted 8 years
- Winds ripped across the prairies and stripped the land of topsoil in parts of southern Alta. & Sask.
- Dust storms were common in the prairies
- Grasshoppers followed and contributed to the destruction of the remaining crops
- 1935 Government passed the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration Act - Irrigation and reservoir construction



THE DISADVANTAGED

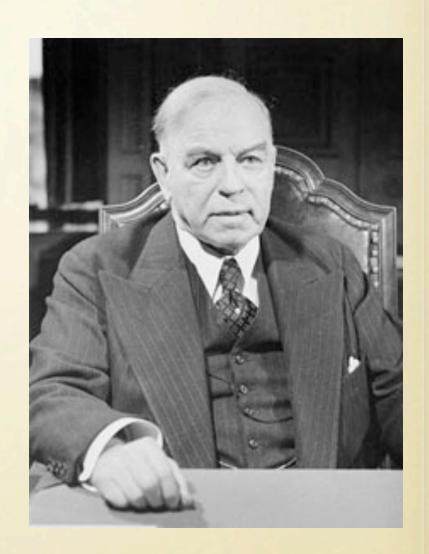
- Minorities
- Women were accused of contributing to the Depression by taking work away from the men
- First Nations were offered minimal relief and were expected to live off the land
- Chinese population (Vancouver) suffered from starvation and only after deaths did the Prov. Govt. show concern
- Immigrants were viewed with hostility Competition for jobs
- Jews in particular anti-Semitism denied access to jobs and clubs

Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother* depicts destitute pea pickers in California, centering on Florence Owens Thompson, age 32, a mother of seven children, in Nipomo, California, March 1936.



WHO TO BLAME?

- Prime Minister Mackenzie King unprepared to solve economic problem
- Thought Depression temporary passed on responsibility to municipal & provincial governments
- Many Municipalities were bankrupted
- Mackenzie lost election to R.B. Bennett (Conservative) in 1930
- Bennett gave \$20 million to Provinces for work creation programs
- <u>imposed tariffs 50% increase contrib. to</u> <u>Protectionism in other countries</u>



USA DEPRESSION ERA PHOTOGRAPHS FROM DOROTHY LANGE

