

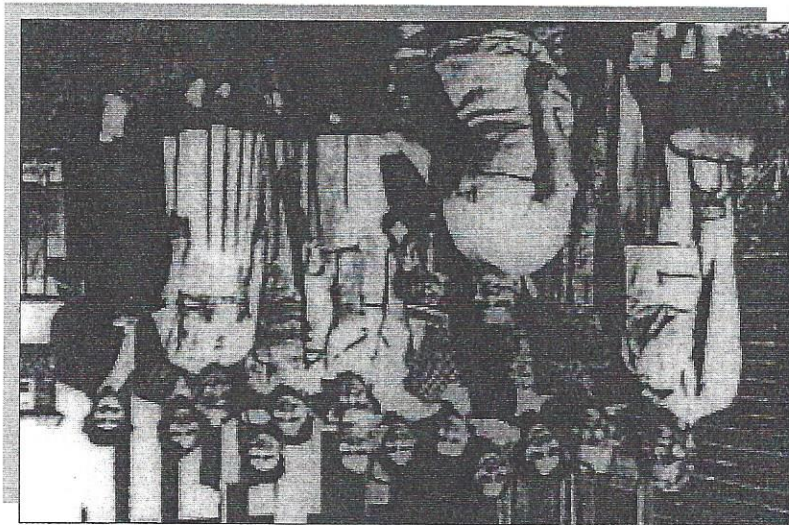
1. If you were living in Canada during World War I, what effects do you think the war would have on your everyday life?
2. Brainstorm actions you think the Canadian government might have to take during the war. Suggest reasons for each action.

Support for the War Effort



During World War I, people on the home front were encouraged to do all they could to support the troops overseas. Posters, patriotic community groups, and government campaigns suggested that no sacrifice should be spared to ensure a victory in Europe. Many people planted "victory gardens" to produce as much food as possible. They reduced the amount of food they ate and tried to waste as little as possible. Meals contained less meat, but butter, sugar, and bread so that these foods could be sent overseas. Canada was shipping vast quantities of food to the fighting forces and civilian populations of other Allied countries.

Although Black Canadians were discriminated against in Canada, many women worked for the war effort. These women worked through the Coloured Women's Club of Montreal during the war.



Not all groups were made up of women of British heritage. Many other ethnic communities including Chinese, Japanese, Jewish, Italian, Aboriginal, and Black women and men also raised funds and contributed what they could. Women of the Six Nations organized a Women's Patriotic League in 1914. It raised money through garden parties and tag days for Six Nations soldiers overseas. Aboriginal people on the Tyendinaga Reserve near Deseronto, Ontario, allowed some of their land to be used for a flying school during the war. Polish organizations worked with the Red Cross to send money, food, and clothing for war relief in Poland. Chinese women held Rice Bowl festivals and

Groups of women of all ages also met regularly to organize community fund raisers and to roll bandages for the troops. Every community held card games, dances, bazaars, and variety shows. The profits from these evenings were used to send soap, writing paper, pencils, and candy to the troops. Some groups also raised money for war victims and war relief.

On the wheat fields of the West, thousands of students were often dismissed from school early to help bring in the harvests. Farm women worked long hours in the fields, and women from the cities also lent a hand. They were needed to replace the farm workers who were fighting overseas.

demanded that these “enemy aliens” be fired from their jobs and locked up.

In response to the pressures, the government used the **War Measures Act** to place restrictions on “**enemy aliens**.” The War Measures Act gave the government sweeping powers to ensure “the security, defence, peace, order, and welfare of Canada.” People suspected of sympathizing with the enemy could be arrested or searched. Many people labelled as “enemy aliens” were rounded up and sent to internment camps in remote areas.

Over 8597 “enemy aliens” were held in these labour camps during World War I. The majority were Ukrainians. Conditions in the camps were harsh. The men worked long hours and were often poorly fed and clothed. Other “enemy aliens” were forced to register with their local police and report on a regular basis. Some had their homes or businesses vandalized.

Mr Spade, who was German, lived at 2 or 4 Jersey Avenue in Toronto. At that time we lived at number 14. This happened after supper because I didn't see it, but I heard them talk about it. A whole gang of men came around and got him and took him over to Clinton Street. They tarred and feathered him. Why I don't know. Except he was a German.

