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Canada

'OUR GLORY AND OUR GRIEF': TORONTO AND THE GREAT WAR

by

**Ian Hugh Maclean Miller
M.A., Wilfrid Laurier University, 1995**

Thesis

**Submitted to the Department of History
In partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Wilfrid Laurier University
1999**

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ABSTRACT

'OUR GLORY AND OUR GRIEF': TORONTO AND THE GREAT WAR

Ian Miller
Wilfrid Laurier University, 1999

Advisor
Prof. Terry Copp

This dissertation studies the impact of the Great War on Toronto, Ontario. What happened in the city? How were the enormous sacrifices of the war rationalized? Why did English-Canadians support it? What did citizens know about the war?

The dissertation draws upon a wide and varied source base. *Every* issue of the following newspapers was examined: the six Toronto daily papers, *The Weekly Sun*, *Maclean's*, *The Industrial Banner*, *Everywoman's World*, *The Labour Gazette*, and the religious periodicals of major religious denominations in the city. In addition, extensive searches were conducted in the City of Toronto Archives, the Archives of Ontario, the Public Archives of Canada, Baldwin Reading Room, Directorate of History, University of Toronto Archives and Thomas Fisher Rare Book Room, and related church archives.

Using these public and private sources, a complex portrait of wartime life has been drawn detailing what residents *knew*, and how they *behaved*. The narrative is informed by social, cultural, military, labour, and women's historiographies. Throughout the war, English-Canadian Torontonians reacted in a manner which was both informed and committed. Initially, they expected the war would be short. However, when military events demonstrated that an ad hoc, voluntary approach would be insufficient to meet the increasing demands of the war, they adapted. Voluntary organizations gradually gave

way to popularly sanctioned government involvement in everything from the financing to the supplying of men for the war. This was a community which was firmly dedicated to winning the war. Despite its enormous cost, citizens endured.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The imaginative vision which created the Tri-University Doctoral Program in History, linking University of Waterloo, University of Guelph and Wilfrid Laurier University, has provided me with a unique opportunity. As part of the first group of students accepted into this program, I have had the privilege of watching it take form and of contributing to that development. As well, it has allowed me access to the skills and resources of three fine departments of history.

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At the centre of my graduate student experience has been my advisor, Terry Copp. Having developed the act of mentoring to a high art, he has given me enthusiastic guidance and direction, in addition to a thousand other kindnesses.

Many other scholars at the three universities helped bring this dissertation to fruition: Gil Stelter, Keith Cassidy, Geoff Hayes, Joyce Lorimer, Marc Kilgour, Michael Sibalis, Suzanne Zeller, George Urbaniak, Len Friesen, David Monod, Richard Fuke, and Gerald Stortz.

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basis of many a happy memory. Deb and Michael Cohen provided a place to stay during my trips to Ottawa. Friends in the history department helped in numerous ways, but particular mention must be made of Michael Bechthold and Allan Thurrott. Members of my intramural soccer team have constantly reminded me of what really matters.

My extended family, near and far, take pride in my accomplishments. My grandparents allow me to regale them with the intricacies of my latest findings. My brother Bruce has offered encouragement, his sense of humour, and a place to park in Toronto. Barley-dog makes sure I remember the finer things in life: a nap, a walk in the sun, and a day with friends. Liisa Peramaki joined me just in time to see me through the comprehensive exam. She has been my partner in this project, as in everything else, since then. Finally, my parents have given love, food, accommodation, and dogsitting in (seemingly) endless quantities.

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Introduction

Armistice Day, 11 November 1919. At precisely 11 in the morning, Toronto stood still. Sirens shrieked. Bells chimed. Factory whistles wailed. Two minutes to remember. Everything stopped. Two minutes to remember sacrifice. To imagine his last smile before he boarded the train. To read his letters from the front: until the telegram which promised no further correspondence. To caress the personal belongings of dead heroes: a pen, a razor, a cherished picture. Sacred. At the corner of Yonge and Adelaide Streets, cars, pedestrians, cyclists and trollies stopped their rumbling. The 13,809 workers at Eaton's Department Store stood silent. They honoured the 3,200 former employees who enlisted, many now lying forever in France. Stores locked their doors. Factories stopped production. Warehouses ceased operations. Silence blanketed the downtown. Hats were removed. Heads lowered. Tears flowed.

After two minutes, citizens were showered in ticker tape, just as they had been in victory celebrations a year earlier. That night, a huge crowd replayed the carnival atmosphere of the original Armistice Night. People gathered downtown to dance, to sing, and to remember. Tanks rumbled amongst the revelers. Planes flew overhead. Military bands played. Firecrackers lit up the sky. The community celebrated sacrifice and victory.¹

* * *

Two parts to a sacred day: remembering the dead, and celebrating their

¹ This description of Armistice Day 1919 was constructed using the following articles: "Toronto Praises Giver of Victory," *World*, 12 November 1919, pp. 1, 3; "Toronto Danced in Carnival Way," *Mail and Empire*, 12 November 1919, p. 4; "Sobbed As They Sang; Tears Stained Faces," *News*, 12 November 1919, p. 4; "Toronto Hushed Two Minutes in Reverie," *Star*, 12 November 1919, p. 2.

achievement. In the Toronto of 1919, these two aspects of the memory of the war could co-exist. Residents took a few minutes to remember the past, to recall the sacrifices, and to honour the dead. The memorialization of the sacrifice took but a few minutes. The celebration lasted for hours.

In the ensuing 80 years, the meanings of the words used to describe Remembrance Day changed. Sacrifice is no longer equated with the giving of oneself for a nobler, higher purpose. The sacrifice of the Great War is now linked with senseless slaughter. This simple change makes celebrating sacrifice impossible. The construction of the *memory* of the Great War has resulted in accepting a vision of the conflict dramatically different from that possessed by those residents who took to the streets to celebrate victory in 1919.

Few spoke publicly of the war immediately after the Armistice. It took a decade before veterans began to write of their experiences. Ten years after the "war to end all wars" came to its bloody conclusion, veterans could plainly see that conflict would continue to mark the twentieth century. Italy had a fascist government, Russia had undergone a violent revolution and years of strife, and Germany nursed its wounds even as it adjusted to a new system of government. In this context, the sacrifices of the Great War appeared to have been in vain. It may have been this framework which influenced writers to dwell on the negative costs of the war, and to interpret its idealism as a superficial veneer which called the youth of the world to slaughter.

The veritable explosion of First World War literature began with the publication in 1928 of Erich Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. This description of the

"truth" about front line service quickly became an international best seller and was translated into the languages of the nations involved in the struggle. Although its main character was German, Remarque's depiction of the front was seen as typical of the infantrymen's experience of all belligerent nations. It helped establish what have become familiar themes in war literature: the contempt of infantry soldiers for their officers safely behind the lines; the ubiquitous mud and squalor; the inability of civilians to comprehend the nature of the fighting; the alienation of soldiers from the "normal" world; and the futility of the attack.⁶ For the next ten years, best seller lists were filled with war literature.⁷

Paul Fussell synthesized the trends and patterns of this post-war literature in his seminal work, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975), further entrenching the notion of the war as senseless slaughter. Although presented as a survey of the "...literary means by which it has been remembered, conventionalized, and mythologized,"⁸ Fussell also used his sources to comment, incorrectly, on the "reality" of the war: "In the Great War eight million people were destroyed because two persons, the Archduke Francis

⁶ Erich Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Translated from the German by A.W. Wheen (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1929).

⁷ The best-known Canadian examples, Charles Yale Harrison's *Generals Die in Bed* (Hamilton: Potlatch Publications, 1928) and later, William Bird's *Ghosts Have Warm Hands* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1968), explore themes similar to Remarque's. Other famous memoir literature includes Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Scribner, 1929); Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That: An Autobiography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931); Siegfried Sassoon, *Memoirs of An Infantry Officer* (London: Faber and Faber, 1930); and H.M. Tomlinson, *All Our Yesterdays* (Toronto: Musson Book Company, 1930).

⁸ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), Preface.

Ferdinand and his Consort, had been shot."⁹ Fussell wrote in a time when the Western world was wrestling with the consequences and lessons of the Vietnam conflict, not least of which was the "truth" that all war was meaningless. The memorial literature of the First World War provided a vehicle for similar discoveries of previous conflicts.

The myth of the First World War has become the single dominant construct used to remember the conflict. Its essential tenets hold that

a generation of innocent young men, their heads full of high abstractions like Honour, Glory, and England, went off to war to make the world safe for democracy. They were slaughtered in stupid battles planned by stupid generals. Those who survived were shocked, disillusioned and embittered by their war experiences, and saw that their real enemies were not the Germans, but the old men at home who had lied to them. They rejected the values of the society that had sent them to war, and in doing so separated their own generation from the past and from their cultural inheritance.¹⁰

These themes continue to inform literary, cinematic, and popular notions of the "truth" of the conflict.¹¹

The "futility" myth persists despite several sustained attempts to debunk it. John Terraine's *The Smoke and the Fire: Myths and Anti-Myths of War, 1861-1945* (1980) attempted to move past the memory of the conflict, to uncover its reality, "...to blow away the smoke and get at the fire."¹² Terraine and other historians have consistently debunked

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁰ Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (New York: Maxwell MacMillan International, 1991), and p. xii.

¹¹ See for example, Timothy Findley, *The Wars* (Toronto: Clarke Irwin and Company, 1977); Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991); Peter Parker, *The Old Lie: The Great War and the Public-School Ethos* (London: Constable, 1987); and Sebastian Faulks, *Birdsong* (London: Vintage, 1994).

¹² John Terraine, *The Smoke and the Fire: Myths and Anti-Myths of War, 1861-1945* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1980), p. 14.

the myth that the generals were senseless buffoons who sent millions of men to their deaths with reckless abandon.¹³

By the end of the 1980s, historians were less prone to simply condemn the war, and attempted to understand it on its own terms. Modris Eksteins' *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (1989) views the war as a cultural event, presenting the war as a cultural conflict between modernist Germany and traditionalist nations like Russia, France and Britain.¹⁴ Samuel Hynes continued this process in *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (1991). He, too, uses literary sources, but employs sources generated *during* the war, rather than those popular after its conclusion. He investigates the notion that the meaning of the war could change over time, arguing that initially Britain went to war for the values of an old civilization. The tensions of the conflict and its costs killed that vision, but no one could articulate a replacement during the war. After a period of quiet, Hynes argues, a storm of writing appeared in the late 1920s, creating what we now see as the "myth" of the war.¹⁵

Recently, historians have moved away from high literary sources to understand the war, and attempted to evaluate how citizens perceived the event. Geoffrey Moorhouse's *Hell's Foundations: A Town, Its Myths and Gallipoli* (1992) analyzes the

¹³ Paddy Griffith and Bill Rawling have argued that British and Canadian Forces attempted to integrate new methods into offensive operations, dramatically changing the tactics of war by 1918. See Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack, 1916-1918* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); and Bill Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare: Technology and the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

¹⁴ Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1989), p. 132.

¹⁵ Hynes, *A War Imagined*.

reactions of the residents of the British town of Bury to the war's demands, recounting its impact on the following decades. He traces the evolution and creation of the myth, emphasizing negative *and* positive consequences of the war experience.¹⁶ The meaning of the war, as presented by Moorhouse, is contradictory. It was brutal, involving the decimation of the local unit in combat, and life affirming, promoting notions of noble sacrifice and a sense of community. Martin Stephen's *The Price of Pity: Poetry, History and Myth in the Great War* (1996) is a further plea for a more nuanced appreciation of the war. It celebrates the complexity of the war experience, arguing that no single understanding of the conflict is possible.¹⁷

Historians of the memory and meaning of the Great War now accept that the reality and the memory of the war are two distinct areas of study. This notion has been carefully developed by Jonathan Vance in his award winning study, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (1997).¹⁸ In the first sustained analysis of the Canadian memory of the conflict, Vance examines the popular construction of memory through the writings of average people, memorial tablets and civic ceremonies, concluding that the myth of the war gave Canadians a "...legacy, not of despair, aimlessness, and futility, but of promise, certainty, and goodness."¹⁹

¹⁶ Geoffrey Moorhouse, *Hell's Foundations: A Town, Its Myths and Gallipoli* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1992).

¹⁷ Martin Stephen, *The Price of Pity: Poetry, History and Myth in the Great War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996).

¹⁸ Vance's study won the 1998 Sir John A. Macdonald Prize for Most Outstanding Book in Canadian history. (Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997)).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

Comparatively little attention has been devoted to the impact of the war itself. To remember an event, after all, requires having experienced it in the first place. Historians in other countries have published surveys of the French,²⁰ British,²¹ and other combatant nations experience,²² but the Canadian experience has only begun to be explored.²³

Vance's study hints at a wealth of information to be found about the initial experience with the war. And yet, the only published full-length monograph to examine the Canadian homefront in detail is Jeffrey Keshen's *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War* (1996).²⁴ He maintains that there "...still exists no systematic examination of the naivete, jingoism and nativism articulated through various means of mass communication, or how this affected society both during and after the

²⁰ See for example, Jean Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, Trans. from French by Arnold Pomerans, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986).

²¹ See Moorhouse, *Hell's Foundations*, 1992; Lloyd Clark, "'Civilians Entrenched': The British Home Front and Attitudes to the First World War," in Ian Stewart and Susan L. Carruthers, eds., *War, Culture and the Media: Representations of the Military in 20th Century Britain* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), pp. 38-53; and G.D. Sheffield, "'Oh! What a Futile War': Representations of the Western Front in Modern British Media and Popular Culture," in *Ibid.*, pp. 54-74.

²² See for examples, Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee, eds., *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995).

²³ The historiography relating to the political, military, social, labour, and women's reaction to the war are examined in detail in the beginning of each chapter of the dissertation.

²⁴ Most surveys of the Canadian homefront survey the press reaction to the war effort. R. Matthew Bray, "'Fighting As An Ally': The English-Canadian Patriotic Response to the Great War," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LXI, No. 2, 1980, was an adaptation of his PhD thesis, "The Canadian Patriotic Response to the Great War," PhD Thesis, York University, 1976. See also, Robert Allan Rutherford, "The Home Front: Consensus and Conflict in Lethbridge, Guelph and Trois-Rivieres During the Great War" (Phd Thesis, York University, 1993), and Robert S. Prince, "The Mythology of War: How the Canadian Daily Newspaper Depicted the Great War" (PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 1998).

conflagration."²⁵ He bases his study on the assumption that Canadians could not have believed what they were being told, and concludes that they must have been duped. There is no room in his analysis for the possibility that people were willing to die for God, King and Empire. Largely based on the papers of Chief Censor, Ernest J. Chambers, Keshen's study does not entertain the notion that people believed in the values articulated during the war.

This dissertation contributes to the historical literature by studying the reaction and behaviour of English-Canadians living in one city, Toronto. Concentrating on one city allows previous assumptions about the war effort generalized from the national experience to be re-examined. What happened in Toronto? What did citizens know about the front? How were the enormous sacrifices of the war rationalized? If the war was futile, as historians have argued, why did English-Canadians such as Torontonians continue to support it?

* * *

Toronto was a relatively new city in 1914. Formally known as York, the city's rise in prominence escalated after it was incorporated in 1834 as Toronto: population 9,254. The site of the new Parliament Buildings at Front and Simcoe Streets was considered far removed from the city centre. Within two decades, the city was in position to seriously challenge Montreal's hegemony as the leading city in British North America. It served as a commercial centre for South-Western Ontario, building upon a vibrant and

²⁵ Jeffrey Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), p. x.

growing manufacturing sector. By 1896, at the beginning of the economic boom which lasted until 1912, Toronto was well placed to reap the benefits. Manufacturing increased by over 600 percent in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and almost two-thirds of Toronto's labour force consisted of blue-collar workers.²⁶

All this growth translated into increased influence. Toronto quickly established itself as a banking centre, and after the 1890s, the "...city's investment tentacles began to stretch."²⁷ It also became an obvious location for offices of all kinds of organizations, and Toronto became "...headquarters for religious bodies, labour groups, professional organizations, and voluntary associations, not to mention legal, medical, and educational institutions."²⁸

The city had a long and close association with the military dating back to its early days as an outpost, leading one observer to note that the city was founded by "many soldiers and a few civilians."²⁹ The first battalion to be associated exclusively with the city was created in 1861, and named the Queen's Own Rifles in 1863.³⁰ Several other companies of militia which were drawn together on 14 March 1862, were known by 1880 as the Royal Grenadiers. Both units saw service in the Fenian Raids of 1866, and the

²⁶ For a discussion of the economic development of the city, see Michael Piva, *The Conditions of the Working Class in Toronto -- 1900-1921* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979), pp. 1-25.

²⁷ Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern In Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition in the Shaping of the Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁹ Jesse Edgar Middleton, *Toronto's 100 Years* (Toronto: The Centennial Committee, 1934), p. 10.

³⁰ The unit was officially formed in 1861 and called the 2nd Battalion Voluntary Militia Rifles of Canada.

Queen's Own took part in suppressing the Louis Riel Rebellion in 1885. Another unit was formed on 18 October 1891, the 48th Highlanders. All three units enthusiastically supplied volunteers for the Canadian force which fought in the Boer War (1899-1902), and continued to train in the years leading up to the First World War.³¹ They were an integral part of the city's early mobilization and subsequent recruiting campaign.

The years between 1900 and 1914 were ones of remarkable change and growth. Fire ripped through the downtown commercial district in 1904, destroying 14 acres and putting 5000 out of work. City planners installed an improved water pressure system to fight future fires, and the business community began reconstruction. In 1907, police handed out their first parking tickets. In 1908, the Toronto Street Railway finally placed doors on the city's trolley cars, vacuum cleaners were introduced, and Torontonians had their first glance at the miracle of aeroplanes. In 1912, Ontario Premier Sir James Whitney threw the switch that lit up the city's darkened streets, ushering in the age of Hydro-electric power.³²

The city's population rose at an astonishing rate during the first decades of the twentieth century. Immigration, coupled with migration from rural areas, caused Toronto's population to explode from 208,040 in 1901 to 376,538 in 1911,³³ and 521,893 in 1921:³⁴ an increase of 251 percent. There are no census figures for the war years;

³¹ For a survey of the military history of the Toronto militia units, see Middleton, *Toronto's 100 Years*, pp. 92-102.

³² On Toronto between 1900 and 1914, see Bruce West, *Toronto* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1979), pp. 157-169.

³³ *Census of Canada, 1911*, Vol. I. (Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee, 1912), p. 554.

³⁴ *Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. I. (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1924), p. 542.

however, a document from the military determined that the population in August 1916 was 470,444.³⁵

Toronto was a "British" city. Of the more than 150,000 immigrants who arrived between 1900 and 1914, three-quarters were from the United Kingdom. Many of the other immigrants were also of British ancestry, arriving from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland. Altogether, these "British" groups accounted for 85 percent of the total population of the city in the early decades of the twentieth century.³⁶

Religion played a key role in the daily lives of Torontonians. Over 76 percent of the population during the First World War claimed to be Protestant,³⁷ while approximately 13 percent reported being Catholic. These percentages remained virtually unchanged throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century. The only exception was the Jewish community which grew from 1.4 percent of the population in 1901 to 6.6 percent by 1921.³⁸

Irish Catholics constituted the most numerically significant ethnic group. Specific attention has been given to surveying the attitudes and opinions expressed in the *Catholic*

³⁵ No author listed, "Recruiting Returns, Military District Number 2 Up To and Including Month Ending August, 1916," September 1916, Public Archives of Canada (PAC), RG 24, Vol. 4303, File 34-1-59, Military District Number 2, General Recruiting, Vol. 8.

³⁶ Piva, *Conditions of the Working Class*, pp. 8-9. For a detailed breakdown of the ethnic origins of the Toronto population in the 1911 and 1921 Census, see Appendix A.

³⁷ That is, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian. For a more detailed breakdown of the religious affiliation of the Toronto population in 1911 and 1921, see Appendix B.

³⁸ See Appendix B. For a further discussion of the religious characteristics of Toronto, see Piva, *The Condition of the Working Class*, pp. 10-11.

Register, the leading Catholic periodical in the city. Mark McGowan's carefully documented "'To Share in the Burdens of Empire': Toronto's Catholics and the Great War, 1914-1918," (1990) records how the war served a unifying role for the Catholic and Protestant populations of Toronto. The city's Catholic population supported the war as strongly as did their Protestant neighbours:

The Catholics of Toronto, both clerical and lay, did not imitate patterns established by Catholics in Quebec, Ireland, the United States, or Australia. In Toronto, Catholics enthusiastically endorsed the war effort and sustained their participation throughout the conscription crisis. The hierarchy and clergy justified the war in religious terms and took great pains to encourage recruitment, bond purchases, and national registration...[I]t is clear that the patriotic initiatives of Catholic leadership in Toronto were sustained and echoed ten-fold by the laity in the pews.³⁹

The other major ethnic group was the Jewish community. The most authoritative work on this community, Stephen A. Speisman's *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937* (1979), gives only passing attention to the experience of Toronto's Jews with the war. The locally published *Hebrew Journal* was written in Yiddish, making its opinions inaccessible for this project.⁴⁰ Judging from the voting patterns of the residents of Toronto Centre, where most Jews lived, there is every reason to suppose that the Jews also supported a determined war effort.⁴¹

The story of Toronto during the war years is largely untold. Assessing the

³⁹ Mark G. McGowan, "Sharing the Burden of Empire: Toronto's Catholics and the Great War, 1914-1918," in Mark George McGowan and Brian P. Clarke, eds. *Catholics at the 'Gathering Place': Historical Essays on the Archdiocese of Toronto 1841-1991*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993), p. 178.

⁴⁰ It was not until the early 1920s that the city was able to support its own English language Jewish weekly, the *Canadian Jewish Review*. (Stephen A. Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), pp. 239-241.

⁴¹ See Chapter 6.

historiography on the city during the First World War, Eric Jarvis and Melvin Baker concluded in 1984 that the "...historical examination of the war and its aftermath has been meager."⁴² This dearth of published material is partly the result of a scarcity of traditional primary sources for the period. In his 1997 study of Toronto's Industrial Exhibition at the turn of the century, historian Keith Walden observed, "Though ideally it would be otherwise, Toronto newspapers are the single detailed source of information about what happened on and off the fairground."⁴³

In what has been described as the "golden age of the press,"⁴⁴ Torontonians learned about the world through the newspapers. The years between Confederation and the Great Depression were riding the crest of the wave of increased literacy; during those

⁴² Eric Jarvis and Melvin Baker, "Clio in Hogtown: A Brief Bibliography," *Ontario History*, Vol. LXXVI, No. 3, September 1984, p. 290. The only work to receive mention as a thorough treatment of the period is Piva's *Conditions of the Working Class*. For general overviews of the history of the city, see the following: Victor L. Russell, ed., *Forging a Consensus: Historical Essays on Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984); Barbara M. Wilson, *Ontario and the First World War, 1914-1918: A Collection of Documents* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977); Paul Rutherford, ed., *Saving the Canadian City: The First Phase, 1880-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974); Edwin C. Guillet, *Toronto: From Great Trading Post to Great City* (Toronto: Ontario Publishing Company, 1934); G.P. de T. Glazebrook, *The Story of Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971); J.M.S. Careless, *Toronto to 1918: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1984); Donald Kerr and Jacob Spelt, *The Changing Face of Toronto -- A Study in Urban Geography* (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1971); Jacob Spelt, *Toronto* (Toronto: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1973).

⁴³ Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto*, p. 27. Other historians working in other areas of research have also noted the scarcity of private papers, making the daily newspapers an essential source for understanding the period. See for example, Linda Kealey, *Enlisting Women for the Cause: Women, Labour and the Left in Canada, 1890-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

⁴⁴ Paul Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1978), p. x.

years, the press transformed itself from mouthpieces for the Liberal and Conservative parties into the primary vehicle through which citizens learned about their world.⁴⁵ In 1914, the six Toronto dailies, the *Globe*, *Mail and Empire*, *Star*, *News*, *Telegram*, and *World* had a combined circulation of 433,023.⁴⁶ The numbers for each paper fluctuated throughout the war years as dailies competed for readership, but combined circulation rose to 439,626 in 1917,⁴⁷ meaning that on average more than one newspaper was received in each household per day. Waking up with a morning paper, or relaxing after work with the news of the day, was part of the daily routine.

The papers were a lively, integral part of the life of the city. By the beginning of the war, "News...had become the major kind of common knowledge, at least in urban Canada. News could set the tone and determine the objects of public concern. Not alone of course, but in conjunction with the perspectives and attitudes already present in the public mind."⁴⁸ This dissertation uses the papers in a variety of ways. At the centre of each newspaper was the editorial page. The opinions expressed in its columns, however, reflect more than the opinions of its writers. Editorials shaped the public discourse by

⁴⁵ For a discussion of the transformation of papers from party organs to independent publications, see Minko Sotiron, *From Politics to Profit: The Commercialization of Canadian Daily Newspapers, 1890-1920* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).

⁴⁶ *The Canadian Newspaper Directory, Ninth Edition, 1915* (Montreal and Toronto: A. McKim Limited, 1915).

⁴⁷ *The Canadian Newspaper Directory, Eleventh Edition, 1918* (Montreal and Toronto: A. McKim Limited, 1918). There is no combined number available for 1918 since the *News* stopped publishing, and did not report circulation in the 1919 *Canadian Newspaper Directory*. (*The Canadian Newspaper Directory, Twelfth Edition, 1919* (Montreal and Toronto: A. McKim Limited, 1919).

⁴⁸ Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media*, p. 58.

providing the information and the terminology to discuss current events. Thus, general patterns of opinion expressed in the Liberal and Conservative daily press provide an initial survey of the attitudes of citizens.

The papers also reported on the activities of prominent citizens. The speeches reproduced, opinions expressed, and behaviour recorded provide a day to day database of the activities of the city's elite. The attitudes and behaviour of average citizens, however, are also discernible. Letters to the editor, and articles which reported the behaviour of citizens, provide the researcher with an avenue to understand the climate of wartime Toronto.

The papers form a daily record of life in the city, recording the important activities and human interest stories which shaped the people's experience with war. The newspaper offices served as a gathering point for a public desperate for information. Citizens besieged newspaper offices whenever a major event took place. People routinely scanned the daily casualty lists posted in the windows of the daily papers. A testament to the importance of the papers to daily life, in the midst of a coal shortage in the winter of 1918, the federal government imposed a mandatory shutdown of all industry: newspaper offices were allowed to remain open even as munitions factories closed. To ensure as complete a survey as possible, in the preparation of this dissertation, *every* issue of the 6 Toronto dailies published during the war years was consulted.

Each paper had its own personality. J.F. Mackay⁴⁹ directed the publication of one

⁴⁹ Mackay was born in Toronto in April 1868. He began his career as a reporter for the *Toronto Mail*, but worked for many other papers, including the *Montreal Herald*. Active in local and provincial politics, Mackay had served as manager of the *Globe* since

of the "quality"⁵⁰ Toronto dailies, the *Liberal Globe*, from its offices at 60-62 Yonge Street. Arriving on doorsteps in the morning, it targeted a "... metropolitan audience of middle and upper income Canadians."⁵¹ The front page shied away from bold, two or three word headlines, preferring instead to use something akin to a leader to spark interest. Throughout the war, a "News of the Day" article appeared in the bottom left hand corner of the front page, usually dominated by recent war events. Only a few articles were published on the lead page, allowing long columns of text: only rarely did a photograph or illustration appear. The editorial page included 2-5 lengthy editorials on the issues of the day, followed by a "Notes and Comments" section for shorter observations and comments: "Your King and Country Need You -- Now!" The Women's page related upcoming rallies and meetings, listed engagements, and often published a daily poem. Other pages were dedicated to sports, stock market performance, and classified ads; most issues ended with a full-page advertisement from Eaton's.

The other "quality" morning daily was the *Conservative Mail and Empire* based at 52-54 King Street West. Like the *Globe*, its general manager, W.J. Douglas,⁵² used a headline consisting of a sentence rather than a one or two word bulletin. Its front page was more varied than the *Globe's*, and it printed some articles in large print, while others

August 1903. (Henry James Morgan, ed., *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography of Living Characters*, 2nd edition (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), p. 697.).

⁵⁰ Robert S. Prince, "The Mythology of War," pp. 14-15.

⁵¹ Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media*, p. 52.

⁵² Douglas was born in Hamilton, Oneida County, New York, in May 1846. Educated in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he came to Canada in 1877, and had served as the general manager for the *Mail and Empire* "for many years." (Morgan, ed., *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 340.).

were much smaller. There was no "News of the Day" article, but issues relating to the war still filled the front page. It devoted particular attention to news events in the first pages of each issue, making room for reporting at the expense of space for advertisers. Occasionally, a photograph of a local event would appear, but this was usually the exception rather than the rule. The editorial page was well presented, with 2-5 lengthy commentaries on recent events each day. Advertisements were more prevalent in the women's, and classified pages.

All but one of the remaining four dailies were published for the evening market. They were popular publications aimed at "...a local audience of middle and lower income readers."⁵³ The only broadly targeted morning paper was the *Conservative World*, based at 40 Richmond Street West.⁵⁴ Unlike its morning competitors, it made use of bold, large headlines. The front page was dotted with a variety of smaller articles, most requiring the reader to turn to the back pages to complete reading. Each issue printed a small box in the bottom left corner of page one under the heading "War Summary." As with every other daily, coverage of the war dominated its pages. The editorial page carried fewer editorials, allowing writers to develop their commentaries on local and national issues. Much of the paper was organized thematically, with weather, sports, stocks, and classified sections complementing local news coverage. Unlike its evening competitors,

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁵⁴ For a discussion on the owner of the *World*, W.F. "Billy" Maclean, see Floyd S. Chalmers, *A Gentleman of the Press* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1969), p. 21. Maclean was born in Ancaster, Wentworth County, Ontario, in August 1854. He began his association with journalism as a reporter for the *Globe*. The year 1880 was a momentous one in his life; it marks the year he received a BA from the University of Toronto, as well as the year he founded the *World*. (Morgan, ed., *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 709.).

the *World* only occasionally published photographs, electing to model its layout after the other morning papers which relied on text-based reporting.

The evening *Liberal Star*⁵⁵ specialized in carrying many small news stories until a major story broke, when owner Joe Atkinson would unleash teams of reporters from the paper's offices at 18-20 King Street to cover the event extensively.⁵⁶ To grab reader attention, most issues began with a short, sharp headline in bold type. The entire front page was designed to catch a reader's eye, and pictures, bold-type and italicized articles competed for attention. Subsequent pages were similarly attractive, the second page, for example, regularly publishing a map of the fighting lines. Advertisements were used more generously than in the previous three dailies. Local and national news was reported but was often pinched between claims of medical wonders and sales at clothing stores. The classified section was large, with news reports scattered throughout. The editorial page was similar to those in the other dailies, with half the page dedicated to lengthy commentaries, while a "Note and Comment" section offered between ten and twenty pithy one-line remarks. The women's page accorded more space to announcing and reporting local women's activities than did the previous three dailies. Most issues ended with the ubiquitous Eaton's Department Store advertisement.

⁵⁵ The paper was managed and edited by Joe Atkinson who was born in Newcastle, Ontario, in December 1865. He started his journalistic career with the Port Hope *Weekly Times* in 1884, before shifting to the *Globe* by 1889. He moved to Montreal to become editor of the *Herald* in 1896, but eventually returned to Toronto in 1899 to edit the *Star*. (Morgan, ed., *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 44.). For a biography of Atkinson, see Ross Harkness, *J.E. Atkinson of the Star* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963).

⁵⁶ Rutherford, *The Making of the Canadian Media*, p. 56.

The *Conservative News*, based at 107 Bay Street, also used headlines and pictures to grab attention. Its owner, J.S. Willison, was one of the most "admired journalists of his generation."⁵⁷ During the war, small black and white photographs of local officers were commonplace on the front page. Articles were written in a variety of type-sizes, with big bold-type articles demanding attention, while others would only catch the eye of the more determined reader. As in the *Star*, photographs and maps were used throughout the paper to keep the reader involved. The editorial page was similar to those in the other dailies, but its editorials were more hard hitting, more opinionated. The women's page published a social calendar, fashion news, poems, and war news of particular interest to women. The sport section was larger than in other papers, as was the classified section.

The offices of the Conservative evening *Telegram* at 81 Bay Street produced a paper very different from the other five dailies. While all the other papers led with news items, the *Telegram* began each issue with six or seven pages of classified ads, by far the greatest number of any of its competitors.⁵⁸ The front page published the *Telegram's*

⁵⁷ Willison was born in Hills Green, Huron County, Ontario, in November 1856. He received a LLD from Queen's University and worked for some years as a businessman. Eventually, he turned to journalism and was instrumental in rescuing the *Globe* from difficulty after George Brown's death. Willison, however, longed to work for an independent paper. He realized his dream in 1902 when he and J.W. Flavelle bought the *News* which he ran as an independent, Conservative minded, publication. On his life and times, see A.H.U. Colquhoun, *Press, Politics and People: The Life and Letters of Sir John Willison, Journalist and Correspondent of the Times* (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1935); Morgan, ed., *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 1171.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the owner of the *Telegram*, see Ron Poulton, *The Paper Tyrant: John Ross Robertson and the Toronto Telegram* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company, 1971). Robertson was born in Toronto in December 1841, and was educated at Upper Canada College. He became the city editor of the *Globe* in 1864, and served as foreign correspondent and business reporter for that publication from London, England, for three years. He returned and established the *Telegram* in 1876. In addition to running

banner, followed by classifieds. During the war, small postage-size pictures of local men reported killed or wounded would appear alongside descriptions of their last civilian jobs and their addresses. The editorial page was different as well, dominated by short editorials which voiced more extreme, opinionated views on current events. Reporting was secondary to its importance as a vehicle for advertisements, with advertisements dominating it to a much greater degree than in any other local daily publication, virtually filling the women's, sports, and finance pages.

This dissertation also draws on the influential weekly, *Saturday Night*, the monthly, *Maclean's*, the farmer's *Weekly Sun*, the labour publication *The Industrial Banner*, the women's monthly journal *Everywoman's World*, the government publication *The Labour Gazette*, and the religious periodicals of five major religious organizations, all published in Toronto: *Christian Guardian* (Methodist), *Canadian Churchman* (Anglican), *The Presbyterian*, *The Canadian Baptist*, and *The Catholic Register*. In conjunction with the daily papers, these sources allow an investigation of what people *knew* about the events at the front, and how they *behaved* during the war years.

