

Canada in the First World War



Okanagan College

26 July 2018

“Calling Home the Legions”

***Pax Britannica*, since 1815**

- Trafalgar, 1805**
- Immense naval strength**
- Gibraltar, Malta, Aden, Ceylon, Singapore, Halifax**

**“Colonial Millstones” vs. India,
“the Jewel in the Crown”**

Franco-Prussian War, 1870-71

- German Empire, 1871**

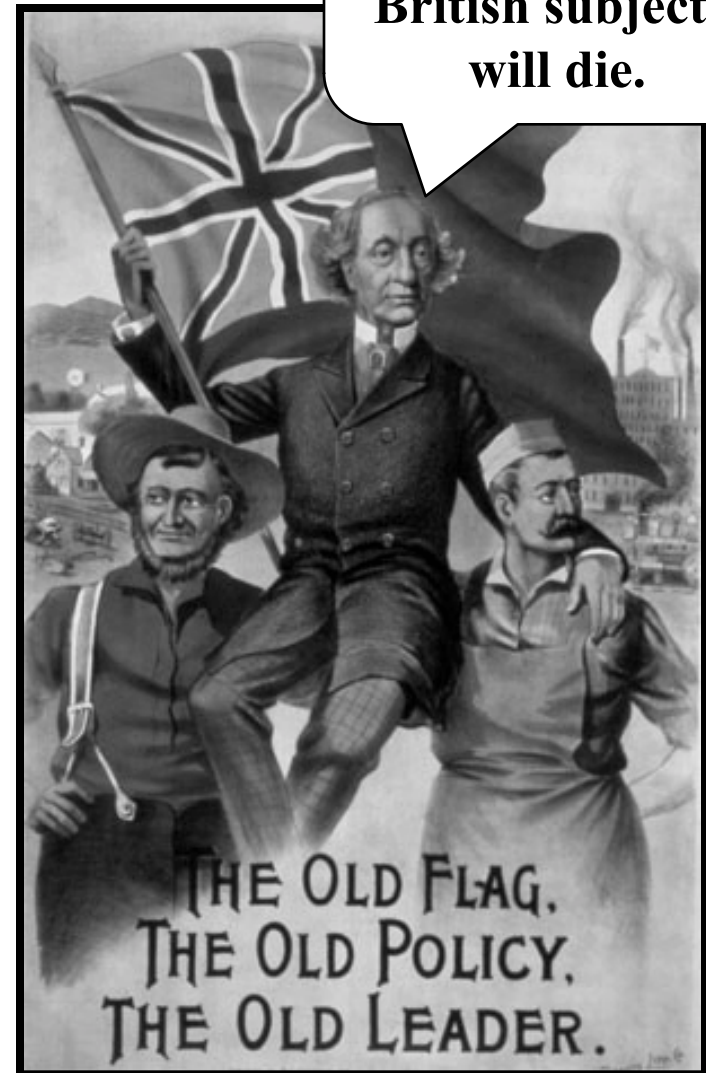
**British Army Cardwell Reforms
Treaty of Washington, 1871**



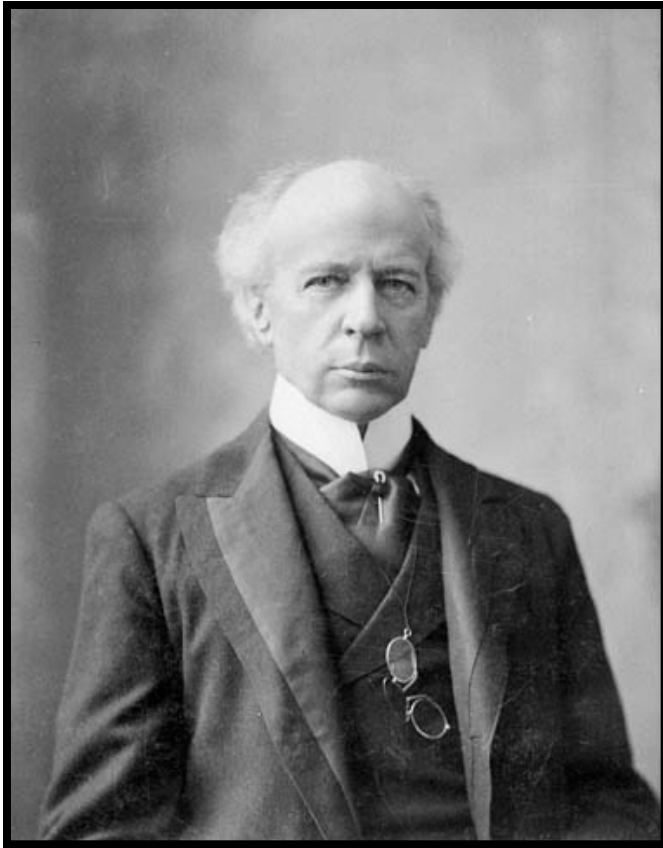
Kaiser Wilhelm II’s *Weltpolitik* challenged Britain’s supremacy by seeking to secure “a place in the sun” for Germany.

On the subject of sending Canadian troops to the Soudan...we think the time has not yet arrived nor the occasion for our Volunteering Military Aid to the Mother Country.... The Suez Canal is nothing to us and we do not ask England to quarrel with France or Germany for our sakes.... Why should we waste money on this wretched business?... Our men and money would be sacrificed to get Gladstone and Co. out of the hole they have plunged themselves into by their own imbecility.

Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, 12 March 1885.



**A British subject
I was born, and a
British subject I
will die.**



England has proved at all times that she can fight her own battles, but if a day were to come when England was in danger, let the bugle sound, let the fire be lit on the hills, and in all parts of the Colonies, though we may not be able to do much, whatever we can do will be done by the colonies to help her.

PM Wilfrid Laurier, 1897.