People of German ancestry in the town of Berlin, Ontario, tried to show they were loyal to the British side in the war. They changed the name of the town to Kitchener, after the British War Minister. Carlstadt in Alberta also changed its name to Alderson after the British commander of these people were viewed with suspicion and even hatred. Rumours of spies and sabotage, including fears that enemies were planning to blow up the Welland Canal, fueled the suspicions. People

until the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, the explosion in Halifax was the biggest artificial explosion ever recorded. All that was ever found of the *Mont Blanc* was a cannon and part of an anchor that landed over 3 km away. Within hours, however, aid was on its way from neighbouring towns. Within two days, a ship from Boston arrived with over \$3 million in relief supplies. Thirty million dollars was collected from around the world to help rebuild the city and assist the survivors. American generosity is still celebrated today with a gift of a special Christmas tree shipped from Nova Scotia to Boston each year.

“Enemy Aliens”

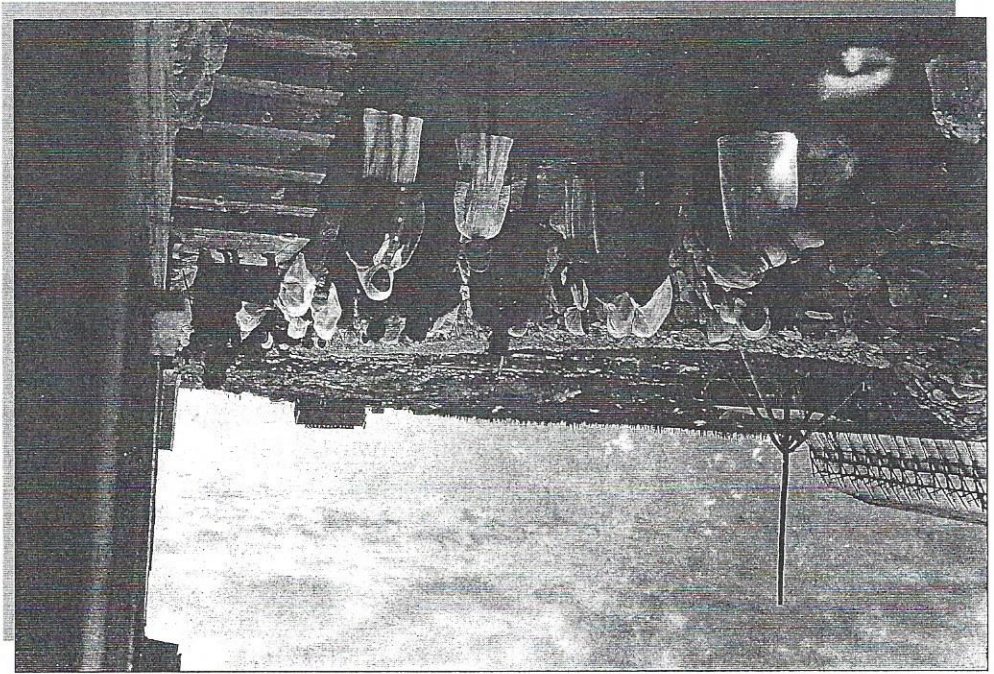


War often has a way of bringing out both the best and worst in people and nations. On the one hand, Canadians were united as never before, making courageous and generous sacrifices for the war effort. On the other hand, the pressures of war also encouraged suspicion, blind intolerance, and personal greed.

When war broke out, there were about 500 000 German, Austrian, and Hungarian people living in Canada. Others, such as the Ukrainians, had come from the territories or allies of the German and Austrian empires. At first, the government urged that these citizens be treated fairly. During the Laurier years, they had been welcomed into Canada. Many had come to escape militarism and oppression in their home countries. They had become successful farmers, business people, and workers in Canada's industries.

But as war fever turned to hysteria, these people were viewed with suspicion and even hatred. Rumours of spies and sabotage, including fears that enemies were planning to blow up the Welland Canal, fueled the suspicions. People

The Spirit Lake enemy alien internment camp in northern Quebec. Rather than live alone, some women joined their husbands in the camps. Describe the conditions of the camp shown in this photo.



Today, people question the trade-off involved in passing such an act. On the one hand, the government needed special powers to respond to the emergencies of war. To many people, this was a war for democracy. On the other hand, the act meant that Canadians lost some of their basic democratic rights and freedoms. Measures Act was no longer in effect.