Extensive searches were also conducted in the City of Toronto Archives, the Archives of Ontario, the Public Archives of Canada, Baldwin Reading Room, Directorate of History, University of Toronto Archives and Thomas Fisher Rare Book Room, and related church archives to further investigate the behaviour and ideas of local residents. Municipal records, Provincial records, letters from soldiers, letters from Torontonians to

the paper, he was a noted local philanthropist, working tirelessly for the Hospital for Sick Children. (Morgan, ed., *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 952.).

prominent politicians, speeches by local religious leaders, personal papers of local citizens, and military records from Toronto's Military District⁵⁹ have all been consulted. While scarce, these private sources do not contradict the portrait drawn in the papers. They reinforce it.

The narrative is developed in seven substantive chapters. The first chapter, "A British 'Provincial' City," sets the framework for the declaration of war in August 1914. It examines the reaction of Torontonians to the series of crises which disturbed the stability of the international community in the years immediately preceding the First World War. Beginning with the 1909 Agadir Crisis, citizens learned a series of lessons about the nature of the international community, and about their place in the Empire. These lessons governed the actions of residents when war finally broke out.

The first month of war is discussed in Chapter 2, "A Great Adventure." Acting on the basis of lessons learned in the pre-war years, citizens enthusiastically went to war. Men, women, young and old, participated in the collective response to war, but they did so in different ways. The first month of war was about organizing already existing enthusiasm. It was a privilege to participate, an honour to serve. This chapter also establishes the justifications Torontonians offered for participating in the war effort, positive as well as preventative. It closes with a survey of the image of the enemy.

The war quickly evolved into "A Great Crusade," the focus of Chapter 3. In the wake of the tremendous Canadian casualties at Second Ypres in April 1915, the war

⁵⁹ Toronto formed the centre of Military District No. 2, Central Ontario. (A. Fortescue Duguid, *Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War, 1914-1919* (Ottawa: J.O. Patenaude, 1938), Appendix 9, p. 10.

effort changed. This chapter explores changing public reaction and behaviour to the steadily increasing demands of the war. The flag waving and enthusiasm of August 1914 evolved into a much deeper commitment to the war effort. Citizens learned of the nature of front-line combat, and its inevitable cost. The nature of the enemy was also transformed. The wartime climate in the city is investigated through reactions to news from the front, and behaviour by citizens in response to local events.

Chapter 4, "Enlistment and Recruiting," chronicles the experience of Toronto in supplying the human material for war. Beginning with a discussion of recruiting historiography, the chapter presents a different interpretation, emphasizing the local experience. It moves away from the standard questions used to understand recruiting and chronicles how recruiting unfolded, rather than how it unraveled. In doing so, it breathes some life and context into the numbers long used to describe recruiting.

Chapter 5, "Women and the War -- Public and Private Spheres," investigates the central tasks of women during the war, placing their activities within the context of wartime Toronto. Although limited by societal norms and traditional notions of work and family, these norms were profoundly influenced by the course of the war, dramatically altering the boundary of both public and private spheres. This chapter explores the critical role that women played during the war; in this struggle, women's activities paralleled, challenged, and reinforced the local approaches taken to prosecute the war.

After three years of war, citizens had a chance to express their views on voluntary recruiting in the December 1917 election. The focus of Chapter 6, "Conscription -- A Decided Commitment," is the attitudes and behaviour of citizens in the months between

the announcement of conscription in May 1917 and the election. The city was determined to elect a Unionist government which would impose conscription and win the war. Far from offering a begrudging mandate to Prime Minister Borden to continue the war, citizens, local organizations, and papers pushed Borden to impose conscription.

Citizens offered a remarkable level of support for an enormous increase in government involvement in their lives for the sake of the war effort. "Total War -- Total Victory," the final substantive chapter, examines Toronto's experience with a fully mobilized war effort. Cracks began to appear in the unity characteristic of August 1914, but not in the way one might expect. The calling out of conscripts, coal shortages, Victory Loan campaigns, riots, and the influenza epidemic brought the world crisis home to every Torontonians. Throughout the process, support for the war did not ebb. The trends and patterns of the city's experience with war are summarized in the Conclusion.

This dissertation is a counterpoint to those studies which have examined the memory of the war. It makes possible the answering of questions about the relationship between the memory and the experience of war. Is the memory of the war linked with wartime experiences, or is it a construction which bears little resemblance to the way war was perceived? Did the memory of the war take only pieces of the war experience, or did it attempt to synthesize the entire process?

It also makes a plea for a wider understanding of "war." The influence of the conflict was too profound for its impact to be measured solely on the soldiers at the front. Citizens at home could not understand the complete experience of front-line soldiers. This does not mean, however, that they did not experience war's demands or sacrifices.

Citizens living at home could not understand what it was like to live under shell fire, but they did read and react to graphic accounts of it. They did endure something called "war." They experienced it differently. Rather than dismissing the home front experience as somehow falling short of the front-line experience, it is necessary to view it on its own terms. Confronting the steadily rising cost of living, dealing with inadequate coal supplies, wrestling with the loss of loved ones, participating in local patriotic drives, and suffering through the influenza epidemic brought the war home.

An attempt has been made to pull together various strands of historical inquiry. Understanding something as profound as the First World War requires a synthesis of different branches of history. Political, cultural, military, women's, and labour historiographies all offer valuable perspectives. This dissertation draws upon these different approaches to enhance the portrayal of a city at war.

The thesis demonstrates that throughout their wartime experience, English-Canadian Torontonians reacted in a manner which was both informed and measured. Initially, they hoped the war would be short. However, when military events demonstrated that an ad hoc, voluntary approach would be insufficient to meet the increasing demands of the war, they adapted. Voluntary organizations gradually gave way to popularly sanctioned government involvement in everything from the financing to the supplying of men for the war. Toronto was a community firmly committed to winning the war. Despite its enormous cost, citizens endured.

The war must be understood in its complexity. It was not an uninformed, ignorant, disengaged populace who took to the streets in November 1919. It was a people

who had been deeply committed and engaged in a life and death struggle who gathered to mark, simultaneously, joy and sadness. To dance gleefully with tears on their faces. To believe that dying for an ideal was not only a cause for remembrance, but for celebration. The following pages attempt to explain the process which led to that victory party.

Chapter 1

A British "Provincial" City

War came upon us without warning, like a thunderbolt from the sky. Our people were essentially non-military, fearing no aggression from a peace-loving neighbour, and ignorant of the imminence of German aggression. Yet, in seven weeks, Canada created the first apparatus of war.¹

Canadians have been taught that Canada went to war in the summer of 1914 because Britain was at war. Canadians, we are told, ignored the signs of a growing crisis in Europe, until events caught up with them in early August 1914. Britain's ultimatum to Germany to cease offensive operations against Belgium expired at midnight on 3 August, and Canada found itself unexpectedly embroiled in a continental European war which was to last more than four years. So goes the standard historical explanation for Canadian actions in the summer of 1914. Aitken's words encapsulate the essence of how Canadians have learned to remember the First World War: "thunderbolt from the sky," "non-military," "ignorant." These are the words which have described the Canada of the summer of 1914.

When Toronto's experience with the summer of 1914 is examined in the light of events which followed, it is easy to understand why historians have emphasized the "thunderbolt from the sky" argument. Weighing the preparedness of Torontonians in 1914 to wage the kind of war which raged at the time Aitken wrote in 1916 makes earlier beliefs and assumptions appear woefully inadequate. However, that does not mean that they were uninformed. Their behaviour in the summer of 1914 was the culmination of a process of drawing lessons from their past, not their future. Measured against the information available in July 1914, their response was both informed and committed.

¹ Sir Max Aitken, *Canada in Flanders: The Official Story of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, Volume I* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916), p. 1.

This chapter explores the crises through which citizens learned about the international environment.

The Empire was riding the crest of almost a hundred years of peace and prosperity. Since the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815, the British had not seen their supremacy seriously challenged. All that changed in 1909. On 16 March, British Prime Minister H.H. Asquith and First Lord of the Admiralty, Reginald McKenna, informed the House of Commons that Germany was accelerating its naval building program. Without drastic action, they argued, Britain risked losing its naval superiority. Germany had increased its ability to produce capital ships of the Dreadnought type,² and threatened Britain's tenure as the world's leading maritime power.

The revelations made in the British House of Commons sparked a flurry of patriotic rhetoric from the Toronto press.³ The safety which had been taken for granted for decades was in question: "In the spring of 1909 Canada learned that the Empire was in danger."⁴ The *Christian Guardian* cited the "vital importance [of the naval crisis] to the Empire," assuring its readers that the "...whole Dominion will be a practical unit on this, that Canada must be prepared to do her full share towards the defence of the Empire to which she belongs."⁵ The *Christian Guardian's* reaction is particularly striking given the views ascribed to it by Michael Bliss in his influential 1968 article, "The Methodist

² This type of ship was faster, and more heavily armoured and armed than any previous battleship.

³ A survey was conducted of the *London Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* for their reaction to this crisis as well as the others discussed below. At no point was their coverage markedly different from that in the Toronto papers.

⁴ Robert Craig Brown, *Robert Laird Borden, A Biography: Volume I: 1854-1914* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1975), p. 148.

⁵ "Britain's Naval Supremacy" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 17 March 1909, p. 1.

Church in World War I." To enhance his argument that the Methodist Church, after a decades old commitment to pacifism, committed itself to the war effort in August 1914,⁶ Bliss briefly examined the pre-war rhetoric of the *Christian Guardian*, concluding that it had been pacifist in the years before 1914. This editorial, among others, demonstrates that the *Christian Guardian's* responses to issues of war and peace were more nuanced. While it remained opposed to aggressive warfare, it readily supported measures designed to improve the security of the Empire. It also shows the pervasiveness of the assumption that to ensure peace, nations had to prepare for war.

The daily papers initially demonstrated a bipartisan response, citing Germany as the enemy of peace. The *World* warned that "...Germany is preparing, has been preparing for years to fight Britain."⁷ Germany had been "stealthily and devotedly getting herself into condition to wrest the naval supremacy from Britain,"⁸ advised the *Mail and Empire*. The *Globe* agreed with the Conservative papers, arguing that a crisis existed and that Germany was the cause.⁹ The only exception was the *Star* which asked what reason Britain had to fear Germany.¹⁰ The editorial staff changed its mind by the following day, however, arguing that "...if Canada, by wiring into the European camp the news that she,

⁶ Michael Bliss, "The Methodist Church and World War I," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XLIX, No. 3, September 1968, pp. 212-233.

⁷ "WAKE UP!" (ed.), *World*, 23 March 1909, p. 6. See also, "German Methods" (ed.), *World*, 25 March 1909, p. 6.

⁸ "Naval Supremacy at Stake" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 18 March 1909, p. 6. For examples of similar reaction in Conservative papers, see the following: "THE EMPIRE VERSUS GERMANY" (ed.), *News*, 22 March 1909, p. 1; "Is Naval Supremacy to be the Shield of Liberty or the Sword of Tyranny!" (ed.), *Telegram*, 23 March 1909, p. 10.

⁹ "The British and German Fleets" (ed.), *Globe*, 18 March 1909, p. 4. See also, "For An Enduring Empire" (ed.), *Globe*, 26 March 1909, p. 4.

¹⁰ "What is the Matter With Britain?" (ed.), *Star*, 22 March 1909, p. 6.

like New Zealand and Australia, will build one Dreadnought, and if necessary, two, can exert an influence in favour of peace at this critical time, it seems clear that Canada should 'get on the wire' without hesitation or delay."¹¹ Thus, with only one temporary exception, there was unanimity in the local dailies that Germany was a threat to the survival of the Empire, and that Canada should aid Britain.

The papers also emphasized that Canada was an integral part of a great Empire. *Saturday Night* welcomed the Australian and New Zealand promises of one Dreadnought each, observing that a "...like contribution from the people of Canada would unquestionably be a popular move..."¹² The *Globe* remarked that were "...supremacy seriously challenged anywhere the welfare of all the States of the Empire everywhere would be involved."¹³ The *News* reported that German naval expansion "...threatens the Empire's existence. Everywhere Canadians are asserting that at such a juncture there is only one thing to do. The Dominion must contribute to the Empire's defence...The existence of the Empire may be at stake and perhaps the world's peace."¹⁴

Paralleling the public demand for action, on 29 March, Conservative member of parliament, George Foster introduced a resolution proposing the establishment of a Canadian naval force to free Royal Navy ships to protect the Mother Country and a cash

¹¹ "John Bull's Navy" (ed.), *Star*, 23 March 1909, p. 6.

¹² "The Front Page" (ed.), *Saturday Night*, 27 March 1909, p. 1.

¹³ "Canada in the Empire's Defence" (ed.), *Globe*, 27 March 1909, p. 6. See also, "The Wearied Titan's Sons" (ed.), *Globe*, 23 March 1909, p. 4; "War and Us" (ed.), *Star*, 24 March 1909, p. 6.

¹⁴ "Our Duty to the Empire," *News*, 24 March 1909, p. 1. For similar examples from Conservative papers, see the following: "What a Defeat of England Would Mean" (ed.), *World*, 23 March 1909, p. 6; "Rule, Britannia" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 24 March 1909, p. 6.

payment in the case of a grave emergency.¹⁵ The Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, offered an alternate resolution to the House which, with minor revisions, was passed unanimously on 30 March.¹⁶ Despite the bipartisan parliamentary endorsement, the

¹⁵ For a summary of the House of Commons proceedings, see Brown, *Robert Laird Borden*, pp. 153-155.

¹⁶ For a summary of the historiography, see Richard A. Preston, *Canada and 'Imperial Defense': A Study of the Origins of the British Commonwealth's Defense Organizations, 1867-1919* (Duke University: Duke University Commonwealth-Studies Centre, 1967), pp. 387-429. For a discussion of the background to the German acceleration and the British reaction to it, see the following: E.L. Woodward, *Great Britain and the German Navy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), pp. 203-218; G.J. Marcus, "The Naval Crisis of 1909 and the Croyden By-Election," *The Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, Vol. CIII, No. 612, November 1958, pp. 500-514; Gilbert Norman Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada: Its Official History: Volume I, Origins and Early Years* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1962), pp. 85-103; A.J.P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 457-484; Arthur J. Marder, *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow: The Royal Navy in the Fisher Era, 1904-1919, Volume I, The Road to War, 1904-1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 151-180; Donald C. Gordon, "The Admiralty and Dominion Navies, 1902-1914," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 4, December 1961, pp. 407-422; Lieutenant-Commander P.K. Kemp, "The Royal Navy," in *Edwardian England, 1901-1914*, ed., Simon Nowell-Smith (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 489-516; Donald C. Gordon, *The Dominion Partnership in Imperial Defense, 1870-1914* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), pp. 216-228; Basil Liddell Hart, *A History of the World War, 1914-1918*, 2nd ed. (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1974), pp. 17-33; Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 205-238; Zara S. Steiner, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), pp. 42-78; Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980), pp. 410-444.

For a discussion of the Canadian reaction, see the following: Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada, Its Official History*, pp. 131-139; James A. Boutilier, ed., *The RCN in Retrospect, 1910-1968* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982); Paul Kennedy, "Naval Mastery: The Canadian Context," in W.A.B. Douglas, ed., *The RCN in Transition: 1910-1945* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), pp. 15-33; Tony German, *The Sea is at Our Gates: The History of the Canadian Navy* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1990), pp. 22-32; Michael L. Hadley and Roger Sarty, *Tin-Pots and Pirate Ships: Canadian Naval Forces and German Sea Raiders, 1880-1918* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), pp. x-27. On Borden's reaction to the crisis, see the following: Robert Laird Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs*, Henry Borden, ed. (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1938),

dailies turned the crisis into a partisan issue. The papers agreed that something had to be done, but they differed about the extent and the form the aid should take. Liberal papers supported the Prime Minister and advocated the creation of a Canadian navy which would release Royal Navy vessels to see to the common defence of the Empire.¹⁷ Conservative papers, foreshadowing the future of Conservative naval policy, demanded Canada do more. The *News* editorialized that the resolution was a good one, but that it would "...endorse any offer of Dreadnoughts or cash contributions to the Imperial navy that the government might see fit to make."¹⁸ *Saturday Night* referred to the Laurier proposal as "mushy," advocating instead a direct contribution.¹⁹ The *Christian Guardian* endorsed the resolution²⁰ advocating preparations for self-defence: "We are utterly opposed to jingoism and militarism, but we do confess a leaning toward necessary measures of self-defence. There is no need to teach hatred of other lands, but our boys should be taught to love our flag, and, if need be, to die in its defence."²¹

The papers demonstrate that columnists of different political stripes had a similar conception of the Empire, an entity worth fighting to preserve. As early as 1909, there was a clear understanding of the security system Canada depended upon. Peace could

pp. 245-249; Gilbert Norman Tucker, "The Naval Policy of Sir Robert Borden, 1912-1914," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, March 1947, pp. 1-30; Brown, *Robert Laird Borden: A Biography*, pp. 142-169. On Laurier's reaction, see Oscar Douglas Skelton, *Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier: Volume II, 1896-1919* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), pp. 121-122.

¹⁷ See for example, "Satisfactory Progress" (ed.), *Globe*, 1 April 1909, p. 6; "Canada's Defence Policy Approved" (ed.), *Globe*, 17 April 1909, p. 6; "The Loyalty Cry" (ed.), *Star*, 22 April 1909, p. 6.

¹⁸ "Parliament and the Navy" (ed.), *News*, 30 March 1909, p. 6.

¹⁹ "The Front Page" (ed.), *Saturday Night*, 3 April 1909, p. 1.

²⁰ "On Parliament Hill" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 7 April 1909, p. 18.

²¹ "Is Militarism Defensible?" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 21 April 1909, p. 5.

only be assured by preparing against the possibility of war, and if the threat of retaliation was insufficient, they would fight for the Empire. This response reflected an informed understanding of the nature of the international community and the costs associated with belonging to a far-flung Empire.

The international scene remained volatile in the years leading up to the First World War, with the 1911 Agadir crisis the next major incident.²² On 2 May 1911 French troops entered Morocco, at Sultan Mulai Hafid's request, and marched to the capital of Fez to protect Europeans. To secure a stronger position from which to press for compensation, on 1 July Germany despatched the gunboat *Panther* to the Moroccan port of Agadir. Ostensibly there to protect German nationals, of which there were reputed to be two, Germany refused to remove the warship. On 4 July Britain declared that it would not recognize any decision in which it was not consulted, a policy reinforced two days later by Foreign Secretary Grey who informed the House of Commons that British interests were directly involved.

In response, the dailies reinforced the lesson learned in the naval crisis of 1909:

²² For a summary of the chronology of events, see the following: Woodward, *Great Britain and the German Navy*, pp. 308-322; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, pp. 471-472; Barlow, *The Agadir Crisis*, pp. 231-387; Dwight E. Lee, *The Diplomatic Background of World War I, 1902-1914* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1974), pp. 236-269. On what Germany hoped to gain: Joanne Stafford Mortimer, "Commercial Interests and German Diplomacy in the Agadir Crisis," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. X, No. 4, 1967, pp. 440-456; Fritz Fischer, *War of Illusions: German Policies From 1911 to 1914* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), pp. 71-94; V.R. Berghahn, *Germany and the Approach of War in 1914*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993). On the British reaction, see: Samuel R. Williamson Jr., *The Politics of Grand Strategy: Britain and France Prepare for War, 1904-1914* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 167-204; Kennedy, *Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism*, pp. 447-453.

Germany was the main threat to international peace, but mediation could solve the crisis. A *Mail and Empire* editorial is indicative of the response of both Liberal and Conservative papers. There was cause for concern, but "it seems unlikely, however, that France or any other nation, or coalition of nations, will go to war to prevent Germany getting a slice of the Sultan's territory."²³ Papers also agreed that Britain must stand with France to create a common front against German aggression: "Had it not been for the entente cordiale between England and France -- which alone made French policy in Morocco effective -- Germany would never have permitted without war the latter country to assert her political supremacy in Morocco, and even with British backing war was only narrowly averted."²⁴ With the benefit of hindsight, historians have argued that the alliance system was a major contributor to the outbreak of war. Within the context of 1911, however, alliances were perceived as one of the few guarantors of peace. They had saved the peace of Europe, and Torontonians, basing their assumption on empirical evidence, put their trust in them.

The crisis reached a fever pitch in the wake of Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George's famous Mansion House Speech,²⁵ which re-emphasized Britain's interest in the

²³ "Germany and Morocco" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 4 July 1911, p. 6. For examples of similar sentiment in other papers, see the following: "British Press Comments on Moroccan Crisis," *Globe*, 3 July 1911, p. 2; "Will Morocco Be Sliced Up?" *Star*, 7 July 1911, p. 1; "Germany Throws a Bomb" (ed.), *Telegram*, 3 July 1911, p. 7; "Britain Will Fulfill Treaty Obligations With France," *News*, 6 July 1911, p. 2.

²⁴ "Germany and Morocco," *Star*, 27 July 1911, p. 1. Other papers, both Liberal and Conservative, stressed the need for concerted action: "Britain Will Fulfill Treaty Obligations With France," *News*, 6 July 1911, p. 2; "Untitled" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 18 July 1911, p. 6; "British Interests Affected in Morocco," *Globe*, 7 July 1911, p. 1.

²⁵ For a detailed assessment of the Mansion House Speech, see Keith Wilson, "The Agadir Crisis, the Mansion House Speech, and the Double-Edgedness of Agreements," *Historical Journal*, Vol. XV, No. 3, 1972, pp. 513-532.

region. The July 21st speech was especially influential because Lloyd George had been a long-time supporter of détente with Germany. Public opinion in Europe was inflamed and from 25 to 28 July "...almost anything might have happened."²⁶

This tense atmosphere was reflected in the Toronto papers. They agreed, however, that a peaceful settlement depended upon joint action. The *Globe* praised the speech: "France's determination not to cower before Berlin's mailed fist will, it is expected here, be immeasurably strengthened by the speech which the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd-George, has just delivered. The speech is interpreted as an unminced warning to Germany that the entente cordiale powers stand shoulder to shoulder in opposition to German demands."²⁷ In a similar vein, the *News* reported that British courage to stand firm with France had paved the way for a negotiated settlement.²⁸

Tension eased after Prime Minister Asquith spoke to the House of Commons on 27 July, reaffirming Britain's support of France, but emphasizing the need to negotiate. The press assumed that the worst of the crisis was over, running editorials and news reports indicating that peace would follow.²⁹ The *Mail and Empire* drew an important lesson from the crisis: "Germany's 'testing' of the Triple Entente [Britain, France and

²⁶ Ima Christina Barlow, *The Agadir Crisis* (North Carolina: Archon Books, 1971), p. 311.

²⁷ "Germany Shows Mailed Fist," *Globe*, 24 July 1911, p. 2. For another example of Liberal reaction see: "Britain to Keep Her Place at Any Cost" (ed.), *Star*, 22 July 1911, p. 7.

²⁸ "British Courage and Patriotism Pave Way for Continued Peace," *News*, 28 July 1911, p. 1.

²⁹ See for example, "The Tension Eased in German Situation," *Star*, 28 July 1911, p. 1; "Moroccan Question Nearing Settlement," *Globe*, 3 August 1911, p. 1; "Rifts in the Morocco Cloud, Outlook is Much Brighter," *Telegram*, 28 July 1911, p. 13; "Danger Point Has Passed," *News*, 1 August 1911, p. 1.

Russia] has produced results that are probably surprising to its Government. It appears to have calculated on a lower degree of solidarity than it has found to exist among the three nations concerned."³⁰

The crisis deepened again in late August and early September after Germany refused France's minimum terms. Another rash of articles stressed the need for combined action to ensure peace. The *Christian Guardian* continued to support self-defence measures, agreeing that alliances were guarantors of peace: "It is understood that some of Germany's demands were very unacceptable to France, and France is said to have delivered an ultimatum to her great rival, but the conditions of that ultimatum and Germany's reply have not yet become public property. The situation is undoubtedly grave enough, but Britain's openly avowed purpose to uphold France's contention will no doubt make for peace."³¹

The combined pressure of Britain and France forced a diplomatic concession from Germany. Negotiations dragged on through September and October, but a resolution was once again forecast.³² The Moroccan Treaty, signed by France and Germany on 4 November 1911, ended the dispute. France gained increased political freedom in Morocco, and Germany was awarded parts of the Congo as compensation. The result was "...viewed by the Germans as a national humiliation, inflicted upon them by the aggressive action of the British and the weak, vacillating, dilatory policy of their own

³⁰ "The Triple Entente" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 28 July 1911, p. 6.

³¹ "France and Germany," *Christian Guardian*, 6 September 1911, p. 4.

³² See for example, "A Franco-German Agreement in Sight," *Globe*, 7 September 1911, p. 1; "French Offer Accepted," *Telegram*, 6 September 1911, p. 13.

government."³³ Although the crisis had passed, there was a sense that conflict between Britain and Germany had only been postponed. The newspaper reaction also demonstrates a central pre-war assumption. Judging from the number of references to the security to be found from a rapid, combined reaction to international crises, papers believed that standing firm with allies and placing faith in diplomats would ensure peace. Had Britain failed to stand with France, it was believed that Germany would have risked war to secure its goals. Faced with the Triple Entente, Germany retreated.

It was not long, however, before rumours of European war again dominated the front pages. Tension built up in the Balkans throughout 1912, erupting into war in October. Great Britain and Germany worked together to limit the Balkan war to Eastern Europe, restraining their respective allies, Russia and Austro-Hungary, from entering the conflict. They did so, however, for very different reasons. Britain hoped to secure the peace of Europe, while Germany sought to detach Britain from the Triple Entente. Their efforts notwithstanding, on 8 October 1912, Montenegro attacked Turkey, followed by the rest of the Balkan Allies (Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia) ten days later.³⁴

After fighting began, the Toronto papers hoped that the war could be contained. The *Christian Guardian* noted that "the powers realize pretty clearly the tremendous issues involved in any move such as the partition of Turkey, and the danger of a general

³³ Barlow, *The Agadir Crisis*, p. 383.

³⁴ For a general chronology, see Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, p 482; Woodward, *Great Britain and the German Navy*, pp. 395-404; Ernst Christian Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938); Vladimir Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966); Lee, *Diplomatic Background*, pp. 301-355. On the diplomatic manoeuvrings of the principle nations involved, see Fischer, *War of Illusions*, pp. 141-159; Steiner, *Britain and the Origins*, pp. 110-127; Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism*, pp. 455-457.

European conflagration is too serious to be lightly regarded...The probability, however, seems to be that the war will be localized and will not be lengthy."³⁵ The *World* hoped that a general European conflict could be avoided, and that localizing the war was "...the one hope of escaping a European Armageddon."³⁶ The *News* echoed the sentiment of the British dailies that the last best hope for European peace lay with the diplomats. Their burden was a heavy one for "...if the diplomacy fails in this the whole of Europe is likely to be plunged in war."³⁷ The only dissenting note belonged to the *Star* which blamed not diplomacy, but "European militarism."³⁸ Nevertheless, the *Star* recognized that since Europe was an armed camp, the last chance for peace lay with the diplomats.

The press reaction demonstrates that the First Balkan war strengthened one of the lessons learned from the Agadir crisis: a European Armageddon could be avoided by sudden and public allegiance to alliances. The fact that diplomatic failure would precipitate horrific war was, according to the *Mail and Empire*, an inducement to negotiate:

Present-day science and invention have made war more terrible than ever, and present-day defensive policy has made it more formidable. Hence has arisen the paradox that Europe's strongest guarantee of peace is its armed camp. So frightfully efficient are the modern instrumentalities of war, and so prodigious are the resources in men and materiel and money kept in the command of the Governments for the waging of war that, we may say, the military spirit of the great powers which maintain this state of preparedness is itself kept cowed into the state of peace.³⁹

³⁵ "The Declaration of War," *Christian Guardian*, 16 October 1912, p. 4.

³⁶ "Balkan War Clouds" (ed.), *World*, 15 October 1912, p. 6.

³⁷ "Straining Diplomacy" (ed.), *News*, 16 October 1912, p. 6.

³⁸ "The European Failure" (ed.), *Star*, 22 October 1912, p. 6.

³⁹ "Stewards of the World's Peace" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 30 November 1912, p. 20.

Liberal papers also agreed that the combined action of the great powers was one of the last best ways to ensure peace. Discussing the terms of an armistice between Turkey and the Balkan Allies, the *Globe* argued that the nations of the Triple Entente must act together to frustrate the pan-German desire to expand its empire to the East. Failure to do so would result in the Balkan Alliance being "...coerced into surrendering to Austria a considerable part of the territory they have won."⁴⁰

As the crisis deepened, dailies took comfort in another assumption: international finance could exert its influence and restrict modern wars. While no one was pleased about the outbreak of war, it was assumed that it would be short. In Britain, the *Guardian* carried a lengthy editorial on the nature of modern war, arguing that modern society would not long tolerate it:

The immediate economic effects of the outbreak of war in the Balkans are certain to be serious. It is not possible for hundreds of thousands of men in any part of the civilised world to turn from the production of wealth by industry to its destruction by war without disastrous results for international trade. The chief sufferers are, of course, the nations which are actually destroying and suffering the destruction of the wealth that peaceful labour has produced, but with them suffer, in a less degree, those other nations with whom in normal times they trade.⁴¹

The economic consequences of war, it was believed, ensured that the concert of Europe would work towards a peaceful settlement.

Editorialists were similarly convinced that international finance would limit a war's scope and duration. Discussing the prospects of Germany and Britain going to war, the *Christian Guardian* argued that "such a war would destroy Germany's purchasing

⁴⁰ "The Danger of a Great War" (ed.), *Globe*, 11 November 1912, p. 6.

⁴¹ "The War and Trade" (ed.), *Guardian*, 19 October 1912, p. 8.

power and would destroy Britain's present purchasing power...Such a war would enrich neither, but as the result of the waste of material resources would impose on the industry and commerce of the two peoples an intolerable burden for the next twenty years."⁴²

Saturday Night drew similar conclusions a few weeks later, arguing that "It would seem that it is up to the banker, the manufacturer, the man of affairs to put a stop to this silly talk of war, war, nothing but war."⁴³

All major local dailies believed in the ability of finance to control modern war. So sure was the *World* of this axiom, that they argued that "...the power of money, in the hands of those whose interests all lie on the side of peace, and exercised with due regard for the just rights of every nation, might certainly be used in a way that would make aggressive war impossible."⁴⁴ The actions of the money markets were judged as a good indicator of the progress of peace talks:

Whatever may be the tenor of the reports cabled from Europe [emphasis added] regarding the international situation created by the Balkan war, the indubitable fact remains that London and Paris, the European financial centres, disclose no symptoms of apprehension. Evidently not only do they not contemplate war, but contrariwise, consider that the conflicting interests of the powers immediately concerned will be adjusted without resort to arms.⁴⁵

The *World's* reaction indicates the weight given the actions of money markets as a superior indicator of the severity of the situation.

Analysts expected the superior Turkish army to win: the opposite occurred. After

⁴² Edward Trelawney, "Is It War?" *Christian Guardian*, 16 October 1912, p. 9.

⁴³ "The Front Page" (ed.), *Saturday Night*, 9 November, 1912, p. 1.

⁴⁴ "Peace and Money Power" (ed.), *World*, 18 November 1912, p. 6. See also, "Guerrilla Warfare in the Balkans" (ed.), *Globe*, 12 October 1912, p. 6.

⁴⁵ "Outlook is Peace" (ed.), *World*, 6 December 1912, p. 6.

only three weeks of fighting, the Balkan Allies took possession of virtually all of European Turkey. A cease-fire was agreed to on 3 December 1912, and the formal peace treaty, the Treaty of London, was signed on 30 May 1913. After months of wrangling over peace terms, the signing ceremony was given only passing coverage. Papers matter-of-factly noted the signing of the final peace settlement in May 1913, and praised Sir Edward Grey for his role. A *News* article, "Declares Grey, Averted Crash; All Praise Him,"⁴⁶ reinforced this the key lesson of the First Balkan War, firmly establishing the diplomats as one of the main guarantors of peace. After all, even when events looked darkest at the end of November and the major powers of Europe readied for war, the diplomats, led by Grey, rescued Europe from the brink.

Torontonians learned that a settlement of the Eastern Europe question was not possible until the alliances clicked into place and the fear of a general European war was so pervasive as to provide the impetus for concessions. No one, it was believed, was willing to risk Armageddon to secure local gains. Once the costs of aggression were escalated to such a point as to make negotiation mandatory, the peace of Europe would be secured. The Balkan war also suggested that international finance, in conjunction with the diplomats, could localize a Balkan conflict. While there was concern over the possibility that the war could spread, experience showed that conflicts could be restricted. Finally, the horrible nature of modern war ensured that any conflict would be short. Contrary to fears expressed at the start of the conflict, the major fighting was over in a matter of weeks. The Balkan war proceeded according to the assumptions which

⁴⁶ "Declares Grey, Averted Crash; All Praise Him," *News*, 31 May 1913, p. 1.

Torontonians and Britons held at its beginning: it had been short, diplomats had restricted its scope and ensured its rapid conclusion, and international finance and modern weaponry had kept it brief. These "lessons" about modern warfare were more deeply entrenched each time they were proven correct.

The Canadian naval debate provides a domestic parallel to the Balkan war. One of the most divisive in Canadian Parliamentary history, the history of the naval debate is a long one.⁴⁷ The first Naval Bill was first introduced by Laurier on 12 January 1910, passing second reading on 20 April and becoming law on 4 May 1910. The contracts for the ships, however, were never awarded. The 1911 election campaign intruded, and with the election of Robert Borden on 21 September 1911, the naval question entered a new, more acrimonious, stage. Borden introduced the Naval Aid Bill to the House of Commons on 5 December 1912. Within the week, Laurier voiced his opposition to the donation of \$35,000,000 for three Dreadnoughts to help relieve Britain's burden of maintaining its lead in capital ships over Germany.