Imperial Federation

**“Imperialism was one form
of Canadian nationalism”**

**Canadian Imperial
Federation League, 1887**

**United Empire Loyalists,
Col. George T. Denison**

**“True north” - Anglo-Saxon
Race, Darwinism**

“Sense of Power”

Joseph Chamberlain, 1895

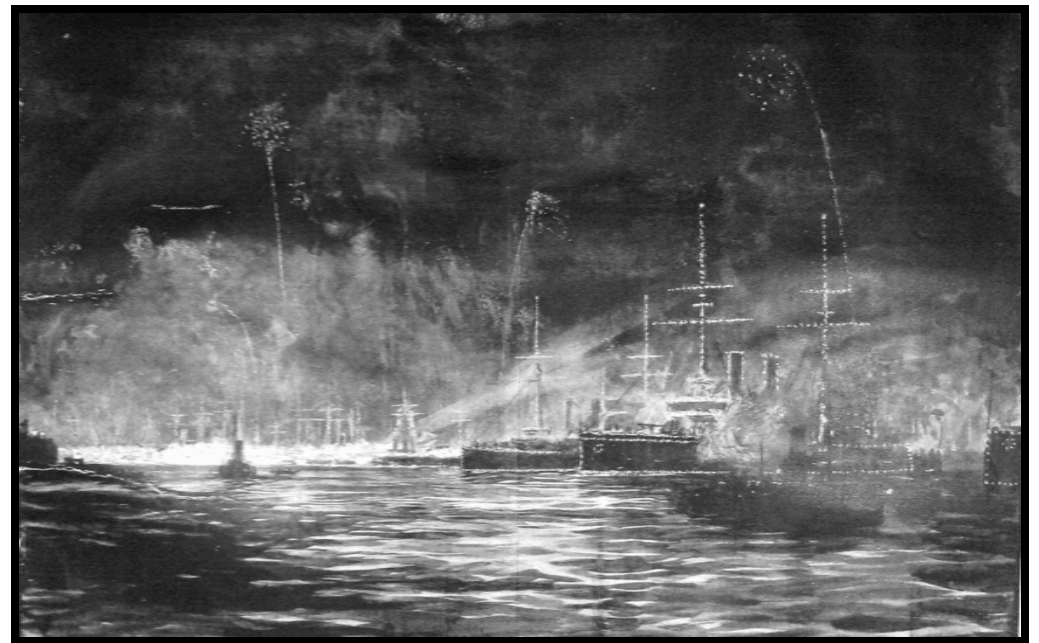


George Taylor Denison III. As Toronto's senior police magistrate 1877-1921, he meted out justice in such a colourful fashion that his court became a tourist attraction.



Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley preceding H.M. Queen Victoria, H.R.H. the Princess of Wales and H.R.H. Princess Christian in state carriage, Diamond Jubilee procession, London, England, 1897.

At the Fleet Review, ships of the Royal Navy paraded in six columns, each of which was 5 miles long. The spectacle included 165 major warships.

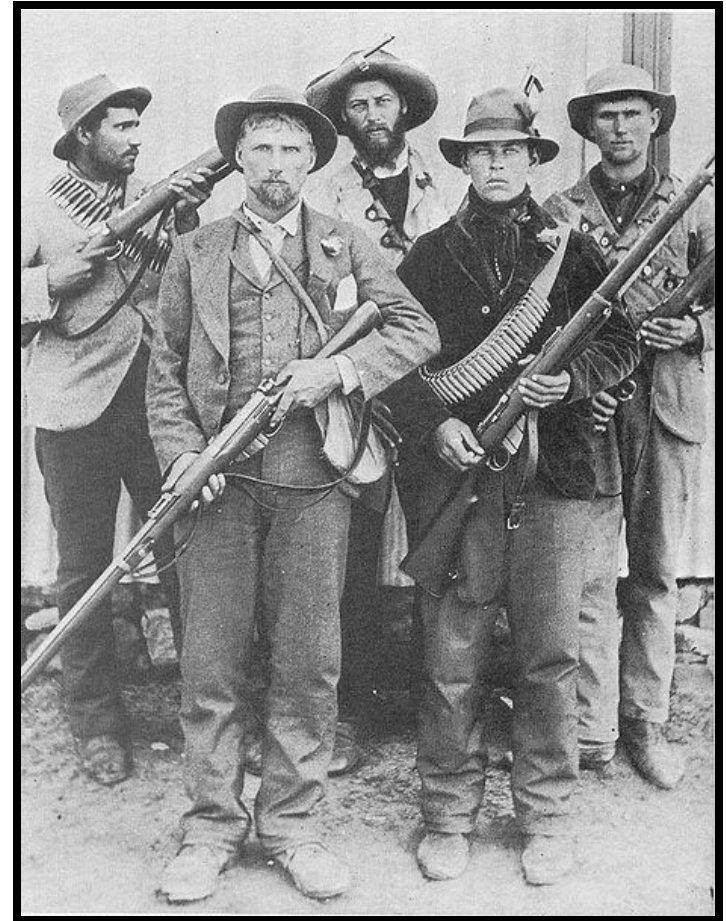


The Boer War, 1899-1902

**Boer Republics - Transvaal,
Orange Free State, Natal
- 1st South African War,
1880-81
- Transvaal gold, 1886
- British *Uitlanders* unwelcome**

**Laurier's Jubilee "Promise"?
- English-Cdn Sentiment vs.
French-Cdn Fear of Precedent**

**Lord Minto and Gen. Hutton
- Chamberlain: "Thanks
Canada"**



**Boer (Afrikaner) *Commandos*,
Second Anglo-Boer War,
1899-1902.**

The Canadian Contingent

**Boers Invade Cape Colony,
October 1899**

Compromise, 13 Oct. 1899

- 1,000 Volunteers**
- Equipment, Transport**
- British Pay, Command**
- Companies of 120 men**

**“Black Week” - Stormberg,
Magersfontein, and
Colenso, December 1899.**

England has proved at all times that she can fight her own battles, but if a day were to come when England was in danger, let the bugle sound, let the fire be lit on the hills, and in all parts of the Colonies, though we may not be able to do much, whatever we can do will be done by the colonies to help her.

