

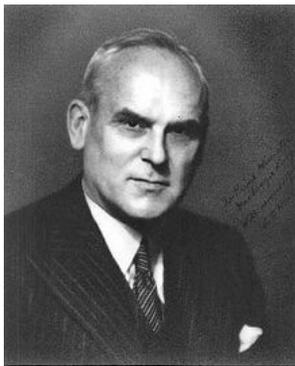
Postal History of Some Aspects of the Home Front Efforts During World War II

The depression of the 1930's was devastating for Canada. Largely dependent on exporting raw materials and with minimal industry, unemployment was rampant and by 1939 was still over 12%. One on five Canadians relied on government relief for support. The outbreak of World War II changed all of that. Everyone who wanted to work could find employment; the Country was, in comparison to many, rich; and by the end of the war the "Dirty Thirties" were in the almost distant past.

This exhibit includes postal history of the 2 major players in transforming the home front, the Department of Munitions and Supply and the Department of National War Services as well as some other contributors to Canada's WWII success.

The War Measures Act (September 3rd, 1939) and the Department of Munitions and Supply (September 13th, 1939) gave the government the power to run a "planned economy". The chief "planner" was the Minister, C. D. Howe. He had the authority to compel manufactures into wartime production on the terms, conditions and prices he considered reasonable. As Minister he could also expropriate private companies without appeal and create Crown corporations under the Companies Act

The most important division of the War Services Department was the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, created by Order in Council on September 3rd 1939, a week before Canada formally declared war on Germany. It was given Board powers to control the price, supply, and distribution of the "necessities of life". The first 2 years of the war saw an inflation rate of 17% leading the government to transfer responsibility for the WPTB from Labour to Finance. With the appointment of Donald Gordon a Chairman, Canada's inflation rate for the duration of WWII was reduced to 2.8%, the lowest of any of the allied countries.



C.D. Howe



Donald Gordon

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