The debate in the papers was bitterly contested, but both political groups were willing to help pay for the Empire's defence. Differences were ones of degree, not kind, with the debate centred around the *form* that aid to Britain was to take, not its necessity. The *Christian Guardian* again demonstrated that the historiography which has presented

⁴⁷ The best source for a general chronology of the debate is Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada*. See also, Hadley and Sarty, *Tin-Pots and Pirate Ships*; Kennedy, "Naval Mastery: The Canadian Context,"; Preston, *Canada and 'Imperial Defense'*; German, *The Sea is at Our Gates*; Boutilier, *The RCN in Retrospect*; Gordon, "The Admiralty,"; Gordon, *The Dominion Partnership*; Brown, *Robert Laird Borden*; Borden, *Robert Laird Borden*; Skelton, *Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier*; Tucker, *The Naval Policy of Sir Robert Borden*.

it as one-dimensional and pacifist is misleading: "The gift of three battleships may be only a small thing relatively, but it will show the world that Canada recognizes that she is in deed and truth part of the Empire, and that she is prepared to do her share in defence of that Empire."⁴⁸ All four Conservative papers supported the giving of \$35,000,000 to Britain for naval defence. The *Mail and Empire's* response was typical: "much as the gift will add to the Empire's prestige and to the guarantees of peace, still more will the giving do so. The onlooking world will be led to realize, as it never realized before, that the British Empire is no loose agglomeration of States, but a political corporation knit together and co-ordinated by ties which the supreme test of danger has the effect of only making stronger."⁴⁹

Liberal papers were not convinced that a cash contribution was the best way to aid Britain. The *Star* granted that at first glance the offer looked impressive. The problem with Borden's policy, it editorialized, was that while it "...reduces one of Britain's difficulties [lack of ships], it increases the other. He [Borden] proposes to have built at Canada's expense three powerful vessels and when the ship-builders and armorers have finished with them to hand them over to Britain -- empty, unpeopled, steamless, idle."⁵⁰ The *Globe* echoed these sentiments, arguing that Canada must do more than just provide Britain with Dreadnoughts: "If Mr. Borden will put the \$35,000,000 into ships to be built, manned, and maintained by Canada, *The Globe* is confident he will secure an

⁴⁸ "Canada's Dreadnoughts," *Christian Guardian*, 11 December 1912, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁹ "Rule Britannia!" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 6 December 1912, p. 6. See also, "Let Borden Keep the Naval Issue Out of Politics" (ed.), *Telegram*, 5 December 1912, p. 10; "Let the Vote be Unanimous" (ed.), *News*, 6 December 1912, p. 6.

⁵⁰ "Adding to the British Burden" (ed.), *Star*, 6 December 1912, p. 8.

almost unanimous support in Parliament...We shall be surprised if the Liberal party does not nail the flag to the Canadian masthead and say: 'Thirty-five millions, or fifty millions if necessary, but it shall be spent upon ships to be owned, manned, and maintained by the people of Canada.'⁵¹

After the initial flurry, the debate degenerated into a bitterly partisan issue in which both sides accused the other of failing to guarantee the security of the Empire. Reflecting the debate in the House of Commons, the Liberal papers argued that while Germany posed a threat, relations between Britain and Germany were improving. In such a context, they advocated a Canadian navy as the best contribution to the defence of the Empire.⁵² In contrast, the Conservatives believed that the emergency was acute and demanded immediate action in the form of a cash contribution to Britain. The *News* argued that "Thirty-five million dollars spent as Mr. Borden proposes to spend it will accomplish more for Canadian and Imperial safety during the next few critical years than would \$100,000,000 laid out on the Laurier plan, admirable though it may be, and capable as it may be of adoption later on [once the crisis had passed]."⁵³

The debate dragged on in the Canadian House of Commons for months, and papers reflected party divisions. Finally, on 28 February 1913 the bill passed second, and on 15 May, third reading, reaching the Liberal controlled Senate on 20 May. Nine days

⁵¹ "No Emergency is Disclosed" (ed.), *Globe*, 7 December 1912, p. 6.

⁵² "A Real Navy for Canada" (ed.), *Globe*, 13 December 1912, p. 6. For another example of the Liberal reaction, see "Sir Wilfrid's Speech" (ed.), *Star*, 13 December 1912, p. 8.

⁵³ "Sir Wilfrid Laurier Changes His Policy" (ed.), *News*, 13 December 1912, p. 6. For other examples of the Conservative reaction, see "Laurier Little Navy Policy Makes No Appeal to Canada" (ed.), *Telegram*, 13 December 1912, p. 10; "Sir Wilfrid in His Lone Furrow" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 13 December 1912, p. 6.

later, under the leadership of Liberal Sir George Ross, the Naval Aid Bill was defeated. The Liberal papers seized this chance to advocate the creation of a Canadian navy as the best guarantee of the Empire's safety.⁵⁴ The Conservative press responded by accusing the Liberals of failing to recognize the need to contribute directly to Imperial defence:

What is the naval emergency? It is not a thing that is on and off at some particular moment. It is not the high point of a particular international controversy. It is a condition of strain that may last for years, a strain that may at anytime cause a break...The emergency is a pending, continuing condition, and the Canadian government must not cease its efforts to place three powerful battleships at the disposal of the British Admiralty as soon as possible.⁵⁵

At its root, the naval debate hinged on the definition of 'emergency.' Both Liberals and Conservatives recognized the same facts, but interpreted them differently, advocating different solutions.

At the close of the debate, the Empire was no closer to solving the German threat. The debate itself, however, reveals much about the nature of Canada's place in the Empire as it was understood in Toronto. Division grew out of different interpretations of the best way to aid Britain, not the need to share in the common defence of the Empire. The Empire was not hierarchical; it was 'a political corporation' which derived its strength from combined action, willingly undertaken. While international alliances protected the peace of Europe, shared beliefs about the Empire ensured that Canadians would support

⁵⁴ See for example, "Naval Policy" (ed.), *Star*, 30 May 1913, p. 8; "Sir George Ross and the Jingoers" (ed.), *Globe*, 30 May 1913, p. 6.

⁵⁵ "The Last Ditchers" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 31 May 1913, p. 20. For other examples, see "Laurier Fiat vs. Popular Mandate" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 30 May 1913, p. 6; "Ross and Laurier" (ed.), *News*, 30 May 1913, p. 6; "A Shame that Sir George Ross Was Called to Sacrifice the Conversations of a Lifetime" (ed.), *Telegram*, 30 May 1913, p. 14.

Britain as part of the Empire in an emergency.

The international environment continued to be an uneasy one, and the Second Balkan War⁵⁶ followed quickly on the heels of the First, erupting over disputes between members of the Balkan Alliance over the spoils from the First Balkan War. Bulgaria, which had done most of the fighting, assumed that it could force its position on Greece and Serbia, attacking them on 29 June 1913 without a declaration of war.

Reaction in the papers was unequivocally one of contempt for the former Balkan Allies. The *Star* noted sarcastically that "when all the best and bravest men of Bulgaria and Servia have slain each other, perhaps the Turk will reconquer what's left."⁵⁷ Jaded comments continued for over a week, the *Star* arguing that "the Bulgarians are being steadily beaten by the Greeks. However, we all know that the Bulgarians conquer old age by drinking buttermilk and will, therefore, ultimately defeat the Greeks by outliving them."⁵⁸ The *Globe* noted caustically that "the satisfaction of the Christian nations in the defeat of Mohammedans is destroyed by the savagery of the Christians in fighting over the spoils."⁵⁹ The Conservative press agreed. The *Mail and Empire* asked, "Who will the Bulgarians or the Servians wallop when they get through with each other?"⁶⁰ It also observed that "Bulgaria having been beaten, there may be a slight interlude of peace in

⁵⁶ For a general chronology of the war, see Woodward, *Great Britain and the German Navy*, pp. 395-404; Helmreich, *Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*; Taylor, *Struggle for Mastery*, pp. 483-510; Dedijer, *Road to Sarajevo*; Lee, *Diplomatic Background*, pp. 301-355; Fischer, *War of Illusions*, pp. 205-229; Steiner, *Britain and the Origins*, pp. 110-127.

⁵⁷ "Note and Comment" (ed.), *Star*, 3 July 1913, p. 6.

⁵⁸ "Note and Comment" (ed.), *Star*, 11 July 1913, p. 6.

⁵⁹ "Notes and Comments" (ed.), *Globe*, 9 July 1913, p. 4.

⁶⁰ "Untitled" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 7 July 1913, p. 6.

the Balkans before the Greeks and Servians turn on each other."⁶¹

Once the fighting began, papers made the familiar plea to localize the conflict and ensure its brevity. They reaffirmed that war was too costly and must be short. The *Christian Guardian* commented that the Balkan war, and the ship-building race between Germany and Britain, must end soon, arguing that "war cannot be waged on patriotic professions and jingo editorials. It takes money, and when the people say, 'We will not pay the price,' the armies and navies will largely disband."⁶² The *Globe* argued that "the veneer of civilization is still very thin in the Balkans. A notification that Europe will refuse them loans on any pretext whatsoever unless they keep the peace would have more influence upon Serb, Greek and Bulgar than many sermons on the evils of war."⁶³

When the fighting ended, Greece and Serbia had fared well, while the Bulgarians had lost territory. After a period of short, sharp fighting, an armistice was agreed to, and a peace treaty, the Treaty of Bucharest, signed on 11 August 1913. The pattern to limit the scale and destructiveness of the conflict followed during the First Balkan War was recommended again. The last war had been restricted to that area of the world where civilization had not yet completely taken hold, so the same policy was advocated,⁶⁴ reaffirming the standard formula for solving Balkan crises: contain the conflict and let the diplomats find a solution. The conflict also reaffirmed the belief that war was too costly and entrenched contemptuous feelings towards the Balkan region. There was a

⁶¹ "Untitled" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 12 July 1913, p. 6. See also, "The Balkan War" (ed.), *News*, 10 July 1913, p. 6.

⁶² "Tight Money Favours Peace," *Christian Guardian*, 2 July 1913, p. 4.

⁶³ "Notes and Comments" (ed.), *Globe*, 5 July 1913, p. 4. For another example, see "The Balkan Question" (ed.), *Star*, 21 July 1913, p. 8.

⁶⁴ See for example, "Note and Comment" (ed.), *Star*, 17 July 1913, p. 8.

growing sense that the region would constantly erupt into short little wars over petty grievances. The accepted strategy was to limit the conflict, to avoid drawing in the great powers, and ensure that it was localized.

These international crises influenced the actions of Torontonians in the summer of 1914. The assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Franz Ferdinand, on 28 June 1914 sparked press reaction, but the papers did not interpret the killing as a harbinger of a European war. In all likelihood, they reasoned, this incident was just the latest in a long series of Balkan flash points which would recede before long. Besides, their attention was focused elsewhere. The gravest issue in the summer of 1914 was not the tension with Germany, but the Irish Question and the prospect of a civil war in Ireland. Papers were preoccupied with the crisis, and editorialists discussed the latest developments. In early June, the *News* warned that "the Irish trouble has not ended. It has scarcely begun."⁶⁵

The issue continued to be a major concern throughout June and the first three weeks of July. The arrival of 12 July, the anniversary of Protestant victories at the Battle of the Boyne, sparked particular concern. The *News* wondered if the 12th would "...mark the climax of the crisis."⁶⁶ If the Irish were unable to solve their dispute, the *World* puzzled, what hope did Canada have of solving its language and religious differences?⁶⁷ The *Globe* and the *Star* took more positive outlooks, arguing that the Irish leaders understood the consequences of open rebellion: "No one knows better than these Tory

⁶⁵ "Ulster Resolute" (ed.), *News*, 6 June 1914, p. 6.

⁶⁶ "The July Crisis" (ed.), *News*, 8 July 1914, p. 8.

⁶⁷ "What It Means For Us" (ed.), *World*, 11 July 1914, p. 6.

leaders that the first shot in a religious war in Ulster would unleash in the United Kingdom forces over which they have no control and involve the throne and constitution in a war of revolution from which every sane Briton must recoil."⁶⁸ The response to the Irish question foreshadowed the reaction to the July crisis. An armed standoff was viewed with trepidation since a mistake could mean war. However, the leaders were trusted to solve the crisis. The Irish used militant tactics to solve problems, their choices reflecting the pervasiveness of the belief that preparing for battle was a necessary precursor to defending one's interests. The international community behaved in the same manner, only on a much larger scale.

Papers did not divert their attention from Irish or domestic events to consider the international crisis until just over a week before Canadians would find themselves embroiled in a major continental war. Loyalty to Britain was assumed throughout this period, the crises crystallizing sentiment which already existed. *Saturday Night* asked,

What are the exact terms of the understanding to-day between Britain and France? Here is the subject of supreme importance -- it may well plunge us into the bloodiest war in history -- it affects the entire financial, commercial and industrial establishments of the British Empire. Yet its nature is unknown to the British people...I venture to say that the men in public life who have seen that argument could be counted on the fingers of one hand -- certainly on those of both hands. *It is secret. It must be secret. It should be secret* [emphasis added]...We must assume that these experts, with all their secret information from the best diplomatic staff in Europe, are doing the best they know to protect the life and the interests of the Empire.⁶⁹

Torontonians considered themselves part of the Empire, and they supported Britain's efforts to avoid war while understanding the consequences of a diplomatic failure.

⁶⁸ "Will Ulster Fight?" (ed.), *Globe*, 11 July 1914, p. 6.

⁶⁹ "Canada's Say on Foreign Politics" (ed.), *Saturday Night*, 27 June 1914, p. 2.

Once aware of the crisis, the papers demonstrated that editors and readers reacted as British Canadians, important participants in the Empire. London was the metropolis for English-speaking Torontonians: their attitudes and preoccupations paralleled those of their British cousins. Referring to the Balkan crisis, *Saturday Night* echoed its earlier opinion:

Britain emphatically does not want to be dragged into a war of *revanche* [emphasis in the original] [over provinces lost in the 1870 Franco-Prussian war]. So she pretends that she will not fight unless France is attacked. But the shrewd French know just how much weight to attach to that. They know that if the Dual Alliance and Triple Alliance lock in a death struggle, Britain simply dare not see the Dual Alliance crushed. *She must fight; and she must fight at the drop of a hat* [emphasis added].⁷⁰

A sudden rush towards war was not only acceptable, but desirable, allowing diplomats maximum latitude to solve the crisis. If all else failed, however, war was recognized as the last resort.

Torontonians took comfort in the belief, learned from previous conflicts, that a European war would be brief. The *News* hoped that Lord Grey would be able, using diplomacy and the "prestige of the mighty British navy," to ensure that any belligerency would be "short-lived."⁷¹ Noting Italy's reluctance to involve itself, the *Telegram* observed that "Without Italy, the two other members of the Triple Alliance would be in a sorry plight. Not long could they stand against armed Europe, and a conflict provoked by the pride would surely end in humiliation. The pan-German plot would be smashed in short order."⁷² The *Mail and Empire* noted the cost of war, despite its assumed brevity,

⁷⁰ "How Canada May be Plunged Into War" (ed.), *Saturday Night*, 18 July 1914, p. 2.

⁷¹ "Canada and the War" (ed.), *News*, 29 July 1914, p. 6.

⁷² "Kaiser May Yet Come to His Senses" (ed.), *Telegram*, 1 August 1914, p. 10.

but focused on what could be gained: "Such a war as is contemplated, involving three-quarters of the great powers of the world, could not be interrupted by any other power or combination of powers once it got under way. It would be of comparatively short duration, and might in the end prove the beginning of an era of universal peace. As it would be the greatest of wars, so it might be the last."⁷³

The reaction of the papers to the events of the summer of 1914 was informed by their experience. Editorialists assumed that Grey would be able to solve the crisis through diplomacy as they had learned to trust Grey on the basis of his success in previous crises. Lord Grey had avoided war with Germany over the naval and Agadir crises, and helped orchestrate peace in the Balkans two times in as many years. The papers ignored the crisis until the last moment, not because they were ignorant of international events, but on the basis of the lessons learned from recent history. The First Balkan war saw the Christian powers support the Balkan alliance. When the victorious allies fought among themselves over the spoils of victory, the press condemned them. Sarcastic comments and reduced coverage indicated that the Balkans were now viewed as a backward region determined to destroy itself. The major powers had contained the conflict twice in the past, and there was every reason to believe that they would do so again in 1914. Canadians have been considered uninformed because they assumed that the war would be short. However, this tenet had been proven twice over, since both Balkan wars had been short campaigns with a clear winner. They also believed that international finance had played a role in ensuring peace by refusing to fund conflict.

⁷³ "The Last of Wars" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 1 August 1914, p. 16.

That Germany would end up the main enemy is not without precedent either. Throughout the naval crisis of 1909, the Agadir confrontation of 1911, and the riotous debate in the House of Commons over the naval question, Germany was consistently cited as the Empire's chief antagonist. When war finally appeared imminent, it was only natural that Germany would assume the role of primary enemy.

When historians interpret Toronto's 1914 reaction in relation to the events which would follow, it is represented as caught up in the course of events. However, when Toronto's attitude is represented as the culmination of a series of lessons learned, the portrait changes. The assumptions that citizens used to interpret international events proved to be incorrect. However, to dismiss their behaviour as naive does not do them justice. Citizens living at the time had passed through a series of international events which had provided a particular set of lessons, formed through learning about, and drawing conclusions from, international events. That the assumptions were wrong proves only that the First World War was unlike any conflict which had preceded it.

Chapter 2

A Great Adventure

News of the German invasion of France and the violation of Belgium's neutrality reached Canada on 2 August 1914. In Toronto, the editors of all six of the city's newspapers prepared editorials which reflected the broad consensus on the role that the British Empire should play in the crisis. Reaction in Toronto was similar to responses in other cities of the Empire like Auckland, Sydney, Cape Town, Halifax or Vancouver.¹ Germany which had repeatedly threatened the peace of Europe and challenged the naval power of the Empire was now waging war on France and ignoring the rights of the Belgian state. Britain would undoubtedly intervene and would enjoy the complete support of the Dominions.

Thousands of citizens gathered on Toronto's downtown streets to be a part of history as it happened. People recognized that great events were afoot, and they wanted to experience it for themselves. Thousands besieged newspaper offices looking for information all afternoon on 4 August. The crowds increased in the early evening when warehouses and factories closed for the day. By early evening, Bay and Yonge Streets were "black with people." Traffic was at a standstill. Policemen gave up directing traffic, turning to crowd control. Newspaper boys did a brisk trade in Extras. Citizens knew that at midnight British time, 7 p.m. in Toronto, the British ultimatum to Germany would expire. If Germany did not back down, then the Empire would be at war alongside Russia and France. They watched and waited as the minutes ticked by.

¹ Historians have established that enthusiasm for war was found in the major cities of belligerent countries. Modris Eksteins notes that crowds of tens of thousands took to the streets Berlin, Paris, London, Vienna and St. Petersburg. (Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1989), pp. 55-56).

At 7 p.m., the bells of Toronto's Big Ben sounded seven times. Nothing else happened. The crowd waited. Thousands of miles away a telegraph operator cabled the news under the Atlantic Ocean. Fifteen minutes later, a news boy's announcement disturbed the relative calm: "Get the War Cry." Extras were purchased quickly. It was official: Britain was at war. Giant banners were unfurled from newspaper offices: "Official Announcement that Great Britain Has Declared War Against Germany." The crowd met the news with silence: "The news sank home. Then a cheer broke. It was not for war, but for the King, Britain, and -- peace gone -- victory."² Residents of this small British provincial town were singularly unconcerned with the reaction of the Canadian parliament. No one wondered whether or not Canada would follow Britain to war. Constitutional distinctions meant nothing. Britain was at war: Canada was at war.

Bulletin after bulletin flashed in newspaper office windows, meeting with cheers. Men removed hats and tilted back heads in song: "Rule Britannia" and "God Save The King" filled the air. Arm in arm with their escorts, women joined in the singing. Young and old participated. Groups gathered at street corners: they talked of nothing but war. As the news spread, thousands more proceeded downtown to hear the latest. Union Jacks appeared in windows and storefronts. Impromptu parades, complete with marching bands, proceeded West along King Street before turning up Yonge, then West on Queen Street towards the Armories. Militia regiment headquarters were assaulted by young men clamoring to enlist. The armories of the 48th Highlanders, Royal Grenadiers, Mississauga Horse, and Queen's Own Rifles, prominent militia regiments, were packed

² "War Call Stirs Patriotic Toronto," *Globe*, 5 August 1914, p. 6.

all evening. Outside, long lines waited for the chance to get in, even before word was received from Ottawa about the form of Canada's contribution. It was midnight before the crowd began to thin.³

Over the next two days, crowds actually increased as more and more Torontonians went downtown to hear the latest. The dinner hour was poorly observed as citizens rushed directly downtown after work for days. Queen, King, Bay and Yonge Streets were crowded with the patriotic and the curious alike until well after midnight. Crowds gathered on 6 August to hear the answer to the following questions: "What means this sound of heavy firing borne on the wind? What means these hundreds of wounded and prisoners? What messages are flashing between the engaged fleet and London?"⁴ The crowds grew each night⁵ as more and more people took an active part in the collective response to the war.⁶

³ The following articles were used to construct a narrative of the day's events: "Last Song Always God Save The King," *News*, 5 August 1914, p. 3; "How The News Was Received in Toronto," *News*, 5 August 1914, p. 4; "War Call Stirs Patriotic Toronto," *Globe*, 5 August 1914, p. 6; "City Rang With Cheers When War Was Declared," *Telegram*, 5 August 1914, p. 13; "Toronto Heard War Call With Quiet Dignity," *Star*, 5 August 1914, p. 3.

⁴ "Anxiously Awaited News," *Telegram*, 7 August 1914, p. 17.

⁵ See for example, "Enthusiastic Crowds Still Parade, Singing Patriotic Songs," *Mail and Empire*, 7 August 1914, p. 4; "Toronto's Thousands Seek News of War," *Globe*, 6 August 1914, p. 6.

⁶ Elizabeth Cawthra kept a diary throughout this period, commenting on the war and the issues of the day from her Beverley Street home. On 7 August she noted that there was "great excitement over the war rumours but nothing decisive reported." (Elizabeth Cawthra, Diary Entry, 7 August 1914, Metro Toronto Reference Library, Baldwin Room, Cawthra Family Collection, Box 2, Series I, Elizabeth Cawthra, Diaries 1900-1921.) Similar enthusiasm was expressed by Mrs. Bessie Grange in a letter to her son Edward. Mrs. Grange, the wife of a prominent Toronto veterinarian, wrote to Edward about the happenings in Toronto in the first days of the war. Her reports confirm those offered by the newspapers: "The excitement here [about the war] has been

The most important manifestation of this early enthusiasm found expression in the numbers of men who flocked to the recruiting depots. Volumes of material have been written on the history of recruiting, most of it centred around evaluating whether or not the schemes used by the colourful Minister of the Militia, Sam Hughes, were a success or a failure.⁷ What is missing from the literature is an assessment of the efforts required to

tremendous. Father has been downtown every night and this house is just full of *extras* [emphasis in the original]." (Letter from Mrs. Bessie Grange to her son, E.R. Grange, Metro Reference Library, Baldwin Reading Room, Manuscript Collection, Grange Family Papers, Box 1, 8 August 1914, p. 5.). Unfortunately, there are very few of these types of sources which have survived. Those that do exist, however, consistently reinforce the portrait drawn in the papers.

⁷ F.H. Underhill, "Canada and the Last War," in Chester Martin, ed., *Canada in Peace and War: Eight Studies in National Trends Since 1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), uses the *Canadian Annual Review* as the major source to evaluate recruiting. His survey only touches on the surface of the recruiting issue. G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919: Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1962), offers a cursory examination of recruiting policy, arguing recruiting proceeded because standards were relaxed over time, but does not probe the issue in any depth. An in-depth study was conducted in a Master's thesis by Jean Bruce, "The *Toronto Globe* and the Manpower Problem: 1914-1917," Queen's University, 1967. Bruce's work indicated the wealth of information available at the local level to study recruiting, but it did not delve far beyond the numbers at the local level to study the recruiting process. Matthew Bray's "'Fighting As An Ally': The English-Canadian Patriotic Response to the Great War," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LXI, No. 2, June 1980, pp. 141-168, examines the patriotic sentiment of English-Canadians and the role that it played in securing recruits. While useful as a commentary on English-Canadian society, it does not offer a conclusive discussion of the stages of recruiting. A case study of battalion recruiting was done by Robert Craig Brown and Donald Loveridge, "Unrequited Faith: Recruiting and the CEF, 1914-1918," *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, No. 51, 1982. Useful to garner the recruiting totals from around the country, focusing on numbers does not allow them to uncover the process involved to secure recruits which is clearly visible at the local level in newspaper coverage. Studies of the Minister of Militia, Sam Hughes, have also offered their assessment of the recruiting effort. The first, written by long-time Hughes friend, Charles F. Winter, *Lieutenant-General the Hon. Sir Sam Hughes: Canada's War Minister, 1911-1916* (Toronto: Macmillan Company, 1931), is a one-dimensional defence of a colleague. A more scholarly approach is taken by Ronald G. Haycock's *Sam Hughes: The Public Career of*

secure troops throughout the war. There were many stages on the road that culminated in conscription, and these stepping stones can be uncovered by studying the recruiting *campaigns*, not just *numbers*.⁸ Securing recruits in August 1914 was less a process of recruiting than it was of deciding who to enlist.

While awaiting orders from Ottawa, officials from local militia regiments met at Military Headquarters at 215 Simcoe Street to discuss the situation. Anticipating having to supply men for a Canadian Expeditionary Force, units opened their doors to accept new recruits. Lieut.-Col. J.A. Currie, M.P.,⁹ of the 48th Highlanders announced that his regiment would welcome 300. There was no difficulty in securing volunteers.¹⁰ Local

a Controversial Canadian, 1855-1916 (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1986), but, again, no examination is given of the efforts required to secure recruits even in the early period of the war.

Other historians have examined recruiting policy within the framework of a wider study. For instance, Mark McGowan's "Sharing the Burden of Empire: Toronto's Catholics and the Great War, 1914-1918," in Mark George McGowan and Brian P. Clarke, eds., *Catholics at the 'Gathering Place': Historical Essays on the Archdiocese of Toronto 1841-1991* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993), pp. 177-207, and his PhD dissertation, "'We Are All Canadians': A Social, Religious and Cultural Portrait of Toronto's English-Speaking Roman Catholics, 1890-1920," Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988, look at the recruiting performance of Catholics in Toronto within the context of the attempt by Catholics to integrate into English-Canadian Protestant society. Paul Maroney documents recruiting in Ontario as part of a wider commentary on the continuity of attitudes towards war between pre-war and war years ("'The Great Adventure': The Context and Ideology of Recruiting in Ontario, 1914-1917," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 77, No. 1, March 1996, pp. 62-98).

⁸ Chapter 4 provides an in-depth analysis of recruiting in Toronto from September 1914 until conscription was announced in May 1917.

⁹ Currie was born in Simcoe County in 1868, but had lived in Toronto for years prior to the start of the war. He worked as a reporter for the *Mail and Empire* and the *News* for a total of 12 years. He was elected to the House of Commons for Simcoe in 1908, and again in 1911. He volunteered for overseas service as part of the First Contingent. (B.M. Greene, *Who's Who and Why, 1921* (Toronto: International Press Limited, 1921), p. 174.).

¹⁰ "Feverish Excitement at Military Headquarters," *News*, 5 August 1914, p. 3.

militia regiments were awash with them. Thousands offered themselves. The number of volunteers would have been much higher but for the measures taken by militia regiments to stem the tide. The Queen's Own Rifles announced that it would consider enrolling only men who had served previously with the unit. All others had to wait. This announcement sent the crowd of around 4,000 men from the Queen's Own armories at Queen Street and University Avenue to swell the throng already gathered in front of the headquarters of the 48th Highlanders. The 48th Highlanders sifted through the flock, taking only the best physical specimens into the building for examination. Hundreds were turned away.¹¹ The Royal Grenadiers were similarly overwhelmed.¹² The galleries of local armories were filled with onlookers who watched newly-enrolled recruits "form up" and begin to drill.

Recruiting officers preferred recruits with previous military experience. This requirement was born out of expediency, out of the desire to form as competent a force as possible, and out of the need to impose a filter to help sort out the thousands who came forward. Given the fact that much ink has been spilled decrying the relatively low percentage of Canadian born recruits in the First Contingent,¹³ it must be emphasized that many men came forward to enlist, only to be passed over in favour of others with experience. Recent immigrants of British birth were more likely to have had military training, and it was primarily for this reason that relatively few Canadian-born men were

¹¹ "Three Times Too Many Eager to Volunteer," *Star*, 6 August 1914, p. 5.

¹² "Hundreds Pour In To Join The Colours," *Globe*, 7 August 1914, p. 7.

¹³ See for example, Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House, 1993), p. 9.

chosen. This fact was recognized at the time, papers reporting as early as 10 August that "[s]everal of the regiments are now limiting their recruits to former members and ex-service men, as they are anxious to have as many experienced men as possible ready for the first contingent from Canada."¹⁴ These reports would have been reinforced by the stories of hundreds of local men who did not have the experience or the physical stature to even enter the Armories, let alone pass the strenuous medical exam and join the ranks. The final tally of Canadian born soldiers in the original force was lower than British born because of the requirement for men with military experience. Had the criterion for service included being born in Canada, the ranks would still have been filled.

Against the backdrop of this enthusiasm, the Canadian war effort took shape. On 6 August 1914 His Majesty's Government cabled from London that it would gladly accept the offer to send a Canadian Expeditionary Force, asking that it be "despatched as soon as possible."¹⁵ Minister of Militia, Sam Hughes, sent secret night telegrams directly to the 226 unit commanders of the Canadian Militia, ordering the preparation of lists of men between 18 and 45 who would serve overseas. On 10 August an Order in Council set the strength of the contingent at 25,000 men. Once it was determined how many men from each militia regiment would be able to serve, the selected men would proceed to Valcartier, Quebec for training before departing for Britain.

Events in Toronto quickened their pace as militia commanders struggled to create the "descriptive rolls" demanded by Sam Hughes. The most commonly used word to

¹⁴ "Toronto Soldiers Eager for Action," *Mail and Empire*, 10 August 1914, p. 4.

¹⁵ Nicholson, *Official History*, p. 17.

refer to volunteering for overseas service was "privilege." At the beginning of the war, the *Telegram* noted the "[i]nspiring scene at armories when hundreds of young men clamor for the privilege to fight."¹⁶ Report after report in daily newspapers proclaimed that the recruiting drive was a complete success.¹⁷ Rumours flew around town as citizens hoped that the local militia regiments would be able to serve as distinct units in France. On 10 August it was reported that the 48th Highlanders and Queen's Own Rifles would go to the front as separate units.¹⁸ Wishing to see what the regiment was doing, thousands gathered to see the Highlanders train. While no doubt encouraging to the men, at times the crowds posed an impediment to training, as "...people surged round the principal entrance [to the armories] in hundreds and constables had all they could do to keep them in check."¹⁹ Men still in civilian clothes paraded and made their best efforts to appear soldier-like even as officers scrambled to secure enough khaki uniforms.

Arrangements were made to create a military camp at Long Branch, at the site of the Rifle Ranges. A tent city was constructed overnight to house between 2,000 and 3,000 new soldiers after 17 August 1914. The commanding officer of the 48th Highlanders, J.A. Currie, organized the training and waited for the order from Ottawa to proceed to Valcartier. In the meantime, recruits drew the standard British army pay of 75

¹⁶ "To Fight For the Empire," *Telegram*, 6 August 1914, p. 10.

¹⁷ See for example, "War Enthusiasm in City, Recruits Throng Armories," *Telegram*, 8 August 1914, p. 20; "Toronto Soldiers Eager for Action," *Mail and Empire*, 10 August 1914, p. 4.

¹⁸ "48th Highlanders Go To Front As a Separate Unit," *News*, 10 August 1914, p. 1; "Highlanders Will Go With First Contingent," *Globe*, 10 August 1914, p. 8; "Local Regiments To Go To War As Units," *Star*, 11 August 1914, p. 1.

¹⁹ "Highlanders Recruits Four Hundred Men," *Globe*, 11 August 1914, p. 6.

cents a day. They were expected to master the rudiments of "...rifle and bayonet practice, skirmishing drill and route marching, and every other phase of military training, from learning how to read war maps to storming every position in the neighbourhood of the camp."²⁰ Since participation was a "privilege," men were asked to obey the highest standards of behaviour: the camp was dry.

It was not long, however, before troops began leaving for Valcartier. Large crowds gathered on 20 August 1914, in a driving rain, to see the first soldiers off to war. The mood of the crowd was at once jubilant to be part of the great adventure and concerned for the welfare of its sons. The Cherry Street Station was the scene of the final parade of 1,000 citizen-soldiers before they left the city. Military bands played martial music from the platform, with soldier and civilian alike joining their voices in song. Just over two weeks ago, these men had been office clerks and factory workers. They were taking their leave of loved ones to face the might of the German Army. The significance of this fact was not lost to the people gathered at the station. Those left behind passed trinkets and good luck charms to arms outstretched from railcar windows. It was a sober goodbye. In their wake, the departed trains left only silence. After a final wave, a last glance, loved ones turned in the mud, and began making their way home.²¹

During the next ten days, wave after wave of volunteers were ushered to the train

²⁰ "48th Highlanders To Be In Camp Monday," *Star*, 15 August 1914, p. 3; "Local Infantry Regiments to Encamp at Long Branch Ranges," *World*, 15 August 1914, p. 2.

²¹ "'Will Meet You In Berlin!' Was Cry," *News*, 20 August 1914, pp. 1, 3; "Hundreds Stood in Rain to See 1000 Troops Off," *Star*, 20 August 1914, p. 1; "Nine Hundred Men Left For Quebec," *World*, 21 August 1914, p. 3; "Volunteers Leave for Valcartier," *Mail and Empire*, 20 August 1914, p. 4.

station by large, cheering crowds. The day after the first large contingent left, another 1,522 soldiers, many from the Queen's Own Rifles, entrained for "points East."²² Crowds of people stood 20 deep, filling the entire platform. Others jammed the overpass for one last look at the departing soldiers. On the afternoon of August 29, another 1,700 recruits entrained.²³ Finally, on 31 August, the last major draft of volunteers left town: "The tens of thousands who cheered the Kilties [the 48th Highlanders] on their way to Valcartier camp, and the war, saw the most workmanlike regiment that ever marched through Toronto streets...The training at Long Branch has bronzed the faces of the men, and their whole appearance was most impressive."²⁴ Speaking to men about to depart, Mayor H.C. Hocken²⁵ again referred to soldiering as a privilege: "You will have the proud privilege of fighting not only for the British Empire but for the cause of civilization."²⁶ Toronto had sent just over 4,000 of its men to war.²⁷

The mood of the period was captured in an unusual series of letters from a young university graduate who returned home to Toronto shortly after the outbreak of war. Writing to his sister in Halifax, Ian Sinclair reported, "I've left Pembroke for good & am going back to Toronto to get some training as I think I'm going to join the 48th

²² "1,522 Toronto Soldiers Leave; Highlanders Go in One Week," *Star*, 22 August 1914, p. 1.

²³ "Seventeen Hundred Will Entrain Today," *World*, 29 August 1914, p. 8.

