

# Post-World War I Era

# Aftermath

- *The armistice of November 11, 1918, brought relief to the whole world. The horrible struggle with its death, destruction and misery was at last halted. It had truly been a world war. Sixty-five million men from 30 nations were involved in it; at least ten million men were killed; twenty-nine million more were wounded, captured or missing; and the financial cost was measured in hundreds of billions of dollars. Never before had there been such a conflict.*

# Post-war conditions

- *Few had expected the long struggle or heavy death toll. A war fought supposedly for liberal freedoms against Prussian militarism had exposed uneasy contradictions, including compulsory military service, broken promises to farmers and organized labour, high inflation, deep social and linguistic divisions, and the suspension of many civil liberties.*



# Spanish Influenza 1918-1919

- The Spanish influenza epidemic, uniquely lethal in attacking young, healthy bodies, killed at least 20 million people worldwide, including an estimated 50,000 Canadians.
- The loss of so many Canadians had a profound social and economic impact on a country that had already suffered 60,000 war dead.
- The combined death toll significantly reduced the workforce. It left thousands of families without a primary wage earner and orphaned thousands of children.

**EPIDEMIC  
INFLUENZA  
(SPANISH)**


**This Disease is Highly Communicable.  
It May Develop Into a Severe Pneumonia.**

There is no medicine which will prevent it.  
Keep away from public meetings, theatres and other places where crowds are assembled.  
Keep the mouth and nose covered while coughing or sneezing.  
When a member of the household becomes ill, place him in a room by himself.  
The room should be warm, but well ventilated.  
The attendant should put on a mask before entering the room of those ill of the disease.

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**TO MAKE A MASK**

Take a piece of ordinary cheesecloth 8 x 16 inches, fold it to make it 8 x 8 inches. Next fold this to make it 8 x 4 inches. The cords about 10 inches long at each corner. Apply over mouth and nose as shown in the picture.



**ISSUED BY THE PROVINCIAL BOARD OF HEALTH**



# Newfoundland and Labrador

- It first appeared in Newfoundland and Labrador in September 1918 and killed more than 600 people in less than five months.
- The effects were most devastating in Labrador, where the disease killed close to one third of the Inuit population and forced some communities out of existence.
- Death rates were particularly high in the Inuit villages of Okak and Hebron.



# Inflation and unrest

- *Inflation* is the rate at which the general level of prices for goods and services is rising and, consequently, the purchasing power of currency is falling
- A *recession* is a temporary period of time when the overall economy declines; it is an expected part of the business cycle
- Across Europe and in North America, the economic impact of the First World War dragged out to two decades of zero net growth. Meanwhile, those in the business of war gained huge profits.
- During WWI, fast-growing cities energized by war employment saw prices rise faster than wages, leading to labour unrest and strikes.



# Veterans

- While the government did provide limited benefits to soldiers after the war, however many issues remained.
- Many soldiers were denied benefits, others had difficulty finding work due to the recession or injuries they sustained in battle.
- PTSD was not well understood. Shell shock victims often had difficulty adjusting to post-war life and many employers were leery to hire these veterans.
- Many veterans believed that government should do more. Some joined labour actions that swept the country in 1919, including the violent Winnipeg General Strike





