

The workers' revolt needs to be understood in the context of settler colonialism and capitalist development.

"Workers on Kananaskis falls development project, Kananaskis, Alberta," circa 1910s. NA-3802-39. Glenbow Museum.



In the late 1800s, the Canadian government continued its nation-building project of dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their lands and encouraging settlers, especially immigrants from Europe, to travel west. Calgary's industrial development was made possible through this process. The arrival of the North-West Mounted Police and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) made Calgary a hub in the new economy of the west.

Fortunes were made in new industries connected to the railroad and the construction boom that coincided with the city's growing population. In the early 1900s, Calgary's population increased by 900% and reached 44,000 by 1911.



"Construction workers, Calgary, Alberta," circa 1910s. PA-3709-37. Glenbow Museum.



"Welcome home parade for 50th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, Calgary, Alberta," 1919. NA-3965-8. Glenbow Museum.

Private George Palmer addressed a mass meeting of the Calgary Great War Veterans' Association on 2 November 1918:

*"Are we going to permit a few greed-sodden drones, men who know not nor ever did know the meaning of the words patriotism and sacrifice to have the ruling of our lives? No! A thousand times no! It's **the rotten corrupt system** that allows men to accumulate millions while others starve."*

Not everyone benefited equally from this industrial growth.

With the signing of Treaty 7 in 1877, the federal government restricted members of the Blackfoot Confederacy and the Stoney Nakoda and Tsuut'ina Nations to small reserves of land.

Working people struggled to make ends meet. Inequality increased during World War I (1914–1918). The sons of farming and working-class families fought in the fields of Europe for "freedom" and "democracy" while capitalists made record profits from the production of war-related materials.