²⁴ "Kilties Leave for War Cheered on by Thousands," *Telegram*, 31 August 1914, p. 6.

²⁵ Hocken was in his second year as Mayor, but he had also served for five years as a Controller for the Council of Toronto. (Ernest J. Chambers, ed., *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1918* (Ottawa: Mortimer Company Limited, 1918), p. 146.).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ "Volunteers Pass the Medical Test," *Mail and Empire*, 31 August 1914, p. 2.

[Highlanders]. However, I do'nt [sic] think I'll get in in time to go to England with the first lot. Gib [a friend] is'nt [sic] likely to go with the first contingent either...It must be rather exciting in Halifax as I suppose a lot of warships are in & out all the time."²⁸ His early enthusiasm for the war and the scope of events continued after he enlisted with the 48th Highlanders, along with most of his friends from university. A week later, he assured his mother that "practically every friend I have in Toronto has volunteered to go and I'm mighty glad I took some step towards helping a little."²⁹

Sinclair also began to keep a diary which records his impressions of the public response to the war. On 23 August he noted that all recruits had "...to turn out for church parade. The beautiful hot Summer day had brought crowds of civilians out to see the parade, which started off with great playing of bands and much eclat [sic] generally. However, it didn't take the sun long to effect the lately inoculated troops and before the service ended, half the battalion had either fainted or sought refuge in their tents."³⁰ Despite the mishap, crowds continued to number in the thousands. Late in August, the troops paraded one last time before leaving for Valcartier Camp. Sinclair recorded his impressions of the crowd in his diary: "The whole [parade] route was a solid mass of cheering humanity, who gave us a great roar of cheers all the way to the station, where we

²⁸ Letter from Ian Sinclair to his sister, Dorothy Sinclair, 17 August 1914, Public Archives of Canada (henceforth PAC), MG 30, E 432, File 1-16, Correspondence, Transcripts, August 1914-December 1914, p. 1.

²⁹ Letter from Ian Sinclair to his Mother, Mrs. Angus Sinclair, 24 August 1914, From Long Branch Camp in Toronto, PAC, MG 30, E432, Vol. 1, File 1-16, Correspondence, Transcripts, August 1914-December 1914, p. 2.

³⁰ Ian Sinclair, Diary Entry, 23 August 1914, PAC, MG 30, E432, Vol. 1, File 1-2, p. 2.

were all soon stowed away and started off on the first leg of our journey to Europe."³¹

The training of these men was conducted in full view of the local population. Route marches wound their way through city streets, citizens watched new recruits struggle with drill, and thousands participated in the process of taking their leave of soldiers when they departed for Valcartier. This was a collective enterprise. Just as the city surrendered thousands of its young men to the military, both civilian and soldier alike were united in a common cause. The enthusiasm for the war effort, however, was not uninformed. Even as citizens were excited by the notion of a great adventure, they worried about the safety of loved ones at the front. Poignant scenes of leave taking, even amidst the cheers and patriotic songs, became a regular feature in this first month of war. Support for the war is even more remarkable given that people understood that men would die, and that others would have to take their place.

While a great deal of attention focused on enlistment and seeing the troops off to Valcartier, virtually all of Toronto was engaged in some way in helping the war effort. Despite a growing and rich literature on Canadian women's history, there is a paucity of information on what women did during the war,³² but the available sources leave no

³¹ Ian Sinclair, Diary Entry, August 1914 (precise date not listed, although likely 29 or 30 August), PAC, MG 30, E432, Vol. 1, File 1-2, p. 3.

³² This literature is discussed in detail in Chapter 5 in the context of an analysis of women's activities in Toronto from September 1914 to May 1917 and the arrival of conscription. The main bibliographic source for scholarly material available on Canada's Military History, O.A. Cooke, *The Canadian Military Experience 1867-1995: A Bibliography*, 3rd ed. (Ottawa: Department of History and Heritage, Department of National Defence, 1997), does not include a single entry for women in the First World War. Linda Kealey, *Enlisting Women for the Cause: Women, Labour, and the Left in Canada, 1890-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) is a noteworthy exception. Similarly, one of the earliest works was done by Ceta Ramkhalawansingh,

doubt that most women living in Toronto eagerly joined the war effort in any way they could.

Many women were just as eager as men to sign up for overseas service. On the evening war was declared, over 200 women volunteered for active service as nurses. The armories at Queen Street and University Avenue were crowded with over 300 women who sought to take the St. John's Ambulance Corps course. Officials stated that twice that number had to be turned away because of lack of space. Reports emphasized that the majority of potential nurses appeared to be from "good homes" and most were quite young. The women agreed to gather on Tuesday and Thursday evenings to learn the rudiments of first aid that they might be accorded the privilege of proceeding overseas.³³

Most early efforts, however, were dedicated to raising enough money to equip a hospital ship. The International Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE) met on the evening of 5 August 1914 at IODE headquarters at Bloor and Sherbourne Streets to begin fundraising. After declaring that the "privilege of sharing in the work will be [every

"Women During the Great War," in Janice Acton, Penny Goldsmith, Bonnie Shephard, eds., *Women at Work, Ontario, 1850-1930* (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1974), pp. 261-308.

Other commentaries on the impact of the First World War on Canada can be found only as incidental to wider studies. Three examples of critical women's history monographs which take a longitudinal approach, including the years 1914-1918, do not offer more than passing attention to the First World War. See for example, Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Karen Dubinsky, *Improper Advances: Rape and Heterosexual Conflict in Ontario 1880-1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991).

³³ "Women Anxious to Serve as Volunteers," *World*, 5 August 1914, p. 2.

Canadian woman's], whether she belong to the organization or not,"³⁴ a national campaign to raise \$100,000 by 20 August was agreed upon. The money would be given to the Canadian government, to be transferred to the British Admiralty.³⁵ Elizabeth Cawthra noted that she had been "...to a meeting at the I.O.D.E. to discuss getting a Hospital Ship for the use of the wounded in the war. Great excitement over war news."³⁶ At that meeting, the following resolution, written by the local chapter president Mrs. A.E. Gooderham³⁷ was passed: "I would like to remind every member of the privilege and obligation enjoined upon them at this time of Imperial crisis. The call has come to us to do our duty as urgently as to the soldiers and sailors of the Empire. The Daughters of the Empire ask the co-operation of the women of Canada to give this tangible expression of their sentiment in the service of King and country in providing a hospital ship to be placed at the disposal of the British Admiralty."³⁸

This initial enthusiasm translated quickly into action through a mass meeting called to develop the idea. Chaired by Toronto Mayor Hocken, women packed into the

³⁴ "Women's Opportunities in the Crisis," *Globe*, 6 August 1914, p. 5; "Women Patriots Plan to Raise Big Amount," *World*, 7 August 1914, p. 1.

³⁵ "Hospital Ship Gift By Canadian Women," *Globe*, 7 August 1914, p. 6. See also, "Canadian Women Plan to Equip Hospital Ship," *Mail and Empire*, 7 August 1914, p. 3; "Will Raise \$100,000 Before August 20th," *Star*, 7 August 1914, p. 5; "Call to Every Woman," *Telegram*, 8 August 1914, p. 22.

³⁶ Elizabeth Cawthra, Diary Entry, 6 August 1914, Metro Toronto Reference Library, Baldwin Room, Cawthra Family Collection, Box 2, Series I, Elizabeth Cawthra Diaries, 1900-1921.

³⁷ Toronto Public Library Scrapbook, Biographies of People, Film T686.3, Volume 16, p. 644.

³⁸ "I.O.D.E. Has Launched Campaign to Raise a Hospital Ship Fund; Regent Issues Personal Appeal," *World*, 8 August 1914, p. 8.

local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) building on College Street.³⁹ Another meeting of over a thousand women took place two days later, this one chaired by Mrs. A.M. Huestis, President of the Local Council of Women. Once again the meeting was so well attended that it was hard to gain admission, with hundreds turned away or forced to listen from nearby hallways or windows. A leading suffragist, Mrs. L.A. Hamilton, announced to those assembled that "...the fight for the franchise is to be laid aside and forgotten by the suffragists of Toronto in the face of the present fight for national freedom."⁴⁰ Mrs. Hector Prenter of the Political Equality League made a similar vow: "All suffrage activities will be dropped for the time being."⁴¹ Every other activity was to take a back seat to the campaign to equip a hospital ship. At the close of the meeting a group of boy scouts proceeded through the crowd, soliciting donations to the campaign: \$230.35 was raised.⁴²

Many women took to the streets on 14 August to seek out donations. Local newspapers spread news of the campaign. While all Toronto daily papers were involved, the *Globe's* response was typical: "An army bent on war -- war on the pocketbook -- will invade Toronto, North, South, East and West, at 8 o'clock to-day. The city has been divided into fifty districts with a captain over each. The captain will be a woman, her rank and file, girls, who will patrol the district allotted, enter shops and offices and ask

³⁹ "Hospital Ship Mass Meeting," *Globe*, 10 August 1914, p. 8.

⁴⁰ "Thousand Women Plan for Hospital Ship," *Globe*, 12 August 1914, p. 7; "Enthusiasm is Growing Among Women Who Have Undertaken Ship Fund," *World*, 12 August 1914, p. 1; "Women Enthusiastic About Hospital Ship," *News*, 12 August 1914, p. 4.

⁴¹ "Suffrage Campaign Dropped During War," *Star*, 11 August 1914, p. 10.

⁴² "Canadian Women To Outfit Men for Cold," *Star*, 12 August 1914, p. 4.

the inmates to put as much as they can into one of the 3,500 boxes the Kilgour Company made specially for the collection of the Canadian Women's Hospital Ship Fund."⁴³

Commenting on the day's events, the evening papers told a story of far-reaching success: "It was ladies' day all over the city to-day. They owned the place, and the people, and before noon almost every man, woman and child was tagged with a British flag, which told how thoroughly they were doing their work of getting contributions for the Hospital Ship Fund."⁴⁴

The efforts of these women, part of a national campaign also organized by women, was a resounding success. While the immediate goal for Toronto had been \$15,000, initial counts of the returns indicated that this goal had been more than doubled.⁴⁵ In less than a week, women had organized a campaign which covered the whole city, involved over 650 volunteers and made use of 150 automobiles.⁴⁶ Newspapers interpreted this incredible success as a demonstration of how well women could work together, as well as an indication of the generosity of the population.⁴⁷ Locally, donations had exceeded initial estimates, and nationally the total sum of \$100,000 was secured before the deadline.⁴⁸

⁴³ "Ladies Will Be Busy for Good Cause," *Globe*, 14 August 1914, p. 6. See also, "Show Your Patriotism By Aiding Hospital Ship Fund To-day," *Mail and Empire*, 14 August 1914, p. 4.

⁴⁴ "It Was Ladies' Day in Toronto," *News*, 14 August 1914, p. 4. See also, "Never Was City So United," *Telegram*, 14 August 1914, p. 16.

⁴⁵ "'Tag Day Doubled Estimate: Total Over Thirty Thousand," *News*, 15 August 1914, p. 2.

⁴⁶ "Canadian Girls Share in Patriotic Service," *Globe*, 15 August 1914, p. 6.

⁴⁷ "Ladies' Ship Campaign Tested City's Temper," *Globe*, 17 August 1914, p. 7.

⁴⁸ "Hospital Ship Fund Now Provided For," *Mail and Empire*, 20 August 1914, p. 4.

While the hospital ship fund was the most visible campaign by women in the early days of the war, efforts were not restricted to that sphere. By the middle of August, other women were working to raise funds and clothing to donate to the families of those left behind by departing soldiers.⁴⁹ On 18 August 1914, all women, but especially those representing women's societies, were invited to an organizational meeting. Despite a heavy downpour, hundreds of women turned up to "...prepare for any service that women could do."⁵⁰ Out of this gathering the Women's Patriotic League was born, with Mrs. Willoughby Cummings as temporary chair, to see to the needs of soldiers' relatives.⁵¹ This organization arranged events to raise money for poor relief, including a benefit concert at Massey Hall.⁵² Other women dedicated their spare time to knitting socks and scarves to see to the comfort of the soldiers. Local nurses sponsored a mass meeting where several hundred women sewed for the soldiers. All women were invited, and if the poor could not supply their own materials, provision was made to secure material for their use.⁵³

There was sporadic opposition by individual women to the war. When it was expressed, however, the response by other women was immediate. On 21 August, the *Star* published a letter to the editor which supported the position taken by the Canadian

⁴⁹ "Toronto Women's Next Work," *Telegram*, 15 August 1914, p. 18.

⁵⁰ Hubert Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit,'* (Toronto: Municipal Intelligence Bureau, 1918), Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, flem0704, p. 49.

⁵¹ "Patriotic League Formed by Women," *Globe*, 21 August 1914, p. 5.

⁵² "Women to Present Concert Friday," *World*, 22 August 1914, p. 5.

⁵³ "Nurses Sewing for Soldiers," *Globe*, 1 September 1914, p. 5.

Women's Business Club [CWBC] in not donating to the Hospital Ship Fund.⁵⁴ Other women wrote in to express their consternation that any woman would fail to support the war: "Heaven grant that they [CWBC] are the only body of women in Canada or elsewhere who are chary of abetting the murderous perpetrators of war. Have they no imagination? Supposing Britain and the Empire had not taken the stand they have, what then? And where, then, does the honour of our Empire rest? We all deplore the circumstances that has made it necessary, but if the powers that be had neglected to fulfil their obligations, I, as a unit, a wife and mother, would be ashamed of the proud claim I hold of being a true Daughter of the Empire."⁵⁵ Another woman, calling herself "One More Patriotic Soul," also wrote to the *Star* to express her support, maintaining that the war had "...become a question of national honour, and as such it is the duty of every citizen to stand shoulder to shoulder and help alleviate the suffering when they see that nothing else can be done."⁵⁶ The Canadian Women's Business Club changed its mind and became a strong supporter of the war effort.⁵⁷

This exchange reveals something of the reasons for which women supported the war. The conflict was perceived as something to be abhorred, but endured. Germany had

⁵⁴ Unfortunately, the papers do not record why the members of the CWBC opposed the hospital ship. The CWBC, however, was a consistent and vocal supporter of the war effort, suggesting that it only opposed the *specific* plan to donate money for a hospital ship, possibly preferring that women devote their attention to another task which would benefit the war effort.

⁵⁵ Mrs. F.M. Pauley, "Women and the War" (letter to the editor), *Star*, 21 August 1914, p. 6.

⁵⁶ One More Patriotic Soul, "Women and the War" (letter to the editor), *Star*, 21 August 1914, p. 6.

⁵⁷ The reasons for the change in the stance of the CWBC was not recorded.

brought the war on the world, they believed, and Britain was drawn into the conflict reluctantly. Once committed, however, the Empire would fight with every ounce of strength. The opportunity to serve was often equated with the word privilege, demonstrating that women wanted to help, and did so willingly. Those lucky enough to be selected as nurses were to be envied, even as those at home set to the task of reacting to the new reality of war. There was no formal structure available for these activities so new organizations were formed. These efforts channeled the already existing enthusiasm of local women. The focus on efforts to raise money for a hospital ship reflected pre-war beliefs about women's place in society. It was women's duty to succor and to provide the comforts necessary to keep the Empire's men fighting. The long-standing fight for an equal franchise was given second priority to the demands of the war effort, demonstrating the degree to which activists in the women's movement came together to fight for a common cause.

There was no separation of church and community in Toronto, so it is not surprising that the leaders of the five main religious groups in the city shared in the general response to the war, supporting the war with a great deal of intensity. The historiography on the response of local churches is more extensive than that written about women,⁵⁸ and focuses more on individual churches than on the war effort as a whole.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ See, for example, McGowan, "Sharing the Burden of Empire," pp. 177-207, and his PhD dissertation, "'We Are All Canadians.'"

⁵⁹ General texts on church structure and policies throughout this period are readily available, although none offer detailed commentary on the war (John Webster Grant, ed., *The Churches and the Canadian Experience: A Faith and Order Study of the Christian Tradition* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963); John Webster Grant, ed., *The Church in the Canadian Era: The First Century of Confederation* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson,

1972); Margaret Lindsay Holton, ed., *Spirit of Toronto: 1834-1984* (Toronto: Image Publishing, 1983), Reginald W. Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1987); Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971); G.A. Rawlyk, ed., *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760-1990* (Burlington: Welch Publishing, 1990); Michael Gauvreau, *The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada From the Great Revival to the Great Depression* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991); Mark G. McGowan and David B. Marshall, *Prophets, Priests and Prodigals: Readings in Canadian Religious History, 1608 to Present* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1992); Richard I. Ruggle, "Canadian Chaplains: A Special Issue," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2, October 1993, pp. 65-74; Duff Crerar, *Padres In No Man's Land* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

On the Anglican response, there is some information available on some of the key players in Toronto during the war. See for example, William C. White, *Canon Cody of St. Paul's Church* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1953), for a brief survey of Cody's support of the war. Early general studies of the Anglican Church in Canada devote attention to the institutional structure of the church, rather than its response to key events or issues. See for example, Philip Carrington, *The Anglican Church in Canada: A History* (Toronto: Collins, 1963). By contrast, work has been done on the response of the Church of England in a British context, revealing the wealth of information that can be gained by a study of the impact of the war (Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London: SPCK, 1978)). The Canadian context is much more difficult to uncover, and what little information is available, must be pieced together from studies of key churches and longitudinal studies (William G. Cooke, "The Diocese of Toronto and Its Two Cathedrals," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2, October 1985, pp. 98-115; Edward Pulker, *We Stand On Their Shoulders: The Growth of Social Concern in Canadian Anglicanism* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1986)). Work has been done on how those Anglicans who joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force as chaplains reacted, but there is no similar study of those on the homefront (Duff Crerar, "The Church in the Furnace: Canadian Anglican Chaplains Respond to the Great War," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2, 1993, pp. 75-103). The best study of Anglicans in general was done by Richard I. Ruggle, "Canadian Attitudes Towards Peace 1890-1920," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2, October 1993. The difficulty with Ruggle's work is that while it examines Anglican reaction to the war, it is not examined within that context. Instead, the First World War is interpreted in light of the glacially slow process of changing church policy.

The Methodist response has been more thoroughly documented. For an example of a war book left by one denomination in Toronto, see Trinity Methodist Church, *Trinity War Book: A Recital of Service and Sacrifice in the Great War* (Toronto: Trinity

Methodist Church, 1921). The first scholarly analysis to receive wide attention was Michael Bliss' influential 1968 article, "The Methodist Church and World War I," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XLIX, No. 3, September 1968, pp. 212-223. Other historians have taken issue with Bliss' argument, citing the need to understand the way in which Methodist ministers reacted to war's demands ("Methodism Embattled: A Reconsideration of the Methodist Church and World War I," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LXVI, No. 1, 1985, pp. 48-64). A survey of the life of one of the key Methodist players in the years leading up to the war, Nathanael Burwash, has also been done (Marguerite Van Die, *An Evangelical Mind: Nathanael Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989)). A general history of the Methodist Church in Canada also yields some information (Phyllis Airhart, *Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992)), but little comment on the war years. A key chapter in David B. Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), entitled "Battling With the Great War," pp. 156-180, offers a survey of Methodist and Presbyterian reaction, but does not do so on its own terms. Instead, the evidence is placed within the framework of the decline of the church and the mistakes these churches made during the war that resulted in a loss of membership at war's end.

The contours of the Presbyterian reaction can also be traced through a piecing together of various secondary sources (John Moir, *Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Canada: Bryand Press, 1975)). Unfortunately, these survey texts cover the whole war in only a few pages, glossing over the fundamental issues and moving on to trace the decline of the church after the war. Michael Gauvreau's "War, Culture and the Problem of Religious Certainty: Methodist and Presbyterian Church Colleges, 1914-1930," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, Vol. XXIX, No. 1, April 1987, pp. 12-31, looks promising, but devotes its attention to looking back at the war years to trace its impact on Church colleges. Brian J. Fraser's *The Social Uplifters: Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875-1915* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University, 1988), takes a similar approach. Knowing that the church declined in influence after the war, Fraser uses a Whig approach to return to the documents to isolate the factors which led to its decline. Another example of the Whig approach used to reassess the firing of a Presbyterian Minister is provided by Brian J. Fraser, "For the Uplift of the World: The Mission Thought of James A. Macdonald, 1890s-1915," in *Canadian Protestant and Catholic Missions, 1820s-1960s*, John S. Moir and C.T. McIntyre, eds. (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), pp. 191-219.

The Baptist response is covered in much less depth than that of the other major churches. The primary survey offers only a cursory glance at the reaction to the war (Jarold K. Zeman, ed., *Baptists in Canada: Search for Identity Amidst Diversity* (Burlington: G.R. Welch, 1980)).

An effort must be made to locate the response of the churches within their own context, in conjunction with the secular response, not as part of a decline after the war. This was a society in which the church played an integral role.

In the first issue published after the war began, the *Canadian Churchman* published a prayer calling for God's support for victory: "O Lord of hosts, the God of our fathers, who sittest on the throne of righteousness, judge now between us and our enemies; stir up Thy strength, O Lord, and come and fight for us, for in Thee alone do we put our trust."⁶⁰ Rather than appealing directly to God, *The Christian Guardian*, published a message from S.D. Chown,⁶¹ the Moderator of the Methodist Church, which appealed to Canadian Methodists to pray for God's support: "...we feel in duty bound to call upon our Methodist people in the Dominion of Canada and in other parts to unite as ministers and congregations in humble supplications to the God of the nations to aid our arms in the present awful conflict on land and sea."⁶² A week later, the *Christian*

On the Catholic response, see the two works cited above by Mark McGowan, "Sharing the Burden of Empire," and "'We Are All Canadians.'" Also worth consulting for a general overview of the Archdiocese of Toronto is John S. Moir, *Church and Society: Documents on the Religious and Social History of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto* (Toronto: Archdiocese of Toronto, 1993), although there is minimal commentary by Moir on the documents he reproduced.

⁶⁰ "Prayer for Victory," *Canadian Churchman*, 13 August 1914, p. 519.

⁶¹ Born in Kingston, Ontario in April 1853, Chown returned to Toronto from Winnipeg just before the war began to assume the duty of directing the Methodist Church. He had a long association with the military, signing up with the Princess of Wales Own Rifles, serving during the Fenian Raids. From the moment war broke out, Chown was a persistent and vocal supporter of the effort, even accepting the honorary rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. (Katherine Rodpit. "Biographical Sketch of Samuel Dwight Chown," United Church of Canada Archives, Samuel Dwight Chown Fonds, Accession Number 86.008c, Finding Aid 23, pp. i-ix, 1983.).

⁶² S.D. Chown, "A Call to Prayer in View of Present Conditions in Europe," *Christian Guardian*, 12 August 1914, p. 6.

Guardian published a poem on the women's page:

Faint nor sluggard ne'er won
 The prize of sought delight,
 For victory comes to those alone
 Who dare to brave the fight.

Brave to walk the same scarred earth
 Saints and martyrs trod,
 And prove life's highest gift of worth
 Is fellowship with God.

Though speech be merged in battle-cries,
 Beneath flags never furled,
 And scorn and scars be all your pride
 Before a scoffing world, --

Yet grant, O God of many hosts,
 The will to do the right,
 And on life's desolate outposts
 Unceasing wage the fight.⁶³

The *Christian Guardian* continued its pre-war practice⁶⁴ of supporting conflicts it believed were necessary, making reference to the duty of Methodists to live up to past actions of 'saints and martyrs.' *The Presbyterian* also demonstrated support of the war early in August. In its first issue after war had been declared, the lead article thanked God: "We are thankful that God has given Canada a place in the sisterhood of British nations, and we are prepared gladly to make whatever sacrifice may be necessary for British honour and British freedom."⁶⁵ Similarly, the organ of the last major Protestant church, the *Canadian Baptist*, used its first war issue to observe that "...Canada must take

⁶³ E.P. Munday, "The Battle," *Christian Guardian*, 18 August 1914, p. 12.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of the attitude of the *Christian Guardian* in the immediate pre-war years, see Chapter 1.

⁶⁵ "In Time of War," *The Presbyterian*, 13 August 1914, p. 123.

the field for this is truly her war. A terrible strain will come upon the mother country and Canada must feel that strain too."⁶⁶

In line with the opinions expressed in the Protestant newspapers, the *Catholic Register*, was also quick to support the war. On 13 August, the journal published "German Peril," an article which reviled Germany and supported the war effort.⁶⁷ A week later, a circular written by Archbishop Neil McNeil to the priests of the archdiocese of Toronto was reproduced:

You do not need to be reminded of the duty of patriotism. You are as ready as any to defend your country and to share the burdens of Empire. But those of us who are remote from the scene of conflict, and cannot leave Canada, may be tempted to think that our part is simply that of interested spectators. It is not. We can all help, and therefore should all help, by taking care to stop all unnecessary expenses in our homes and in our daily lives. It is no time for luxuries or festivities when millions of men are in mortal combat, and the poor everywhere are likely to need all we can spare next winter.⁶⁸

Archbishop McNeil played a large role in Toronto's war effort. From its very early stages, he appeared at rallies arguing that there was no difference between Catholics and Protestants in their support of the war.⁶⁹

The evidence from the official papers of the various church organizations support McNeil's assertion. Reports in the newspapers confirm that the religious response was not restricted to passive comments of support for the war effort. The major churches

⁶⁶ "A Word of Caution," *Canadian Baptist*, 13 August 1914, p. 8.

⁶⁷ "German Peril," *Catholic Register*, 13 August 1914, p. 4.

⁶⁸ "Circular: To the Priests of the Archdiocese of Toronto," *Catholic Register*, 20 August 1914, p. 3.

⁶⁹ "'To the Last Man and Dollar We Will See This Through,'" *News*, 25 August 1914, p. 4.

were active participants in campaigns and rallies across the city. In a combined effort, civic religious leaders asked that the daily newspapers publish the following passage:

We urge on all occupying the pulpits on Sabbath, 23rd [August]:

1st. To announce a public patriotic meeting for Monday evening, August 24th, in Massey Hall under the auspices of the above association [Toronto and York County Patriotic Association].

2nd. Also to announce that following the meeting there will be a campaign started to raise \$500,000 for the aforementioned purpose. We commend most heartily this campaign to the generous support of the people.

Whilst we greatly deplore war, and are unalterably opposed to it, yet, believing that our empire is facing a crisis which leaves no other course clear for lovers of liberty, honour and right, we feel justified in making this appeal.⁷⁰

Duly instructed, priests and ministers devoted their 23 August sermons to the subject of the war and its necessity.⁷¹ This example is but one of many which indicates strong interaction between the various elements of Toronto to support the war.

Local political leaders were committed to the cause. Beginning with the speech made by Ontario Conservative Premier J.P. Whitney⁷² on 4 August, politicians endorsed the war effort: "The momentous crisis we now face makes plain what Canada's course must be. That course is to exert her whole strength and power at once in [sic] behalf of our Empire."⁷³ One of the first measures passed by the Toronto City Council after the outbreak of war was a resolution which declared: "The Board [of Control] recommend that all employees of the City for a period of at least six months, not necessarily

⁷⁰ "Ministers Ask Pulpit Support," *World*, 22 August 1914, p. 4.

⁷¹ "War Topics in Many Pulpits," *Telegram*, 24 August 1914, p. 7.

⁷² For an examination of Whitney's life, see Charles W. Humphries, *"Honest Enough to be Bold": The Life and Times of Sir James Plimy Whitney* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

⁷³ "Canada Will Not Quail, Says Premier Whitney," *Globe*, 5 August 1914, p. 7.

continuous, who by voluntary enlistment or otherwise, have been called upon to serve in the Army or Navy, be paid their full wages during the time they are on duty or in active service."⁷⁴ City Hall's generosity did not end there. The city also promised that it would insure the "...life of each of its citizens who serves in the Canadian contingent in the present war in Europe..."⁷⁵ It even agreed to contribute 100 horses from the Civic and Police Departments to the war effort.⁷⁶

The cornerstone of the effort at the municipal level was the creation of the Toronto and York County Patriotic Fund, which quickly became a part of the Canadian Patriotic Fund. Initial meetings on 10 August involved leading figures in local and national life: Sir William Mulock, Chair of the Fund Committee; E.R. Wood, President of the Central Canada Loan and Savings Company and Treasurer of the Fund; J.E. Atkinson, editor of the *Star*; Stewart Lyon, journalist; W.K. George, Governor of the University of Toronto; and many prominent members of the local business, legal and banking communities, including E.T. Malone, H.C. Cox, D.R. Wilkie, G.T. Somers, Aemilius Jarvis, and J.M. McWhinney.⁷⁷ The fund was formally brought into existence with the

⁷⁴ Toronto Board of Control, *Appendix 'A' to the Minutes of the City Council* (Toronto: Carswell Company, 1915), Toronto City Hall Archives, p. 1583.

⁷⁵ "City Will Insure Lives of Soldiers," *Mail and Empire*, 14 August 1914, p. 4.

⁷⁶ Toronto City Council, *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of Toronto for the Year 1914* (Toronto: Carswell Company, 1915), Toronto City Hall Archives, p. 363.

⁷⁷ Biographical information on these men was drawn from Chambers, ed., *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1918*, Greene, ed., *Who's Who and Why, 1921*, and Henry James Morgan, ed., *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 2nd edition (Toronto, William Briggs, 1912).

passage of a resolution by the City Council on 14 August.⁷⁸ It had for its object the "...raising of a fund for the benefit of wives, children, and other dependents of men of the military and naval forces being organized and recruited in the City of Toronto and in the County of York to serve the Empire in connection with the existing war."⁷⁹ Organizers were certain that the people of Toronto and York would come forward and donate money to see that no family member of a departed hero would go wanting.

The announcement of the creation of the fund and its initial campaign for donations was greeted enthusiastically by the press. In a manner typical of the dailies, the *Star* claimed editorially that it was "not a burden, but a privilege" to support the fund, and that each person should give "...not what costs us little, or even what costs us something substantial, but, each in his degree, what costs us much."⁸⁰ The *Globe* echoed these sentiments, arguing that those people who remained at home were indebted to departed soldiers: "Citizens are asked to think over the matter during the next few days and determine how much those of us who remain at home in peaceful and happy Canada can give, not as a matter of favour, but as an acknowledgement of the debt we owe to the brave men who, gladly giving up all, go forth to fight the battles of Canada and the

⁷⁸ For a general overview of the fund, see Philip H. Morris, *The Canadian Patriotic Fund: A Record of Its Activities From 1914 to 1919*, Archives of Ontario, Canadian Patriotic Fund Association Records, 1902-1924, MU 489, F940, The Canadian Patriotic Fund File, Bound Volume. See also, Desmond Morton and Cheryl Smith, "Fuel for the Home Fires: The Patriotic Fund, 1914-1918," *The Beaver*, Vol. 75, No. 4, August/September 1995, pp. 12-19.

⁷⁹ "Toronto to Provide for Families of Soldiers," *World*, 15 August 1914, p. 1.

⁸⁰ "The Patriotic Fund" (ed.), *Star*, 17 August 1914, p. 6.

Empire."⁸¹

The first campaign sought \$500,000 in donations in three days, 24-26 August 1914. The press supported the campaign ardently, and informed residents of the upcoming "whirlwind" campaign.⁸² Local churches helped, and Sunday sermons were used to emphasize that the need was genuine and the cause was good.⁸³ Launched on 24 August, the campaign's focal point was a giant rally at Massey Hall which, the *Telegram* argued, would "...proclaim the city's realization of its duty. It will be an inspiring affair significant of a city's gratitude to the brave citizens who go out against the foe."⁸⁴ At the forefront would be the city's leaders, the "...greatest combination of public men who have ever been associated for a public purpose in Ontario."⁸⁵ Buoyed by the coverage in the newspapers, citizens awaited the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment.⁸⁶

Their response was overwhelming. Half an hour before the meeting was scheduled to begin, Massey Hall was already filled to capacity and several hundred disappointed citizens had to be turned away: 3,500 gained entry. While they waited for the meeting to begin, the crowd inside was entertained by the bands of the 48th Highlanders, Salvation Army, and the Queen's Own Rifles. Chief Justice Sir William Mulock, chairman of the Fund Committee, presided. At 8:15 p.m., he rose to lead the

⁸¹ "Toronto's Patriotic Fund" (ed.), *Globe*, 17 August 1914, p. 4. See also, "Must Swell the Patriotic Fund," *News*, 19 August 1914, p. 2.

⁸² "Whirlwind Campaign for Patriotic Fund," *Globe*, 19 August 1914, p. 6.

⁸³ "Churches Help Patriotic Fund," *News*, 21 August 1914, p. 2.

⁸⁴ "Let Your Patriotism Loose Your Purse Strings" (ed.), *Telegram*, 24 August 1914, p. 10.

⁸⁵ "The Local Patriotic Fund" (ed.), *World*, 24 August 1914, p. 6.

⁸⁶ See for example, "To Raise \$500,000 Before Saturday," *Mail and Empire*, 24 August 1914, p. 2; "Toronto's Duty to Her Sons" (ed.), *Globe*, 24 August 1914, p. 4.

singing of the National Anthem. Voices joined together in song, followed by a stirring singing of "Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past." Mulock spoke to those assembled, telling them, "Our soldiers are fighting for the maintenance of free institutions, and, if needs be, the smashing of the German Kaiser."⁸⁷ Patriotic speeches were given by leading citizens, prompting cheers and applause. For those lucky enough to find a seat, they spent the evening "...wildly applied in patriotic sentiments and patriotic airs, and cheering the names of Lord Kitchener, Sir Edward Grey and other personages now in the public eye."⁸⁸ The *World* summarized the evening: "Never before has the great heart of Toronto throbbed and pulsated with more patriotic enthusiasm or been thrilled with a greater loyalty to the mother country."⁸⁹

The next morning, front page articles proclaimed that in the first three hours, over a quarter of a million dollars was subscribed.⁹⁰ The city's population, however, did not rest on these early successes. During the whole campaign, energy levels were kept up and the drive to secure as much money as possible was maintained. City wide, over \$700,000 was pledged in the first three days.⁹¹ Encouraged by these results, the length of the campaign and its target total were both increased, the latter to \$800,000. When the

⁸⁷ "To The Last Man and Dollar We Will See This Through," *News*, 25 August 1914, p. 4.

⁸⁸ "Patriotic Fund Loyally Launched," *Mail and Empire*, 25 August 1914, p. 4.

⁸⁹ "Loyalty to Britain and Knowledge of Duty Fills Massey Hall," *World*, 25 August 1914, p. 1. See also, "Patriotic Relief Fund Rally Starts With \$100,000 Donations," *Star*, 25 August 1914, p. 5.

