

WHAT WERE SOME VICTORIES FOR THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT?

The Right to Vote

Women's groups in Canada had been fighting for more rights since the nineteenth century, including the right to vote. Nellie McClung, a well-known author, speaker, and feminist, did not agree when the premier of Manitoba told her that "Nice women don't want the vote." McClung and her supporters fought back by staging a mock parliament in Winnipeg in 1914. In this performance, roles were reversed and men were trying to get the right to vote. McClung had the crowd roaring with laughter and approval when, playing the role of the premier, she imitated him perfectly saying "Nice men don't want the vote." Once the war started, women began to replace men in factories, banks, and offices. The war expanded women's roles, and women wanted to use their new economic advantages to push for political rights.

In 1916, Manitoba became the first province to grant women the right to vote. The next year, wives, sisters, and mothers of soldiers, and nurses gained the right to vote in federal elections, and in 1918, all Canadian women were granted the right to vote.

LITERACY LINK

How does finding the main idea of the mock parliament help you understand how women got the right to vote?

No woman, idiot, lunatic, or criminal shall vote.

▲ **Figure 12** This excerpt comes from the *Election Act of the Dominion of Canada* in 1916. Nellie McClung and other women's rights activists often quoted this Act to support their cause. They felt the Act was out of step with Canadians' values at the time.

◀ **Figure 13** This photo is of a group of women voters in Westcott, Alberta, around 1917. What do the details in the photo tell you about the roles of women at the time?





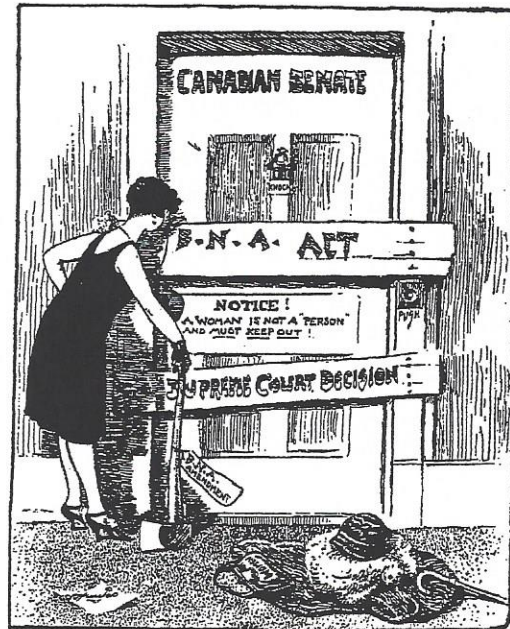
The Right to Sit in the Senate: The Person's Case

Imagine how shocked you would be if you were informed that you were not “a person.” In 1916, Emily Murphy, a Canadian women’s rights activist, became the first female judge in the British Empire. However, a lawyer challenged her position as judge, citing an earlier British law that stated that “women were not persons in the matters of rights and privileges.” The Alberta Supreme Court ruled in Murphy’s favour, which started a campaign to get Murphy appointed to the Senate.

Yet in 1928, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Section 24 of the *British North America (BNA) Act* did not include women in its definition of a “person.” As a result, women could not be appointed to the Senate. Murphy discovered that any five persons could appeal a Supreme Court decision in Britain. She and four other women, including Nellie McClung, took their case to Britain and became known as The Famous Five. They took their case to the British Privy Council, which was Canada’s highest court at the time. During the debates, the arguments supporting women pointed out their great service and sacrifice during World War I.

In 1929, the British Privy Council ruled that women were indeed persons and could be appointed to government positions. Though Murphy herself was never appointed to the Senate, she and her supporters felt that the final barrier to women’s participation in all levels of government had come down.

◀ **Figure 14.** Throughout her career, Nellie McClung was a dynamic public speaker, writer, and activist for women’s rights.



The woman: “Well, we’ll see whether I’m a ‘person’ or not.”

▲ **Figure 15** This 1928 cartoon was originally published in the *Manitoba Free Press*. How is the woman in the cartoon reacting to the *British North America (BNA) Act*?

CHECK IN

1. Historical Significance

Are the mock parliament and person’s case significant in Canadian history? Use the historical significance criteria to judge the evidence.

2. Interpret and Analyze

In Figure 15, what is the cartoonist’s opinion? Does he or she believe that women should be considered persons? What details in the cartoon support the cartoonist’s opinion?

