

The Great Depression

(Note)

Stock Market Crash

- Tuesday October 29, 1929
- Many stocks lost all of their value (worthless)
- Stocks now worth nothing (or very little), but when bought on margin you still owe for what you paid

Drought in the Prairies

- In 1929 a drought began that lasted almost 10 years
- Crops dried up and, soil turned to dust, and the wind blew away the dry soil
- Storms of dust occurred in Alberta and Saskatchewan resulting in the name 'Dust Bowl'
- Had purchased new farm machinery with borrowed money
- Many people abandoned their farms
- Those that could farm faced a lot less demand for their products

Grasshoppers

- 1931 and 1932 grasshoppers began destroying wheat fields across the prairies
- Could destroy fields in minutes
- Compounded the problems
- Many people started leaving farming towns and moving from city to city looking for work

City

- Little demand for products which resulted in factories closing or having limited production
- Many rural Canadians came to the cities in search of jobs
- Now have higher populations, and fewer jobs

Suicide

- Suicide rates increased during the depression
- People felt as if there was no way out of the despair
- Emotionally a very difficult time

Government Involvement

- The government created basic jobs for the unemployed
- Aim was to get people off the streets
- Ranged from building city infrastructure to building roads that led nowhere
- 1 in 4 Canadians depended on government relief as 25% of the population was unemployed
- Relief was created and people were supported by the government. This was a new concept to Canadians and the government.
- In 1932 relief camps were set up for unemployed men where they worked in return for room, board, medical care, and about 20 cents a day
- Many municipalities struggled and had to borrow money to support its citizens and often had little money left or were on the verge of bankruptcy