⁹⁰ "Nearly Quarter of Million Subscribed in Three Hours," *News*, 25 August 1914, p. 1. See also, "Patriotic Fund Totals \$248,000," *World*, 26 August 1914, p. 2; "Whirlwind Start Brings \$325,000 For Patriotic Fund," *Globe*, 26 August 1914, p. 7.

⁹¹ "Over \$700,000 Raised for Patriotic Fund," *Globe*, 28 August 1914, p. 6. See also, "Patriotic Fund Reaches \$700,000," *Mail and Empire*, 28 August 1914, p. 4.

campaign finally came to a close after five days, \$882,000 had been raised, the city council itself contributing \$50,000 to the total.⁹²

City Council's contribution was not the only lump sum offered to the Patriotic Fund. Business leaders and corporations were also solid supporters. Their support in these early stages is even more remarkable given the widespread turmoil international markets experienced with the outbreak of war. A spokesperson for Massey-Harris Limited, a farm equipment producer, announced that in Toronto 2,500 more workers would be laid off owing to the "...very large numbers of orders for the European markets [which] were cancelled at the first sign of war."⁹³ The *Labour Gazette* reported that "...industrial and labour conditions were adversely affected by the war in Europe."⁹⁴ Despite the turmoil, business leaders sought public avenues to demonstrate their support of the war. From its 21-23 Wellington Street Offices, the Kilgour Company supplied the boxes used by women to collect the money to equip the hospital ship.⁹⁵ The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce donated \$50,000 to the Toronto and York Country Patriotic Fund.⁹⁶ The most generous patron, however, was the owner of Eaton's Department Store, John C. Eaton:

Mr. Eaton has tendered...to the Minister of Militia [Sam Hughes], first, the sum of \$100,000 to purchase, fit up and equip a battery of Vickers quick-firing machine guns, mounted upon armored trucks, for the use of the

⁹² *Appendix "A" to the Minutes of the City Council 1914* (Toronto: Carswell Company Limited, 1915), Toronto City Hall Archives, p. 1583.

⁹³ Ian Miller, "'Until the End': Brantford's Response to the First World War," MA Cognate, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1995, p. 27.

⁹⁴ *Labour Gazette*, September 1914, p. 323.

⁹⁵ "Ladies Will Be Busy for Good Cause," *Globe*, 14 August 1914, p. 6.

⁹⁶ "\$882,000 Raised for Patriotic Fund," *Globe*, 29 August 1914, p. 6.

Canadian contingent; secondly, he offered his palatial steamer[,] *the Florence* [emphasis added], the largest and fastest boat of its kind on the Great Lakes; thirdly, the free use of his wireless station at Toronto, the most powerful north of Long Island.⁹⁷

Even children were not sheltered from the reality of war. The Girl Guides were "...up and ready to do their part for the Empire and the flag they are taught to love. Already they are beginning the practical work of making red cross armbands for the Boy Scouts, amongst whom a first aid ambulance corps of one hundred is being organized in the city for any emergency that might arise."⁹⁸

While much of the campaign's success depended upon corporate donations, it would not have been successful without the participation of workers. All across the city, the employees of major firms announced that they would each be donating a full day's wages. The diminutive president of the Newsboys' Union, Harry Roher, brought forward a copper box filled to the brim with donations. Thousands more dollars, a day's wages for each employee, were pledged by workers at the 190-218 Yonge Street T. Eaton Company and the 160-178 Yonge Street Robert Simpson Company. Employees at the Rice Lewis Company at 25-33 Victoria Street took up a collection, along with a large number of other firms. Local policemen donated one day's pay each, further swelling the total.⁹⁹

It was a community undertaking. Business leaders, political leaders, church leaders, women, workers, campaign officials, the press, and even children all worked

⁹⁷ "Ottawa Gives Half a Million to War Fund, Ottawa Learns," *Mail and Empire*, 21 August 1914, p. 1. John Eaton was the son of Timothy Eaton, founder of Eaton's. A prominent business person in his own right, the younger Eaton was active on many boards, and did plenty of charity work. (Greene, ed., *Who's Who and Why, 1921*, p. 592.).

⁹⁸ "Girl Guides Are Proving Their Mettle," *News*, 10 August 1914, p. 4.

⁹⁹ "Hundreds of Workers Are Giving a Day's Pay," *Star*, 26 August 1914, p. 2.

together to support the families of the men departing for the front. The enthusiasm of the general population was so great that the boundaries of the fund had to be expanded. Despite these measures, the people of Toronto consistently over subscribed the fund. Recognizing the sacrifice of the men who left to serve the Empire, the city pledged its financial resources to ensure that the families of the new citizen-soldiers would not be left wanting.

What sustained the population in this great adventure? The behaviour of Toronto citizens resulted from their confidence in a complex series of beliefs about why Canada and the Empire were at war. Most blamed Germany for starting the war, but war was joined for more than defeating Germany. Liberal and Conservative papers, along with the religious press, responded editorially to the crisis and reproduced speeches made by local elites, thereby helping to define the public discourse used to justify the war effort. Historians have been reluctant to explore the enthusiasm for war, choosing instead to focus on its costs. However, efforts must be made to return to the start of the war, when no sense of futility existed. Doing so provides a window to help understand why contemporaries believed themselves at war. Their 1914 mindset is fundamentally important since it was these beliefs and assumptions that shaped the nature of the early war effort. Toronto's press, both secular and religious, proclaimed the issues that had prompted the Empire to take up the fight. Different ideas were presented, but there was no discussion of which was the most critical. Each was added into the mix, allowing citizens to steel their resolve and do their part.

Premier Whitney was one of the first public personages to offer a detailed

justification of why Canada was at war. In an interview with the *Mail and Empire*, he maintained that Canada must give as much as possible to the cause. After all, Canada was a part of the Empire "...in the fullest sense and we share in its obligations as well as its privileges. We have enjoyed under British rule the blessings of peace, liberty and protection, and now that we have an opportunity of repaying in some measure the heavy debt we owe the Mother Country, we will do so with cheerfulness and courage."¹⁰⁰ The Conservative press echoed Whitney's resolve, outlining other reasons for the conflict. Not all justifications were of a high and noble character, however, as the *Telegram* argued simply that the Empire was "...determined to give the bully of Europe [i.e., the German Kaiser] a trouncing."¹⁰¹ The *News* outlined more traditional war aims, claiming that "...in simple fidelity to her pledges and alliances, she [Britain] has joined with Servia and Russia and France and Belgium to end a perpetual menace, to establish her own security. and to restore settled conditions in Europe."¹⁰²

The reasons underpinning the war effort, however, were not static. Over time other justifications were added as events from the front were reported and debated. In light of advances by the German army through neutral Belgium, the press generalized their notion of what the fight was about. The reaction of the *News* was typical: "Great Britain, France and Canada are not striving for dominion...The Allies have engaged in this world struggle in order that mediaeval barbarism may be checked and those free

¹⁰⁰ "Canada Must Stand At Britain's Side," *Mail and Empire*, 5 August 1914, p. 5.

¹⁰¹ "City Rang With Cheers When War Was Declared," *Telegram*, 5 August 1914, p. 13.

¹⁰² "United for Security," *News*, 7 August 1914, p. 6.

institutions for which our fathers bled established more securely upon the face of the earth."¹⁰³ As the scale of the fighting increased, the justifications for it did not change: they expanded. Not only were the Allies fighting a noble struggle against a barbarous foe, but in doing so they were supported by the notion that they could not break faith with their ancestors who had provided the freedoms they enjoyed.

Participation in the war, however, was not only the result of factors outside the British Empire. The *Globe*'s description of the situation on 5 August stressed both internal and external elements: "Now that the worst has come to the worst Britain has no alternative. Had the obligations of honour, as regards France and Belgium and Holland, been less binding than they are, Britain's high duty remains: duty to herself, duty to all British democracies, duty to the ideals of freedom and self-government in all the world. Were German autocracy to win, Holland and Belgium, and perhaps Scandinavia too, might become German States with a vast shore line to menace Britain on the North Sea."¹⁰⁴ The *Star* pointed out that "...there may be times, rare enough in humanity's history, it is true, when honour, when justice, when good faith, when the welfare of mankind, all alike require of a people that they should not shrink from the responsibility of engaging in it."¹⁰⁵ A few days later, the *Globe* offered its own assessment of the high ideals supporting the Allied war effort: "Our national pride, our devotion to the Empire, our love of freedom, and our full realization of the vital and pressing necessity of dealing a blow to autocracy and tyranny are sufficient incentives. They will inspire us to make

¹⁰³ "The Call to Canadians" (ed.), *News*, 25 August 1914, p. 6.

¹⁰⁴ "Why This War Is Inevitable" (ed.), *Globe*, 5 August 1914, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ "'Hands All Round" (ed.), *Star*, 6 August 1914, p. 6.

every sacrifice, to meet every emergency, to brave every danger, to endure every hardship, to expend every energy, and to sustain the determination that halts only when victory is won."¹⁰⁶

There was no hiding of the eventual cost, nor the currency in which it would be counted. The cost was to be born with head held high since the very foundation of British society was at stake: "The price is beyond all reckoning. The cost of it is not in fabulous money, but in rivers of blood. The pain of it will run through the months to a million mouths. But that price for the word of 'a scrap of paper' [referring to Germany's promise to respect Belgian neutrality] Britain will pay to the uttermost farthing. That word was the pledge of Britain's honour."¹⁰⁷ Honour committed, the secular press was willing to bear any costs to achieve victory.

The religious press, too, offered a host of justifications. The most martial of the church organs, the Anglican *Canadian Churchman*, carried an editorial which claimed that church and laity were one on the issue of war's necessity: "It is no use to cry Peace! Peace! when there is no Peace. And there has been no Peace in the past years. There has been pause, but no peace...War is a hateful thing, but since the appeal has been carried to that court it must be answered in the language of that court. We sought no fight. We tried to pacify our enemies. Now we may ask God's blessing on our arms. *Blessed be the Lord my God who teaches my hand to war and my fingers to fight* [emphasis in the original]."¹⁰⁸ The war was portrayed as one of Germany's making which challenged the

¹⁰⁶ "War's Prevarications" (ed.), *Globe*, 10 August 1914, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷ "'For a Scrap of Paper'" (ed.), *Globe*, 20 August 1914, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ "Our Empire" (ed.), *Canadian Churchman*, 13 August 1914, p. 520.

honour and integrity of the British Empire. Printing patriotic poetry in its pages, the *Churchman* presented an image of Britain as mediator forced to fight, arguing "Thou, peacemaker, fight! Stand England for honour."¹⁰⁹ Faced with the reality of German affronts to international peace and honour, Britain was forced to draw the sword.

Methodists emphasized the international crime Germany had committed by invading Belgium. In its first war issue, the *Christian Guardian* outlined the threat to Britain if Germany were allowed to take possession of the Low Countries. Besides the threat to Britain's security, there were issues of honour and international progress at stake: "[Britain] is in the present struggle solely at the behest of weaker powers, whose appeal she would never have been justified in failing to listen to, if for no other reason, for this good and sufficient one that a victory over Germany over these same powers would have meant disaster to Europe's progress and to the higher and better international ideals for many years to come."¹¹⁰ Poetry published in the issue appealed to God to give "...the courage not to spurn a peace that crushes men."¹¹¹ The poem alluded to a justification of the war which received further elaboration later in the month. As the extent of the German preparations became clear and translated into battlefield victories, the nature of its government became a target of scorn. Blaming the German government for starting the war, by the end of August, the *Christian Guardian* also believed that one of the reasons for the war was to defeat "tyrannical and autocratic governments."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Robert Bridges, "The Call to the Nation," *Canadian Churchman*, 20 August 1914, p 539.

¹¹⁰ "Why France and Britain Came In," *Christian Guardian*, 12 August 1914, p. 3.

¹¹¹ Albert D. Watson, "Battle Hymn," *Christian Guardian*, 12 August 1914, p. 16.

¹¹² "A United Canada," *Christian Guardian*, 26 August 1914, p. 5.

Presbyterian, Baptist and Catholic papers did not offer the same breadth of coverage as did the Anglicans and Methodists, but they offered reasons for going to war nonetheless. *The Presbyterian* claimed that all Presbyterians were willing to stand by Britain and to make "...whatever sacrifice may be necessary for British honour and British freedom."¹¹³ *Canadian Baptist* writers emphasized the emotional link with Britain, arguing that Canada must enter the war to support the Mother Country.¹¹⁴ Neither paper expressed any opposition to the war, nor did they debate the justifications offered by others. The *Catholic Register*, too, believed in the war effort. It maintained that the Empire was at war for security reasons, arguing that a successful campaign against Germany was essential, "Our own existence depends on it."¹¹⁵

It is difficult to argue that Torontonians did not understand why the Empire was at war. They were sustained by interlocking beliefs which allowed them to justify the expenditure of men and resources. They understood that the costs would be enormous. However, they believed that fighting was necessary to keep faith with those who had stood in the line in the past, to quell a potential threat to the Empire, to satisfy the demands of national pride, to make a stand against tyranny and autocracy, and to punish Germany for its crime of invading neutral Belgium.

There were, however, more than "push" factors which demanded that the Empire go to war. There was also a series of "pull" factors: contemporaries believed that the war would provide a variety of benefits. In the first month of the war, Toronto had not been

¹¹³ "In Time of War," *The Presbyterian*, 13 August 1914, p. 123.

¹¹⁴ "A Word of Caution," *Canadian Baptist*, 13 August 1914, p. 8.

¹¹⁵ "German Peril," *Catholic Register*, 13 August 1914, p. 4.

forced to justify the deaths of any of its soldiers. Training was conducted in a jovial atmosphere. Citizens jostled with one another in crowds to get a better view of the soldiers on parade. Small children marched along with the troops down main streets. It is essential to understand that residents approached the war as a necessary adventure.

In the days after war was declared, papers extolled the unifying benefits of the war. The *Star* expressed its views on the unity of the people across age and political boundaries: "In this country the unanimity of sentiment on the whole matter is as impressive as it is inspiring. Conservative or Liberal, young or old, rich or poor, Canadian-born or newly-arrived from across the seas, we are all at one. We are at one in the ties of sentiment and affection which bind us to Great Britain -- those ties, seemingly so unsubstantial, which yet 'grapple her to our soul with hoops of steel.' We are at one in our view of the inherent justice of her present cause."¹¹⁶ Later in the month, the unity of the Empire was emphasized as a "...silver lining to the vast cloud of terrific blackness."¹¹⁷ That silver lining, the *Star* believed, was the unity of "...the whole of the British Empire and each of its component parts."¹¹⁸ The British and the Irish were standing together, as were French- and English-Canadians, in the face of the common enemy. The *Mail and Empire* echoed these sentiments, crediting the Kaiser with saving Ireland from civil war.¹¹⁹ In a less tangible way, secular papers also credited the existence of a state of war with having put everything in its proper perspective. No longer would people be

¹¹⁶ "'Hands All Round" (ed.), *Star*, 6 August 1914, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ "A Right Perspective" (ed.), *Star*, 11 August 1914, p. 6.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ "Somehow Good," *Mail and Empire*, 11 August 1914, p. 6.

concerned with trifling matters when the future of their civilization was at stake.

Neighbours would be brought closer together, and people would no longer suffer from the "narrowness of vision"¹²⁰ that existed before the war.

The religious press also believed good things would come out of the war, but they were reluctant to be specific. Even though the road would be costly in human lives and suffering, God could be trusted to use His wisdom to bring benefits from the struggle. The Anglicans argued that the war was being waged against selfishness: "The end of the war can come only when selfishness is crushed. It is the will of God that it should be crushed. It must be crushed by the instruments it has appealed to, beaten on its own ground and with its own weapons."¹²¹ When the war was over, selfishness would be banished from international relations. The Methodist *Christian Guardian* believed that the war would wipe the slate clean. The war itself would not advance the cause of Christ, but it would provide "...the possibility of a brighter and better day, a day that will be won at awful cost, it is true."¹²² The article continued to contemplate the costs of the war, but it returned to the conviction that the final result would be the progress of mankind: "No, a good day is coming; a morning of brightness will dawn after a day of darkness and blood. And God grant that it may come soon."¹²³

Canadian Baptist writers were similarly convinced that something good would come out of the war. They too believed that despite the costs, God had a grander plan

¹²⁰ "A Right Perspective" (ed.), *Star*, 11 August 1914, p. 6.

¹²¹ "A Holy War," *Canadian Churchman*, 20 August 1914, p. 536.

¹²² "The Past and Future of It," *Christian Guardian*, 12 August 1914, p. 5.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

which would see light at the end of the tunnel: "A further effect of the war upon the world, we firmly believe, will be the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. Perhaps this is not easy to see at the present, when war clouds are thick, when business is suffering, and when many men and women are feeling more strongly than ever before that the problems of living are being greatly multiplied. But we must remember that our Heavenly Father has not removed His hand from the government and care of the universe, and that He is able to turn the curse into a blessing to bring good out of the seeming ill."¹²⁴ Catholics too, believed that the war would have good results in the long run. Bishop McNeil's circular to the priests of the Archdiocese of Toronto, for example, stressed the need to pull together to care for the poor and to promote the unity of the Empire.¹²⁵

Citizens were living at the end of almost a century of progress since the Battle of Waterloo ended the Napoleonic threat in 1815. People believed in the Empire. They believed that God would gradually improve their lot. Members of a deeply religious society, Torontonians never questioned His means. They interpreted the causes and consequences of war from this perspective. God and the Empire would, they believed, emerge stronger as a result of the great test.

The transition from peace to war, however, was not accomplished without some intellectual gymnastics. Germany, after all, was a Christian nation. Citizen and newspaper editor alike had to construct an image of Germany which would not undermine their pre-war faith in scientific progress and the advancement of Christian

¹²⁴ "Some Effects of the War," *Canadian Baptist*, 20 August 1914, p. 8.

¹²⁵ "Circular: To the Priests of the Archdiocese of Toronto," *Catholic Register*, 20 August 1914, p. 3.

civilization. Germany had occupied a central position in mainstream thought that believed in the steady progress of humankind towards a better world. To the secular press, Germany's educational standards, its commitment to scientific endeavour, and its rapid rise to international prominence had been held up as examples for other nations to follow. A vision of Germany had to be constructed which would allow them to fight the German army, without discarding pre-war beliefs in the merits of education and science. At the beginning of the conflict, this difficulty was reconciled by blaming the war directly on German Kaiser Wilhelm II. The German people, they argued, were innocent dupes of a mad-man who was using the good German people to advance his own ambitions. By extension, the war was as much *for* the German people as against them. When the Kaiser's armies were defeated, the German people would be permitted by a benevolent coalition of armies to construct their own government and regain their rightful place with other Christian nations.

There were some factions in Toronto, however, who did not share this belief. Shortly after the war began, the papers reported on isolated incidents of crowds venting their patriotic fervour on visible German targets. On 5 August, a mob of 500 citizens surrounded the Liederkrantz Club, the "premier German institution in Toronto."¹²⁶ The stage had been set by the refusal of the club's management to lower the German flag and raise the British Ensign. The mob demanded that the situation be rectified immediately, and were it not for the intervention of about 20 police, "the building might have been

¹²⁶ "Angry Mob Surrounds the Local Liederkrantz Club," *News*, 6 August 1914, p. 1.

raided."¹²⁷ The crowd was successful, however, in its bid to tear down the German flag.¹²⁸

On 7 August, the directors of the club met to decide whether or not to raise a British flag. In an interview, the director of the club stated that "...had overtures been made to them in a friendly fashion, there would have been no objection to the raising of the flag. He was not going to be ruled by a mob of rowdies, however."¹²⁹ Cooler heads prevailed, the issue was settled, and the British flag was raised. In response, the *Mail and Empire* ran a lengthy editorial which chastised those who attacked either those of German descent or their organizations. It reminded readers that the object of malice was not the German people, but the German Kaiser: "Canadian youths should carry in mind that rowdy tactics against unoffending Germans are unfair and inconsistent with British practice. There are thousands of splendid German workers in Canada, intelligent, thrifty, industrious, and peaceable. They are in most cases as much, if not more, attached to Canada than to the Fatherland. They should not have to suffer from the prejudice or ill-will of any Canadians, because the British nation is not warring against the German people, which is composed of individuals such as the German-Canadians, but against the military overlordship with which the German people are afflicted."¹³⁰

Throughout the month of August, papers followed a similar pattern. Just after the war began, the *News* blamed the chaos squarely on the shoulders of the Kaiser and his

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ "Tore Down German Flag," *Telegram*, 6 August 1914, p. 8.

¹²⁹ "German Club May Fly British Flag," *News*, 7 August 1914, p. 4.

¹³⁰ "Germans in Canada" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 7 August 1914, p. 6.

advisors: "In pursuit of his vaulting ambition he [the Kaiser] and his swash-buckling advisers are not stayed by treaties or international obligations of any kind. The neutrality of small states is violated, and millions of human beings are ruined financially, while tens of millions of non-combatants face the prospect of starvation, pestilence and death in a ferocious and devastating war."¹³¹ On the same day, the *Telegram* made a point of blaming not ordinary Germans, but the Kaiser: "Mad with arrogance and pride the German Emperor has plunged a continent in war and the world in financial crisis. For his action there has been no iota of justification. Deliberately, calculatingly, Wilhelm has built up his land and sea forces till his people groaned under the burden of militarism. The war is not of the choosing of the German peasant or the German artisan. Their zeal is for peace. The war is the work of the Kaiser himself and the arrogant bureaucrats who surround him. Long have they made ready for the fray."¹³² Even as events proceeded and the German army began its sweep into Belgium, the real enemy remained the Kaiser, and regret was expressed that "never had a nation its heart less in a war than in that which Wilhelm II of Germany has forced upon his people."¹³³

In an editorial printed later in the month, the *Star* reinforced its reasons for blaming the war on the Kaiser. It reaffirmed that it was not the German people that were responsible for the war, but the "Prussian theory of government, in which the ruler boasts a divine right to rule, and exhausts the resources of the nation as fast as they increase in

¹³¹ "The Great Day" (ed.), *News*, 5 August 1914, p. 6.

¹³² "No Peace Till the Kaiser is Crushed" (ed.), *Telegram*, 5 August 1914, p. 10.

¹³³ "World's Quarrel Is With the Kaiser" (ed.), *Telegram*, 14 August 1914, p. 9.

maintaining a militarism that will make his boast good."¹³⁴ The editorial reminded its readers that the first victims of the Kaiser's deluded vision were the German people. Constructing the image of the German enemy in this way allowed the secular papers to maintain their pre-war images, restating the idealistic portrait of the German people: "They are an industrial and commercial people, with a fondness for their homes, churches, and schools. It will be a fine day for the world when Germany is free to manage her affairs for the benefit of her inhabitants instead of for the entertainment of one who is substantially a lunatic."¹³⁵

The religious press followed similar lines. Their pre-war belief in the fundamental progress of Christian civilization had included Christians living in Germany. Church leaders and laity alike now had to square their pre-war beliefs with the reality of war with Germany. As was the case with the secular press, the solution they employed in the first month of the war was to blame the Kaiser, not the lack of religious conviction on the part of the German people. When the war was successfully brought to a close, they believed, the renewed German people would be allowed to resume their place among Christian nations.¹³⁶

The remarks in the Methodist *Christian Guardian* were typical of the official

¹³⁴ "The German People" (ed.), *Star*, 13 August 1914, p. 6. For similar sentiments, see also, "The Man Who is Blamed" (ed.), *Globe*, 24 August 1914, p. 4.

¹³⁵ "The German People" (ed.), *Star*, 13 August 1914, p. 6. See also, "German Imperialism" (ed.), *Weekly Sun*, 19 August 1914, p. 1; "The War Lord" (ed.), *Star*, 7 August 1914, p. 6; "War's Prevarications" (ed.), *Globe*, 10 August 1914, p. 6.

¹³⁶ The only religious organ to not deal with this issue in August 1914 was *Canadian Baptist*. However, in its issue for the week ending 3 September, 1914, it expressed sentiments similar to those outlined below by the other papers. See, for example, "Editorial Comment," *Canadian Baptist*, 3 September 1914, p. 3.

press reaction. It blamed the Kaiser and his minions for keeping alive the spirit of militarism with which the world was fighting.¹³⁷ A week later, parallels were drawn between Englishman and German: "The Englishman is of the same race and the same religion as his German brother, and, while rivals in trade, the Englishman is ready to acknowledge the many excellences of his German competitor. There is no feud between Briton and German, and yet *at the will of one man* [emphasis added] these hundreds of thousands of men who cherish not the slightest enmity the one to the other are arrayed against each other, and are seeking determinedly to kill each other."¹³⁸ Like the discourse in the secular papers, the *Christian Guardian* was clearly relieved that it could draw a line between the German people and their leader: "Apart altogether from the 500,000 Canadian citizens of German extraction, there exists throughout Canada only admiration and respect for the great German nation, which by its industry, its intelligence, and its ability, has won for itself a foremost place amongst the nations of Europe. But the German people and the German military machine, controlled by an autocratic war-lord, are two separate and distinct things; and while the British Empire has nothing but profound respect for the first, it has nothing but determined opposition to the second."¹³⁹

Toronto was at war against the Kaiser, not the German people. Reflecting pre-war

¹³⁷ "The Past and the Future of It," *Christian Guardian*, 12 August 1914, p. 5.

¹³⁸ "Foolish, Costly, Un-Christian," *Christian Guardian*, 19 August 1914, pp. 5-6.

¹³⁹ "A United Canada," *Christian Guardian*, 26 August 1914, p. 5. For examples of editorials from other religious periodicals, see the following: "Our Empire," *Canadian Churchman*, 13 August 1914, p. 520; "A Holy War," *Canadian Churchman*, 20 August 1914, p. 536; "In Time of War," *The Presbyterian*, 13 August 1914, p. 123; "German Peril," *Catholic Register*, 13 August 1914, p. 4.

assumptions about the nature of Christian civilization and the fundamental progress of humankind, the enemy was the Kaiser. Conceiving of the enemy in this manner suggested that people believed the German army was fighting for the wrong reasons. The German soldiers would be unable to sustain their attacks when they realized that they were fighting for a corrupt system of government. Conceiving of the enemy in this way, provides an insight into why people may have believed that the war would be over by Christmas. This assumption was based as much upon the perceived weakness of the German system as it was upon the strength of British and French forces. This image of the enemy also indicates that secular and religious beliefs could be changed to reconcile events at the front. While this image of the enemy reflects pre-war beliefs, it also demonstrates that when the situation demanded it, assumptions could be changed.

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English-Canadian Torontonians could not foresee the length or the cost of the conflict upon which they embarked, and to evaluate their actions from that perspective is unfair. The sources examined, both public and private, allow an examination of the collective response of English-Canadians living in Toronto on its own terms. As the term "collective response" implies, efforts must be made to evaluate these sources in relation to one another, looking for patterns of behaviour. Such an endeavour is critical to understanding how Toronto's English-Canadian majority reacted to the war as it unfolded. Their understanding of what the war was about shaped the war effort.

Publicly and privately, residents supported the war. Massive, spontaneous parades and rallies in the opening days of the conflict dispel the notion of a people at war

for strictly legal reasons. Following lessons learned through the pre-war crises from the 1909 naval crisis to the Balkan wars, citizens believed that sudden and rapid allegiance to alliances would secure peace. The nature of that response, however, offers insight into key facets of Toronto society. Both men and women, young and old, from upper and working classes, took to the streets in the first days of war. United in patriotic enthusiasm, citizens sang, paraded and demonstrated their support for the Empire.

It was a collective enterprise. This did not mean, however, that everyone would participate in the same way. Men marked their dedication by offering their services for the duration of the war. Their sacrifice spoke volumes of the dedication of the general population, from which they were drawn, to the war effort. Families surrendered loved ones to the demands of King and country. There was much enthusiasm, but most of the planning was reactive rather than proactive. Militia officials did their best to respond to the unpredictable demands of Minister of Militia Hughes, and to transform the enthusiasm of thousands of men into trained recruits. Not surprisingly, the result was a series of ad hoc decisions designed to make the best of an ever-changing situation. This type of war effort, however, was in keeping with a "great adventure." Interpreting the conflict in such a way affected the attitude of citizens to the chance to serve with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Since it was a privilege to serve, the notion of conscription was anathema. This war would be fought by the best and bravest Toronto had to offer. That "shirkers" might be drafted into the ranks, usurping the positions better occupied by patriots, would never have been accepted in August 1914. Women participated by registering to serve as nurses, and by organizing events to support the war

effort. Societal norms emphasized the nurturing role for women, and their support for the war manifested itself in funds for hospital ships, in sewing and knitting, and in raising money for needy families.

All activities to support the war at this early stage were considered a privilege. Conceiving of the war in such a way had a profound impact on the nature of the early war effort. Regardless of the capacity in which each individual citizen was acting, the impetus to help the war effort came from within. Enlistment, patriotic drives, knitting circles, and prayer meetings were all part of an overall patriotic response which was driven by a desire to help. As a result, the war effort was one which organized already existing enthusiasm rather than one which attempted to convince the citizenry of their duty.

Underlying this enthusiasm was more than just a simple commitment to see the war through to its conclusion. In a quite astonishing unity, English-Canadians, both secular and religious, offered a myriad of interlocking justifications for the war effort that grew as the month of August proceeded. The depth and breadth of the reasons for the war suggested that the early enthusiasm for the war would not soon evaporate. Newspapers of the major denominations and political stripes reinforced early enthusiasm by outlining the positive impacts that would accrue from the war. Religious organs promised a better, more Christian world. Secular papers outlined the beginning of a lasting peace. Setbacks and rising casualties would not diminish enthusiasm for the war: they would be received into this set of beliefs about the war.

The enemy was Germany, but the responsibility for the war was laid at the feet of

German Kaiser Wilhelm II. Unwilling to change their notions of the world, religious and secular papers altered the image of their enemy. Unfortunately, to defeat the Kaiser, German soldiers would have to be killed. While that reality was not celebrated, it was accepted as necessary. The resilience of pre-war ideals demonstrates the strength of the faith of English-Canadian Torontonians in pre-war beliefs. Rather than change their own notions about scientific progress and religious development, they changed the nature of their enemy. This image would prove flexible as the war progressed.

The reaction of Torontonians to the war was fluid. The month of August saw the first major effort to get the war effort rolling, to enlist the first soldiers, and to prepare for the first casualties. In that effort, there was exceptional unity among diverse elements of the population. Members of all classes, and both genders took an active role in participating in the collective response to the war. Publicly and privately, there was a remarkable degree of unity. The incredible enthusiasm of the first few days was not sustainable, however. The massive crowds which took to the streets to hear the early war news began to dwindle in size as it became obvious that the war would not end in one decisive battle. Gradually, more and more people were willing to wait for newspapers to reach their homes to learn the latest war news. As the month drew to a close, the initial wave of enthusiasm had produced an incredible result. As September dawned, it became clear that more efforts would be required to continue the war, changing Torontonians' experience of it. As the way they understood the war changed, the nature of the war effort itself underwent a gradual transformation.

Chapter 3

A Great Crusade

Public opinion, or at least public opinion leaders, in Toronto were virtually unanimous in their support for an active Canadian role in the war, but what kind of war did they envisage? It is generally correct to say that most expected the war to be over quickly, perhaps before Christmas. They had been taught to believe that European wars involved great and decisive battles on land and at sea. They were confident that British and French armies, in combination with the "brave Belgians" and the Russian steamroller, would bring the war to a speedy and victorious conclusion. The triumph of the Royal Navy was considered a forgone conclusion.

The belief that the war would end quickly helps to explain Sam Hughes' decision to ignore existing mobilization plans and despatch a force of the keenest volunteers to England as soon as possible. It also explains public support for the ad hoc and chaotic response of governments and voluntary organizations in 1914. The belief in the certainty of an early Allied victory persisted despite the news from the front. This chapter explores the transformation of Torontonians' conception of the war effort. It does so by examining reactions to the war's major events between September 1914 and the announcement of conscription in May 1917. The "great adventure" of the first month of the war was profoundly altered during this period, prompting a sea-change in the way Torontonians understood the conflict.

The first four divisions of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) had arrived in France in mid-August 1914 and were deployed towards the Belgian city of Mons. Facing a numerically superior enemy, British commander Sir John French fought a defensive battle before beginning a hasty withdrawal to avoid encirclement. The "Retreat from

Mons" which began on 24 August 1914 ended in the early days of September with the French counterattack known as the First Battle of the Marne. The following weeks were marked by a German retreat to favourable defensive ground and the "race to the sea." This attempt to outflank to the enemy ended in stalemate and the construction of a line of trenches on French and Belgian territory from Switzerland to the English Channel.¹

Belgium suffered terribly from the German army which burned its cities, smashed its army, and brutalized its citizenry. Confronted with the horror of the German army's behaviour in Belgium, secular and religious publications advocated a variety of measures to comfort victims. The performance of the outnumbered Belgian army in slowing the advance of the Germans, so that Britain and France had time to organize their forces, epitomized the heroic vision of war. The sacrifices of the Belgian people, therefore, demanded the utmost attention and energy.

There was an outpouring of suggestions on how best to aid the Belgians. Newspapers, both secular and religious, emphasized the virtues of the Belgian nation, and the need to support it: "...no call can count upon a more willing response than that made upon the behalf of the destitute people of Belgium."² Letters to the editor were consistent with the spirit of giving, one citizen suggesting that Canada offer 50 acres of farmland to

¹ G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919: Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1962), pp. 40-48. For a detailed examination of the retreat from Mons, see Richard Holmes, *Riding the Retreat: Mons to the Marne 1914 Revisited* (London: Pimlico, 1995).

² "The Just Claim of a Brave People" (ed.), *Telegram*, 14 October 1914, p. 8.

Belgian refugees able to come to Canada.³ An unnamed woman proposed the transportation of Belgian orphans to Canada, arguing that the cause was worthy, and the costs to Canada a "...mere bagatelle."⁴ The religious press paralleled this attitude, suggesting that Belgians be placed on Canadian farms.⁵

This climate of sympathy translated into a variety of efforts to lessen Belgium's burden. The City of Toronto donated a carload of foodstuffs and clothing to Belgian relief, at a total cost of approximately \$10,000.⁶ Toronto Mayor Hocken sent a cablegram "...to King Albert of Belgium [which expressed] to him the admiration of this City for the valor and bravery of the Belgian army and people in their magnificent struggle against the German invasion."⁷ In October, the Toronto Board of Control recommended to City Council that a grant of \$25,000 be given to the Belgian Repatriation Fund, as a recognition of "...the heroic and valiant conduct of the Belgian troops in resisting the invasion of their country by the German enemy in superior numbers."⁸ Even without a formal organization, Ontario's farmers donated 25 carloads of produce from the fall

³ Professional Villager, "How to Aid the Belgians" (letter to the editor), *Globe*, 24 October 1914, p. 4.