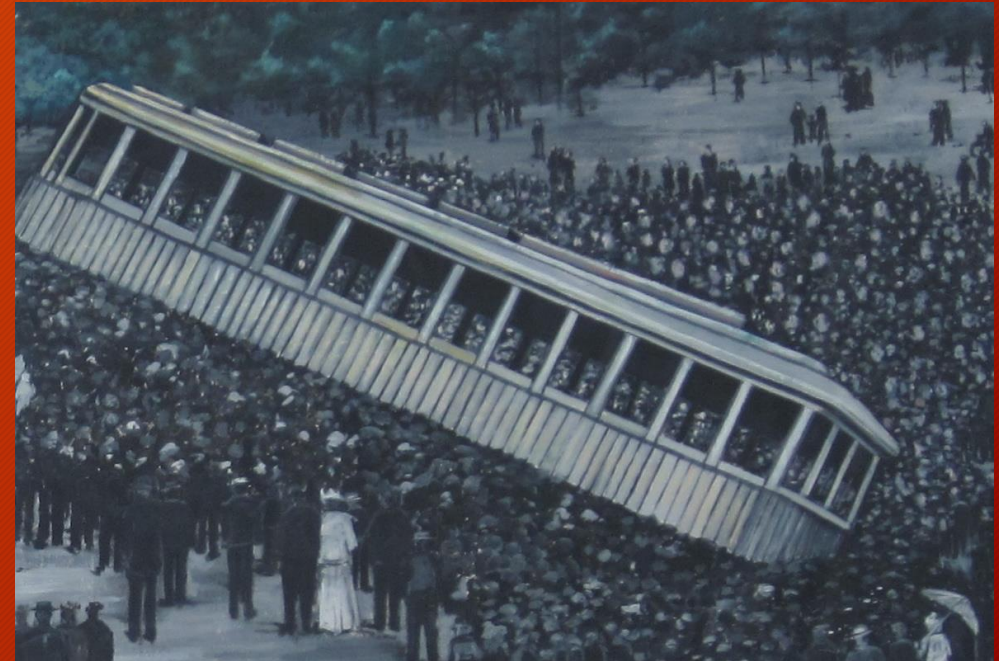
# Winnipeg General Strike (1919)

- The Winnipeg General Strike, 15 May-25 June 1919, is Canada's best-known general strike. Massive unemployment and inflation, the success of the Russian Revolution in 1917, and the rise of *Unionism* all contributed to the postwar labour unrest that fuelled the landmark strike.
- In Winnipeg on 15 May, when negotiations broke down between management and labour in the building and metal trades, the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council (WTLC) called a general strike. **At stake were the principle of collective bargaining, and better wages and working conditions.**
- ***Within hours almost 30,000 workers left their jobs.*** The almost unanimous response by working men and women closed the city's factories, crippled Winnipeg's retail trade and stopped trains. Public-sector employees, including policemen, firemen, postal workers, telephone operators and employees of waterworks and other utilities, joined the workers of private industry in an impressive display of *solidarity*.



# Bloody Saturday and Aftermath (June 21)

- On 17 June the government arrested 10 leaders of the Central Strike Committee and two propagandists from the newly formed One Big Union.
- Four days later, a charge by Royal North-West Mounted Police into a crowd of strikers resulted in 30 casualties, including one death. Known as “Bloody Saturday”, it ended with federal troops occupying the city's streets.
- Faced with the combined forces of the government and the employers, the strikers decided to return to work on 25 June
- The General Strike left a legacy of bitterness and controversy among organized labour groups across Canada. It sparked a wave of increased unionism and militancy, and sympathetic strikes erupted in centres from Amherst, Nova Scotia to Victoria, British Columbia.