FAST FORWARD

The War Measures Act has been used three times in Canada's history. The first time was during World War I. The act was introduced again during World War II. In World War II, Japan was an enemy nation and more than 16 000 Japanese Canadians were sent to internment camps under the act. In 1988, the Canadian government formally apologized to these Japanese Canadians and provided them with financial compensation. No apology has ever been extended to those who were interned during World War I, however. Some communities, such as the Ukrainians, are attempting to raise awareness of this fact. In 1970, the War Measures Act was passed again to deal with the terrorist FLQ crisis in Quebec. It was the first time the act was ever used in peacetime. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau justified his government's action by saying that the crisis in Quebec represented a threat to overthrow the government. Some people believe it was used more to put down political protest in Quebec, and that there was no real threat to the government. The issue is still controversial.

The Changing Role of Government



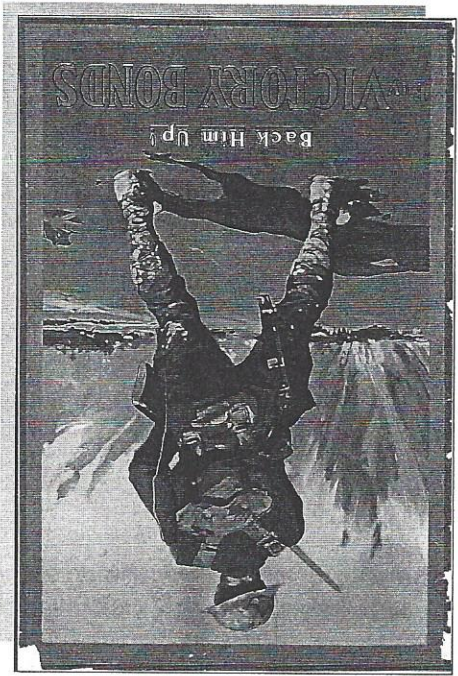
introduced an increasing number of controls. Many of these controls directly affected the everyday lives of Canadians. Before the war, the government in Ottawa seemed distant to most people. It had little real effect on their day-to-day lives. The war changed that. Government-appointed fuel controllers promoted "heatless days" to conserve coal. Food controllers urged Canadians to eat less and waste nothing. Government officials introduced "Meatless Mondays" and "Fuelless Sundays."

By the fall of 1918, Canadians were buying "war bread" that was made with some flour substitutes. By a system of "honour rationing," people limited themselves to a pound and a half of butter and two pounds of sugar a month. Honour rationing meant that people were expected to reduce the amount of food they ate voluntarily. Anyone caught hoarding or stockpiling food, however, could be fined or jailed. Other controls included a ban on the sale and drinking of alcohol.

Keeping up the war effort was also expensive. By 1918, the war was costing Canada over \$1 million a day! The government launched a major campaign urging people to buy **Victory Bonds**. Citizens who bought the bonds were lending money to the government for the war effort. After the war, the bonds could be cashed in at a profit. Business people also lent money to the government—in total over \$1 billion. The loans would be paid back with interest when the war was over.

Children played a part by buying Thrift Stamps. Each stamp cost 25¢ and was stuck on a card. When \$4.00 worth of stamps were bought, the child received a War Savings Stamp. A War Savings Stamp could be cashed in for \$5.00 in 1924. In another effort to raise finances for the war, the government introduced a

By 1917, Canadians were feeling the hardships of war. With so many men away fighting and industries booming at home, almost everyone who could work had a job. But the war was beginning to put a strain on the country's resources. Food and fuel became scarce and prices soared. The shortage of coal for furnaces meant many Canadians shivered through the winter of 1917. During the winter of 1918, schools and factories closed because they had no heating. While many Canadians struggled to deal with these shortages, some business people seemed to be making huge profits during the war. There were cries of profiteering. Some people believed a few businessmen were stockpiling food and fuel until prices rose so high, the goods could be sold at a big profit. To deal with these problems and to keep up the war effort, the government



Foster, such as this one, urged Canadians to help pay for the war effort.

