

War on the Home Front

(Chapter 8 of Text)

Introduction

At the outset of the war, Canadians knew little about the horrors that their relatives and neighbors were facing in the trenches. A government press censor banned all news stories considered to be harmful to the war effort. The Canadian press was ready to provide its patriotism by cooperating fully with the censor, so information about the war was carefully controlled. Government propaganda posters appeared on street corners all over the country, and some artists were commissioned to paint pictures glorifying the "Great War."

Before 1914, many Canadians had been against war on principle. Once Britain declared war, however, many former pacifists became staunch war supporters. The few Canadian pacifists who continued to speak out against the war, such as the well-known social reformer Reverend J. S. Woodsworth, often lost their jobs. Pacifist religious sects that had been welcomed to Canada before the war—the Doukhobors, the Mennonites, and the Hutterites—were now treated with suspicion and hostility. Many Canadians believed that defeating the Germans was Canada's moral duty. Some even believed that Canadians who opposed the war were as dangerous as the enemy across the Atlantic.

Story Outline for Chapter 8 The War on the Western Front

THE STORY	THE DETAILS	TERMS & PEOPLE
<i>In 1914, Canadians from coast to coast rallied for the war effort. Almost everyone contributed to the war effort and made do with less at home.</i>	<p>Page 150: Gearing Up for War</p> <p>1). A Canadian Patriotic Fund began to collect money for soldiers' families that struggled to survive on a private's salary.</p> <p>2). People in Canada made sacrifices so that food and fuel could be sent overseas to support the war effort.</p> <p>3). Young boys replaced men on the farms to collect the harvest. They became known as the Soldiers of the Soil.</p>	<p>Canadian Patriotic Fund: a fund collected by Canadians to help support the families of soldiers fighting overseas.</p> <p>Soldiers of the Soil: a phrase used to describe the young men to young to serve in the military but old enough to work on the farms.</p>
<i>Canadian patriotism had a "dark side", e.g. The government was pressured to fire German/Austrian immigrants who held government jobs; moreover, German language instruction was outlawed as well as the playing of German music by orchestras.</i>	<p>Page 150: Canada's "Enemy Aliens"</p> <p>1). At the time of the war, there were approximately 500,000 immigrants from Germany and Austria in Canada.</p> <p>2). These immigrants were collectively referred to as "enemy aliens" and it was believed they were still loyal to their home countries.</p> <p>3). In 1915, the Canadian Government ordered more than 8,000 "enemy aliens" to be interned in one of four remote internment camps.</p>	<p>Enemy Aliens: were recent immigrants to Canada of non-British lineage, i.e. Ukrainians, Austrians, Germans, Poles, Hungarians, etc.</p>
<i>Canada's main contributions to the war—aside from thousands of soldiers—were food and munitions. When war broke out, Russian wheat exports to Europe abruptly stopped. Soon after, the German army rolled across France, and much of France's rich farmland fell into German hands. The Allies were desperate for food for soldiers and citizens alike. They needed all the food that Canadians could produce.</i>		
<i>During the war years Canadian farmers supplied millions of tonnes of food to Britain and France.</i>	<p>Page 151: Food for the War Effort</p> <p>1). Between 1914 and 1918 more than 16 million additional hectares of soil were brought under cultivation.</p> <p>2). Farmers made significant profits from wheat farming.</p> <p>3). Intensive wheat farming was slowly ruining/exhausting the soil. Farmers in the west were beginning to create the disastrous conditions of the 1930s "dustbowl," in which badly eroded topsoil blew away in dry weather.</p>	
<i>Canadian industries produced a significant amount of munitions for the war effort.</i>	<p>Page 152: Canada's Munitions Industry</p> <p>1). By 1917 Canada had shipped millions of dollars worth of ammunition and shells to Britain.</p> <p>2). Some Canadian industrialists made massive personal fortunes by overcharging Britain for much needed munitions.</p> <p>3). British Prime Minister David Lloyd George told Prime Minister Borden that England would not buy Canadian munitions until the corrupt practices were ended.</p> <p>3). Prime Minister Borden established the Imperial Munitions Board which brought the production of munitions directly under the supervision of the British government.</p>	<p>David Lloyd George: the prime minister of Great Britain during the war years.</p> <p>Imperial Munitions Board: replaced the previous "Shell Committee" overseen by Sam Hughes. The Shell Committee was demonstrably corrupt as Hughes personal friends benefited from all the contracts.</p>

