

The 1920s – A New Era

- through the 1920s, Canada changed in many ways: the role of the federal government, rise of new political parties, a shift from rural to urban population, and a transformation in the economy

Federalism

- after 1919, both national parties chose new leaders: William Lyon Mackenzie King for Liberals; Arthur Meighen for Conservatives



Sir Wilfrid Laurier



- they hated each other and were complete opposites (King was a compromiser, sought middle of the road so as to not offend anyone; Meighen believed in principles over compromise, did not matter who he offended)
- had to worry about a new problem in Cdn politics – REGIONALISM (concern of the various regions of the country with their own local problems)

Maritimes – influence declining, had fewer seats in Parliament; industries were declining; people wanted oil ... they had coal

West – unhappy with the gov't as the policies favoured Central Canada

Ontario & Quebec farmers – more ppl moving to cities (1911 = 50/50); formed National Progressive Party – initially successful, but did not last

Social Support Starts

- in the 1920s some provinces took first steps to creating system of social support
- began to finance hospitals, schools, and other institutions
- in Ontario, mother's allowance was introduced
- in 1926 – choice between U.I. or old age pensions; Old Age Pension Act created in 1927 for people in need 70 yrs or older

Urbanization & Industry

- began at turn of century – farms went mechanized ∴ Needed less workers; so went to the cities
- by 1931, city dwellers outnumbered rural pop for first time
- rural life = good moral life; urban became associated with various social evils
- bustling centres of industry; filthy & squalid – esp. downtown
- automobile and street cars made it feasible for wealthier ppl to move out to the tree-lined residential areas
- cars, radios, new electrical appliances
- besides jobs, cities offered taverns, music halls, cinema, sports events
- INDUSTRIALIZATION went with urbanization
- wheat still most important staple, but pulp and paper (75% of newsprint made in Canada sent USA), mining and smelting, and hydroelectricity gave Canada new wealth
- Branch plants (businesses owned and controlled by parent companies in the U.S.A.)