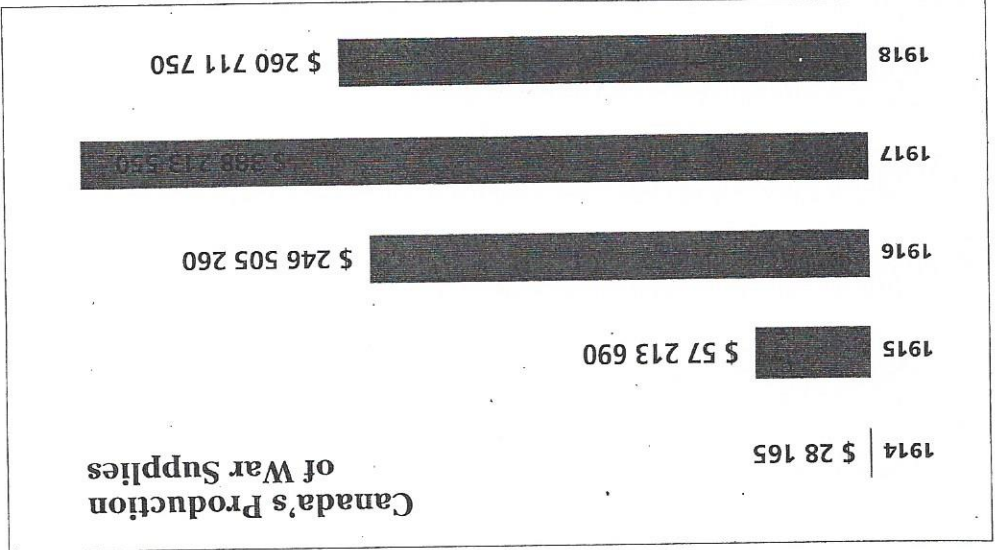
these factories and one-third of the shells fired by the armies of the British Empire were made in Canada. Textile, pulp and paper, steel, and food factories also boomed during the war.


The government urged farmers to produce as much as they could. The wheat crop in 1915 was the largest in Canadian history. In the following years, however, crops fell off badly. In 1917, a Board of Grain Supervisors (which became the Canadian Wheat Board in 1918) took over wheat production and distribution. The government also supervised the large quantities of fish, pork, beef, and cheese that were sent overseas.

By 1917, Britain's coffers were beginning to run dry. It could not afford to buy all that Canadian factories could produce. But in that year, the United States entered the war. It quickly became a major market for Canada's munitions (including new warships and aircraft), food, and industrial products. A War Trades Board was formed to work closely with the United States and to manage imports, exports, and problems of scarcity. Canada's economy continued to boom until the end of the war.

A Booming Economy

The government also took a greater role in the country's economy. Before 1914, few factories in Canada were capable of producing munitions (military weapons and equipment). After war was declared, factories were quickly reorganized to produce war supplies. The first war materials Canadian factories produced were poor quality. However, after government leaders organized an Imperial Munitions Board, factories began to turn out quality munitions at an astounding rate. Plants manufacturing airplanes, shells, and ships sprang up across the country. By 1918, 300 000 Canadians were employed in



New Roles for Women 

World War I brought other great changes, especially to the lives of Canadian women. As soon as the war began, hundreds of Canadian women volunteered to work overseas as nurses or ambulance drivers. Many worked in field hospitals just behind the front-line trenches. One operating room nurse wrote in a letter home, "We ... had 291 operations in ten nights, so that will give you a fair idea of a week's work." Women also played an important part in the war effort at home. With the general shortage of labour in Canada, the number of women employed in industry rose dramatically. Thirty thousand Canadian women worked in munitions factories and other war industries. These jobs in heavy industry would have been considered unsuitable for women before 1914. Working conditions were difficult and sometimes dangerous. Women also drove buses and streetcars. They worked in banks, on police forces, and in civil service jobs.

I had a very hard job. It had to be that you run a machine of weights into the shell, and the weight had to be just

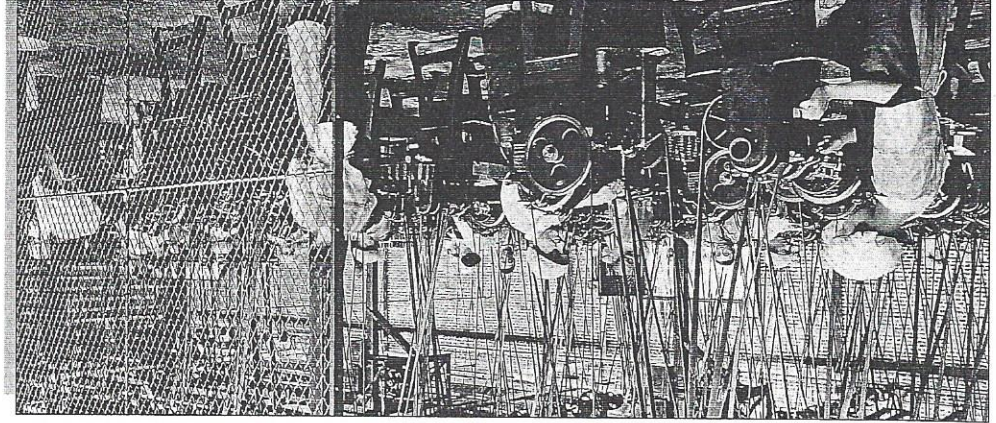
I wanted to help do my share, and I joined the Red Cross and helped roll card games, dances, and variety shows that helped fund the parcels sent to the troops.

