Women After WWI:

Introducing Agnes MacPhail:

In the federal election of 1921, for the first time, all Canadian women over the age of 21 were allowed to vote (women related to soldiers had been allowed to vote in the 1917 "conscription" election). Agnes MacPhail was the first female elected to Canada's parliament in 1921.

Watch the [*Historica Heritage Minute*](http://www.tvdsb.ca/webpages/mckeownw/files/agnes%20macphail.mp4), which highlights some of Agnes MacPhail’s political work as a Member of Parliament.

“Like famous Canadians Billy Bishop and Nellie McClung, I was born in Grey County. I went to Teachers' College in Stratford, Ontario and taught school for a time. I was very familiar with farm life, and a new political party, the United Farmers Party, asked me to be their candidate in the 1921 election. My father, who was an auctioneer, had made the MacPhail name well-known in Grey County, and this fact helped me to win that 1921 election."

"Although I was in love with a man named Bob Gardiner, I decided not to marry and have a family, so that I could devote myself to politics. I usually wore a black coat, hat, and scarf, and I was known as a "no-nonsense" person. People often made fun of my "school teacher" image, but I did not care about their jokes, and devoted my energy to helping the poorer members of society. I found that prisoners lived in terrible conditions, and were sometimes beaten with belts until they bled. I worked hard to make Canadian prisons places of dignity. I also worked for pensions for old people, better pay for women, and better policies for farmers.”

In the 1920s, women became at the same time more independent and more equal members of Canadian society. Women were allowed to participate at the Olympic Games for the first time in 1928 at Amsterdam. Fanny "Bobbie" Rosenfeld won a silver medal in the 400 metre relay and a gold medal in the 100 metre race.

Inference Question:

1. How did the “home front” environment in Canada during WWI contribute to the changes in life for women in the 1920s?