⁴ "The Front Page," *Saturday Night*, 31 October 1914, p. 1.

⁵ See for example, Lashley W. Hall, "Bring Belgians to Canada," *Christian Guardian*, 11 November 1914, p. 28; "The True Spirit," *Catholic Register*, 19 November 1914, p. 4; "Help Little Belgium," *Canadian Baptist*, 7 January 1915, p. 1; "For Belgian Relief," *Christian Guardian*, 10 February 1915, p. 6.

⁶ "Gift of Food to Belgians," *Telegram*, 13 October 1914, p. 16.

⁷ Toronto City Council, *Minutes of Proceedings of the Council of Corporation of the City of Toronto for the Year 1914* (Toronto: Carswell Company, 1915), Toronto City Hall Archives, 20 October 1914, p. 447.

⁸ Toronto Board of Control, *Appendix 'A' to the Minutes of the City Council 1914* (Toronto: Carswell Company, 1915), Toronto City Hall Archives, 3 November 1914, p. 1859.

harvest.⁹ The Women's Patriotic League collected clothing donations at their Sherbourne Street headquarters, counting their totals by the ton.¹⁰

Individuals, too, took it upon themselves to offer aid. Through a letter to the editor, one resident offered "...to take care of an entire Belgian family."¹¹ Overseas, Canadian nurses and doctors administered to the needs of wounded Belgian soldiers and civilians.¹² Individuals organized aid projects for the Belgians out of existing structures. The Board of Trade, for instance, donated \$20,000 and "a hundred dozen heavy men's sweaters."¹³ Individual churches promoted the participation of their brethren in the relief effort. Reverend W.T. Herridge, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, hoped that members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada "...will persevere in their efforts to assuage the sorrows of that brave little people whose splendid stand against oppression is the most heroic event of modern history."¹⁴ A special collection was taken at the next Sunday service.

The private papers of Torontonians indicate a similar level of dedication to aiding the Belgians. George Denison III attended a "crowded" meeting at Massey Hall to hear lectures on the plight of the Belgian people.¹⁵ In a diary which offers only brief

⁹ "Rallying to Aid of Brave Belgians," *Globe*, 15 October 1914, p. 7.

¹⁰ "Tons of Clothing for Belgian Refugees," *Globe*, 16 October 1914, p. 5.

¹¹ P.S., "Will Take an Entire Family" (letter to the editor), *Saturday Night*, 14 November 1914, p. 2.

¹² Mary MacLeod Moore, "The Queen's Canadian Military Hospital," *Saturday Night*, 14 November 1914, p. 25.

¹³ "Twenty Thousand for the Belgians," *World*, 7 January 1915, p. 1.

¹⁴ W.T. Herridge, "The Belgian Relief Fund," *The Presbyterian*, 21 January 1915, p. 64. See also, "Editorial Comment" (ed.), *Canadian Baptist*, 11 February 1915, p. 1.

¹⁵ George Denison III, Diary Entry, 14 October 1914, PAC, MG 29 E 29, Vol. 29-30, Diaries 1901-1923, p. 213.

observations on his daily activities, the fact that he devoted space to the Belgian situation indicates the degree to which it had intruded into his consciousness. Elizabeth Cawthra was also moved by the Belgian situation, noting in her diary for 15 October that she had spent the evening collecting "...clothes for the poor Belgians."¹⁶

The plight of the Belgians, added onto the casualties suffered by the heroic Belgian Army, struck a chord with Torontonians. They knew that hundreds of thousands of civilians had been forced from their homes by the advancing German Army. They could imagine the streams of refugees abandoning everything during their escape. Torontonians' support, however, was galvanized around Belgium's strategic predicament. Long before stories of German atrocities were reported in the papers, citizens had gone to war to defend the rights of a small nation against an overwhelming foe. Britain and the Empire had promised to defend France and restore Belgium's national boundaries. The people of Toronto responded with a degree of enthusiasm which quickly overwhelmed existing informal mechanisms to deliver aid.

This effort to aid the Belgians was part of a deepening commitment by city residents to the war effort. Secular and religious newspapers reiterated the reasons for fighting they articulated in August 1914, and built upon them. Understanding these reasons is essential to understanding the nature of the war effort since the willingness to sacrifice depended upon the breadth and depth of the reasons underpinning the war effort. Reports that thousands of British soldiers had been killed did not undercut support for the

¹⁶ Elizabeth Cawthra, Diary Entry, 15 October 1914, Metro Toronto Reference Library, Baldwin Room, Cawthra Family Collection, Box 2, Series I, Elizabeth Cawthra, Diaries 1900-1921.

war: they reinforced it. A Rudyard Kipling poem, published in the papers, encapsulated the spirit of the fall of 1914: "for all we have and are, for all our children's fate, stand up and meet the war."¹⁷

Everything that the Empire stood for, and everything that it might become, was wrapped up in the verdict being determined on the battlefield; there was no room for compromise,¹⁸ their democratic way of life was threatened.¹⁹ Even in December, when it was obvious that the war would not be over by Christmas, support did not ebb.²⁰ Liberal papers, including the farmers' *Weekly Sun*, echoed these sentiments.²¹ The *Globe* argued that the war was about ideas: "Mere money, or mere war equipment, or mere battleships, or even mere men -- these the nations are pouring out with the lavish hands of spendthrifts. And why? For the sake of Ideas: the idea of Honour, the idea of Truth, the idea of Freedom. Ideas alone are worth fighting for. Things may be counted, weighed, measured, paid for. But Ideas -- the things that are unseen -- are eternal."²²

Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and Catholic church spokespeople were all consistent supporters of a war for ever-expanding ideals. The principal

¹⁷ Rudyard Kipling, "For All We Have and Are," *World*, 2 September 1914, p. 1.

¹⁸ "Duty of Canada" (ed.), *News*, 11 September 1914, p. 6. See also, "A War of Ideals" (ed.), *World*, 30 September 1914, p. 6.

¹⁹ "The Front Page," *Saturday Night*, 17 October, p. 2.

²⁰ "Four Months of War," *News*, 5 December 1914, p. 6. See also, "The Only Basis of Peace," *World*, 15 April 1915, p. 6.

²¹ See for example, "The Course of the War" (ed.), *Weekly Sun*, 9 September 1914, p. 1; "Democracy Versus Imperialism" (ed.), *Weekly Sun*, 16 September 1914, p. 1; "Peace For All or Peace for None," *Globe*, 9 September 1914, p. 6; "War and the Talk of Peace" (ed.), *Globe*, 28 September 1914, p. 4; "Enlistment Necessary" (ed.), *Star*, 28 September 1914, p. 6; N.W. Rowell, qtd. in "Issue of the War Tests Foundations," *Globe*, 5 December 1914, p. 9.

²² "Canada in the Battle of Ideas" (ed.), *Globe*, 18 January 1915, p. 4.

difference between the secular and religious press is that while the former placed the debate in the context of right and wrong, the latter viewed it as a struggle between good and evil. The *Canadian Churchman*, for instance, maintained that Britain was justified in "...taking up arms for the prevention of any great evil threatening to overwhelm the social and political system of which the nation is a member."²³ The Anglican paper rejected the notion of an early peace to reduce casualties,²⁴ arguing that the war was one of survival of the British Empire and must be fought to a successful conclusion.²⁵

Secular and religious papers believed in the Empire's cause, but as part of a society accustomed to progress, they also believed that good things would arise out of the slaughter. The *World* believed that as a result of Britain's willingness to fight "for a scrap of paper," the war was ushering in new and higher standards of "national and

²³ "Is Britain Justified?" *Canadian Churchman*, 3 September 1914, p. 568.

²⁴ "The Desire for Peace," *Canadian Churchman*, 13 October 1914, p. 663.

²⁵ "National Righteousness," *Canadian Churchman*, 14 January 1915, p. 21. For similar examples from other religious periodicals, see the following: "The Sword," *Canadian Churchman*, 28 January 1915, p. 52; Francis G. Brown, "The Transfiguration of War," *Christian Guardian*, 23 September 1914, p. 8; "A Fight For Life," *Christian Guardian*, 21 October 1914, p. 5; S.D. Chown, "A Message to Our Soldiers: A Sermon Preached in Massey Hall Last Sunday by Rev. Dr. Chown, General Superintendent, in Connection with the Christmas Mail Message Service of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society," *Christian Guardian*, 16 December 1914, p. 7; "The Coming Year," *Christian Guardian*, 30 December 1914, p. 5; Cranswick Jost, "The Ethics of War" (letter to the editor), *Christian Guardian*, 10 February 1915, p. 23; W.T. Herridge, qtd. in "'The Church and the War,'" *The Presbyterian*, 15 October 1914, p. 342; Charles W. Gordon, "Canada's Duty," *The Presbyterian*, 12 November 1914, p. 438; "One Hundred Days of War," *The Presbyterian*, 26 November 1914, p. 492; "After Six Months of War," *The Presbyterian*, 4 February 1915, p. 117; "A National Call to Prayer," *Canadian Baptist*, 3 September 1914, p. 5; Thos Trotter, "Mr. MacNeill's Sermons on Christianity and the War" (letter to the editor), *Canadian Baptist*, 31 December 1914, p. 5; "Editorial Comment" (ed.), *Canadian Baptist*, 28 January 1915, p. 1.

international morality."²⁶ In that common struggle, Britain and the Empire would also benefit from a breaking down of class divisions.²⁷ The fact that casualty lists included both officers and enlisted men was seen as one of the hallmarks of the "...new social order that will come with the close of the war."²⁸ Canada was sacrificing, temporarily, some of its prosperity, but would be the better for it in the long term.²⁹

The religious press was similarly convinced that as part of God's higher purpose, the war would ultimately benefit humankind. This position was articulated in the context of knowing that the scale of the destruction was immense.³⁰ The *Christian Guardian* stressed the heroism and glory of laying down a life for the cause,³¹ while praising the opportunity to rid the world of "King Alcohol." It also welcomed the solidarity of the Empire, the common purpose of the churches, the development of the patriotic spirit, and the breaking down of national prejudices.³² The *Canadian Baptist* also dwelled on the positives of the conflict, publishing stories which recounted the "...wonderful qualities of sympathy and kind and respectful consideration for others in many persons who never

²⁶ "International Obligations" (ed.), *World*, 2 September 1914, p. 6.

²⁷ "Advance of Democracy" (ed.), *World*, 21 September 1914, p. 6.

²⁸ "The Roll of Honour" (ed.), *World*, 3 March 1915, p. 6.

²⁹ "Good Out of Evil" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 8 December 1914, p. 6; "Unity of the Empire" (ed.), *Star*, 8 September 1914, p. 6; "Good Out of Evil" (ed.), *Globe*, 12 October 1914, p. 4; "The Birth of the Larger Christ" (ed.), *Globe*, 25 December 1914, p. 4; "A New Year in a New World" (ed.), *Globe*, 1 January 1915, p. 4; "Archdeacon Cody Makes Call for Self-Sacrifice," *Varsity*, 19 October 1914, p. 1; "'It's an Ill Wind --'" (ed.), *Varsity*, 13 January 1915, p. 2.

³⁰ See for example, "The Canadian Church and the War," *Canadian Churchman*, 1 October 1914, p. 633.

³¹ "Making the Great Sacrifice," *Christian Guardian*, 11 November 1914, p. 5.

³² "What the War Has Done," *Christian Guardian*, 14 April 1914, pp. 5-6.

desire to live in the light of public admiration."³³ One such story told how a wounded soldier waiting for a bus was put into a taxi paid for by a patriotic gentleman. The emphasis was placed on the positive influence of the war and how it had prompted this gentlemen to sacrifice for someone else. No mention was made, however, of the horrors the soldier went through in sustaining his wound, or the fact that the war demanded a much higher price from some than from others.³⁴

As the war expanded in scope and cost, so did the commitment of local citizens. By the beginning of 1915, there was no longer any debate about whether or not a man who picked up the sword to fight was acting as a good Christian; the debate now turned on whether the man who failed to pick up the sword was worthy. They were committed, body and soul, to defeating Germany. They believed that everything the Empire stood for was being tested in the great conflict. It was these ideas which would sustain them through the dark days ahead. Citizens understood that they were fighting for more than territorial or political gain. They were fighting for the very future of the civilization they had created. At the end of the long road that was the Great War, citizens were convinced that their sacrifice would pay dividends. Giving of themselves and their families, they believed, would ultimately result in a better society. Their willingness to sacrifice ran

³³ "Editorial Comment" (ed.), *Canadian Baptist*, 1 April 1915, p. 1.

³⁴ "Editorial Comment" (ed.), *Canadian Baptist*, 22 April 1915, p. 1. For examples from other religious periodicals, see the following: "Pax Britannica" (ed.), *Catholic Register*, 17 September 1914, p. 4; "Virtue of Patriotism" (ed.), *Catholic Register*, 18 March 1915, p. 4. "A Prayer," *The Presbyterian*, 4 February 1915, p. 126; J.R. Geddes, "The Benefit of the War" (letter to the editor), *The Presbyterian*, 11 February 1915, p. 167; "The Anchor of the Soul," *The Presbyterian*, 11 March 1915, p. 254.

deep, and they would need all of that resolve in the coming months as Canada's soldiers finally closed with the enemy.

* * *

In late April 1915, the war hit home for Torontonians. After months of training in Britain, the Canadian Expeditionary Force made the voyage to France -- and the front -- in April 1915. On the morning of 22 April 1915, the Canadian 1st Division held a portion of the front line near the town of Ypres with a British division on their right and a French-Algerian division on their left. Troops could feel a slight breeze blowing into their faces. At 5 p.m., observers reported greenish clouds of poisonous chlorine gas moving towards the Allied trenches, causing the Algerians to flee, opening a large gap in the line. That night parts of the Canadian 1st Division attempted to re-take lost ground, at incredible cost. The fighting continued for several days as the Canadians struggled to close the gap before withdrawing on 27 April. The battle cost over 208 officers and almost 6,000 other ranks killed, wounded or missing -- almost one third of the total Canadian force then overseas.³⁵

In the context of a war for adventure and glory, Toronto newspapers greeted the first news from Second Ypres with tremendous enthusiasm, trumpeting the official word from the British War Office: "Their [the Canadians] gallantry and determination undoubtedly saved the situation. Their conduct was magnificent throughout."³⁶ In a

³⁵ See for instance, Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and the Great War 1914-1919* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1989), pp. 58-63, and Nicholson, *Official History*, pp. to 49-92.

³⁶ See for example, "CANADIANS AT LANGEMARCK," *Star*, 24 April 1915 p. 1; "Brilliant Work by Canadians Saved Day Near Langemarck," *World*, 25 April 1915 p.

commentary typical of the daily newspapers, the *Star* interpreted the fact that Canadians were outnumbered as a further measure of their achievement: "This contingent, outnumbered and forced to give way, covered themselves with glory and apparently saved the day, preventing the on-rushing Germans penetrating the main Anglo-French-Belgian line. They lost heavily, the War Office admits, but their conduct is praised in the warmest terms."³⁷ Demonstrating that their metropolis was London, Torontonians were thrilled to learn that the actions of the Canadians at the front were recognized worldwide and "every single evening newspaper [in London] contains the word 'Canada.'"³⁸

It was not until two days after the initial news of the Canadian stand, while the battle continued, that concern was expressed about the human cost. Along with articles which focused on the glory of Second Ypres, Toronto was filled with "... feverish anxiety and dread..."³⁹ waiting for casualty lists. Learning of casualties was a public phenomenon and crowds gathered outside newspaper offices to scan the lists. Initially, only officer casualties were reported: "Sunday was one of the most anxious days ever experienced in Toronto, and the arrival of the officers' casualty list only served to increase the feeling that a long list including all ranks was inevitable. Crowds scanned the newspaper bulletin boards from the time of the arrival of the first lists shortly before noon, until midnight, while hundreds sought information by telephone."⁴⁰

1; "Canadians Saved Situation," *World*, 25 April 1915 p. 1.

³⁷ "Canadians Won Great Glory," *Star*, 24 April 1915, p. 1.

³⁸ "London is Aflame Over Canada's Feat," *Globe*, 26 April 1915, p. 1.

³⁹ "Await Further List With Much Anxiety," *News*, 26 April 1915, p. 1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* See also, "Toronto Hit Heavily in List of Officers," *Globe*, 26 April 1915, p. 1.

The Second Battle of Ypres prompted Minister of Militia Sam Hughes to announce that a Third and Fourth Contingent would be mobilized.⁴¹ While Hughes pledged more of Canada's sons, the struggle to find information continued in the midst of the accolades. The fundamental difficulty was that casualty lists for other ranks were not immediately available, and even information on officer casualties was difficult to secure. Newspaper offices were inundated with personal and telephone requests from Torontonians wanting to learn the fate of loved ones: for several heart-wrenching days, their attempts failed.⁴² Mayor T.L. Church, elected on 1 January 1915, announced plans for a memorial service at Massey Hall, providing that militia and municipal authorities were in agreement, but that was scant comfort to waiting relatives.⁴³

As news trickled into Toronto, the terrible price paid by local soldiers became clearer. On 28 April 1915, it was reported that fully 15 percent of the total officer casualties were men from Toronto, and that the total list would not be known for some

⁴¹ "More Canucks for the Front," *Star*, 26 April 1915, p. 1.

⁴² See for example, "Her Bowed Head is Proudly Held," *Globe* 27 April 1915, p. 7.

⁴³ "Memorial Service is Being Planned," *World*, 27 April 1915, p. 4. T.L. Church was a life-long resident of the city and trained as a lawyer before entering municipal politics. He served as an alderman from 1905-1909, then as the City Controller in 1910. (Henry James Morgan, ed., *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 2nd edition (Toronto, William Briggs, 1912), p. 232.). His papers have been preserved at the Archives of Ontario, but according to the Finding Aid, "there is little in this collection that would prove of interest to the historian, administrator or biographer. It can only be presumed that the more important documents, and particularly correspondence, which T.L. Church must have accumulated during his public life is in other hands or has been destroyed." (Archives of Ontario, Finding Aid No. 25, Inventory of the T.L. Church Papers, Prepared 1951, p. 3.).

time.⁴⁴ The next day, some citizens had received news of the fate of other ranks, but most were still waiting.⁴⁵ Local militia units passed on the information they had received, the 10th Royal Grenadiers reporting having lost, in one casualty list, two officers killed, five wounded, and six missing.⁴⁶ The Queen's Own Rifles were similarly devastated, the unit reporting that of the original 28 officers assigned to the third battalion, only five remained.⁴⁷ Other reports reflected the growing awareness of the battle's cost, noting that it "...becomes daily more evident that the battle in which the Canadians saved the day was one of the bloodiest of the war...Reports to hand last evening show that nearly 50 per cent. of the officers of the 3rd (Toronto) Battalion fell on the field of Langemarck."⁴⁸ Reports like this only worsened the anxiety of those still waiting for news of enlisted men, and papers cautioned about the inevitable list of dead and wounded.

The fate of the 15th battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, consisting almost entirely of men from Toronto's 48th Highlanders, remained uncertain as late as 1 May 1915. The *Star* reported that only 10 officers of the original 28 had survived the battle unscathed.⁴⁹ The *World* assumed that the scope of the Highlanders' casualties meant the whole battalion was missing, and hoped that more officers would be located in

⁴⁴ "Toronto's Loss is Heavy; Prominent Officers Killed," *Telegram*, 28 April 1915 p. 14.

⁴⁵ "Citizens Eagerly Awaiting New Lists of Casualties," *News*, 29 April 1915, p. 11.

⁴⁶ "Grenadiers Lost 9 of Their 10 Officers," *Star*, 29 April 1915, p. 4.

⁴⁷ "Of Q.O.R. Officers Only Five Remain," *News*, 29 April 1915, p. 1.

⁴⁸ "Half of City Officers Fall in Fierce Fight," *Globe*, 29 April 1915, p. 3. See also, "Toronto's Officers' Losses," *World*, 29 April 1915, p. 1.

⁴⁹ "18 Kiltie Officers Lost at Langemarck," *Star*, 1 May 1915, p. 2.

the coming days.⁵⁰ The *World* argued that since the unit's casualties were so high, the entire regiment must have been captured by the Germans -- any other explanation was too horrible to contemplate.⁵¹ Almost a week after the first officer casualties were reported, however, there was nothing to do "...but wait for the lists."⁵²

After two more days of uncertainty, the cost of Second Ypres to other ranks was announced: "CANADIAN CASUALTIES ARE 5,400;" "CANADIAN CASUALTIES MAY AMOUNT TO 5,000;" "Canadian Casualties Nearly 6,000;" "Canadian Loss to Reach 6,000."⁵³ If anyone failed to recognize the scale of the sacrifice, the *Mail and Empire* put it in perspective: "This means that half of the infantry at the front have been put out of action."⁵⁴ It was now clear that former members of 48th Highlanders serving as the 15th Battalion were not prisoners, as had been hoped. Citizens understood the nature and cost of the fighting through early telegrams from wounded soldiers who had been in the battle. One unnamed, wounded Highlander cabled back to reassure his family: "The British troops came in time to take up supporting trenches, three-quarters of a mile back, but we [48th Highlanders] saved the day. Other Canadian regiments who were in action

⁵⁰ "48th HIGHLANDERS MISSING," *World*, 1 May 1915, p. 1.

⁵¹ "Casualties Among Highlanders Indicate That Entire Regiment Has Been Captured by Germans," *World*, 1 May 1915, p. 1.

⁵² "Fear That Casualties May Number Into the Thousands," *News*, 1 May 1915, p. 15.

⁵³ "CANADIAN CASUALTIES ARE 5,400," *News*, 3 May 1915, p. 1; "CANADIAN CASUALTIES MAY AMOUNT TO 5,000," *Globe*, 3 May 1915, p. 1; "Canadian Casualties Nearly 6,000," *Telegram*, 3 May 1915, p. 13; "Canadian Loss to Reach 6,000," *Mail and Empire*, 3 May 1915, p. 1; "Canadian Losses Over 6,000, Heroism Was Magnificent," *Star*, 3 May 1915, p. 1; "Canadians Held 3-Mile Front At Weakest Spot; Highland Brigade Fought to Last Cartridge," *Telegram*, 3 May 1915, p. 13; "Losses Among Canadians Will Reach 6,000," *World*, 3 May 1915, p. 1.

⁵⁴ "Canadian Loss to Reach 6,000," *Mail and Empire*, 3 May 1915, p. 1.

did equally well. We saved the line and the guns. We hope some officers and men who held the forward trenches, which were a series of redoubts, may have been taken prisoners, but they fought too hard and were likely killed almost to a man. The same is true at St. Julien Village. Only one who was there when the Germans entered came back."⁵⁵

The extent of the losses, however, was interpreted by all daily newspapers as a further sign of the glory Canadians had won. The *Star's* reaction was typical, noting that the tale of the battle "...is a straightforward story of a stand in the face of terrible odds, as inspiring as any in history, and indicates that there was not a single of the now-terribly-decimated battalions and their officers who did not cover themselves with glory."⁵⁶ The *World* defined for its readers the nature of the glory won at Langemarck: "The price of glory is a heavy one, and we may be thankful that our soldiers have not been asked to pay the price of glory as the soldiers of the Kaiser have. We have asked them to pay the price of freedom, the glorious heritage of British citizenship. They have paid the price, and they have taught us the value of that treasure of liberty for which unsparingly they laid down their lives. That is their glory."⁵⁷

A mother of one of the men, Mrs. H. D. Warren, learned that she had lost her son and a "loved companion." She told reporters that her "...great comfort is that we, the

⁵⁵ "Those in Forward Trenches Killed Almost to a Man," *News*, 4 May 1915 p. 3.

⁵⁶ "Canadian Losses Over 6,000, Heroism Was Magnificent," *Star*, 3 May 1915, p. 1.

⁵⁷ "The Price of Glory" (ed.), *World*, 3 May 1915, p. 6. See also, "The Canadians at Langemarck" (ed.), *Star*, 3 May 1915, p. 6; "The Noblest Death," *News*, 3 May 1915, p. 6.

mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers, at home in this dreadful time, are fighting with those who are fighting at the front. The greatest solace is work [at the Women's Patriotic League]."⁵⁸ Mrs. Angus Sinclair wrote to her son, Ian, who was serving as an officer at the front with the 13th Battalion: "You have been through terrible times the past few days and we have been feeling the strain here dear. We thank God not hearing of harm to you, and feel for the ones who have lost their dear ones."⁵⁹ Despite the cost, Mrs. Sinclair was elated at the victory, and praised the "...wonders the Canadians did. The British say you saved the day -- so with all the sorrow and anxiety there is tremendous feeling of pride in ours, who have done so nobly."⁶⁰ A week later, after news of the casualties had arrived, Ian Sinclair's brother wrote from Toronto: "We are all so proud of our boys who have shown they can live nobly and die nobly for all our Empire stands for -- I am no good at the expressing of these things old man but you know how we all feel in our heart of hearts."⁶¹

Many ministers read the names of Canadian casualties from the city's pulpits to recognize their sacrifice and to comfort those left behind.⁶² Rev. Dr. W.H. Hincks of Trinity Methodist church advised his parishioners not to despair, but to take comfort in the knowledge that "[t]here are still thousands of boys ready and willing to step into the

⁵⁸ "Spartan Mother Speaks Message To The Bereaved," *Star*, 1 May 1915, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Mrs. Angus Sinclair to son Ian Sinclair, 27 April 1915, PAC, MG 30, E432, Vol. 1, File 1-17, Correspondence -- Transcripts -- January 1915 - April 1915.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Bob Sinclair to brother Ian Sinclair, 4 May 1915, PAC, MG 30, E432, Vol. 1, File 1-17, Correspondent -- Transcripts -- January 1915 - April 1915.

⁶² "Toronto Hit Heavily in List of Officers," *Globe* 26 April 1915, p. 1.

vacant places of those who have given their all for their country."⁶³ Mayor Church extended the sympathies of the City of Toronto to the bereaved: "To those of our bereaved citizens we tender our deepest sympathy in their hour of trouble and trial. We may well be proud of our beloved boys and heroes who have fallen in the greatest engagement around Langemarck."⁶⁴

While headlines, editorials and poems celebrated the glorious aspects of the battle, there was a need to mark the passing of so many young men. While each militia regiment held a service for its fallen,⁶⁵ communal grief crystallized around the funeral for a young captain of the 48th Highlanders, Robert Clifton Darling, whose body was brought home by his wife for burial in Toronto.⁶⁶ Mrs. R.C. Darling arrived in Toronto on 5 May 1915,⁶⁷ two days after the headlines announced 6,000 Canadians had become casualties at

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ T.L. Church, qtd. in *Appendix "C" to the Minutes of the City Council, 1915* (Toronto: Carswell Company Limited, 1916), Toronto City Hall Archives, p. 49.

⁶⁵ The Queen's Own Rifles, for example, held a service with regimental chaplain, Hon. Lieut.-Col. Archdeacon Cody, presiding. ("Queen's Own Honour Their Heroic Dead," *News*, 6 May 1915, p. 3; "Solemn Memorial for Lost Q.O.R. Men," *Globe*, 6 May 1915, p. 6.)

⁶⁶ "Bring Home Bodies of Slain Husbands," *World*, 4 May 1914, p. 1. R.C. Darling played a key role in getting volunteers organized in August 1914, and went overseas as an Adjutant with the newly formed 15th Battalion. On 23 March 1915 he was wounded by a sniper bullet in the shoulder while cutting across the open behind the front-line. He died later in hospital in London. (Kim Beattie, *48th Highlanders of Canada, 1891-1928* (Toronto: 48th Highlanders of Canada, 1932), pp. 18-19, 46.). The obituaries of his funeral carry no information about his family background, but there is no doubt that he was from a prominent family. His uncle, Henry W. Darling, was a wealthy local businessman before his move to New York just before the war, having sold his Toronto interest in a dry goods company for over \$1 million. R.C. Darling's wife was also from an upper class family. Her father, Isidore Frederick Hellmuth, was a distinguished Toronto lawyer, and one of the "leaders of the bar." (Morgan, ed., *Canadian Men and Women*, pp. 296, 520-21.).

⁶⁷ "Military Honors for Capt. Darling," *World*, 5 May 1915, p. 7.

Second Ypres. His body lay in state at his family's home at 2 Dale Avenue until the funeral.

The whole city was in mourning on 6 May. The flags in front of the Parliament buildings and City Hall, as well as all other public and private buildings, flew at half mast for Captain Darling and the men killed at Ypres. The funeral service was conducted in a crowded St. James' Presbyterian Church on Gerrard Street. Outside, a "...solidly massed crowd of citizens stood along the sidewalks and boulevards of Gerrard Street, participating silently in the ceremony that was going on within. It was a crowd composed of men, women and children, and many of the women were moist-eyed as they thought of their own sons or husbands on the battlefields of Europe."⁶⁸ Densely packed, the crowd extended to the West to Yonge Street and to the East to Church Street, a distance of two blocks in both directions. The church was filled with Darling's comrades from the 48th Highlanders. The rostrum and organ were draped in black while the flags of the Allies were centred around the royal flag of Scotland at the lectern. The coffin was piped into the church to the strains of "The Flowers of the Forest," and, upon its arrival at the front, the congregation sang, "O God, Our Help in Ages Past."

Rev. Dr. Robertson presided, taking as his text, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." "We are gathered to commemorate more than death," he said. "We are here to commemorate sacrifice. Gallant soldier, winsome comrade, constant friend, man of stainless honour; he laid down his life when life was

⁶⁸ "Impressive Service Marks Captain Darling's Funeral," *News*, 7 May 1915, p. 11.

opening for him, holding everything he hoped for or could desire. I am not sure any of us would have it otherwise. It is good to die so. Death is not the worst thing that can happen to a man."⁶⁹ It was not death, Rev. Robertson argued, which had brought them together on that day. It was the sacrifice of the dead, and it was that sacrifice which was commemorated.

At the end of the service, Capt. Darling's oak coffin was taken out to a gun carriage to be drawn by six horses to Mount Pleasant Cemetery. At the front of the procession marched the 48th Highlander Piper, playing "Lochaber No More." On the carriage, alongside Capt. Darling's Union Jack draped coffin, were carried his sword and bonnet. Tethered to the carriage was the captain's charger which, with empty saddle and stirrups, followed its master's coffin. Outside the church, thousands lined the route of the funeral procession up Yonge Street to the cemetery. Accorded full military honours, the coffin was accompanied by Capt. Darling's 48th Highlander colleagues who marched with rifles reversed. Also present at the ceremony were many prominent figures in Toronto and national life: Ontario Premier Hon. Col. J.S. Hendrie, Mayor T.L. Church, Leader of the Ontario Opposition Mr. N.W. Rowell, and President R.A. Falconer⁷⁰ [University of Toronto] were among the dignitaries. So many floral arrangements had been received that it took two carriages to transport them to the cemetery. As the procession neared the burial place, the funeral cortege resumed a slow pace. Upon arriving at the family plot,

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ For a discussion of Falconer's life, see James G. Greenlee, "'The Song of a People': Sir Robert Falconer on Empire," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring 1980, pp. 80-92.

three volleys were fired. Bayonets were fixed and arms presented in the last salute, a piper again played "Lochaber No More," and then the bugles sounded the "Last Post."⁷¹ Capt. Darling was laid to rest under a marker in the shape of a cross. The inscription reads: "Captain Robert Clifton Darling, Adjutant 48th Highlanders, 15th Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Canadian Division. Wounded in Action 23rd March [bullet wound] Near Neuve Chapelle France, Died London, England, 19th April 1915." He was twenty-seven years old.⁷²

The Second Battle of Ypres transformed the war from a great adventure to a great crusade. Prior to the battle, citizens equated warfare with glory. In the wake of the devastating casualty lists, such a conception of the war was impossible. In its place, Torontonians began a great crusade. Not only were they sustained by the ideals articulated in the early months of the war, but they were further supported by the need to make good the sacrifice of so many men. The war effort continued to be a collective enterprise. Crowds gathered to learn the fate of loved ones, and they mourned their dead together, gathering around the funeral for Capt. Robert Clifton Darling. The thousands who gathered to mark his passing were no doubt thinking of their own loved ones in a

⁷¹ This discussion of Captain Darling's funeral is taken from the following articles: "Last Tribute's to War Hero; Capt. Darling Borne to Grave," *Telegram*, 6 May 1915, p. 8; "Silent Crowd Lined Route," *News*, 6 May 1915, p. 1; "Toronto Pays Mighty Tribute to Captain Darling," *Star*, 6 May 1915, p. 1; "Grateful Tribute to Toronto Hero," *Mail and Empire*, 7 May 1915, p. 5; "Impressive Service Marks Captain Darling's Funeral," *News*, 7 May 1915, p. 11; "Sermon of Hope, Tender Comfort, Valiant Words," *Star*, 7 May 1915, p. 10; "Toronto Pays Tribute to Gallant Soldier," *Globe*, 7 May 1915, p.7.

⁷² Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Internment Register No. 3, 21709-35339, p. 210, No. 33272.

grave in France, in the hospital or still in the trenches.

The pace of the war did not allow Torontonians an adequate period of mourning. One day after Capt. Darling's funeral, headlines focused on the giant passenger ship *Lusitania*, pushing the news of Second Ypres from the front page. On 7 May 1915 it was reported that the *Lusitania* had been torpedoed by a German submarine during the seventh day of its voyage from New York to Kinsale, Ireland.⁷³ Many local residents were known to be on board. Once again, newspaper offices were besieged by concerned relatives searching for information. Crowds also converged on the ticket distributor, the Robert Reford Company, at 50 King Street East. Around 10 p.m. on 7 May, a company spokesperson announced that all passengers were safe. Shortly thereafter, however, it was confirmed that the *Lusitania* had been sunk by a German submarine with large loss of life.⁷⁴ There was no more information available that night. Concerned relatives left their vigils at newspaper offices and headed for home, hoping for the best, but preparing for the worst.

It was not until the following day that more details became available. One report claimed that there were 75 Torontonians on the passenger liner, and all were assumed dead.⁷⁵ The good news was that by 8 May, there were 703 known survivors;

⁷³ See for instance, "LUSITANIA IS TORPEDOED," *Star*, 7 May 1915, p. 1; "Lusitania Torpedoed; All Safe?" *News*, 7 May 1915, p. 1; "Lusitania Torpedoed and Sunk by German Submarine Off Kinsale, Ireland," *Telegram*, 7 May 1915, p. 15.