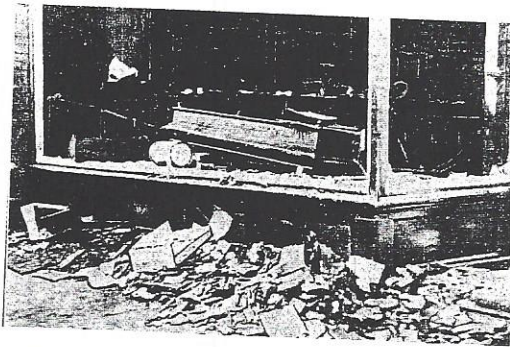
HOW WERE MINORITIES DISCRIMINATED AGAINST AFTER THE WAR?

xenophobia

the fear of foreigners, often leading to discrimination

13 (c) ... such immigrants are deemed undesirable owing to their peculiar customs, habits, modes of life and methods of holding property, and because of their probable inability to become readily assimilated or to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship within a reasonable time after their entry.

▲ **Figure 16** The *Immigration Act* of 1919 prohibited many types of immigrants, including criminals, alcoholics, illiterates, and “diseased persons” to come to Canada. What types of immigrants does this passage prohibit?



▲ **Figure 17** This photo shows damage to a restaurant following the anti-Greek riots. Economic issues and racism were causes of the riot. Which cause do you think was more important in starting the riot?

Whose Canada?

One of the consequences of the war was the greater level of distrust many Canadians had for foreigners. Even though most Canadians were immigrants themselves, **xenophobia** of non-British immigrants was at an all-time high due to wartime nationalism.

Immigration Act

In 1919, the government introduced the *Immigration Act*, which reflected the beliefs of that time. The Act banned entry to people coming from countries that had fought against Canada during the war and people who had “unwanted qualities.”

Anti-Greek Riots

From 1914 to 1917, Greece had remained neutral, divided on whether to support Germany or Britain. This made the Canadian government unsure if Greek Canadians would end up siding with Germany. As a result, Greek Canadians were not allowed into the Canadian forces.

When the World War I veterans returned home to face unemployment and poverty, their resentment toward certain groups grew. They saw Greek Canadians, who had not served in the war, financially benefiting from the peace. The Greek community in Toronto was small, but visible, because they owned many businesses, including cafés and grocery stores. These frustrations resulted in one of the worst anti-Greek riots in the world. For five days in August 1918, 50 000 veterans and civilians rioted in downtown Toronto, looting and destroying all Greek businesses.

Aboriginal Canadians' Fight at Home and Away

Approximately 4000 First Nations people and an unknown number of Métis people and Inuit volunteered to serve in World War I. Two of the main reasons behind enlistment were the high unemployment rate on the **reserves** and the good military salary. Others wanted a chance to prove their patriotism in the hopes of better treatment by the Canadian government after the war.

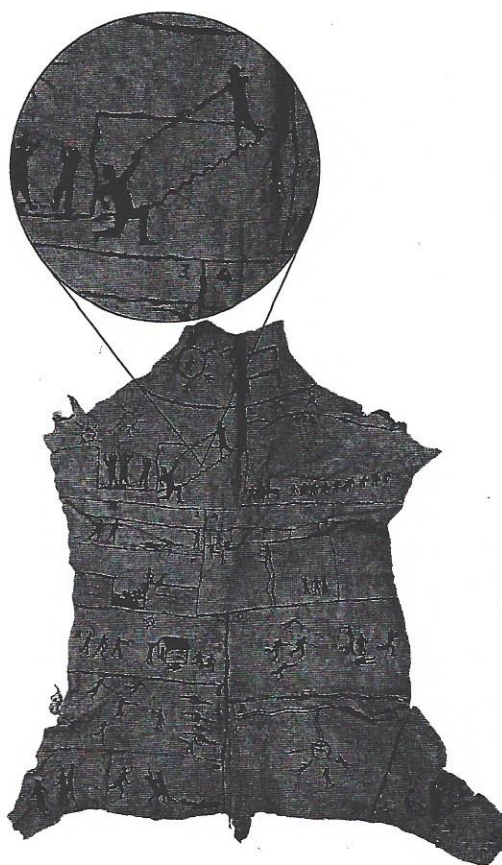
reserves

land set aside for use only by First Nations people, as written in the *Indian Act*

Indian Act

The *Indian Act* of 1876 allowed the government to control most aspects of First Nations peoples' lives, including land, resources, education, and travel. First Nations soldiers were given the right to vote in the 1917 federal election as members of the military and hoped to gain full voting rights after the war. But this did not happen, nor did they get land settlements like other veterans. In fact, some First Nations veterans returned to find that some of their land had been given away to other non-Aboriginal veterans.

