

## LIFE FOR CANADIAN FARMERS IN THE 1920S

Use the information provided on the pages 66-67 of your textbook, and your own ideas, to help you answer the questions below.

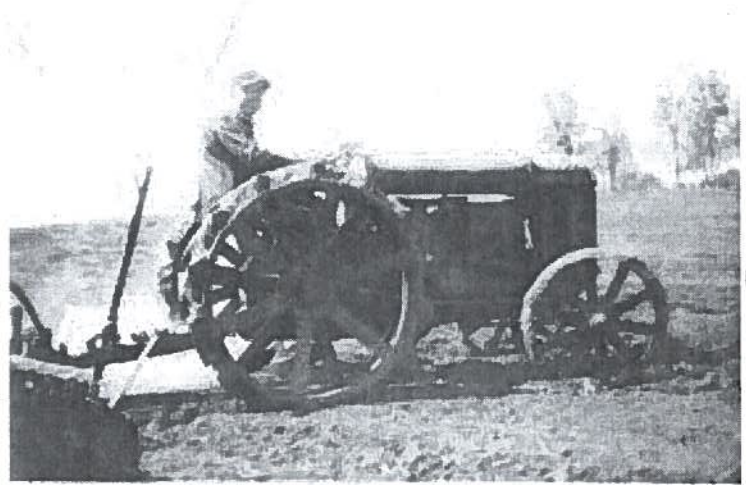
1. What happened to prices for farm produce at the end of the Great War? Demand remained high at first, then demand dropped and prices fell.
  
2. Many farms started using large machinery during the war.
  - a) What are two positive aspects of using this machinery? • made work easier  
• could cultivate/harvest larger areas in less time
  
  - b) What are two negative aspects of using this machinery? • equipment was expensive  
• don't need as many workers, so they move to the cities  
• had to cultivate more land to pay for machines (which can drive down prices for crops)  
• monoculture instead of many different products
  
3. Use the Glossary to define:
  - a) rural in or related to the countryside
  - b) urban in or related to town or cities
  
4. Examine the graph "Where Canadians Live" on p. 67.
  - a) Compare 1901 to 1921. What does the graph tell you? In 1901, under 40% of the population lived in cities. In 1921, 50% lived in cities, 50% were rural.
  
  - b) Why were farmers worried about this change? Urban residents would soon be the majority of the population. They worried that politicians would pay less attention to rural issues and concerns.
  
5. Examine Figure 1.45.
  - a) What do you see in the cartoon? **Just describe, do not interpret the meaning.** I see;  
caption: "Why Farmers Are in Politics"  
1885 - little guy in a business suit (City Population) sitting on a big  
guy (Farm Population) with a pitchfork, tree stumps in background  
1921 - City Population man is really big, Farming Population man is having  
trouble carrying him, fields in the background
  
  - b) Now, explain the meaning/message of the cartoon. Farmers are having trouble supporting  
the City Population, which keeps getting bigger, so the farmers are  
\* getting involved in politics so they can be heard.

6. List two challenges that farmers in the 1920s faced that also affect today's farmers. \_\_\_\_\_
- being heard by politicians and city people (FARMERS FEED CITIES)
  - expensive machinery, forces farms to get bigger, monoculture (one main crop)
  - high cost of services (e.g. roads)
  - quality of education
7. What do you think the slogan "Farmers Feed Cities" really means? In other words, why do farmers think they need to remind people about where their food comes from? (your opinion)
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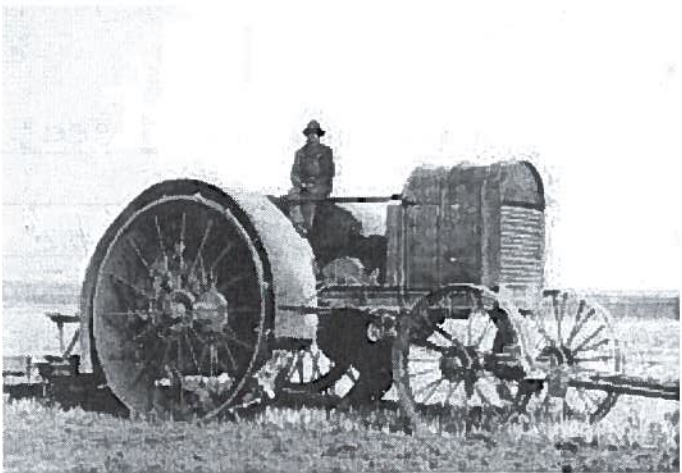
*Machinery helped farmers during the Great War and during the 1920s, but many farmers had difficulties paying for the machines.*



Source: utas.edu.au



Source: homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com



Source: cooktractor.net

## A Shift in Population

People living in **rural** areas, including farmers, made up a little more than half of Canada's population between 1914 and 1921. But the percentage of people who lived in **urban** areas was rising. Jobs were more plentiful in towns and cities. Before long, urban residents would form a majority of the population.