**PM Wilfrid Laurier,
Royal Colonial Institute,
London, 1897.**

English-Canadian Nationalism

Britain's "Black Week"

Paardeberg Day, 27 Feb 1900

- 4,000 PoWs, incl. Gen.

**Cronje - irregular warfare
from this time forward**

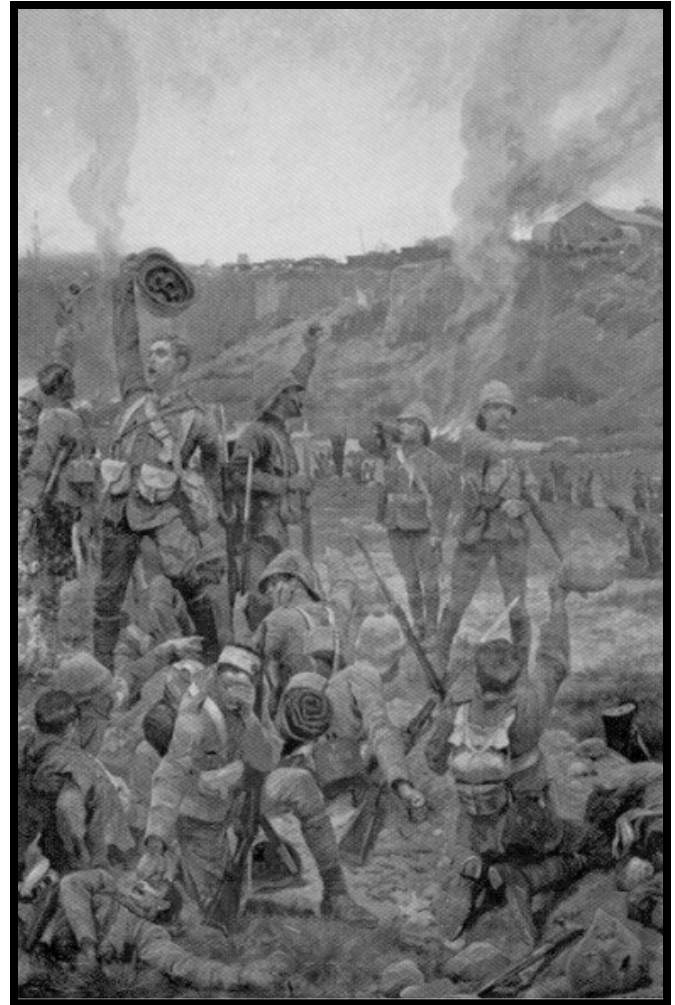
"Don't Call Me Tommy!"

- Colonial Contingents

Laurier: Chamberlain

**seeking to "bring Canada
into the vortex of**

**militarism that is the curse
and blight of Europe."**



*The Dawn of Majuba, Paardeberg,
South Africa, 27 February 1900.*

French-Canadian Nationalism

McGill Student Riots

Henri Bourassa: Laurier *un vendu* (Sellout)

- Resigned, 18 Oct. 1899

Canada's Boer War

- 2RCR, RCD, RCFA,

LdSH, 1-6 CMR's

- 7,300 Soldiers, 1899-1902

- 270 died, ½ from disease

***Ligue Nationaliste* (1903)**

Jules-Paul Tardival & ACJC



Henri Bourassa

Despite the uncertainty and local hesitations, the abolition of the colonial garrisons proved, in the end, an invaluable boon to the unity of the Empire. It put an end to the one concrete grievance which the British taxpayer and his representatives in Parliament could present against the overseas Empire. The removal of that grievance indefinitely strengthened the whole imperial. The colonies, which once had leaned so heavily upon the mother country and had been reviled as parasites upon her resources, were soon freely sending contingents of formidable fighters to augment her armies struggling in South Africa.