In 1919, Frederick Loft, a Mohawk man who had served as a lieutenant, founded the League of Indians of Canada. The goal of the organization was to provide a united voice and push the government for more rights. But despite the organization's efforts, in 1920, the federal government made damaging changes to the *Indian Act*. These changes included forcing First Nations parents to send their children to residential schools.



▲ **Figure 18** Mike Mountain Horse, a member of the Kainai Nation in Alberta, had his war experience painted on a cowhide robe in the tradition of his nation. The events are in order of their importance to Mountain Horse, starting with the top left panel. This panel shows that while behind the German defences on August 21, 1917, Mountain Horse, in self-defence, shot a German officer who was hiding in a cellar.

CHECK IN

1. Historical Perspective

Why do you think the government introduced the *Immigration Act*? What would this way of thinking explain? Use evidence to support your answer.

2. Communicate

Write a news article reporting on the state of Aboriginal rights after World War I.

WHAT CHANGED FOR CHINESE CANADIANS?

Chinese Immigration

Chinese people first began to immigrate to Canada in the 1850s in the hope of finding a better life mining gold. Once the gold rush was over, Chinese workers took on other jobs. During the 1880s, thousands more Chinese men moved to Canada to work on completing the Canadian Pacific Railway to the west coast.

After the railway was completed, the federal government imposed a tax of \$50 on any Chinese person wanting to enter Canada to discourage Chinese immigration. But workers in Canada could earn 10 to 20 times what they could earn in China, so Chinese immigrants kept coming. The government raised the Head Tax on Chinese immigrants to \$100 in 1900 and \$500 in 1903. These taxes temporarily reduced Chinese immigration to Canada.

Chinese Exclusion Act

In 1923, the Canadian government passed the *Chinese Immigration Act*. Chinese people in Canada immediately called it the Chinese Exclusion Act, because it stopped all Chinese immigration to Canada. Only students, businessmen, and diplomats from China were permitted entry into Canada after 1923. Between 1923 and 1947, when the Act was withdrawn, fewer than 50 Chinese immigrants were allowed into Canada.

Community Protests

July 1, 1923, the day the Act was passed, became known as Humiliation Day in Chinese communities across Canada. Public demonstrations were organized to show how Chinese Canadians felt betrayed by the Canadian government.

All Chinese were advised to do the following:

1. To wear the July 1 Humiliation to Overseas Chinese Commemoration badges
2. All merchants to post the July 1 Humiliation to Overseas Chinese Commemoration banner on the windows of their stores
3. No display of Canada flag in residences and stores
4. No visits to playgrounds and participation in parades
5. No music in the area where Chinese lived

▲ **Figure 25** The Chinese Canadian Benevolent Society in Vancouver organized a protest on July 1, 1924, one year after the *Chinese Immigration Act* was passed. Reports on July 2 in a Chinese-language newspaper indicated that all members of the Chinese community had complied with the guidelines listed here. What does this tell you about the Chinese Canadian community in Canada in 1924?



CITIZENSHIP

There are many effective ways to have your voice heard if you feel that a situation is unjust. How might a protest like the Chinese Canadian Benevolent Society's actions be similar and different today?



▲ **Figure 26** This photo was taken in 1936 in Vancouver's Chinatown. Chinese men often went to gambling houses after work, since without their wives and children, there were few other options. Caucasian Canadians then accused the Chinese men of being immoral for gambling.

Impact on Chinese Canadians

More than 20 years of excluding immigration from China had long-term consequences for Chinese Canadians. Many Chinese in Canada were barred from working in industries in which it was believed their low wages would take jobs away from Caucasian workers. Many Chinese workers retreated to Chinese-owned businesses, where there was no competition with Caucasian workers. Men usually came to Canada before their wives and children, and would send for their family members when they had saved up enough money. Because of the Act, families were separated for decades. The Chinese population in Canada had very few women.

When my grandmother and mother were finally able to join my grandfather in Canada, just before I was born, it was an emotional reunion. My mother had never known a father growing up, and he had been deprived of knowing his own child—she was 27 years old the first time she met her father in 1965.

▲ **Figure 27** In this excerpt from 2006, University of British Columbia professor Henry Yu describes the effects of the *Chinese Immigration Act* on his family. How might an imbalance of the sexes and a separation of families have affected the Chinese Canadian community as a whole?