Farmers worried about this. They feared that politicians would start paying less attention to their concerns.

## Farmers Take Action

To make their voices heard, farmers in various provinces formed their own political parties — and even won some elections.

The United Farmers of Ontario, for example, won the Ontario election of 1919. In 1921 and 1922, farmers' parties also won elections in Alberta and Manitoba. Farmers in Ontario and the Prairie provinces united to form the Progressive Party, a new federal political party. The Progressives won 64 seats in the 1921 federal election. This made it Canada's first successful third party.

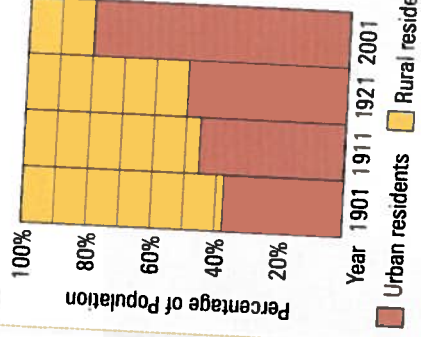
But its success was short-lived. Farmers disagreed over how to solve their problems. As a result, most rural-based parties lost power in the following elections.

## SHOW YOU KNOW

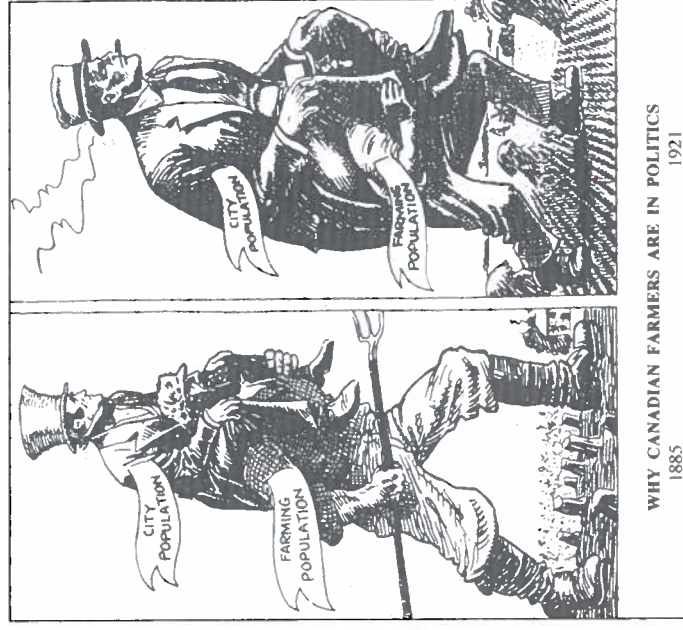
1. List three changes that affected farmers after World War I.
2. Imagine that your parents were farmers in 1920. Think about the conditions they faced. Would they advise you to stay on the farm or move to the city? Explain how they might justify their advice.

## Where Canadians Lived 1901–2001

The percentage of the population that lived in cities grew all through the 20th century. Today, about 80 per cent of Canadians live in cities.



Source: Statistics Canada, Historical Statistics of Canada A67-69. Population, rural and urban, census dates, 1871–1976.



**Figure 1.45** This cartoon captures farmers' feelings about their relationship with city dwellers.

en demand for changed after the 1910s.

both overseas and unable to produce. High demand led to higher incomes.

remained high — and prices dropped, led by 60 per cent to lower incomes.

farm was rising. However, the improved conditions were also expensive. The cost of electricity and fuel far exceeded the savings from higher share expenses.

their children did not attend school in cities. The one-room school, where the children were in the same room and books were in the same room.

ing and after the war, when oil prices were high. The price of wheat was as high in 1918 as it was in 1914, and it took farmers a long time to get by.