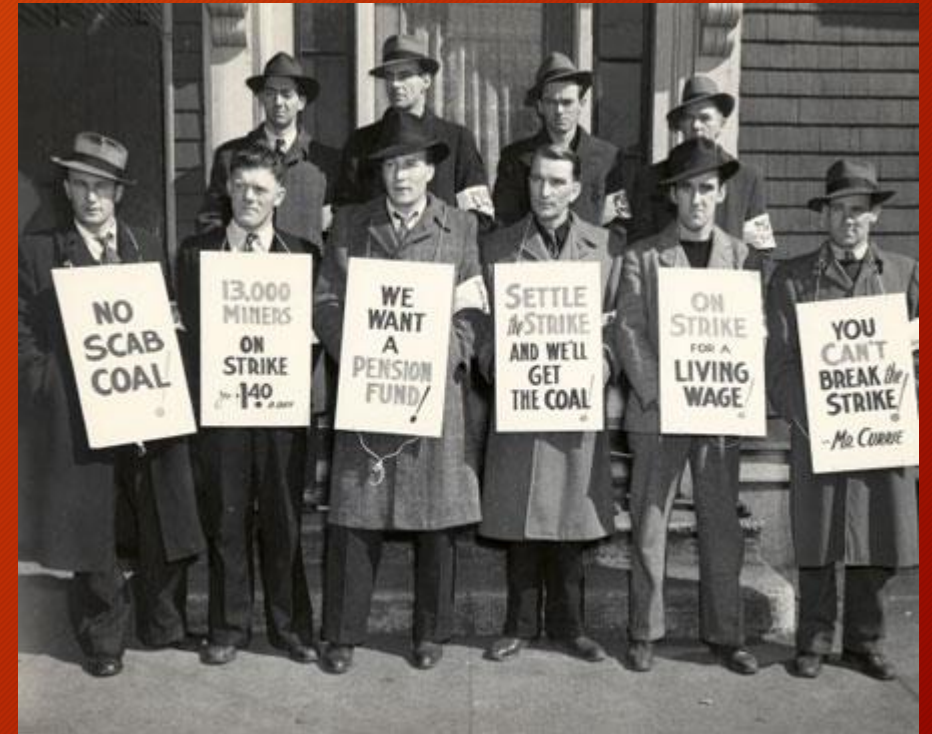


# Suppression of rights

- Seven of the arrested Winnipeg strike leaders were convicted of a conspiracy to overthrow the government and sentenced to jail terms ranging from 6 months to two years.
- *Immigration Act* amended so British-born immigrants could be deported. More over some immigrant lost their jobs due to the strike.
- *Criminal Code* altered to broaden definition of *sedition*
  - Fred Dicksen charged with seditious conspiracy for writing an article critical of the government.
  - J.S. Woodsworth charged with seditious libel but charges eventually dropped.

# Nova Scotia coal strikes of 1922 to 1925

- During the strikes, Cape Breton coal miners resisted wage reductions by the British Empire Steel Corporation (BESCO) despite desperate living conditions and provincial police dispatched to coal mining towns across Cape Breton.
- Dramatic confrontations followed, and 3 major strikes accounted for more than 2 million striker-days. At the company's request, provincial police and federal troops were ordered into the coal and steel towns.
- Because of the strikes during the 1920s, Nova Scotian miners brought national attention to Cape Breton and forced the federal and provincial governments to consider more conciliatory labour policies, marking a turning point in Canadian labour relations.