C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the British Army*

Alaskan Boundary Dispute, 1902-03

Alaska Purchase, 1867

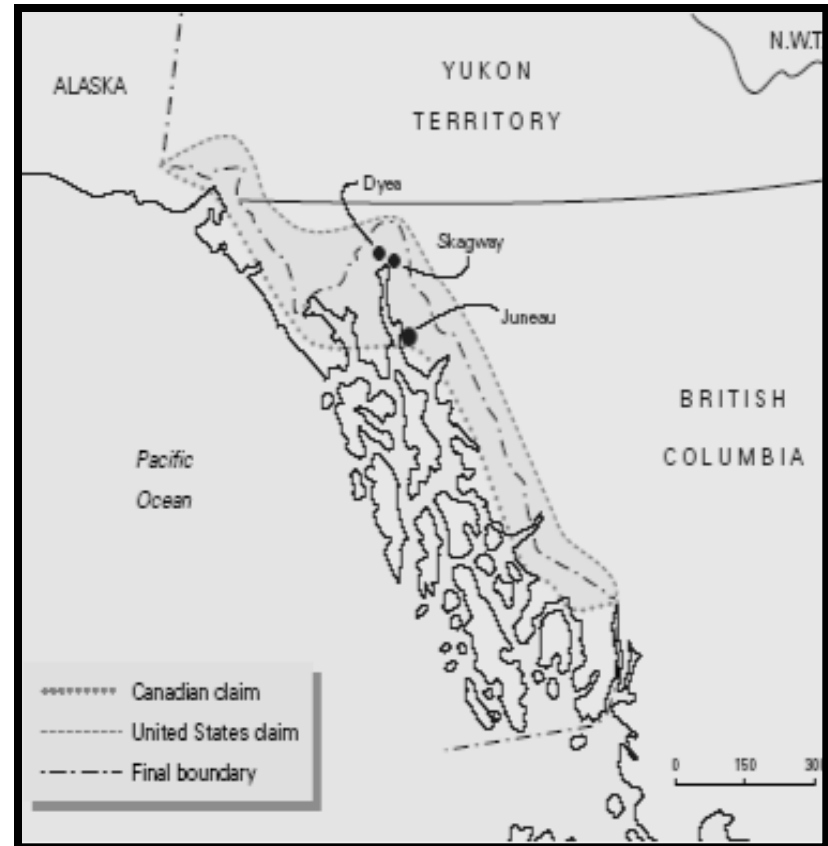
1897 Klondike Gold Rush

- Dawson City, pop. 20,000 in 1898**
- Access via Chilkoot Pass inland from Skagway, Alaska**

Pres. Teddy Roosevelt, 1901

London controls Canadian Foreign Affairs

- 5/6 Cdn Commissioners**
- Lord Alverstone, 1903**



The Alaska boundary dispute, 1903, showing the Canadian and American claims, and the final settlement.

The Naval Crisis

HMS *Dreadnought*, 1906

**Cromwell: “Fear God and
Dread Nought”**

**Kaiser Wilhelm II: “A place
in the sun.”**

**1908 British and German
Press**

**A.T. Mahan – Decisive Battle
= Control of Seas**

Anglo-German Arms Race



**Above: A 1907 painting of
the HMS *Dreadnought*.**

Laurier's "Tin Pot Navy"

**English-Canadian Imperial
Nationalism**

**Borden Conservatives
- Direct \$35 million (Con)**

**Bourassa: "Who are you going to
fight?"**

**"The most complete backward
step Canada has made in a
century."**

**"Tin Pot" Navy (Lib), 1910
- 5 Cruisers, 6 Destroyers**

Sir Robert Borden and his Conservative opposition objected to Laurier's "Tin Pot" navy, and preferred financial contributions directly to the Imperial fleet. Henri Bourassa and his Quebec Nationalistes saw anything more than a navalized Fisheries Protection Service as a sellout of Canadian sovereignty. Laurier's fleet would be Canadian in time of peace, Bourassa mocked, but it would be an imperial fleet in time of war: better to keep it small and close to home.

Reciprocity Agreement, 1911



- Free trade natural products**
- Pulpwood, minerals, grain
 - Cdn mfg. tariffs to remain!

Toronto 18 stir up fears

The “Loyalty Election,” 1911

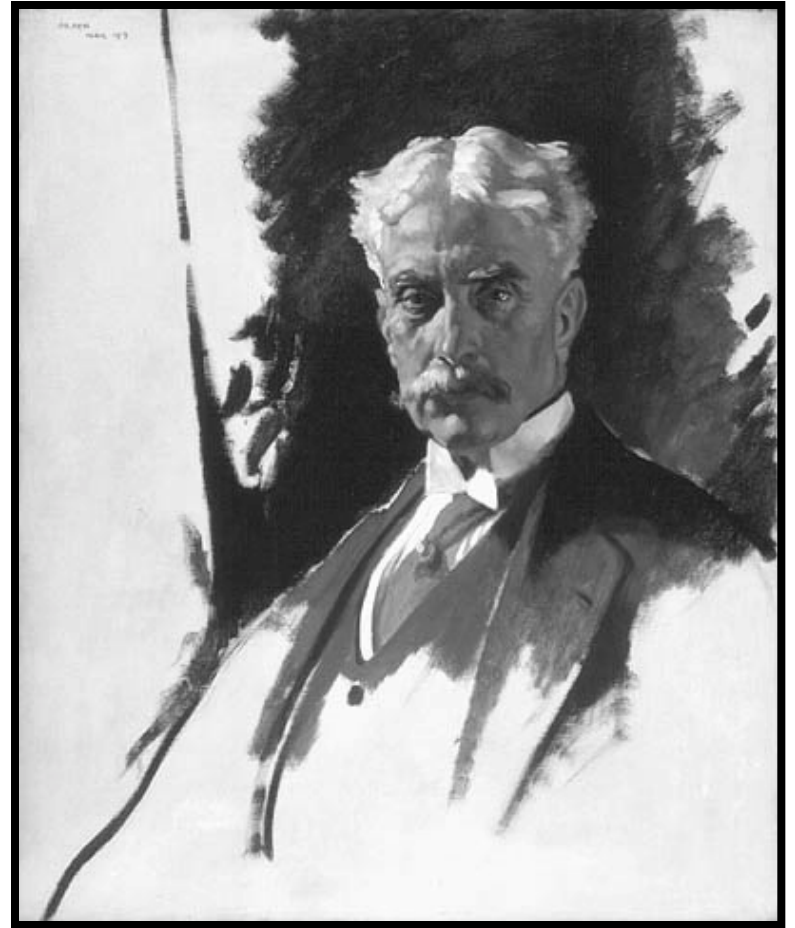
**“Tin Pot” Navy (Lib), 1910
- 5 Cruisers, 6 Destroyers**

**Borden Conservatives
- Direct \$35 million (Con)**

**Laurier opposed by Borden
(imperialists), Quebec
(Bourassa) and businesses**

**Federal Election, 1911
- Lib. 87; Con. 134**

**PM Robert L. Borden (Con)
- Naval Aid Bill, 1912**



Portrait of Canadian Prime Minister Sir Robert Laird Borden.