CHECK IN

1. Cause and Consequence

Which consequence of the *Chinese Immigration Act* do you think had the most significant impact on the Chinese community in Canada? Use evidence to support your choice.

2. Interpret and Analyze

Carefully review two of the sources on these pages. Finish one of the following sentences:

- These sources clearly show ... but I cannot be sure that ...
- It is highly likely, based on these two sources, that ...
- These sources lead me to believe that ...

CHAPTER CHECK IN

Focus Question

Were the 1920s a time of progress or decline?

WHO WAS AFFECTED MOST BY RACISM IN CANADA DURING THE 1930s?

Immigration and Racism in the 1930s

For many Canadians, people who spoke a language other than English or French, and practised other religions, were seen as a threat to Canada's mainly British and French culture. This included First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Some argued that too many immigrants were being allowed into the country from places that were not British or French, and were taking jobs away from Canadians. As the Great Depression worsened, Canada began to close its borders to immigrants.

Racist and anti-immigrant groups had been around in earlier times, but they gained strength in many parts of Canada during the Great Depression. Groups such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) were anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic (anti-Jew), and anti-immigrant. Some Canadians were influenced by Germany's Nazi Party, under Adolf Hitler. The Nazis were mainly anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant, if the immigrants were not Caucasian.

The Christie Pits Riot

In some Canadian cities, public displays of Nazi symbols provoked violent clashes. One of the most violent encounters took place in Toronto at Christie Pits (Willowvale Park) on August 16, 1933.

Toronto Daily Star Thursday, August 17, 1933

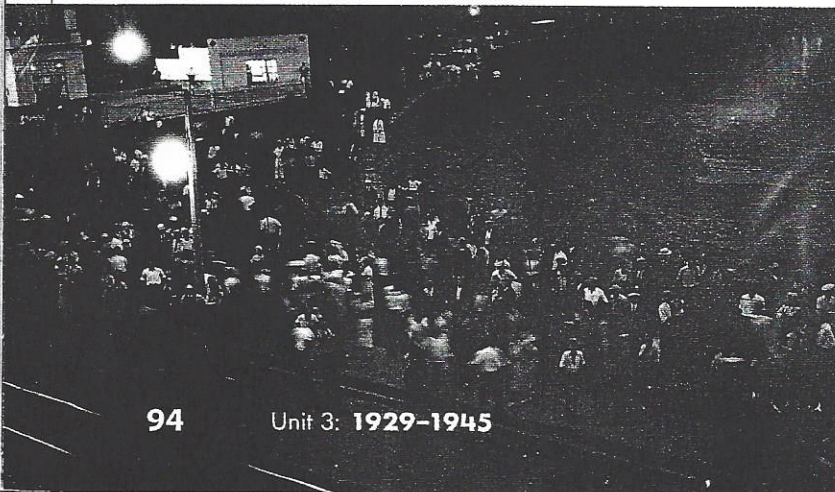
Six hours of rioting follows Hitler shout

Scores hurt, two held

While groups of Jewish and Gentile [non-Jewish] youths wielded fists and clubs in a series of violent scraps for possession of a white flag bearing the swastika symbol at Willowvale Park last night, a crowd of more than 10 000 citizens, excited by cries of "Hail Hitler," became suddenly a disorderly mob and surged wildly about the park and surrounding streets, ... which soon developed in violence and intensity of racial feeling into one of the worst free-for-alls ever seen in this city... Heads were opened, eyes blackened, and bodies thumped and battered as literally dozens of persons, young and old, many of them non-combatant spectators, were injured more or less seriously by a variety of ugly weapons in the hands of wild-eyed and irresponsible young hoodlums, both Jewish and Gentile.

▲ **Figure 2** At a baseball game between a predominantly Jewish team and a predominantly Caucasian, church-sponsored team, some people in the crowd displayed a large swastika painted on a flag, prompting the Christie Pits riot. The swastika is the Nazi symbol. For Jews, the swastika represents degradation and humiliation.

◀ **Figure 3** This is the only known photo of the Christie Pits riot.



Immigration Restrictions

In 1923, the Canadian government had passed the *Chinese Immigration Act*, which nearly ended immigration to Canada from China.

By 1931, Canada had restricted the immigration of other groups, too. For example, between 1929 and 1936, only 813 Japanese immigrants were admitted. Any people from Asian countries who were admitted to Canada were allowed in on a temporary basis (such as students and diplomats). Immigrants who were allowed into Canada during the Great Depression were not eligible for government relief. If they lost their jobs or were unable to support themselves, they were deported.