# Suffrage Movement

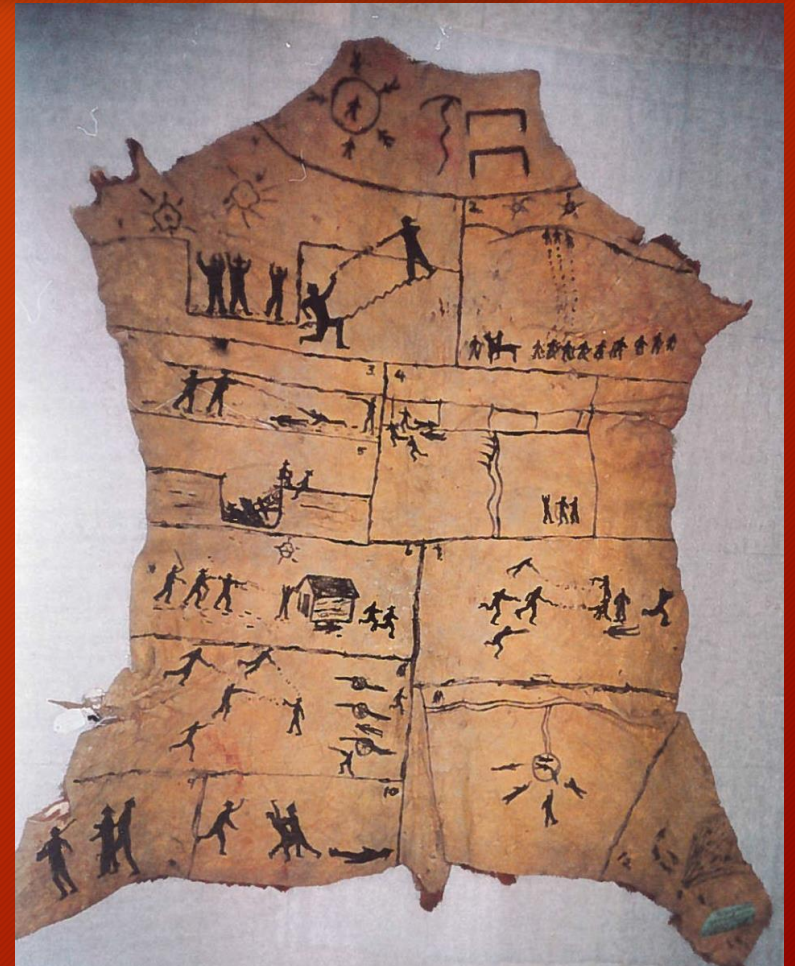
- The provinces began extending voting rights to women in 1916, and women were finally allowed to vote in federal elections in 1918.
  - This was gradual and first implemented in the West
- **Who was left out?**
  - Recent immigrants associated with enemy countries - had seen this right rescinded.
  - Ottawa finally extended the right to vote to all Indigenous people, women and men, in 1960.



WE WERE VOTERS OUT WEST!  
WHY DENY OUR RIGHTS IN THE EAST?

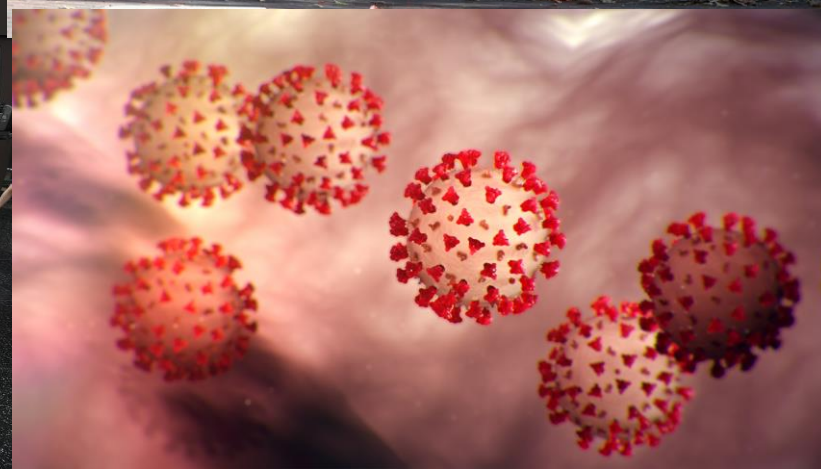
# Indigenous Peoples

- When Native soldiers came back from war and were discharged, nothing really changed for them; they went back to the reserves where Indian Agents and laws restricted their rights.
- Children continued to be enrolled in Residential Schools across the country; reports of criticizing the schools were ignored and silenced.
- Most Indigenous peoples have no right to vote or run in Canadian elections.





# Parallels today? (Hint: links in pictures)



# 'Then and Now' #1 - Post WWI Era

- Epidemics: Spanish Flu vs Coronavirus (Covid-19)
  - Workers rights and unionization
  - Inequality and fighting for a living wage
  - Indigenous rights
  - Women's rights
  - Veteran's issues
  - Freedom of Expression/Speech
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- **Choose one of the topics above and locate 2 sources: one historical source (then) one recent news article (now). Compare the issues of the past with today's concerns. How have the issues changed? In what ways do they remain the same? Use full sentences, minimum of 500 words.**