⁷⁴ "Toronto Heavily Represented in Lusitania Passenger List," *Mail and Empire*, 8 May 1915, p. 1.

⁷⁵ "City Swept by Spirit of Avenging Justice," *Globe*, 8 May 1915, p. 8.

unfortunately, at least 1,364 passengers were lost at sea.⁷⁶ Toronto waited to find out how many of its citizens fell into each category.

While they waited, a renewed debate about the nature of the enemy erupted. The German introduction of poison gas at second Ypres had cost over 6,000 Canadian casualties, and now the enemy had fired on an unarmed passenger ship carrying women and children.⁷⁷ Editorials were filled with condemnations of Germany's war effort and its people. While the sinking of the *Lusitania* was the first atrocity which affected the lives of civilian Torontonians directly, it was just the latest in a series of highly publicized, barbarous acts by the German military. No longer was the Kaiser perceived as the sole enemy. The German people were no longer portrayed as his innocent dupes, but as his willing pawns. Germany's officer class had joined the Kaiser in a toast, "to the day," referring to the moment when German armies would be unleashed on the world. German academics endorsed German activities. Average German soldiers participated in the raping and pillaging of Belgium. German citizens took to the streets to celebrate German victories. All this evidence was digested in the papers, reinforcing the notion that the Empire was involved in a fight for its way of life against a particularly barbarous enemy.

Toronto continued its vigil. Some citizens were relieved when relatives, once safely ashore at Kinsale, sent telegrams home. On 8 May, the *Telegram* reported that

⁷⁶ "Known Survivors From Lusitania Total 703 -- Lost Number 1,364," *Telegram*, 8 May 1915, p. 17; "Latest Figures Show Survivors 703, Dead 1,364; Little Hope for Others," *News*, 8 May 1915, p. 1; "Lusitania is Lost; 1,400 Drown, Torpedoed Without Warning," *Globe*, 8 May 1915, p. 1.

⁷⁷ "City Swept by Spirit of Avenging Justice," *Globe*, 8 May 1915, p. 8.

John Eaton's sister Mrs. Burnside and daughter were both safe.⁷⁸ Many others were not, however, and the papers carried stories of the scale of the losses, including the toll of more than 150 babies who died in the water:

One mother lost all her three young children, one six years old, one aged four, and the third a babe in arms, six months old. She herself lives, and held up the three of them in the water, all the time shrieking for help. When rescued by a boat party the two oldest were dead. Their room was required in the boat, and the mother was brave enough to realize it... With her hair streaming down her back and her form shaking with sorrow, she took each of the little ones from the rescuers and reverently placed it in the water again, and the people in the boat wept with her as she murmured a little sobbing prayer to the great God above. But her cup of sorrow was not yet completed, for just as they were landing her third and only child died in her arms.⁷⁹

By 10 May the cost of the tragedy to Toronto was clearer, with reports claiming 63 from the city safe and 96 still missing.⁸⁰ Churches condemned the German atrocity even as they provided solace and comfort for bereaved families.⁸¹ In an address typical of the major denominations, Archdeacon Henry John Cody⁸² of St. Paul's Anglican Church told his congregation, "This policy of frightfulness is designed to inspire terror, but it will only deepen the grim determination of every Briton to fight through until this hideous, war-god of militarism and brute-force is shattered forever."⁸³

⁷⁸ "Toronto a City of Anxiety; Cables Bring Relief to Some," *Telegram*, 8 May 1915, p. 15.

⁷⁹ "Awful Toll of Babes, 150 of Whom Died in the Water," *News*, 10 May 1915, p. 3.

⁸⁰ "More Cables Tell of Safety; Over 60 People From City Rescued," *Telegram*, 10 May 1915, p. 13.

⁸¹ "Pulpit Speaks Out in Righteous Wrath," *Globe*, 10 May 1915, p. 6.

⁸² For a brief survey of Cody's life, see William White, *Canon Cody of St. Paul's Church* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1953).

⁸³ "Toronto Pulpits on Teutonic Savagery," *Star*, 10 May 1915, p. 8.

Citizens continued to travel to newspaper offices seeking information, more often than not without success. Gradually, stories of local survivors reached home. One young passenger, eleven year old Frank Hook, had been returning to England with his father and sister. He was thrown overboard when the torpedo struck, and broke his leg on a piece of floating wreckage. The boy came up again underneath an upturned boat. He was later reunited with his father, who did not know until later that his son had survived, in a hospital in Queenstown.⁸⁴

Colonel George Sterling Ryerson,⁸⁵ President of the Canadian Red Cross, had been told that his wife and daughter had both survived. Mrs. Ryerson had been on her way to London to visit her son who was recuperating in hospital after being wounded at Second Ypres while vainly trying to save his brother. However, once ashore, Miss Ryerson confirmed that her mother had drowned.⁸⁶ Tales of families being torn apart were commonplace, and funeral services were conducted all over the city. It was not until 11 May that the final tally was complete: Toronto had lost 86 citizens.

Ministers set aside 16 May as a day of public mourning. A service at the Sherbourne Street Methodist church was typical. It was conducted in memory of the late Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Rogers and Franklin A. Peardon, employees of the Robert Simpson Company, traveling to Britain as part of "...the Dominion's war-time promise of

⁸⁴ "Survivors Tell of Their Escape," *Mail and Empire*, 10 May 1915, p. 1.

⁸⁵ Ryerson was a long-time Toronto resident, having been born there in January 1855. He established an admirable academic career as a Professor of Ophthalmology. (B.M. Greene, *Who's Who and Why, 1921* (Toronto: International Press Limited, 1921), p. 174.), p. 1450.).

⁸⁶ "Toronto Ladies Suffer From Shock," *Mail and Empire*, 12 May 1915, p. 4.

'business as usual.'"⁸⁷ It brought together a large crowd of mourners, seeking some outlet for their emotions.

The sinking of the *Lusitania* had helped to change Torontonians' notion of who they were fighting. This transformation profoundly altered the nature of the war effort and the city's experience of it. They were fighting against an enemy who would stop at nothing to win. Thus, the Allies would have to use the very tools they abhorred to ensure victory. In addition, enemy aliens were no longer perceived as victims. The fight was now against the German people, and this translated into much rougher treatment for local enemy aliens.⁸⁸ In the wake of the German attack on the *Lusitania*, Mayor Church announced that he would ask the local German community to close their clubs. They closed voluntarily two days later.⁸⁹ The City Council unanimously passed a resolution requiring, "...that it be an instruction to the several heads of Civic Departments to dismiss from the service of the City forthwith all persons of German, Austrian or Turkish birth, who are aliens or not naturalized subjects of His Majesty the King."⁹⁰

⁸⁷ "Paid Solemn Tribute to Murdered Dead," *Globe*, 17 May 1915, p. 8.

⁸⁸ For a discussion of the treatment of enemy aliens in the Canadian West, see Joseph Amedée Boudreau, "The Enemy Alien Problem in Canada, 1914-1921," PhD Dissertation, University of California, 1965. On internment operations, see Desmond Morton, "Sir William Otter and Internment Operations in Canada During the First World War," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LV, 1974, pp. 32-58; D.J. Carter, *Behind Canadian Barbed Wire: Alien Refugee and Prisoner of War Camps in Canada, 1914-1946* (Calgary: Tumbleweed Press, 1980); and Lubomyr Luciuk, *A Time for Atonement: Canada's First National Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914-1920* (Kingston: Limestone Press, 1988).

⁸⁹ "Mayor Church May Close German Clubs," *World*, 9 May 1915, p. 1.

⁹⁰ *Minutes of Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto for the Year 1915*, 17 May 1915 (Toronto: Carswell Company, 1916), Toronto City Hall Archives, p. 176.

While citizens were coping with the news of Second Ypres and the *Lusitania*, letters written by soldiers who survived the battle began to arrive in Toronto, becoming a regular feature in the papers. The most striking aspect of these private letters which became public is the detail about the nature and cost of trench warfare. One of the first letters to arrive was written by Capt. C. E. H. Morton of the 10th Royal Grenadiers, serving with the 3rd Battalion, to Major J. Cooper Mason, D.S.O., Brigade Major of the Toronto Infantry Brigade. It was published in the *World*:

It was a veritable inferno; shell after shell broke around us continuously, half-a-dozen at a time, from 7 a.m. till 1 p.m., all sorts of conditions of shells -- 'Johnsons,' 'Whistlers,' shrapnel, and God knows what not. I had been attending to wounded men in the open with the help of two chaps of the 2nd Battalion, who were mortally wounded on the job; they fell by my side and gave me an unpleasant twenty minutes until they were beyond help. I crawled away, and a few minutes later was hit myself in the right thigh by shrapnel. I tried to carry on, but could not stand, so I crawled about 75 yards to a tree trunk which had been felled, and hugged the leese of it until 9 p.m., when I was picked up by the stretchers. You may believe me, it was not pleasant to lie there helpless, expecting every minute to be landed by one of the shells that were incessantly bursting around me.⁹¹

Another letter from Private E.G.B. Relt, Toronto Battery, described the gas attack at Ypres. "It is deadly poison, and causes the victims to suffer terrible agony first. It burns their eyes terribly. It causes suffocation also, and altogether is the deadliest, or one of the deadliest, war machines used in the war. I was near enough, as was the battery, to experience the effect it had on the eyes, and, believe me, it burns some."⁹² Transport

⁹¹ "French Retired While Canadians Battled Against Terrific Odds," *World*, 13 May 1915, p. 6.

⁹² "How Canadians Saved the Day Told by Tommy Atkins Himself," *World*, 14 May 1915, p. 3.

officer Lieut. R.W.E. Jones wrote to his father, describing his experience and impression of the battle's cost to the infantry: "What they [the infantry] went thru in that terrible battle no one engaged in it can possibly realize. Just fancy, the dead are piled in heaps and the groans of the wounded and dying will never leave me. Every night we have to clear the roads of dead in order to get our wagons thru. On our way back to our base we pick up loads of wounded soldiers and bring them back to the dressing stations."⁹³ All Torontonians learned through these letters of the general conditions of the front, which included the indignity of being strewn like cord wood at the side of the road with other corpses to await burial, or, if lucky enough to be only wounded, lying alone for hours before receiving medical attention.

Other letters told of the infantrymen's experience at first hand. Private E.A. Foy, serving with the 4th Battalion, wrote to his sister:

We had about 1,500 yards to go over absolutely open ground, no cover whatsoever, and their trench was on a beautiful slope. Believe me, if hell is anything like Friday, I'm for reforming. They simply raked us with machine gun and rifle fire, and our fellows began dropping before we got properly started. How I lasted as long as I did I hardly know, as at every rush the fellow next to me copped it, and once when we were lying down the man next to me got it square through the head. Only one sergeant and four men including myself out of our platoon got within 200 yards of the trench when the fellow next to me was hit in the arm. I sat up beside him to get out his bandage to tie him up, when I got it myself through the back, and the next fellow got it in the shoulder. So that just left two. Suppose they got theirs later.⁹⁴

The argument that Canadians "... read, saw or experienced relatively little" of the

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ "Only Twenty-Six Men of 4th Battalion Escaped Inferno," *Star*, 19 May 1915, p. 2.

war's reality and "remained sheltered from the grizzly details,"⁹⁵ is simply wrong. In 1915 and throughout the war, Canadians had ample opportunity to learn the grizzly details of front-line combat. The public opinion leaders used editorials, church sermons and other available means of communication to make the case for the necessity of the war and to argue that sacrifices were not in vain, but the horrors of the conflict were never hidden from the people.

Detailed accounts of front-line life were readily available to the Toronto public. Capt. Morton's letter demonstrates that soldiers portrayed war neither as heroic nor as glorious. His letter dispels the notion that everyone at home was told only of quick victories, nobly won. Soldiers were not killed in a heroic dash by a single bullet to the heart, but often died a slow and painful death even as they attended to wounded comrades. Fear was a constant companion. Death and wounds descended upon defenseless soldiers from hidden guns, often miles away. Private Relt's letter describes the gas attacks in grizzly detail, allowing civilians at home to construct an image of one of the front's hazards. Private Foy's gritty description recounts how the Germans, in possession of the high ground, were able to make effective use of superior weaponry to halt the attack. The cost to Canadian infantry is also clearly outlined, as he notes that fully 86 percent of the members of this platoon became casualties in a single attack.

This point must be emphasized to balance the views expressed in the most recent study of the role of the press in the First World War. *Propaganda and Censorship*

⁹⁵ Jeffrey Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), p. xi.

During Canada's Great War by Jeffrey Keshen is based on the files of the Chief Censor and presents a picture of a tightly controlled press which was "muzzled" when it failed to impose self-censorship. Keshen insists that "unpleasant tales about front-line life were forbidden."⁹⁶ In the light of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, our task then is not to explain the reaction of a public which was denied the opportunity to learn of the reality of war, but to try to understand why a population which was well informed about what awaited its young men in the trenches of Europe continued to mobilize into resources, including manpower, to achieve victory.⁹⁷

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Defensive warfare, of the type conducted by the Canadians at Second Ypres, continued for more than another year. Allied forces were too weak to conduct a sustained attack and devoted their attention to building up resources for a summer 1916 offensive. The Germans were largely content to fortify their positions in the West and hold their ground, concentrating on dealing a knock-out blow to the Russians in the East. Canadian troops participated in largely diversionary attacks at Festubert in late May 1915, at

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* An examination of the Chief Censor's Files at the Public Archives of Canada revealed that the Chief Censor, Ernest J. Chambers used Circulars addressed to the editors of all major daily newspapers to control their publications. The overwhelming majority of these circulars were concerned with controlling information which might be useful to the enemy, and had very little to do with regulating life at home. For instance, Chambers asked editors to refrain from publishing information on the location and unit of a wounded or killed Canadian soldier. They were entitled to publish news of his death, but Chambers feared that information on the unit or its location might be useful to the enemy. He aimed to eliminate the publication of information useful to the enemy, not to bolster support for the war at home. (Ernest J. Chambers, Confidential Circular to Canadian Editors, 3 April 1916, PAC, Immigration Branch, RG 76, Vol. 604, File 884866.).

⁹⁷ The recruiting process is discussed in detail in chapter 4.

Givenchy in mid-June, and St. Eloi and Mount Sorrel in March and June 1916, respectively.

The first major British offensive of the war began on 1 July 1916 by the Somme River. The new British commander, Sir Douglas Haig, hoped that a massive artillery bombardment followed by waves of infantry would overwhelm German defenders, allowing cavalry to break the trench deadlock. The offensive had three fundamental objectives: "...to relieve pressure on the French armies at Verdun, to inflict as heavy losses as possible on the German armies, and to aid Allies on other fronts by preventing any further transfer of Germany [sic] troops from the West."⁹⁸ While Haig's attempt was a reasonable way to try to break the stalemate, it failed. On 1 July alone, the British Expeditionary Force sustained over 60,000 casualties, almost 20,000 dead, the costliest day ever for British arms. Despite the losses, the offensive ground on into November,⁹⁹ Haig's rationale being that if the enemy was given "...no rest and no respite from anxiety...another powerful attack would break through his remaining defences."¹⁰⁰

In Toronto, the public discourse recognized the Somme offensive for what it was: a starting point. Even though Canadian troops were not involved until September 1916, Torontonians were keenly interested in the Somme battle. Saturday July 1st was Dominion Day, celebrated with parades and patriotic enthusiasm. In the midst of these

⁹⁸ Nicholson, *Official History*, p. 160.

⁹⁹ For a discussion of the intervening period at the front, see the following: Bill Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare: Technology and the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 37-66; Nicholson, *Official History*, pp. 93-159; Morton and Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon*, pp. 106-115.

¹⁰⁰ Nicholson, *Official History*, p. 163.

celebrations, preliminary news filtered in about a huge British offensive. The morning papers went to press too soon to cover the story, but the evening *News* carried a bold headline: "BRITISH CARRY GERMAN LINE; TWENTY MILE FRONT IS TAKEN IN ASSAULT."¹⁰¹ Elizabeth Cawthra noted in her diary on 1 July that during the festivities and parades she heard "...of a British victory over the Germans."¹⁰²

It was not until Monday, 3 July 1916, that the papers were able to give fuller details of the offensive. The dailies all trumpeted that something momentous was under way. "Anglo-French Blow Delivered and Great Triumph Results,"¹⁰³ declared the *Telegram*. The *Globe* happily reported that "official despatches published to-day record successful Allied offensives on every front."¹⁰⁴

Despite the reported successes, the dailies were careful to place recent events in context and advised residents not to expect instant results. A *Star* editorialist commented that the Germans had spent hundreds of thousands of lives in recent attacks at Verdun, cautioned readers that the upcoming British offensive would not be easy, and that "...the best that can be hoped is that it will be possible."¹⁰⁵ Papers warned readers against the kind of blind enthusiasm characteristic of the early days of August 1914: "Too much rein was given to that bent [i.e., enthusiasm] in the earlier days of the struggle. To raise

¹⁰¹ "BRITISH CARRY GERMAN LINE; TWENTY MILE FRONT IS TAKEN IN ASSAULT," *News*, 1 July 1916, p. 1.

¹⁰² Elizabeth Cawthra, Diary Entry, 1 July 1916, Metro Toronto Reference Library, Baldwin Room, S259, Cawthra Family Collection, Box 2, Series I: Elizabeth Cawthra, Diaries 1900-1921.

¹⁰³ "Anglo-French Blow Delivered and Great Triumph Results," *Telegram*, 3 July 1916, p. 15.

¹⁰⁴ "Bulletins of Victory," *Globe*, 3 July 1916, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ "The Allied Advance" (ed.), *Star*, 3 July 1916, p. 6.

expectations to the highest pitch and then have to report disastrous reverses is not desirable. The enemy is still very powerful."¹⁰⁶

There is no mistaking, however, the general mood of optimism. Even with warnings to keep things in perspective, the public discourse reflected a hope that a turning point had been reached. Each of the daily papers, as well as the weekly religious periodicals, believed that the war had entered a new stage. Newspapers commented that Dominion Day, 1916, would long be remembered as a turning point: "The first news reached Toronto as her citizens were preparing to enjoy themselves in the bright sunshine of the first summer holiday. The news as it spread, added zest to the day."¹⁰⁷ Following the usual pattern, residents swamped newspaper offices with inquiries and extra after extra was printed and posted in office windows.

A small sample of the type of information available to local readers can be used to demonstrate that citizens had access to important information about the strategic direction of the war. The reporting in the *Globe* on 12 July was typical of the daily papers. After 11 days of fighting, headlines trumpeted that the whole *first* German line had been taken.¹⁰⁸ This "success" was illustrated with the advance of the British into Mametz Wood after "six costly assaults."¹⁰⁹ If this information had been received by a readership which did not understand the nature of trench warfare, it could not possibly have been

¹⁰⁶ "Smiting the Enemy" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 3 July 1916, p. 6. See also, "Will Win by Steady Pressure; Can't Expect a Sudden Breach," *Telegram*, 3 July 1916, p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ "Dominion Day Will Long Be Remembered," *Star*, 3 July 1916, p. 14.

¹⁰⁸ "Big Progress by British: Conquer Whole First Line," *Globe*, 12 July 1916, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ "War Summary," *Globe*, 12 July 1916, p. 1.

presented as a success. After all, it had taken almost two weeks to take the first of several German trenches immediately before the British positions.

Readers, however, had been consistently well informed about the progress of trench warfare for almost two years. They had been told that trench systems were organized in depth, and could clearly see from the daily maps provided in the papers that the trench lines moved very little as the months passed. The meager progress of the first days of the Somme offensive could only be interpreted as a success by a readership which understood the nature of the fighting. Had this information been presented to a populace which expected grand strategic movements and sweeping arrows across maps of Europe, the reaction would have been different. Local residents, however, were not uninformed about the nature of attritional warfare.

While Torontonians absorbed the available news, at the front Sir Douglas Haig was reinforcing areas where the Allies had gained ground. He poured troops and munitions to the front, trusting in God that a break-through was only days away. The Canadian Corps moved into the front-lines on 30 August, relieving the 1st Anzac Corps, with British General Julian Byng as their commander. It was the first time the Canadians, now three divisions strong, had made a strategic move as a Corps. They were allotted a quiet sector to allow continued training for offensive work as part of the general Somme battle. While not without incident, the Canadians were kept out of the news, awaiting their turn in the "big push."

In Toronto, the first two weeks of September 1916 were spent in familiar activities. The degree to which the war was seen through the experiences of Canada's and

especially Toronto's troops is evident in the newspaper coverage of the Somme offensive. Front page stories conveyed the main events but the press and community leaders were not fully emotionally enjoined until Canadian soldiers went into action in late September.

The first week of September saw the closing of a record year in attendance for the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) which had modern industry as its theme.¹¹⁰ One of the Exhibition's highlights had been the visit of royalty, the Duke of Connaught and Princess Patricia attending on 5 September. Great crowds gathered to watch the arrival of the two Royals, and watched the Duke during his review of the Boy Scouts.¹¹¹ The climax to the day was a giant military parade and tattoo on the Exhibition grounds by Lake Ontario, attended by over 28,000 people. All told, there were 850 musicians, 1,000 Boy Scouts serving as torch bearers, and 29 active service bands who had come from Camp Borden for the occasion.¹¹²

By the second week of September, Torontonians knew from the increase in casualty lists that the Canadian Corps was once again at the front, serving at the Somme.¹¹³ By this point in the war, casualties from normal front-line duty did not elicit a

¹¹⁰ "147,500 People at Exhibition," *Globe*, 5 September 1916, p. 1.

¹¹¹ "Canadian Patriotism Ran High When Royalty Visited Fair," *World*, 6 September 1916, p. 4.

¹¹² "Fitting Climax to a Big Day Was Immense Military Tattoo," *World*, 6 September 1916, p. 5. For a detailed examination of the history of Camp Borden, see Ronald G. Haycock, "Of Times and People: The Early History of Camp Borden, 1905-1916," *Ontario History*, Vol. LXXXIII, No. 4, December 1991, pp. 253-274.

¹¹³ "Canadians Again in Action; This Time on Somme Front," *Mail and Empire*, 11 September 1916, p. 1; "Canadians Are in Action Along the Somme Front," *World*, 11 September 1916, p. 1; "Canadians in Somme fight," *News*, 11 September 1916, p. 1; "Canadian Casualties in Somme Battles," *Globe*, 12 September 1916, p. 1; "Canadians in Somme Fight," *Telegram*, 14 September 1916, p. 9.

massive response on the part of the press; the major preoccupation was the price of coal. The war had put great demands on the supply of coal, but the problem was further compounded by the lack of planning on the part of coal companies in the United States. Ontario depended entirely on its southern neighbour for its supply of anthracite coal, but American companies had expected a short war when it erupted in 1914 and had not expanded their distribution networks to handle the prolonged and enlarged demand for coal. The resulting backlog of orders drove up the price of coal.¹¹⁴ The rise was so pronounced that many papers favoured creating a civic coal yard.¹¹⁵ All dailies recognized the problem, but differed in their assessment of the proper way to cope, some advocating a coal yard,¹¹⁶ others favouring more direct regulation of the coal industry.¹¹⁷

By mid-month the Canadian Corps finally took to the offensive, resulting in a costly final two weeks of September. All three divisions advanced for the first time in the battle of Courcellette, 15-22 September. The Canadians acquitted themselves well, but in a week's fighting sustained 7,230 casualties, and all along the line final objectives had not been secured. Poor weather and a shortage of ammunition brought a temporary halt to offensive operations.¹¹⁸ On 26-30 September the Canadians renewed the attack, focused at Regina trench but were unable to secure it, despite taking heavy casualties.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ For an examination of the coal situation, see Andrew Pateman, "Keep the Home Fires Burning: Fuel Regulation in Toronto During the Great War," MA Thesis, University of Western Ontario, June 1988.

¹¹⁵ "The Price of Coal," *Christian Guardian*, 13 September 1916, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ "Municipal Coal" (ed.), *Star*, 14 September 1916, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ "The Price of Coal" (ed.), *News*, 15 September 1916, p. 6.

¹¹⁸ Nicholson, *Official History*, pp. 169-173.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-180.

The news about the Canadian operations at Courcellette was received in Toronto by a population increasingly stressed by the demands of the war. The papers, prominent citizens, and local organizations were becoming increasingly vocal about the need for conscription. In addition, the high cost of living was a source of concern as workers struggled to provide for their families. The City of Toronto came under criticism from its employees for failing to increase salaries commensurate with inflation. Representing the men of the sewer department, A. Bellchambers called upon the Board of Control to increase wages to compensate for the rising cost of bread. Aware of the demands of the war, workers were not threatening to strike, but were only expressing their concerns to the city, "All we ask is that you give us consideration."¹²⁰ As a result, the Board of Control initiated an investigation into the ever increasing cost of bread.¹²¹

While Torontonians faced calls for conscription, and rising costs, their continuing concern was the men at the front. The fighting at Courcellette was first reported on 16 September and even initial reports, while stressing the offensive character of operations, revealed that casualties were heavy. A *Globe* correspondent reported that the Canadians had been in action and had secured their objectives. Despite heavy preparations, when the artillery stopped firing and the infantry went forward, "...it was certain there were many of the enemy still living and waiting with machine guns to give the Canadian assailants a fierce reception...I may perhaps be allowed to state that included

¹²⁰ "Feel High Cost of Living," *Telegram*, 20 September 1916, p. 17.

¹²¹ "Probe High Cost of Living; May Increase Civic Wages," *Telegram*, 21 September 1916, p. 16. See also, "Plan Speedy Action to Cut Price of Bread," *Star*, 23 September 1916, p. 1; "Cost of Living" (ed.), *News*, 26 September 1916, p. 6.

among them were certain battalions who suffered pretty severely in heavy encounters."¹²²

While the Canadians were still in action, there was little information about casualties; papers, however, prepared to receive more bad news. An ominously worded report from the *Globe* noted that information was still forthcoming and that "...casualties are not as heavy as might have been expected, considering the ground gained, and the impetuous character of the Canadians' attack."¹²³ Despite the censorship of the reports from the front, Torontonians were informed, "*It was the Canadian's [sic] first offensive on any big scale [emphasis in original].*"¹²⁴

When the toll from the battle arrived, it was indeed a heavy one. Daily newspaper reports gave some indication of the scale of the human cost to local soldiers. On 23 September alone, reports told of 104 local dead or wounded.¹²⁵ Reports of this type continued until the end of September, reaching 804 by 27 September.¹²⁶ And still the casualties came in, 125 reported on 29 September, another 101 listed on 30 September: more than 1,000 local men dead or wounded within a week.¹²⁷

The Canadian Corps continued its grueling work at the Somme front for two more

¹²² "Canadian Troops Share in Big British Victory," *Globe*, 16 September 1916, p. 1. See also, "Canadians in Action Carry Foe Position," *World*, 16 September 1916, p. 1; "Canadians Gained 1500 Yards and Took Many Prisoners," *Mail and Empire*, 16 September 1916, p. 1.

¹²³ "Canadians Add to Their Fame," *Globe*, 19 September 1916, p. 1.

¹²⁴ "In Their First Big Offensive Canadians Went Right to the Mark," *Telegram*, 19 September 1916, p. 15.

¹²⁵ "Casualty List is Increasing Daily," *World*, 23 September 1916, p. 4.

¹²⁶ "Of 804 Toronto Men 170 Have Lost Their Lives," *Star*, 27 September 1916, p. 2.

¹²⁷ "125 Toronto Men in Latest Casualties," *Star*, 29 September 1916, p. 2; "101 Toronto Names in Casualty Lists," *Star*, 30 September 1916, p. 5.

months. Regina trench appeared for a while to be an unreachable goal. The Canadians could fight their way into it, but the enormous cost of moving across no man's land made it impossible to hold. Again and again, troops were forced to abandon their attack on the infamous trench. Concerted attempts were made on 1 and 8 October, but to no avail. The main trench did not come under Canadian control until 11 November, with its supporting trenches not consolidated until 18 November. Canadian troops remained in the front lines until 28 November when they withdrew to train and re-equip.¹²⁸

Gruesome attritional warfare had a profound impact on Toronto, but its citizens were also dealing with the ever-increasing cost of living. Confronted with rising prices, dwindling supplies and another harsh winter, organizations lobbied the federal government to increase its involvement in the economy, and papers reported receiving countless letters from people expressing anger about the high cost of foods and other necessities of living.¹²⁹ Lobbying continued throughout October, with editorials pointing out measures other countries had taken to deal with the stresses of wartime, arguing that Canada do something similar.¹³⁰ While pressure increased, so did the price of goods. Front page reports at the end of October warned of another increase in the cost of bread, this time rising 12.5 percent to 18 cents for a large loaf.¹³¹

In addition to coping with scarcity, Torontonians were inundated with casualty

¹²⁸ Nicholson, *Official History*, pp. 180-198.

¹²⁹ "The High Cost of Living" (ed.), *Star*, 2 October 1916, p. 6.

¹³⁰ "What Everybody Knows," *Star*, 27 October 1916, p. 6.

¹³¹ "Bread May Take Two-Cent Jump Monday Next," *Star*, 26 October 1916, p. 1.

For a discussion of the steadily rising prices in Toronto during this period, see Michael Piva, *The Conditions of the Working Class in Toronto -- 1900-1921* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979), especially Chapter 2, "Real Wages," pp. 27-60.

reports. Throughout October and November, each day brought a new list of killed and wounded. In the early part of October, as a result of two separate attempts to take Regina trench, over 589 casualties were sustained by local soldiers.¹³² Residents knew that the Canadian Corps was involved in several unsuccessful attacks to take Regina trench, papers carrying articles which emphasized the cost of crossing no man's land and then being forced back.¹³³ Throughout October, the casualty lists continued to arrive, accounting for the killing or maiming of 2,872 Toronto men since the beginning of the Somme offensive.¹³⁴

Despite the stream of casualties and the knowledge that the Canadian offensive had stalled, the secular and religious press maintained that the sacrifice was justified. The *Christian Guardian* was pleased that the Allies had been able to continue smashing the German lines yard by yard, arguing that such a strategy would eventually win the war.¹³⁵ After outlining the likely price of the war as a generation of young men, the *Canadian Churchman* asked if victory was worth the cost: "We believe it is, and it is this belief that reconciles us to the loss. It should, however do much more than that. It should make us put forth every effort in our power to preserve that for which they are giving their

¹³² "164 Men in Latest Casualties," *Star*, 2 October 1916, p. 2; "103 Men, 2 Officers in the Latest Lists," *Star*, 3 October 1916, p. 2; "Toronto Officers Killed in Action," *World*, 5 October 1916, p. 6; "229 Toronto Names in the Casualty Lists," *Star*, 10 October 1916, p. 3.

¹³³ "Canadians Add Luster to Their Name, But Loss Heavy," *Star*, 12 October 1916, p. 1; "Prove Superiority in Advance Though Failing to Hold Gain," *Telegram*, 12 October 1916, p. 13; "Canadians in Heroic Fight Lose Heavily," *World*, 13 October 1916, p. 1; "Canadian Dash on Foe Lines," *Globe*, 13 October 1916, p. 1.

¹³⁴ "War Has Taken a Toll of Over 2,000 Toronto Lives," *Star*, 28 October 1916, p. 5.

¹³⁵ "Smashing the German Line," *Christian Guardian*, 4 October 1916, p. 3.

lives."¹³⁶ Similar examples of patriotic dedication appeared in both Liberal and Conservative papers, arguing that the real fighting had only just begun.¹³⁷

Soldiers serving at the Somme wrote home to friends and family, thereby helping to shape the public discourse. One avenue was to write to prominent Torontonians whose speeches and appearances were instrumental in shaping the local war effort. One unnamed chaplain wrote to Archdeacon Cody, who also served as the chaplain for the Queen's Own Rifles, about his experiences at Regina trench:

Unconsciously the men throw light on what it all means to them. The other day, one chap about 40 yrs. old, nearly smashed to pieces and yet wonderfully strong and cheerful -- told me how a group of them, and among them a boy, were hit by a shell. It killed two, wounded others, and tore off the poor boy's hand. In his agony and terror the poor lad started to run up and down the trench crying, ' Mother, Mother' -- the men fled. They couldn't stand it. The thing absolutely broke their nerve and they fled. My friend was wounded -- and to get out of reach of that pitiful cry - - he ran away -- down a trench and fainted -- and when he came to -- he was back in a dressing station. Isn't it terrible?¹³⁸

Other private letters were sent to the papers to be published for the community to read. First-hand accounts from the Somme left little to the reader's imagination. Private George Rice from the 74th Battalion wrote to his wife of the Somme, the letter later published in the *Telegram*:

I have just been through the battle of the Somme, and I pray God I shall not have to go through another one; the sites I have seen at the front have been pretty hard to stand. My battalion was in the front line of trenches;

¹³⁶ "The Price of Victory," *Canadian Churchman*, 5 October 1916, p. 631.

¹³⁷ "More Men Needed," *World*, 9 October 1916, p. 6; "Thanksgiving and Trial," *Globe*, 9 October 1916, p. 6.

¹³⁸ Letter from a soldier to Ven. Archdeacon Cody, 13 October 1916, Provincial Archives of Ontario, MU 4970, Rev. H. J. Cody Papers, Series A-6: General Correspondence, 1889-1918, File 13, pp. 2-4.

the boys stood it pretty well as Fritzy put over his three bombardments on us. Just as we were going in a shell hit my platoon, killing one and wounding several. I was thrown about fifteen feet in the air, landing in a shell hole, not a very pleasant sensation for me I can assure you. Really, I thought my end had come, but thanks to God I was not harmed at all, only a bad shaking up. Well, dear, I must say that your prayers have been answered; how one could come through such a battle without a scratch is a mystery. Only about 41 men, counting N.C.O.'s are left of my company [usual strength 250]. Capt. Kendall was killed, and a brave man he was. What my thoughts were you can well imagine. I was expecting to go down at any minute. We should have been relieved 24 hours sooner than we were, but owing to the heavy firing that was on, they could not get up that night, so it was up to us to stick it out another day.¹³⁹

Both letters emphasized the arbitrary nature of the killing and wounding of men. The latter is just one example of a stream of letters published in the papers. Individual personality was often overwhelmed by the tools of war, and individual bravery could not surmount the technology of war. Neither letter tells of anything remotely resembling a victory, both writers electing instead to comment on the incredible cost to human life.