Groups of women of all ages met regularly to knit socks for the soldiers and to roll bandages. They arranged many of the card games, dances, and variety shows that helped fund the parcels sent to the troops. I decided to become farmettes when we read in the paper that there was a big crop and they needed people to come, and there were no men. So this friend and I said that we would go. We volunteered. Masses of young people went out and brought that all in.

In wartime, there were few men left to work on the farms. Women on the farms were also recruited to go out and help.

exact. Quite a few of them didn't have the patience. It was interesting work but very hard on your nerves. There was a machine went on fire. This friend from Beaverton run to her and we had to go down on our hands and knees and crawl out of the place. So we had a little experience of what it was to be right in a war.

During the war, women worked in munitions factories, sometimes under dangerous conditions.



home, but not 24 hours a day. They should have exactly the same freedom as men." When World War I broke out, it helped to prove that Nellie McClung was right. Women did jobs once performed only by men. The war brought women together in volunteer organizations and employment. They began to share ideas and work for political equality with men. They also took active roles in journalism and campaigned for better public health, working conditions, and wages. They pushed for equal opportunities in careers such as medicine and law, and for the right to own property. Suffragists campaigned enthusiastically for women's suffrage (the right to vote). Their leaders included Dorothy Davis in British Columbia, Margaret Gordon in Ontario, Emily Murphy and Alice Jamieson in Alberta, and the dynamic Nellie McClung in Manitoba. The first breakthrough for women's suffrage came in Manitoba. In 1916, women were given the right to vote in that province. Within months, Saskatchewan and Alberta also granted women suffrage. Ontario and British Columbia followed suit the next year.

But the main goal was to win the right to vote in federal elections. In the federal election of December 1917, the **War-time Elections Act** granted the vote to the mothers, sisters, and wives of soldiers in the Armed Forces. Canadian nurses serving in the Forces could also vote. By the time the war had ended, the right to vote in federal elections had been extended to almost all women in Canada over the age of 21. The **Dominion Elections Act** (1920) also gave women the right to run for election to Parliament. However, Aboriginal women (and most Aboriginal men), Asians, and many other members of minority groups in Canada were not allowed to vote.

bandages and knit socks. My first ones were big enough to fit an elephant, and after that, I became very proficient—so proficient that I knit a pair of socks a day without any trouble.

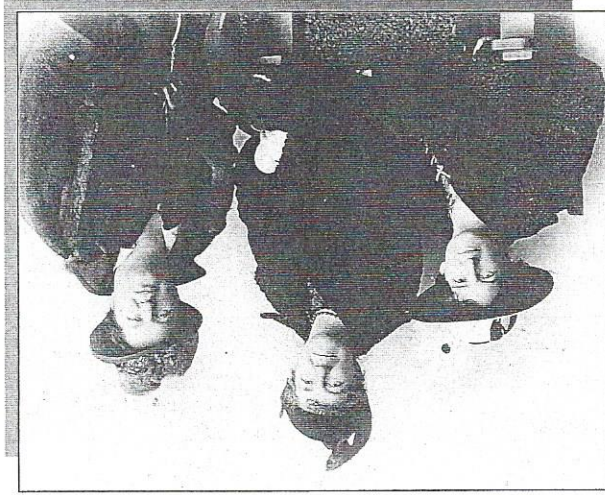
You see, everybody felt they had to do something. You just couldn't sit there. There was a phrase, 'Doing your bit.' Well, that was pretty well the keynote feeling all through that First World War. Everybody was extremely patriotic, and everybody wanted to 'do a bit.' If there's anything we could do to help, we must do it.

The Struggle for Women's Rights

Since women were doing so much for the war effort, they wanted a share in making decisions about the country. It was during World War I that an important step forward was taken in Canada for women's rights. At the beginning of the twentieth century, women in many countries had begun to organize themselves to gain the right to vote. Members of this movement in Canada were called **suffragists**.