Sir Sam Hughes

**Conservative MP, Borden's Minister
of Militia and Defence, 1911-16**

Imperialist – Boer War Volunteer

**Militia Myth, Volunteer Spirit, and
Amateur Enthusiasm in 1912:
“The days of standing armies are
gone. The old Saxon days have
returned, when the whole nation
must be armed.”**

**x2 Defence Spending, 1911-14:
Remarkable Foresight or an
empire-building “Conceited
Lunatic”?**



**Above: Sir Sam Hughes,
Canadian Minister of Militia
and Defence, 1911-1916.**

Background: The July Crisis, 1914

France: Alsace-Lorraine

Britain: Control of the Seas

Germany: Schlieffen Plan

**28 June: Assassination of
Austrian Archduke Franz
Ferdinand**

23 July: Austrian Ultimatum

**30 July: Russian Army
Mobilization**

“When cut down to essentials, the sole cause for the outbreak of war in 1914 was the Schlieffen plan – a product of the belief in speed and the offensive... All were trapped by the ingenuity of their military preparations, [but] the Germans most of all.”

**A.J.P. Taylor,
War By Timetable
(1969).**

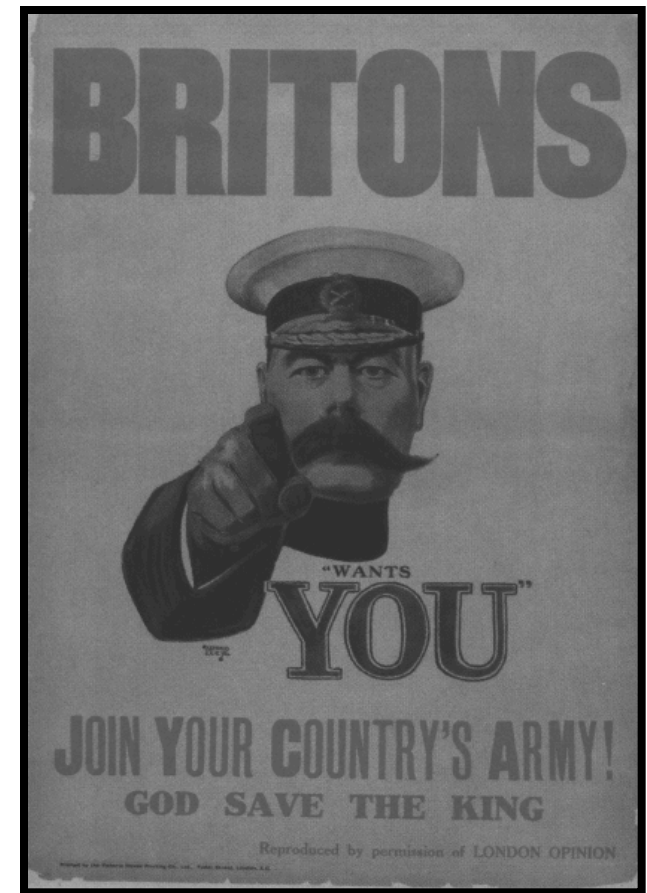
The Canadian Response, Aug. 1914

**English- and French-Canadians
united in support of Britain... *at
first.***

**“Imperial Defence” – Anglo-
German Naval Race, Imperial
Conferences of 1907 and 1911**

**Self-Governing Dominions –
Home defence and “no taxation
without representation.”**

**Popular Support – “La
Marseillaise,” “Rule Britannia”**



**A British recruiting
poster from 1914.**

“Over By Christmas”? The 1st Contingent

Canadian Militia: 60,000

Part-Time, 3,000 Permanent

**1914 Economic and Patriotic
Motives**

Surplus of Volunteers

- 36,000 in 1st Contingent**
- 70% Born in British Isles**

Short War Illusion:

**Valcartier, Numbered
Battalions, Politics, No
Conscription**



Crowds swarmed into downtown Calgary the night war was declared, 4 August 1914. Local armouries became recruiting centres and within two months some 30,000 volunteers had been gathered at Valcartier, Quebec.

The Salisbury Plain

Atlantic Convoy to England

**Salisbury Plain: Rain on 70/75
Days**

**British Army Ridicule of
“Comedian” Contingent**

**Inadequate Clothing, Morale,
and Discipline – British Pubs**

Influenza, Meningitis, 1/3 VD

Hughes Chaos Legacy?

**Arrived in Flanders (Ypres),
Feb. 1915**



Record rainfall in the fall and winter of 1914-15 created miserable conditions for soldiers, both at the front in Flanders (above) and in poorly-drained training areas like the Salisbury Plains.

To Break the Stalemate?