1. A British subject entering Canada directly or indirectly from Great Britain ... , Newfoundland, the United States of America, New Zealand, Australia, ... who has sufficient means to maintain himself until employment is secured; provided that the only persons admissible under the authority of this clause are British subjects by reason of birth or naturalization....
2. A United States citizen entering Canada from the United States who has sufficient means to maintain himself until employment is secured.
3. The wife or unmarried child under 18 years of age of any person legally admitted to and resident in Canada who is in a position to receive and care for his dependents.
4. An agriculturalist having sufficient means to farm in Canada....

The provisions of this Order ... shall not apply to immigrants of any Asiatic [Asian] race.

▲ **Figure 4** This excerpt from the Canadian government's order on March 21, 1931, shows who the government allowed into the country during the Great Depression. What do you notice about this order?



▲ **Figure 5** What does this immigration certificate tell you about beliefs about Chinese immigration at the time?



CITIZENSHIP

National identities are often expressed by who is allowed to immigrate. How do the attitudes about Canadian identity that are portrayed on this page compare with your own?

CHECK IN

1. Historical Significance

Choose one event or development from these pages. How does its historical significance vary for different groups?

2. Gather and Organize

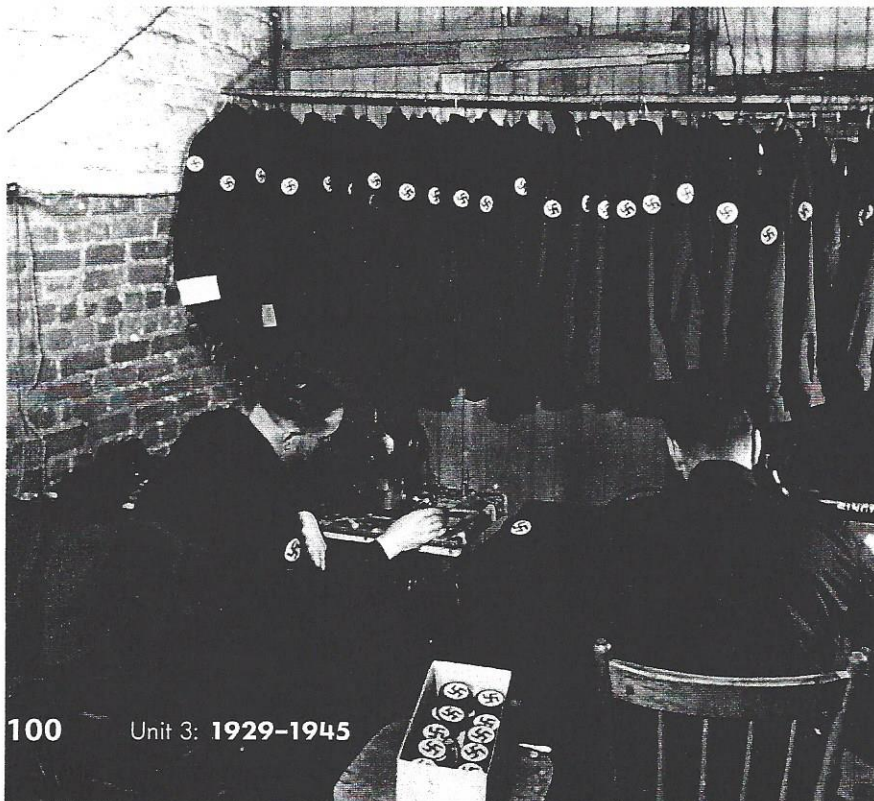
What sources would you explore to find out more about racism in the 1930s? Create a chart to organize your information and document your sources.

HOW DID EXTREMIST GROUPS INFLUENCE GOVERNMENT POLICIES?

Fascism in Canada

In response to the Great Depression, some new right-wing and left-wing political groups formed in Canada, such as the Social Credit League. Other political ideas, such as Fascism, came to Canada from Europe. Canadian Fascist groups were similar to Mussolini's Fascists in Italy and Hitler's Nazis in Germany. In Canada, Fascism was most noticeable in Québec, and its leader there was Adrien Arcand. In 1934, Arcand founded the *Parti national social chrétien* (National Social Christian Party), which later became the National Unity Party, and had about 10 000 followers at the height of his popularity. Arcand disliked anyone who was not English or French. He particularly disliked Jews.