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<p><i>Many Canadians made substantial personal sacrifices for the war. As food and fuel became scarcer, they had tightened their belts and shivered through the winter months.</i></p>	<p>Page 154: Profiteering and Scandal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Canadians were stunned to learn that some millionaire industrialists were growing rich from dishonest dealings in war contracts. 2). These industrialists were accused of profiteering and taking advantage of the desperation of Canadians to turn a quick profit. 3). Borden appointed people to monitor the actions of businessmen; however, no serious attempt was made to curb the corrupt practices of private enterprise during World War I. 	<p>Profiteering: the act of making a profit by methods considered unethical. Business owners may be accused of profiteering when they raise prices during an emergency (especially a war).</p>
<p><i>Women played a key role in Canada's industrial achievements by filling the jobs left vacant by men going to the front.</i></p>	<p>Page 154-155: Women During the War Years</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Women left the home and traditional roles (maids, nursing) and entered the factories. 2). The presence of women in the work place was resented and protested by labour union leaders. 3). It was expected that once the war was over that women would return to their traditional roles as wives, mothers, and domestic workers. 	
<p><i>Women had always made important contributions to Canadian society; however, the role of women played in Canada's success during the war convinced many women to call for social reform.</i></p>	<p>Page 155-156: Women, Social Reform, and the Vote</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Women became increasingly active in fields such as social work, journalism, teaching and public health. 2). In Alberta, women worked for changes to laws that prohibited women from owning property, e.g. A widow who had lost her husband overseas had no legal right to her dead husband's land. 3). Labour activists like Helena Rose Gutteridge pressured law makers to pass laws in British Columbia that increased wages paid to women and reduced the number of hours they were required to work. 4). In 1914, women were still denied the right to vote in federal elections. Suffragists like Gutteridge and Nellie McClung continued to pressure governments for the right of women to vote. 5). In 1916, McClung and several other women won the right for women to vote in Manitoba's provincial elections. 6). Borden's government decided during the war that it was time to give women the right to vote in federal elections. E.g. The Wartime Elections Act (1917) gave some women the right to vote. 	<p>Helena Rose Gutteridge: was a suffragette, labour activist and the first female elected to city council in Vancouver, British Columbia.</p> <p>Suffragists: people who fought for women to receive the right to vote.</p> <p>Nellie McClung: a Canadian feminist, politician, and social activist. She was a part of the social and moral reform movements prevalent in Western Canada in the early 1900s.</p> <p>The Wartime Elections Act: the act gave Canadian nurses serving in the armed forces and the wives, sisters, and mothers of Canadian soldiers a vote in the upcoming federal election. Borden promised to extend the right to vote to all women if he were re-elected. Native peoples and Canadians of Asian ancestry still did not have the right to vote.</p>

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<p><i>The war was costing the Canadian Government one million dollars a day. During peacetime the government would simply reduce its spending to avoid going into debt; however, during war you had to feed and supply an army so a reduction in spending was not an option.</i></p>	<p>Page 156: Paying for War</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Borden's government introduced an "income tax" to raise money for the war effort; it was assumed that once the war was over the income tax would disappear. 2). The government also introduced something called Victory Bonds to raise money for the war effort. 3). Both the income tax and bonds began as temporary measures; however, they became a permanent fixture of Canadian life. 	<p>Income Tax: a progressive tax on the taxable income of individuals, partnerships, companies, corporations, trusts, decedents' estates, and certain bankruptcy estates.</p> <p>Victory Bonds: a form of investment with a guaranteed profit, i.e. Buy \$100.00 of bonds at 5% interest and the value of your investment would become \$105.00.</p>
<p><i>French and English Canadians viewed the "Great War" differently, e.g. While Anglophones believed in the righteousness of the cause Francophones believed the true enemy was not Germany but English Canada.</i></p>	<p>Page 158: French-English Conflict and the Conscription Crisis</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). In 1913, the Ontario Department of Education brought in Regulation 17 as a first step towards going to an "English only" education system. 2). French Canadians both in and outside of Quebec were furious at what they saw as an attack on French-language rights guaranteed them by Confederation. 3). By 1916 the Prairie provinces rejected the compromise Laurier had won for French Catholics in their school systems. <p>*Regulation 17 and the weakening of French rights in Western Canada weakened support for the war in Quebec.</p>	<p>Regulation 17: limited the use of the French language in schools (even in regions with large French-speaking populations).</p>
<p><i>French and English Canadians generally disagreed over whether or not conscription should be introduced.</i></p>	<p>Page 158: The Decline in Voluntary Enlistments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1). Borden had declared in 1914 that the Canadian government would never introduce conscription. 2). By 1916 the brutality of the Great War discouraged many Canadian men from enlisting in the armed forces. 3). There were many reasons why Francophones did not enlist in the same numbers as Anglophones. I.e. They married younger and married men did not volunteer in the same numbers as single men; and unlike other provinces Quebec was not given its own provincial fighting divisions. 4). In an attempt to repair the damage, Hughes created the French Canadian 22nd Battalion. 	<p>Conscription: the practice of pressing men into active military service against their will.</p> <p>22nd Battalion: one of the most distinguished units in the war and won over 150 medals for valour, courage, bravery, etc. The unit was nicknamed the "Van Doos" (after the French <i>vingt-deux</i> or 'twenty-two').</p>

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<p><i>Many Canadians opposed conscription, e.g. Farmers opposed it because it took their sons and farmhands away, union leaders threatened to lead general strikes, and the French by and large opposed it because they saw it as another example of Anglophones getting their way in Confederation.</i></p>	<p>Page 159-160: The Military Services Act 1). Borden introduced the Military Services Act (1917) which officially introduced conscription into Canadian law. 2). Borden could no longer count on any active support from Quebec; therefore, he formed a Union Government—a coalition of Conservatives and Liberals outside of Quebec. 3). Just before the Union Government was established tragedy struck the Maritimes in the form of the Halifax Explosion. 4). The Military Services Act was enforced after the election. However, out of the 400 thousand intended to enter the armed forces through conscription only 24,000 actually were pressed into active service</p> <p>*There were riots in Quebec when English officers tried to press Frenchmen into service.</p>	<p>Military Services Act: an act of government passed by the Borden government amidst much controversy that forced Canadian men to serve in the armed forces.</p> <p>Union Government: a multi-party coalition established for the sole purpose of pushing through Borden's pro-British policies.</p> <p>Halifax Explosion: two ships (one laden with explosives) collided touching off a fire and an eventual explosion that kill 2,000 people in</p>
<p><i>When the soldiers finally came home, they returned to a Canada deeply divided over conscription. The bitterness persisted long after the war ended. Although the war on the home front had been marred by profiteering scandals, many Canadians had worked hard in the war effort. Canada's extraordinary successes in agriculture and industry were a source of national pride. Women had also taken a step forward on the road towards equality. They made important contributions to the war effort in the home and took on new roles in the workplace. They were active in social reforms and they were winning the battle for the vote.</i></p>		