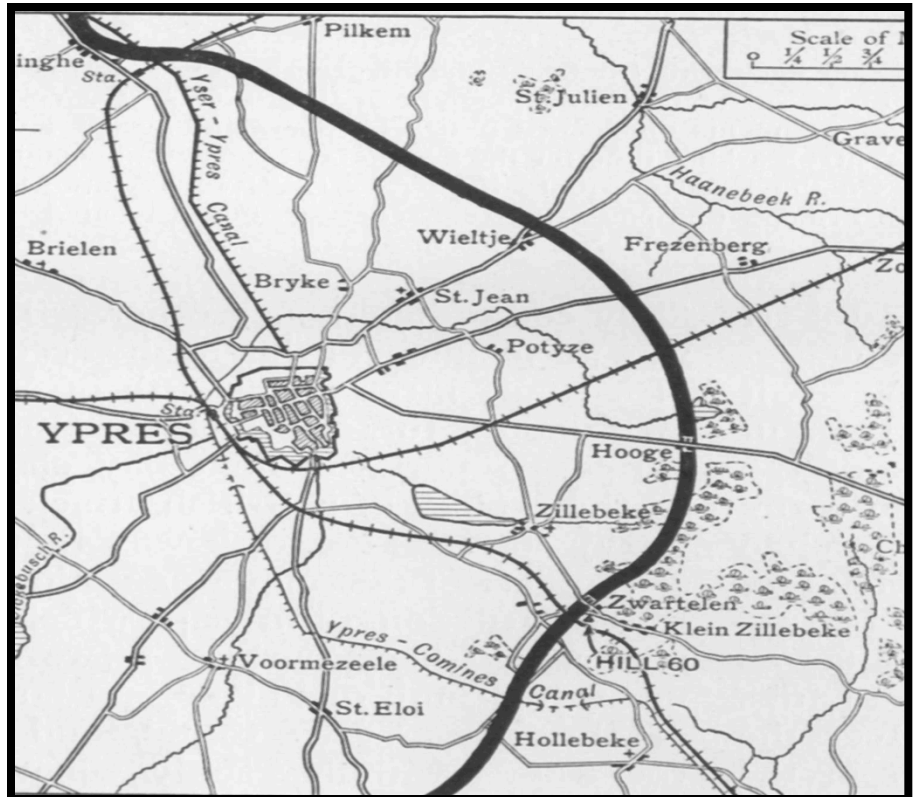
German Spring Offensive

- Chlorine gas canisters
- 2nd Ypres in Cdn history

Gas Warfare: Hague Convention 1899

**Chlorine - Asphyxiation,
abundant by-product of
German chemical
industry (dyestuffs)**

Limited German objective
- Shorten their lines in W



The “salient” was an Allied bulge in the German front in Flanders, Belgium.

2nd Battle of Ypres, 22 April 1915

**Delays: Prevailing Westerlies
- 10x as frequent as East
wind**

**Opened with “great wall of
green gas about 15 or 20
feet high”**

**Collapse of French Algerian
Division - Colonial troops**

**Canadian flanking fire and
lack of German reserves**

German missed opportunity?



Chemical Warfare in 1915

St. Julien, 24 April 1915

- 2nd Chlorine attack**
- Germans held at 5 km**

Kitchener's Wood

- Counterattacks fail**

**700 Wounded by Gas, 350
Sent Home, 175 dead by
1919**



“We stopped at a ditch at a first-aid clearing station. There were about 200 to 300 men lying in that ditch. Some were clawing at their throats. Their brass buttons were green. Their bodies were swelled. Some of them were still alive. Some were still writhing on the ground, their tongues hanging out.”

**Account of a British soldier
arriving to relieve the
Canadians at Ypres, Apr. 1915**

The Ross Rifle

Canadian-Made .303 Rifle

- Unreliable British supply**
- Superior range/accuracy**
- Prone to jamming in rapid fire and/or mud**

2nd Battle of Ypres, Apr. 1915

- Canadians discard Ross's and salvage Lee-Enfields from dead British soldiers**

Lt. Gen. Edwin Alderson, 1st

Canadian Div., vs. Hughes

- Ross rifles discarded in 1915 - Hughes in 1916**



Canadian soldiers turning in their Ross Rifles, Kingston, Ontario, June 2, 1915. The Canadian-made rifles were replaced by British Lee-Enfields.

“A Canadian War”

John McCrae, “In Flanders Fields”: 50% Casualties in McCrae’s Brigade

2,000 Canadian Dead; 3,410 Wounded; 775 Taken Prisoner

“Canadians made their reputation by preventing a German breakthrough”

