

1914–1923

1914–1923

Urbanization, factory work, slums, poverty, and increased immigration triggered social movements calling for social reform.

The emergence of social work in Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century corresponded with the ever-increasing industrialization of Canada. Prosperity for some was not without hardship for others. Urbanization, factory work, slums, poverty, and increased immigration triggered social movements calling for social reform. Several new professions arose at this time—psychiatry, public health, nursing, psychology, early childhood education, librarianship, and social work. In the early days of social work in Canada, much of the effort was voluntary and there was a strong link between Christian service and social reform. Managing sickness, disability, aging, and poverty was a family responsibility, and if help were needed it was provided through the churches.

Toronto, 1914. A mother and her children huddle outside their home at 18 William Street. A horseshoe, symbol of hoped-for good luck, hangs over the doorway, a poignant detail. Photo: City of Toronto Archives



DEPT. OF HEALTH NO 326 AUG. 28 1914 REAR 18 WILLIAM ST.