Nellie McClung was a suffragist and one of Canada's great social reformers. She wrote, "Certainly women belong in the

Nellie McClung, Alice Jamieson, and Emily Murphy. This famous photo was taken on the day women won the right to vote in Manitoba, 1916.



Dates Women Gained Suffrage in Canada

Province	Suffrage (The Vote)	First Woman Elected
Manitoba	January 1916	June 1920
Saskatchewan	March 1916	June 1919
Alberta	April 1916	June 1917
British Columbia	April 1917	June 1918
Ontario	April 1917	August 1943
Nova Scotia	April 1918	June 1960
New Brunswick	April 1919	October 1960
Prince Edward Island	May 1922	May 1970
Newfoundland	April 1925	May 1930
Quebec	April 1940	December 1961
Federal Dominion of Canada	Close relatives of member of armed forces September 1917; all women May 1918	December 1921

Conscription



One of the greatest crises in Canada during the war occurred in 1917. It centred around the issue of conscription. Con-

A Country Divided

The mention of conscription brought a storm of protest in some parts of Canada, especially among French Canadians. Many English Canadians believed that Quebec was not doing its part in the war. English-Canadian newspapers pointed out that Ontario had provided 63 per cent of the volunteers in proportion to its population. Manitoba and Saskatchewan provided 81 per cent, Alberta 92 per cent, British Columbia 104 per cent, and the Maritime provinces 38 per cent. Quebec had provided only 20 per cent of the volunteers in proportion to its population.

Why were there fewer volunteers from Quebec? The majority of Quebecers were farmers, many with large families. Fewer farmers than city people joined the Armed Forces since farmers were considered essential to produce food for the war effort. But most French Canadians also did not

war could not be won without more reinforcements, but he became convinced that the slaughter of men in the war was horrendous. Borden was concerned. The number of men killed or wounded. Borden was shocked by the information he received. Casualties were mounting daily on the Western Front. Military officials urged Borden to send even more Canadian troops to Europe. In Canada, volunteer enlistments were not keeping up with the number of men killed or wounded. Borden was concerned. The slaughter of men in the war was horrendous, but he became convinced that the war could not be won without more reinforcements.

Early in 1917, Prime Minister Robert Borden left to visit the Canadian soldiers at the front. Borden was shocked by the information he received. Casualties were mounting daily on the Western Front. Military officials urged Borden to send even more Canadian troops to Europe. In Canada, volunteer enlistments were not keeping up with the number of men killed or wounded. Borden was concerned. The slaughter of men in the war was horrendous, but he became convinced that the war could not be won without more reinforcements.

no longer be on a voluntary basis only. The war had dragged on much longer than anyone had thought. By 1917, the death toll was mounting and the number of volunteers was dwindling.

would be required to join the army. They would have no choice. Enlistment would no longer be on a voluntary basis only.

The mention of conscription brought a storm of protest in some parts of Canada, especially among French Canadians. Many English Canadians believed that Quebec was not doing its part in the war. English-Canadian newspapers pointed out that Ontario had provided 63 per cent of the volunteers in proportion to its population. Manitoba and Saskatchewan provided 81 per cent, Alberta 92 per cent, British Columbia 104 per cent, and the Maritime provinces 38 per cent. Quebec had provided only 20 per cent of the volunteers in proportion to its population.

Why were there fewer volunteers from Quebec? The majority of Quebecers were farmers, many with large families. Fewer farmers than city people joined the Armed Forces since farmers were considered essential to produce food for the war effort. But most French Canadians also did not

Dates Women Gained Suffrage in Other Parts of the World

New Zealand	1892
Australia	1902
Finland	1906
Norway	1913
Denmark	1915
Britain	1918
Netherlands	1919
Germany	1919
United States	1920
Sweden	1921
Turkey	1934
Brazil	1946
France	1946
Switzerland	1971
Leichtenstein	1986

Bourassa summarized his position in a pamphlet published on 4 July 1917.

We are opposed to further enlistments for the war in Europe, whether by conscription or otherwise, for the following reasons:

- Canada has already made a military display, in men and money, proportionately superior to that of any nation engaged in the war
- any further weakening of the [labour force] of the country would seriously handicap agricultural production and other essential industries
- an increase in the war budget of Canada spells national bankruptcy
- it threatens the economic life of the nation and, eventually, its political independence
- conscription means national disunion and strife, and would thereby hurt the cause of the Allies to a much greater extent than the addition of a few thousand soldiers to their fighting forces could bring them help and comfort.