Shock and outrage on the home front – *Duty to empire or a Canadian war?*

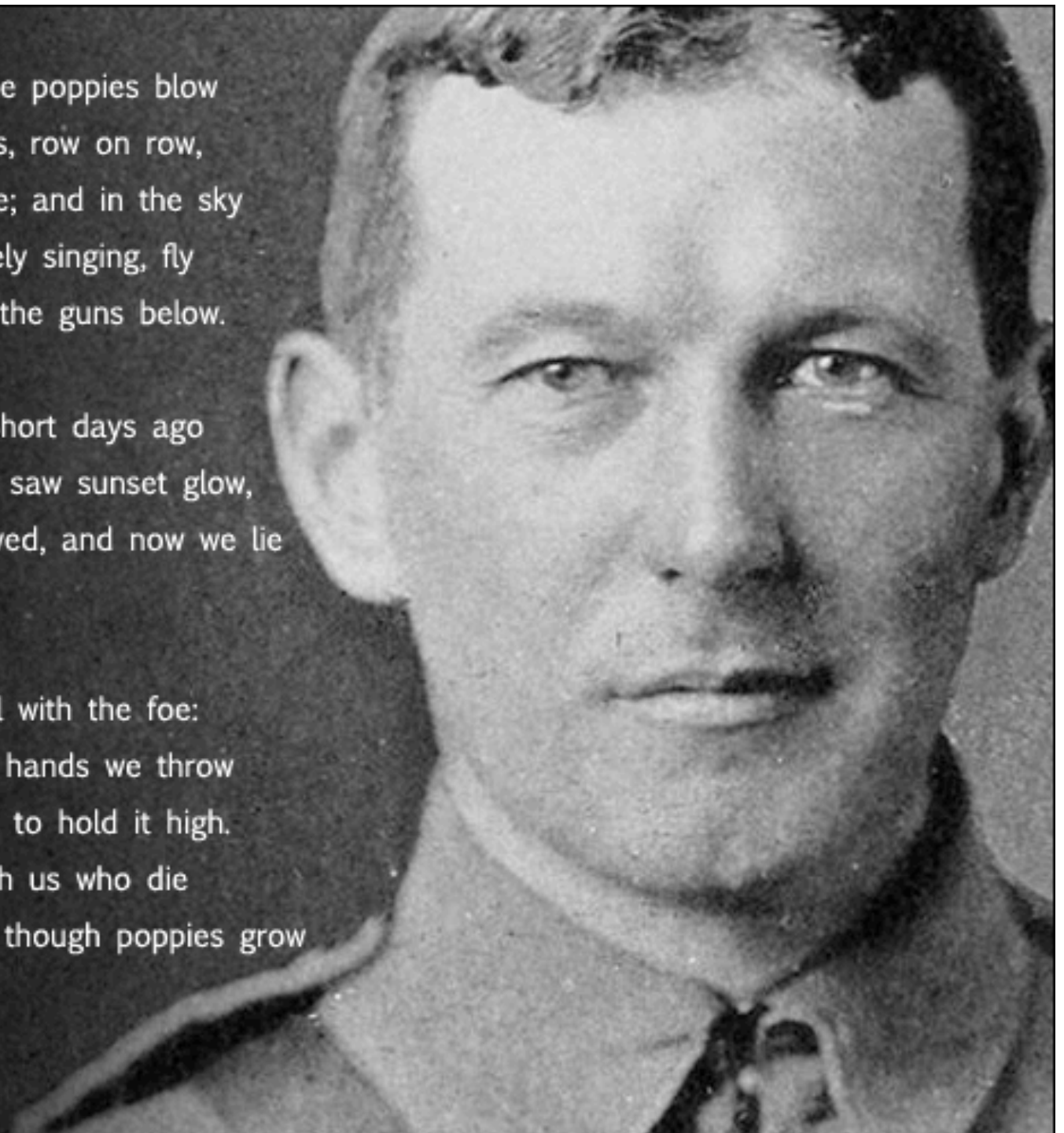


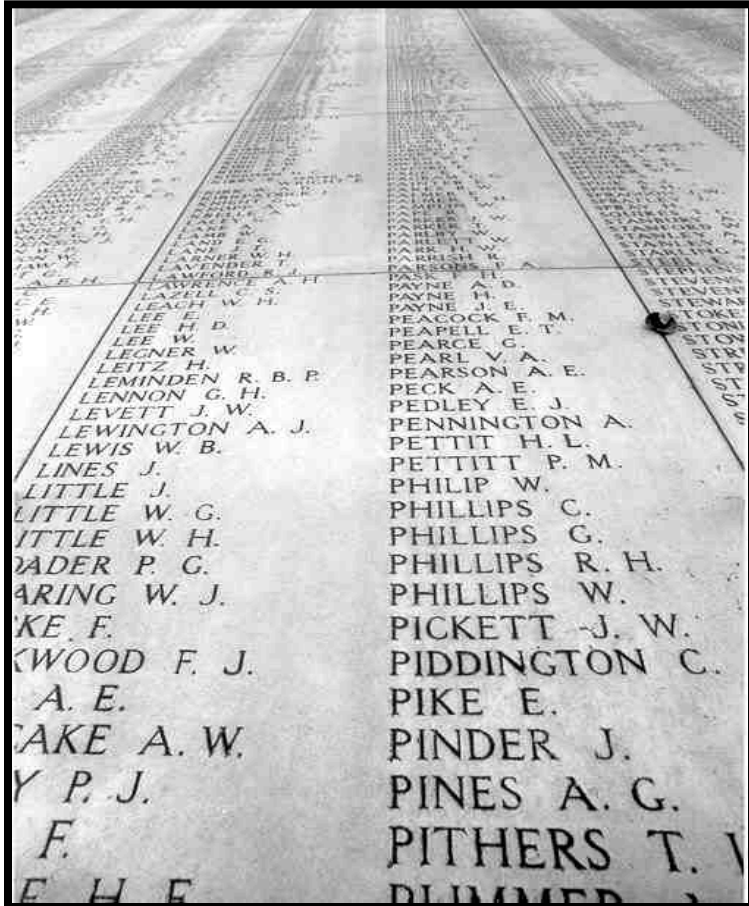
Canadians at the 2nd Battle of Ypres, Belgium, April 1915.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch, be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.





To the armies of the British Empire who stood here from 1914 to 1918 and to those of their dead who have no known grave.

Inscription from the Menin Gate, Ypres, Belgium

The War Measures Act

War Measures Act, 22 Aug.