Arcand blamed Canada's problems on immigrants. In his newspaper, the *Canadian Nationalist*, he promoted extreme nationalism and hatred of non-English and non-French people. The newspaper also introduced Canadians to the idea of racial superiority (the idea that some races are better than others) that was promoted by his party.



◀ **Figure 12** These men are producing Nazi-style uniforms in Montréal around 1938. What does this photo show about the popularity of Fascism in Québec at the time? Why might this photo have been taken?

Eugenics

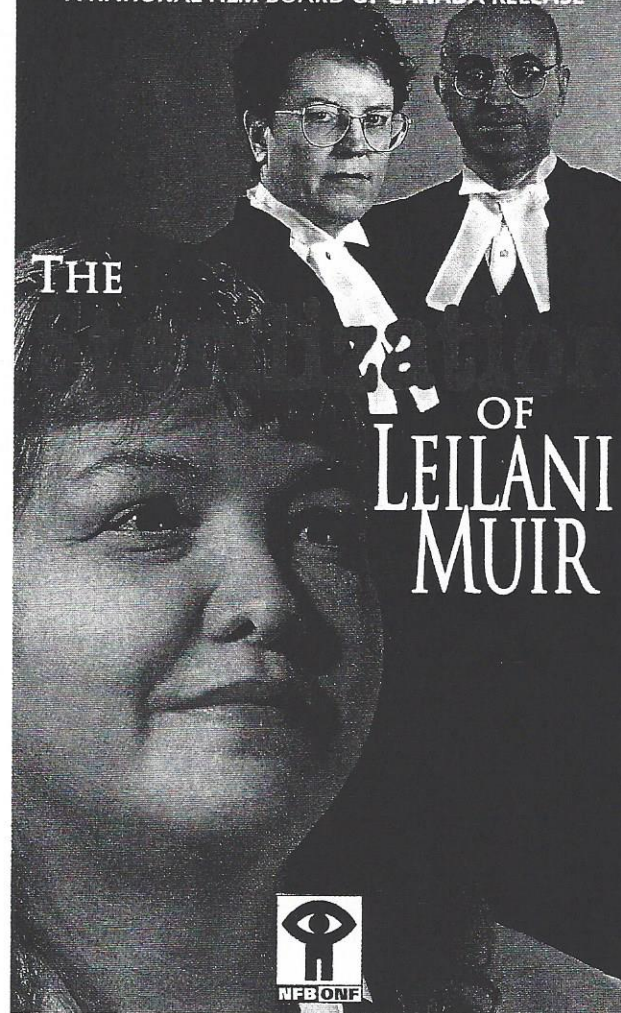
Some people wanted to “improve” the human race by controlling which women could have children. This is called the science of eugenics. For example, followers of eugenics did not want women with intellectual or physical disabilities to be able to reproduce. Eugenics was one of the ideas of racial superiority promoted by Arcand. The idea was also popular with many prominent Canadians, and it influenced government policy.

Between 1928 and 1933, the Alberta and British Columbia governments passed sexual sterilization acts, which allowed women to be sterilized (permanently prevented from getting pregnant) without their consent. From 1928 to 1972, the Alberta Eugenics Board approved the sterilization of over 4700 women, which was about 98 percent of the cases presented to the Board.

Leilani Muir sued the government of Alberta in 1995. When she was ten years old, Muir was admitted to the Provincial Training School for Mental Defectives in Red Deer as an abused child. She was held for over a decade against her will (despite later testing that showed she was not ill) and later discovered that she had been sterilized during an appendectomy [an operation to remove the appendix]. The judge awarded her \$1 million. Within three years, the province faced hundreds of additional lawsuits.... [T]he government introduced a bill to apply the [Canadian] Charter of Rights and Freedoms' notwithstanding clause to impose a \$150 000 cap on all lawsuits. The ensuing public outcry led the government to withdraw the bill within 24 hours (the government later agreed to an out-of-court settlement of \$80 million).

▲ **Figure 13** This excerpt is from a website about the history of human rights in Canada. What questions would you like to have answered about this excerpt or this source?

A NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA RELEASE



▲ **Figure 14** In 1996, The National Film Board of Canada released a documentary based on the case of Leilani Muir. What do you think the director's perspective on Muir's case was, based on this poster for the documentary?

CHECK IN

1. Cause and Consequence

What conditions allowed the rise of Fascism in Canada? What conditions might have prevented the Canadian Fascists from being successful? Why do you think Fascists had some followers in Canada during the 1930s?

2. Evaluate and Draw Conclusions

What does the practice of eugenics reveal about Canadian society in the 1930s?