Conscription brought a storm of protest in Quebec.



Enlistment/Casualty Rate for 1917

Month	Enlistments	Casualties
January	9 194	4 396
March	6 640	6 161
May	6 407	13 457
July	3 882	7 906
September	3 588	10 990
November	4 019	30 741

share the enthusiasm that English Canadians felt for Britain's war. They did not believe that their sons should be forced to join the war. Many also did not feel any real tie to their country of origin, France. They felt they had been deserted by France when they were conquered by British forces in 1760. French language rights had been taken away in Manitoba and other western provinces, and in Ontario schools. French Canadians felt they were being treated like second-class citizens in Canada.

Sir Sam Hughes, as Minister of Militia, had stirred further protest in Quebec when he appointed a Protestant clergyman to supervise recruiting in that province. Quebecers were mostly Roman Catholics. Training programs for French-Canadian volunteers were also in English, even though the men often did not speak the language.

Very few French-Canadian officers received important army posts. Only one French-Canadian regiment—the 22nd, the famous “Vandoo”—had been sent to the Western Front to fight. It seemed to many French Canadians that Hughes's policies had done little to encourage their greater participation in the war. Eventually, Hughes was dismissed by Borden, but not before he caused long-term resentment in Quebec. The opposition to conscription in Quebec was led by Henri Bourassa.



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Robert Borden



In January 1916, Canada's Prime Minister, Robert Borden, wrote in a letter to the British govern-

It can hardly be expected that we shall put 400 000 or 500 000 men in the field and willingly accept the position of having no more voice and receiving no more consideration than if we were toy automata

should have a greater voice in the way the war was waged. He was sometimes appalled at the senseless slaughter of soldiers and the incompetence of the British generals. After Passchendaele, he bluntly told Britain's prime minister, "... if there is ever a repetition of the battle of Passchendaele, not a Canadian soldier will leave the shores of Canada as long as the Canadian people entrust the government of Canada to my hands."

In 1917, Borden's persistence paid off. Canada

and the other dominions of the Empire were represented at the Imperial War Conference. Britain was finally recognizing that it could not ask for yet more soldiers without at least consulting the dominions. At the conference, Borden played a major role in drafting a resolution that promised the dominions autonomy (complete control over their own affairs) after the war and an "adequate voice" in Empire foreign policy. At the Paris Peace Conference after the war, Borden ensured Canada had a voice independent from Britain.

But Borden's leadership was not without crisis and controversy. He faced a country that was bitterly divided when he introduced conscription in 1917. His government interned "enemy aliens" and with the Wartime Elections Act, unjustly took away the vote from conscientious objectors and all those born in an enemy country. Finally, exhausted from the war and with failing health, Borden resigned as prime minister in 1920.

1. How did Borden contribute to Canada's growing sense of identity during World War I?
2. Would you consider Robert Borden a "great" Canadian prime minister? Justify your answer.

Borden never sent the letter, but it expressed one of his deepest convictions. Borden was an imperialist, but he was determined that Canada should have an independent position within the Empire. Canada's great sacrifice during the war only increased his determination. During the nine years he was prime minister, Canada won greater independence from Britain and gained international recognition for its achievements in the war.

Borden was prime minister of Canada during very trying times. The challenges of leading Canada through World War I were immense. Borden did not have the flare and charisma of some other prime ministers, but he was hard-working, methodical, and steadfast. As a young man in Nova Scotia, he had had to work hard to get an education first as a teacher and then as a lawyer. In 1896 he joined the Conservative party and helped to rebuild it after years of disarray following the death of John A. Macdonald. In 1911, Borden defeated Laurier in the federal election. After just three years in office, he was plunged into World War I.

Under Borden's leadership, Canada raised, trained, and equipped a large fighting force during the war. The country's businesses, industries, agriculture, and transportation were all reorganized to support the war effort. New measures were introduced to finance the war. On the international front, Borden persistently insisted that Canada

More moderate French-Canadian opinion was represented by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the leader of the federal Liberal party and former prime minister. Laurier had struggled all his life to keep Canada united. He did not support conscription. He realized it was an issue that could tear the country apart. Laurier was disillusioned when 22 Liberals from Ontario, the West, and the Maritimes voted with the government for the conscription bill. Only the Liberals in Quebec and a handful of English-speaking Liberals stood with Laurier against conscription.