1914: 1) Suspend civil liberties of collaborators; 2) Regulation of society

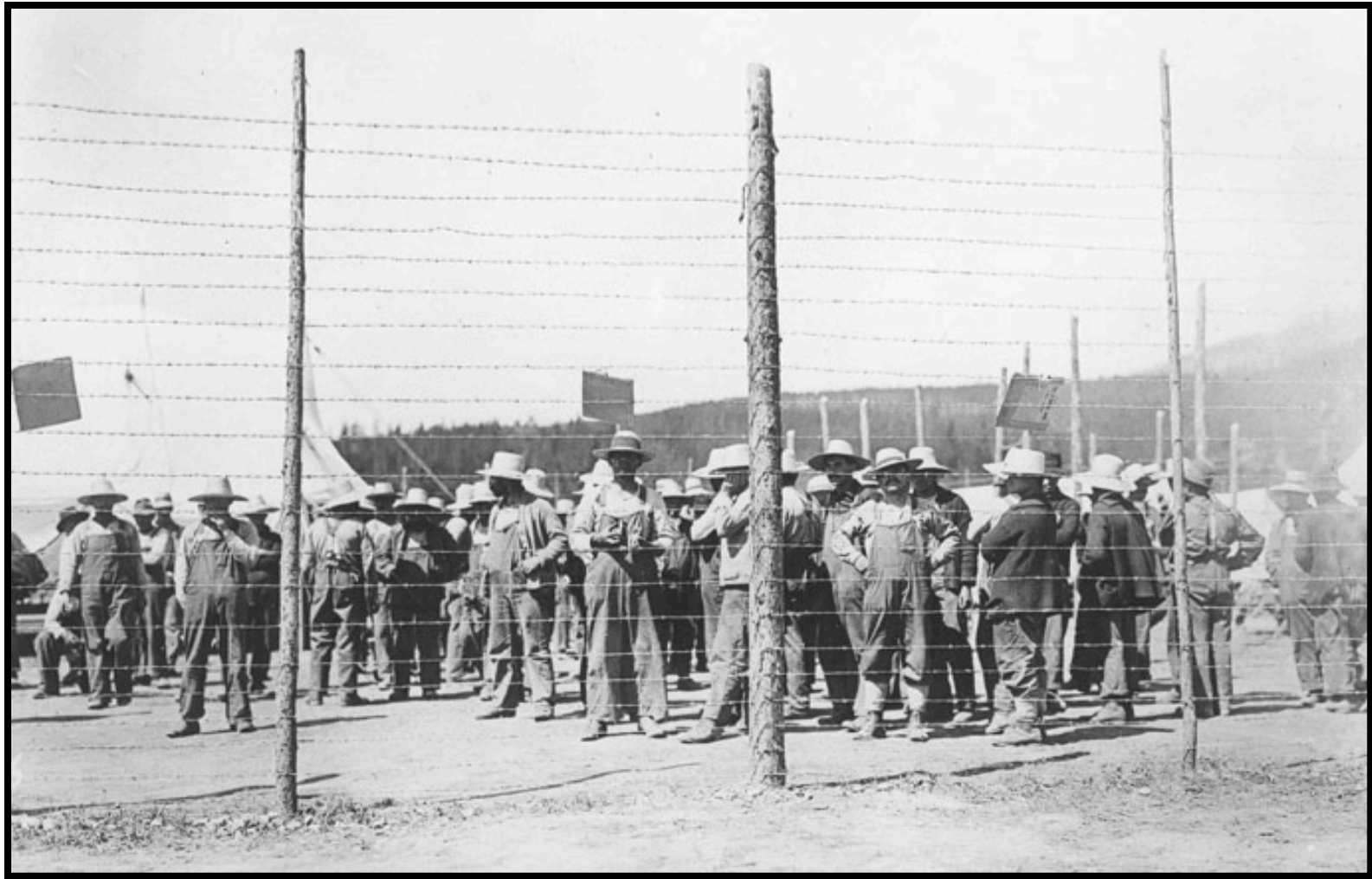
100,000 Germans, Austro-Hungarians, Ottomans: “German Fenians”?

“Enemy Aliens”: 24 Camps, 25¢/day, Banff, Ukrainians

8,579 Interned (3,000 citizens), Gen. Otter, Leon Trotsky



Lenin and Trotsky at Red Square, Moscow, 1920. In April 1917, Trotsky was removed from a passenger vessel and briefly detained in Nova Scotia.



As subjects of Canada's enemy the Austro-Hungarian Empire many "enemy aliens," most of them ethnic Ukrainians faced internment. Above, internees at Castle Mountain, Banff National Park.

The Interventionist State

**Board of Grain Supervisors
(Post-1919 Wheat Board):
“Granary of the Empire”**

**Rationing: Coal, Wood, Gas
→ “Fuelless Sundays”;
Food and Alcohol →
“Meatless Fridays” and
Prohibition**

**“Temporary” Income Tax:
2% on incomes < \$6000;
25% on incomes > \$100,000**



**"We are saving you,
YOU save FOOD"**



**Well fed Soldiers
WILL WIN the WAR**

Are YOU breaking the Law?



**CANADA
FOOD BOARD
ORDER**

FOOD HOARDERS
Fines \$1000 to \$5000
or
3 months Prison
or
Both

**PATRIOTIC CANADIANS
WILL NOT HOARD FOOD**

Canadian Women and the War

**101 Volunteer Nurses in 1st
Contingent; 2,500 1914-18, 43
Killed overseas**

**IODE, Red Cross, Women's
Institutes, Vacant Lot Garden
Clubs**

**30,000 Employed in Munitions
Factories - "canary girls"**

**Canadian Patriotic Fund: \$50/
month for families of sick,
wounded, insane, addicted vets**



OVERSEAS SERVICE

SCALE OF PAY

		PAY PER DAY	FIELD ALLOWANCE PER DAY (cents)	TOTAL PER DAY
SERGEANTS	AGE 18 to 45 years HEIGHT 5 feet 2 inches min.	\$1.35	.15	\$1.50
CORPORALS		1.10	.10	1.20
PRIVATES		1.00	.10	1.10

MONTHLY SEPARATION ALLOWANCE

TO THE WIFE OF A

SERGEANT \$25.00 • CORPORAL \$20.00 • PRIVATE \$20.00

A widowed mother, if her son is unmarried and is her sole support, gets same separation allowance as a wife. Enlisted men, in addition to pay and separation allowance, are CLOTHED AND FED.

FROM PATRIOTIC FUND

IS PAID MONTHLY IN CASE OF NEED

FOR WIFE \$5.00 TO \$10.00 - FOR EACH CHILD \$1.50 TO \$6.00

The Government will grant a PENSION when the circumstances justify it.

Many employers throughout Canada are guaranteeing PREFERENCE IN EMPLOYMENT to returned soldiers.

HOW TO ENLIST

Apply Headquarters any Regiment or any Recruiting Office, or write for information to

CITIZENS' RECRUITING ASSOCIATION

MCGILL BUILDING, MONTREAL

NATIONAL POSTURE COMPANY, LONDON, ENGLAND

TO THE WOMEN OF CANADA

1. You have read what the Germans have done in Belgium. Have you thought what they would do if they invaded this Country ?
2. Do you realize that the safety of your home and children depends on our getting more men NOW ?
3. Do you realize that the one word "GO" from you may send another man to fight for our King and Country ?
4. When the War is over and someone asks your husband or your son what he did in the great War, is he to hang his head because you would not let him go ?

**WON'T YOU HELP
AND SEND A MAN TO
ENLIST TO-DAY ?**