Borden also knew that conscription was a dangerous policy. It could divide French and English Canadians. Farmers would also protest the loss of their remaining sons and farm hands. Still, Borden felt the shortage of troops was so severe that he had no other choice. The **Military Service Bill** was passed in the summer of 1917. The bill made conscription a law. Military service became compulsory for all males between the ages of 20 and 45. Only men in vital wartime production jobs, those who were sick, or conscientious objectors (those for whom fighting was against their religious or other beliefs) did not have to join the Forces.

The Election of 1917

With a general election coming in December 1917, the government passed two further bills. They were both meant to strengthen Borden's position on conscription. The **Military Voters Act** allowed soldiers overseas to vote. More important was the Wartime Elections Act. It gave the vote to female relatives of soldiers. These women could be expected to vote for conscription and a government that promised to support their loved ones overseas. The **War-time Elections Act** also took away the vote from people born in enemy countries or who spoke the language of an enemy country and conscientious objectors.

The election of 1917 was particularly bitter. Conservatives and Liberals who believed in conscription formed a **Union government**. Voters were asked by the Union government: "Who would the Germans vote for?" Laurier and his followers were accused of letting down the soldiers at the front. The election results saw Borden and the Union government returned with an overwhelming majority, but with only three seats in Quebec. The split in Canada that Laurier had feared for so long had occurred. There were riots in Montreal and Quebec City against conscription. Four people were killed and many were injured. Troops had to be sent in with machine guns to restore order. Emotions among other Canadians also ran high. Many people saw support of the war effort as a moral duty. They felt justified in putting down others who did not fulfil this duty. Conscription and the dire need for men overseas hardened these attitudes. Men who had not signed up to fight overseas were seen as "slackers." One woman admitted:

When you had your own there voluntarily, you hated all those others sitting around having a nice time while yours were being killed. You didn't like them. You'd no respect for them. But I was never one of those or approved of going around handing out white feathers. Do you know that some women did? . . . They actually went to men on the street whom they knew, or if they didn't know them—strong working men—and handed them a white feather.

The white feather was a symbol of cowardice.

Resentment also increased against pacifists. **Pacifists** were against war on the basis of spiritual or moral beliefs. They included Mennonites, Doukhobors, and Quakers who had come to Canada not many years earlier to avoid military service in their home countries and for religious freedom. The Canadian government had guaranteed that they would not have to serve in the military. When the war broke out, however, these people faced hostility and ridicule. They were seen as “shirkers.” The fact that Mennonites spoke German heightened suspicion of them.

As conscientious objectors, they were exempt from conscription. The fact that they did not have to fight while others were now obligated to give their lives only increased feelings of bitterness toward them. The government was responding to public opinion when the Wartime Elections Act took away the vote from conscientious objectors. Some Mennonites contributed to the war effort by buying Victory Bonds and working in farming, forestry, road-building, and industry. Few Canadians during the war, however, were willing to acknowledge this contribution.

Other pacifists believed war was a destructive and wasteful way to solve world problems. They supported non-violent ways to bring about change and to root out the causes of war. The Canadian Women’s Peace Party was an example. This group continued to speak for peace and freedom throughout the war.

Did conscription work? The call for conscripts did not begin until 1918. Thousands of men claimed exemption from service. A man could be excused from military service if he had a physical disability, an essential occupation (e.g., farmer), was a conscientious objector, or was a member of the clergy. By the time the war ended in November 1918, only about 45 000 conscripts had reached the battlefield.

Almost five years after the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo, government leaders met at Versailles, near Paris, to sign the peace treaty. Thirty-two victorious countries were represented, including Canada. Canada was not content just to be part of the British delegation. Borden demanded that Canada be represented as a separate nation at the meetings and at the official signing of the treaty. He argued that Canada deserved a voice in the peace talks because of its major contribution to the war and the Allied victory. Canada was given two seats of its own at the conference. The main decisions, however, were made by the leaders of three countries—Britain, France, and the United States. These countries were referred to as “The Big Three.”

The American president Woodrow Wilson suggested that a **League of Nations** be set up to settle future disputes. The League of Nations would be an organization promoting international co-operation. Canada joined the League as an independent nation. Canada had entered World War I as a colony of Britain with no say over its own foreign affairs. By the end of the war, it had gained a new sense of nationhood and international recognition.

Peace: The Treaty of Versailles



divided nation.