Torontonians knew what was going on at the front, understood that soldiers were dying by the thousand, and yet they did not falter in their support for the war. Citizens demonstrated their support by donating to patriotic drives, including the British Red Cross campaign, 17-19 October 1916. This campaign was far more organized than the ad hoc arrangements common in the early part of the war. In the weeks leading up to its opening, ads ran in all the dailies, appealing to average Torontonians to contribute money: "The British Red Cross Society urgently needs, FROM YOU, who read this appeal, HELP in carrying on its beneficent activities. It may be that at this moment your

¹³⁹ "Voices From the Firing Line and the Road to the Trenches," *Telegram*, 28 October 1916, p. 12.

son, or the son of someone near and dear to you, is being borne to safety from a shell-torn battlefield in a Red Cross ambulance, or is receiving the ministrations of a Red Cross surgeon, whose skill will TURN THE EBBING TIDE OF LIFE when a longer wait for aid would have brought death."¹⁴⁰ Many different organizations were involved, ministers preaching from the pulpit, public theatres offering free advertisements,¹⁴¹ and workers donating one day's wages.¹⁴² The whole city was involved in the drive to raise \$250,000 in three days: "The women, the Labour men, the employers, the schools, the churches, the men of large financial and commercial affairs -- all have given hearty assurance of their readiness to play a part in pushing round the hands of the big clock which will register the progress made from day to day and hour to hour in front of the campaign headquarters at the Nordheimer Building, King Street East."¹⁴³ Papers, too, offered extensive supportive editorial comment.¹⁴⁴ A massive rally at Massey Hall the night before the drive opened was the final pre-campaign booster, and residents filled the hall, singing and cheering the Empire's cause.¹⁴⁵

The morning of 17 October, Torontonians opened their morning papers to be

¹⁴⁰ "The British Red Cross Needs Your Help," *Globe*, 16 October 1916, p. 1. For similar examples, see the following: "Advertisement," *World*, 14 October 1916, p. 12; "Advertisement," *Globe*, 14 October 1916, p. 13.

¹⁴¹ "Churches and Picture Theatres Will Help," *World*, 14 October 1916, p. 2; "Churches Behind Red Cross Appeal," *World*, 16 October 1916, p. 2.

¹⁴² "Labour of Love for Red Cross," *News*, 14 October 1916, p. 1.

¹⁴³ "Red Cross Campaign Will Be Sizzler," *Globe*, 16 October 1916, p. 8.

¹⁴⁴ "Give Freely for the Red Cross" (ed.), *Star*, 16 October 1916, p. 6; "Let Toronto Honour the Red Cross Appeal" (ed.), *Telegram*, 16 October 1916, p. 8; "Red Cross Campaign on Thursday Next" (ed.), *Varsity*, 16 October 1916, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵ "City Stirred by Red Cross Call," *Globe*, 17 October 1916, p. 1; "Call of British Red Cross Heard by Toronto Citizens," *News*, 17 October 1916, p. 4; "Toronto Heeds Empire's Call," *Mail and Empire*, 17 October 1916, p. 1.

confronted by full-page ads about the Red Cross drive. The *Globe* carried a standard advertisement [Figure 3.1] which showed a man being blown up by an exploding shell and, in another picture, the same man recuperating in a Red Cross hospital, with a nurse at his bedside. The caption read, "HE'S FIGHTING FOR YOU -- YOU CAN AT LEAST RELIEVE HIS SUFFERING."¹⁴⁶ The cost of the war was not hidden from the people; it was used to help raise funds to continue the war.

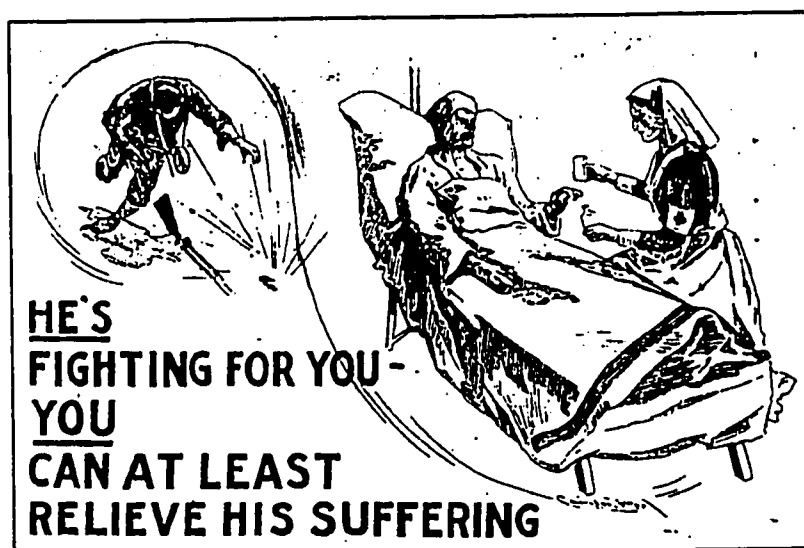


Figure 3.1: "Advertisement," *Globe*, 17 October 1916, p. 7.

Editorialists continued to stress the merits of the Red Cross,¹⁴⁷ and the City of Toronto gave a large boost with the donation of \$75,000, a threefold increase over the previous year.¹⁴⁸

The first day raised \$104,000, a good beginning to reach the quarter-million

¹⁴⁶ "Advertisement," *Globe*, 17 October 1916, p. 7.

¹⁴⁷ See for instance, "Appeal of British Red Cross Deserving of Warm Response" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 17 October 1916, p. 1; "Double Your Gift" (ed.), *World*, 17 October 1916, p. 6; "The Red Cross Needs You" (ed.), *Star*, 17 October 1916, p. 6.

¹⁴⁸ "City's Contribution to Red Cross Fund," *News*, 17 October 1916, p. 7.

desired, but not sufficient to outpace the 1915 total of \$538,000.¹⁴⁹ Ads continued to stress the need for donations. One picture showed a mother saying goodbye to her soldier son, and another portrayed him later, wounded, being carried by a Red Cross officer and nurse. The caption read, "'T WAS A MOTHER'S SACRIFICE THAT GAVE HIM TO HIS COUNTRY. IT MAY BE YOUR SACRIFICE THAT WILL BRING HIM BACK"¹⁵⁰ [Figure 3.2].



Figure 3.2: "Advertisement," *Globe*, 18 October 1916, p. 7.

Despite the organization, the deadline was extended on 19 October for another day to allow canvassers to cover the entire city. With a total of \$273,000 after two days,¹⁵¹ workers re-doubled their efforts.

They were helped by the arrival of a film unlike any other. Citizens besieged the

¹⁴⁹ "164,000 Given for Red Cross," *Globe*, 18 October 1916, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ "Advertisement," *Globe*, 18 October 1916, p. 7.

¹⁵¹ "Quarter Million Passed: Red Cross Call Extended," *Globe*, 19 October 1916, p. 1.

Adelaide Street Regent Theatre to see the first pictures from the Battle of the Somme. Showings began at 10 a.m., continuing until 11 p.m.: each screening brought the war home to another 1,680 people. Advertisements lauded the film as of the "...first official moving pictures of a British battle ever shown, and a living illustration of the biggest news event to British eyes since Waterloo."¹⁵² All week, the film played to packed audiences, reaching over 14,000 spectators a day. The film showed men rising out of the trenches, only to be cut down by artillery and machine-gun fire, often as they struggled with enemy barbed wire. Echoing sentiments of writers of the other papers, a *Globe* editorialist described the film: "The whole panorama is one nerve-straining spectacle. The spectators watch men moving along communication trenches with fixed bayonets, alive and healthy and next moment see them emerge on to the sky line silhouetted in death. They watch the giant howitzers lift their mouths skyward and belch forth demons of devastation and death."¹⁵³ In total, over 98,000 residents saw the film the first week. Attendance increased in the following days, as two other theatres opened in an attempt to provide sufficient seating for everyone wanting to see the film. Crowds continued to converge on the movie houses for a taste of life at the front.¹⁵⁴

The visual horrors of the war, accompanied by accounts of enormous British

¹⁵² "Advertisement," *World*, 18 October 1916, p. 11.

¹⁵³ Editorial from the *Globe*, reprinted, "Opinions on the Pictures of the Battle of the Somme," *World*, 18 October 1916, p. 6.

¹⁵⁴ "New Record is Made Every Day," *World*, 21 October 1916, p. 4. The majority of the coverage on the film was offered by the *World*, which sponsored the event. Coverage in the other papers was more concise, noting the great interest in the film, but not offering extensive observations on the event.

casualties in the Somme offensive,¹⁵⁵ did not make people recoil in terror. Pictures and increased casualties translated into increased contributions to the Fund. This enthusiasm helped bring the total up to \$421,000 on the morning of 20 October.¹⁵⁶ One more full day of campaigning, and a huge rally at Massey Hall, brought the total to \$701,546, an increase of 30 percent over the previous year.¹⁵⁷ A young man working in the Merchant's Bank of Canada in the city, H. Anson Green, wrote to his father to tell him about the campaign: "The boys in the office gave a day's pay. This was done generally throughout the business sector."¹⁵⁸

Torontonians' satisfaction with patriotic donations was undercut, however, on 24 October when they city's largest casualty list of the war arrived, adding over 200 new names.¹⁵⁹ Also on that day, Borden announced an upcoming tour to promote National Registration, a scheme designed to help find sufficient men to fill the military and industrial needs of the nation.¹⁶⁰

When Canadian forces finally succeeded in taking and holding Regina trench, articles conceded that it was only a minor victory, however costly.¹⁶¹ Much of the attention that might have been accorded the Canadian Corps was diverted, however, when

¹⁵⁵ See for example, "Many Men Die to Gain a Yard," *Globe*, 15 July 1916, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ "\$421,000 Raised for Red Cross," *Globe*, 20 October 1916, p. 5.

¹⁵⁷ "Toronto Contributes \$701,546 To Red Cross," *News*, 21 October 1916, p. 11.

¹⁵⁸ H. Anson Green, to his Father, 22 October 1915, PAC, H. Anson Green Papers, MG 30, E440, File 10, Green Family Correspondence, 1914-1915, p. 4.

¹⁵⁹ "Largest Toronto List Yet Issued," *World*, 24 October 1916, p. 3.

¹⁶⁰ "Premier Borden Issues a Call," *Globe*, 24 October 1916, p. 1. This issue is examined in detail in the next chapter.

¹⁶¹ "Canadians in Night Attack," *News*, 13 November 1916, p. 1; "Canadians in Night Attack Stormed Regina Trench," *Telegram*, 13 November 1916, p. 13; "Canadians Win Regina Trench," *Globe*, 14 November 1916, p. 2.

controversial Minister of Militia, Sir Sam Hughes, resigned in disgrace and Toronto MP A. E. Kemp was appointed.¹⁶² Newspapers paid only passing attention to the success of the Canadian Corps in taking the support trenches around Regina trench between 20 and 22 November.¹⁶³ From then until 28 November, the Canadians were involved in mopping up operations with relatively few casualties. Newspapers reported on one occasion that "only 17" men had been killed or wounded the previous day.¹⁶⁴ The gruesome attritional warfare of the Somme offensive had made the killing or maiming of 17 Torontonians seem unexceptional. Since arriving at the Somme on 30 August, the Canadian Corps had lost 24,029 men, killed, wounded or missing.¹⁶⁵ It appeared as though fighting would continue indefinitely, with no immediate promise of a breakthrough.

It is in this context that the actions of Torontonians in the summer and fall of 1916 must be evaluated. The local population had a remarkable amount of information available. When the first news of the Somme offensive arrived in early July 1916, local papers stressed its significance: it was a beginning. People understood that an important turning point had arrived, but they realized that years of fighting remained on the horizon. Piecing together information from Canadian casualties, papers were able to relate with

¹⁶² "Sir Sam Hughes Goes," *Globe*, 14 November 1916, p. 6; "SIR SAM HUGHES RESIGNS," *World*, 14 November 1916, p. 1; "Hon. A. E. Kemp Appointed Minister of Militia," *Globe*, 24 November 1916, p. 1. Kemp was born at Clarenceville, Quebec in August 1858. He became a successful manufacturer before turning his attention to public affairs in 1895. He served as President of the Toronto Board of Trade in 1899 and 1900. He was first elected to the House of Commons in 1900, and was returned in 1904, and 1911. (Ernest J. Chambers, ed., *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1918* (Ottawa: Mortimer Company Limited, 1918), p. 149.).

¹⁶³ "Canadians Make Win Complete," *Globe*, 20 November 1916, p. 7.

¹⁶⁴ "Few Local Names in Casualty List," *World*, 25 November 1916, p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare*, p. 81.

reasonable accuracy the position and disposition of Canadian troops. As these men fought and died, Torontonians followed their progress.

Reports of the Somme offensive had to share space with a war effort which pervaded all aspects of life in Toronto. The growth of wartime industry had created a shortage of coal, and wartime economics translated into a steadily increasing cost of living, but local citizens tried to work through their difficulties and cope without disrupting the war effort. Criticism was directed not at the war, but at the manner in which it was being directed. While the ad hoc approach to the war had suited the climate of a great adventure, a great crusade demanded more. Citizens demanded increased organization. They appealed for government to exert a greater influence in war planning. Governments at the federal, provincial, and municipal level responded hesitantly by helping to organize patriotic drives and to stretch coal resources. Hundreds of local men were dead, and over a thousand others wounded, but support for the war effort did not ebb: it increased. Armed with the knowledge that the war would likely continue for years, Toronto was firmly set on continuing the great crusade.

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The winter of 1916-17 was one of the coldest in years. To make matters worse, just before Christmas an embargo was placed by American coal companies on Canadian railroads, thereby closing all entry points for coal into Ontario. The city's coal supply was so limited that a prolonged spell of cold weather would pose a real hardship. Coal dealers in Canada claimed that the only way to rectify the situation was to cut down on passenger

service so more attention could be paid to freight transportation.¹⁶⁶ Reacting to reports of a congestion of loaded coal trucks in New York, papers speculated that the coal shortage was an artificial creation of American war profiteers who were paying attention to more profitable goods. Calls were again made for the federal government to take over the Ontario lines of the Grand Trunk Railway.¹⁶⁷ Even Conservative papers which had earlier blamed the war for the rising cost of coal, changed their editorial opinion and blamed United States profiteers for artificially raising coal prices.¹⁶⁸ Finally, the Toronto Board of Control decided to apply for legislation authorizing the city to get into the fuel business. A fund of two million dollars was earmarked to cover the cost of "... securing sites for coal-yards, scales, and other equipment. The cost of buying the coal will be provided for in the estimates."¹⁶⁹

It was in this context of increasing casualties and deprivations, that Torontonians first learned of a peace offer: from Germany. On 12 December 1916, Germany called on all belligerents to outline the objectives around which they would be willing to make peace, a process the Allies rejected.¹⁷⁰ The press responded by rejecting anything less than total victory. Front page articles condemned the offer,¹⁷¹ and were followed by

¹⁶⁶ Pateman, "Keep the Home Fires Burning."

¹⁶⁷ "Ontario's Coal Shortage," *Christian Guardian*, 3 January 1917, p. 4.

¹⁶⁸ "The Price of Coal" (ed.), *News*, 8 January 1917, p. 6.

¹⁶⁹ "Two Millions for Coal Yards," *News*, 25 January 1917, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰ On the German proposal, see Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967).

¹⁷¹ "Britain Is Opposed to Even Discussing the Peace Proposal," *World*, 13 December 1916, p. 1; "British Press Is Emphatic in Rejecting Peace Plan," *News*, 13 December 1916, p. 1; "Canada Wants No Peace at Present," *World*, 13 December 1916, p. 1; "GERMANY'S ALLIES ARE ALL SICK OF THE WAR; KAISER FORCED TO ASK PEACE CONFERENCE," *Mail and Empire*, 13 December 1916, p. 1.

lengthy editorial condemnations. While editorials stressed several arguments, the most common was that the peace offer was made for German home consumption. The *Star's* editorial on 13 December 1916 was typical in this respect, arguing that "... the offer is just as much a part of Germany's war policy as any offensive she has conducted on any front. The making of this offer is designed to have a great effect in Germany and Austria, where the people cry out against a war that bids fair to abolish the male population. Berlin now gets into position to say peace was sought and refused and that the people must fight on, must still follow their war lords."¹⁷²

Another prominent argument was that the Germans were seeking peace because they knew they could not win on the battlefield. In addition to arguing that an early peace would only translate into another war in the near future, the *World* editorialized, "Now that Germany finds that there is a limit and a climax to the brutal attacks she made on her neighbours, and that for the future she must decrease while they must increase, she is anxious to call a halt."¹⁷³ The *Weekly Sun* offered a simple synopsis: "Her [Germany's] overtures have been received, here and abroad, by belligerents and neutrals, with marked disfavour."¹⁷⁴ The proposal itself was short-lived, and by 19 December, newly-appointed British Prime Minister Lloyd George condemned it, and was praised for doing so by the

¹⁷² "Germany Proposes Peace" (ed.), *Star*, 13 December 1916, p. 6. See also, "The Peace Offer" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 13 December 1916, p. 6; "The Peace Proposals" (ed.), *News*, 13 December 1916, p. 6.

¹⁷³ "Germany's Peace Offer" (ed.), *World*, 13 December 1916, p. 6. The *Globe* made a similar argument in "The Great Obstacle to Peace" (ed.), *Globe*, 13 December 1916, p. 6.

¹⁷⁴ "The Peace Proposals" (ed.), *Weekly Sun*, 20 December 1916, p. 1.

Toronto press.¹⁷⁵

As troops in the trenches struggled to keep warm, on 18 December 1916 United States President Woodrow Wilson offered to mediate.¹⁷⁶ He was rebuffed by both sides. In his peace "note," Wilson claimed that the aims of the two warring factions were "virtually the same," and he asked for each side to define its war aims so that a peaceable solution could be found.¹⁷⁷ Both sides bitterly resented the implication that their aims were the same as those of their sworn enemy, and no diplomatic advances were made.

The *Star* interviewed citizens on the street, reporting that Wilson's proposal "...has met with general and emphatic condemnation in Toronto. The citizen has yet to be found who will speak favourably of the move."¹⁷⁸ These interviews were conducted in a city which had already given 50,000 men to the Canadian Expeditionary Force, of whom 11,150 had become casualties, with 2,150 dead.¹⁷⁹ Despite the tremendous human costs, the prospect of peace as Wilson defined it prompted editorial writers in both secular and religious papers to vociferously reject Wilson's offer. Echoing the opinions of British diplomats and politicians, editorials condemned Wilson for failing to see the difference

¹⁷⁵ "The Only Possible Reply" (ed.), *Globe*, 20 December 1916, p. 6.

¹⁷⁶ For a discussion of the Wilson peace initiatives, see August Heckscher, *Woodrow Wilson* (Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada, 1975), and Jan Willem Nordholt, *Woodrow Wilson: A Life for World Peace*, translated by Herbert Rowen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

¹⁷⁷ Arthur S. Link, ed., *Woodrow Wilson Papers* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), Vol. 40, p. 274.

¹⁷⁸ "Toronto Condemns Wilson Peace Move," *Star*, 21 December 1916, p. 1.

¹⁷⁹ "Toronto Has Given 50,000 Men and Over \$15,000,000," *Star*, 23 December 1916, p. 1.

between the Allies and the enemy.¹⁸⁰ One editorial called Wilson's move the "prime joke" of diplomatic history,¹⁸¹ while another wondered "...whether President Wilson is an intellectual pervert or merely suffering from *cacoethes scribendi* [inadvisable desire to write]."¹⁸²

Torontonians did not care to sign an early peace. They were dedicated to supporting the war and the troops overseas. Beginning in January 1917, the city prepared itself for another patriotic drive, this time for the Toronto and York Patriotic Fund. Reflecting the growing organization that went into wartime activities, preparations were underway well before the 23-26 January campaign. A giant thermometer was set up at the corner of Queen and Yonge, 50 feet high and 10 feet wide, to measure the progress of the drive on its way to securing loans of \$2.5 million in 4 days.¹⁸³ The papers provided extensive editorial support on the importance of the Fund, outlining what the fund paid for, and charging citizens not to fail the families of fighting men.¹⁸⁴ Once again,

¹⁸⁰ See for example, "Britain and Her Allies Must Decide Question of Peace or War" (ed.), *Telegram*, 21 December 1916, p. 8; "Mr. Wilson's Blunder" (ed.), *News*, 21 December 1916, p. 1.

¹⁸¹ "Amateur Diplomacy" (ed.), *World*, 23 December 1916, p. 6.

¹⁸² "The Front Page" (ed.), *Saturday Night*, 30 December 1916, p. 1. Religious papers also condemned Wilson's note. See for example, "President Wilson's Peace Note" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 27 December 1916, p. 6; "Peacemaking" (ed.), *The Presbyterian*, 28 December 1916, p. 564; "President Wilson and Peace" (ed.), *Canadian Churchman*, 28 December 1916, p. 827; "The Talk of Peace" (ed.), *Catholic Register*, 28 December 1916, p. 4; "Peace!" (ed.), *Canadian Baptist*, 4 January 1917, p. 8.

¹⁸³ "Huge Thermometer Will Show Toronto's Patriotic Warmth," *Star*, 8 January 1917, p. 5.

¹⁸⁴ See for example, "Toronto and the Patriotic Fund" (ed.), *Globe*, 8 January 1917, p. 6; "The Patriotic Fund" (ed.), *Star*, 9 January 1917, p. 6; "The Patriotic Fund" (ed.), *News*, 9 January 1917, p. 6; "Let Him Who Never Gave Before, Give Now" (ed.), *World*, 12 January 1917, p. 6.

advertisements were a regular feature, promoting the slogan, "Serve By Giving," often by playing on the insecurities of those left at home:

You work in a factory. You've got a steady job. Your folks at home get plenty to eat, go to the shows, read the clothing ads, enjoy life -- but SUPPOSE YOU were to throw up your job, and go to the front, and SUPPOSE you heard that your women folks were living from hand to mouth; SUPPOSE you heard the kids couldn't go to school because they hadn't boots -- **could you fight your best** [emphasis in original]?¹⁸⁵

Other advertisements were not so subtle. Comparisons were made with the cost to men at the front if they failed in their duty:

Give -- till it hurts! Give so much that you'll have to do without something. Give so much that it'll be a real sacrifice. That will put you in nearly the same class as the man at the front. It isn't charity -- It's merely decent duty. And, remember -- at the front if a man fails in his duty -- **HE'S SHOT!**¹⁸⁶

Organizations all over the city promoted the Patriotic Fund, charging their membership to donate. On 18 January 1917 the Toronto District Labour Council unanimously endorsed the Patriotic campaign, and individual members were urged "...to assist in every way in making the campaign an unqualified success."¹⁸⁷ Throughout the city prominent men in political, manufacturing, financial, commercial, and labour circles came forward to endorse the fund.¹⁸⁸ The University of Toronto's President Falconer advised his students on the enormity of the project, emphasizing that anything they do at

¹⁸⁵ "Advertisement," *Globe*, 16 January 1917, p. 5.

¹⁸⁶ "Advertisement," *Globe*, 20 January 1917, p. 12.

¹⁸⁷ "Big Patriotic Fund Campaign Endorsed by Labour Council," *News*, 19 January 1917, p. 2.

¹⁸⁸ "The Patriotic Fund Workers" (ed.), *Globe*, 20 January 1917, p. 6; "Serve By Giving" (ed.), *News*, 20 January 1917, p. 6.

home is "...far short of what is being done by those who give their lives for this cause."¹⁸⁹ The churches offered their support and ministers from the major denominations praised the fund.¹⁹⁰

When the campaign opened on 22 January, the City of Toronto donated half a million dollars.¹⁹¹ The drive was off to a good start, securing \$1,256,656 the first day.¹⁹² All the advertisements and promotion worked well, and by the end of 24 January the fund was 22 percent ahead of its 1915 three-day total, reaching \$2,138,959.¹⁹³ The final tally was well over the 1915 total of \$2,302,829, residents having donated \$3,258,972.14, an average of close to \$10 for every man, woman and child.¹⁹⁴ The fund had been over subscribed by more than three-quarters of a million, and Torontonians celebrated their achievement at a giant rally at Massey Hall:

Toronto has never before seen such a meeting as last night's. For sheer patriotic, selfless, spontaneous, exuberant enthusiasm, but there never has been such another meeting in Toronto. For once Toronto's leading citizens forgot their reserve and self-consciousness. They shouted and sang, they waived their handkerchiefs and cheered. They sang 'Jolly Good Fellow,' whenever they got a chance, and 'God Save the King,' 'Rule Britannia,' 'Keep the Home Fires Burning,' and the doxology at other times. They got on tables and made speeches, and they stood on tables and chairs and other peoples' toes to applaud the speakers. They shouted across the hall at one another; men and women vied with one another in demonstration of good feeling.¹⁹⁵

The diverse support for Toronto's Patriotic Fund can be clearly seen in this description of

¹⁸⁹ "To The Students" (ed.), *Varsity*, 22 January 1917, p. 2.

¹⁹⁰ "Every Minister Made an Appeal," *World*, 22 January 1917, p. 4.

¹⁹¹ "Half Million to Patriotic Fund," *World*, 23 January 1917, p. 3.

¹⁹² "\$1,256,656 Given on First Day," *Globe*, 24 January 1917, p. 1.

¹⁹³ "Swing of Success in Big Campaign," *Globe*, 26 January 1917, p. 1.

¹⁹⁴ "\$3,258,972.14," *World*, 27 January 1917, p. 1.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

the Massey Hall rally. While civic leaders were in the spotlight, they shared in the Patriotic enthusiasm of all present. Torontonians of all classes, and both genders, were united in their determination to support the families of those overseas fighting for the Empire's cause.

It is small wonder then, that Woodrow Wilson's second peace initiative was rejected outright since news of his proposal arrived in Toronto in the midst of the drive for the Patriotic Fund. In a speech to the United States Senate on 22 January 1917, Wilson called for "peace without victory," arguing that both sides should lay down their arms and end their dispute.¹⁹⁶ In the context of the opening day of the Patriotic Fund drive, editorials thoroughly condemned Wilson's speech. Some editorialists dismissed Wilson's speech as "futile piffle,"¹⁹⁷ while others remarked, "If this be diplomacy it is malignant; if it be stupidity it is diabolical."¹⁹⁸

The war effort continued to demand more. In response, citizens pledged ever greater amounts of time and money. The campaign for the Toronto and York Patriotic Fund demonstrated the willingness of citizens to pledge scarce resources to support the war effort. The process used to secure these funds built upon previous success,

¹⁹⁶ Link, ed., *Woodrow Wilson Papers*, p. 274.

¹⁹⁷ "'Peace Without Victory' Talked a Shame to the U.S.A. and a Reproach to Woodrow Wilson" (ed.), *Telegram*, 23 January 1917, p. 8.

¹⁹⁸ "President Wilson and the Senate" (ed.), *World*, 23 January 1917, p. 6. For other examples of secular and religious condemnation of Wilson's second peace note, see "President Wilson's Speech" (ed.), *Globe*, 23 January 1917, p. 6; "No 'Peace Without Victory,'" (ed.), *News*, 24 January 1917, p. 6; "President Wilson's Lecture" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 24 January 1917, p. 6; "Woodrow Wilson's Peace Vision" (ed.), *Star*, 25 January 1917, p. 6; "The Last Phase of the Struggle" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 24 January 1917, p. 5; "Editorial Notes" (ed.), *Canadian Churchman*, 1 February 1917, p. 67; "The President and the Allies" (ed.), *The Presbyterian*, 1 February 1917, pp. 121-2.

continuing the process of running a more efficient and organized campaign. Even in the midst of coal shortages, rising prices, enormous casualty lists, and the promise of continued warfare, Torontonians increased their contributions.

Local citizens reacted to the offers of peace negotiations in this context. They did not dismiss offers of peace in the midst of a cocoon of misinformation and optimism. Residents had to look no further than their kitchen table to see the demands of the war. Meat was not served as often. The warmth of a furnace was something to be celebrated, not taken for granted. Papers continued to print long lists of men who would not return. From this perspective, in this world, Torontonians refused outright any discussion of peace. They did so fully understanding that a rejection of peace would mean months, if not years, of fighting. Their level of commitment to the war was so intense that the trade-off was not even considered. They believed that the war effort had to be continued until victory was secured. Anything which fell short of this goal was unacceptable. If there were any individuals who supported the peace proposals, they kept their views to themselves.

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The Canadian Expeditionary Force spent the winter of 1916-17 in a relatively quiet sector of the line, training to attack the enemy's strongest position in the sector: Vimy Ridge. The winter was spent integrating reinforcements into units greatly reduced by the Somme fighting. Even though the winter was the coldest in 20 years, conditions in the trenches were improved over the previous year because their lines drained into the Zouave Valley, keeping them drier. While little activity took place at the front, key

events took place at diplomatic and strategic levels.¹⁹⁹ After their peace feelers had been rejected by the Allies, and still suffering from the Allied blockade, Germany began unrestricted submarine warfare on 1 February 1917. Designed to starve Britain, the German plan angered the United States, bringing it into the war on the Allied side on 6 April 1917. On the Eastern front, the March Revolution overthrew the Tsar, and even though the Provisional Government continued the war, they could not do so with as much dedication. The November Bolshevik Revolution and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk removed Russia from the war.

One of the strongest positions facing the Allies in the spring of 1917 was the German stronghold at Vimy Ridge. Its slopes commanded a view of the whole sector, and were surrounded by supporting trenches. The Canadian operation to take the Ridge was the first time all four divisions attacked together. Sir Julian Byng meticulously planned the assault, the troops rehearsed in mock battle zones, and tanks, aircraft, and infantry were coordinated. On 9 April, Easter Morning, the attack went in, completely overwhelming German front-line defenders. Resistance stiffened as ground was taken, but the Canadians continued to advance, taking the "Pimple" [the top] of the Ridge by 10 April, and establishing a secure new forward trench by 14 April: "It had been a great and striking victory. On a four-mile frontage the Corps had overrun one of the enemy's most formidable positions from foremost defences to the gun-line in a single day; it had gone on to achieve a maximum penetration of nearly five miles. And despite the almost

¹⁹⁹ John Swettenham, *To Seize The Victory: The Canadian Corps in World War I* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1965), pp. 145-152.

incredible defences, the Germans had suffered the greater losses."²⁰⁰ Victory, however, came at the price of 10,602 casualties, and 3,598 were dead.²⁰¹

News of the Canadian triumph at Vimy Ridge was received in Toronto with great acclaim, rivaling the reaction to Second Ypres as the greatest Canadian achievement of the war. Headline after headline announced the great Canadian advance. The press had learned of the strategic importance of the Ridge, thereby adding to the Canadian laurels: "With Vimy Ridge gone, the whole German line covering the French towns and industrial districts to the North, became a wavering one, and any leisurely retreat the Germans may have planned is made uncertain and precarious."²⁰² Editorials basked in the glow of victory, rejoicing that the King had sent another message of praise, "Canada will be proud that the taking of the coveted Vimy Ridge has fallen to the lot of her troops."²⁰³

Despite the accolades, there was some evidence of a growing war-weariness on the part of Torontonians. Reflecting this new trend, a *World* editorial condemned the city's failure to celebrate publicly the victory at Vimy Ridge: "Such military successes as have occurred this week in France would have been hailed in 1914 with such

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

²⁰¹ Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare*, p. 131.

²⁰² "Huns Cleared From Vimy Ridge; Counter-Attacks Repulsed," *Telegram*, 10 April 1917, p. 13. For examples of similar commentaries, see "9,000 PRISONERS, 40 GUNS," *Star*, 10 April 1917, p. 1; "CANADIANS ADVANCE BEYOND THE RIDGE," *News*, 10 April 1917, p. 1; "CANADIANS BEAR BRUNT OF FIGHTING; TAKE FAMOUS VIMY RIDGE NEAR ARRAS," *World*, 10 April 1917, p. 1; "Canadians Captured 3,000 Huns," *Telegram*, 10 April 1917, p. 13; "Canadians Had Place of Honour," *Mail and Empire*, 10 April 1917, p. 1.

²⁰³ "The Battle of Arras" (ed.), *Globe*, 11 April 1917, p. 6. For examples of celebratory editorials, see "On the West Front" (ed.), *News*, 11 April 1917, p. 6; "A Stroke to Free the World" (ed.), *World*, 11 April 1917, p. 6; "Canadians and Their Comrades" (ed.), *Star*, 12 April 1917, p. 6.

demonstrations, probably, as would have rivaled Mafeking night. Yet in Toronto, where thousands of her sons have gone to battle, and where the news of the capture of Vimy Ridge is the greatest event in local history, there has not been a flag raised to signalize the occasion."²⁰⁴

Evidence of the decided lack of a carnival atmosphere is also available through some of the poetry printed in the papers. The following poem describes a goodbye to a soldier:

Kiss me again,
It is such pain
Loving you, dear.
Oh! how I fear
To let you go.
I love you so.
Why should I dread?
I saw you dead,
Dear, in my dreams,
How real it seems?
God, what a price
You...I...Sacrifice
Yes, dear, I know
I must let you go
No, I won't cry.
Kiss me! Good-bye,
Dear heart, good-bye.

God, don't let him die.²⁰⁵

Written by a woman saying goodbye to a lover, there is none of the enthusiasm for war which pervaded Toronto in August 1914. Reports of tremendous casualties and endless fighting had taken a toll. The reaction to Vimy Ridge still drew upon both glory and

²⁰⁴ "Flags Out for Vimy Ridge" (ed.), *World*, 14 April 1917, p. 6.

²⁰⁵ S. C. C., "Good-Bye," *Star*, 20 April 1917, p. 10.

grief, but the glory was not as prominent as it had been. Citizens were acutely aware of the dangers of the front, and despite the victory at Vimy Ridge, they knew that long casualty lists would be the inevitable result.

Casualty reports, as usual, took over a week to begin filtering back to Toronto. The press did its best to allay fears, recording that of the wounded, few were badly hurt, and reported "...it may bring solace to the sad hearts to know how carefully the wounded were handled and how reverently the dead were buried."²⁰⁶ The press continued to count the total cost of the war, even religious magazines reporting that it was all worth the awful price. A *Canadian Baptist* article was typical, outlining a total cost of over 10 million dead or wounded resulting from the war, but still arguing, "Some things are of more value to humanity than coin in the realm. And human life is outweighed by liberty, truth and righteousness."²⁰⁷

The combination of all these events was having a profound effect upon the city. Shortly after the first news of Vimy Ridge arrived, a riot took place involving soldiers and "enemy-aliens." Reports had been heard by Toronto soldiers that a crippled soldier had been insulted by an Austrian in a downtown restaurant, and they were determined to seek revenge. Over 100 overseas men proceeded down Yonge Street between 7 and 8 p.m., calling soldiers they passed to join them. The leaders entered Child's restaurant where the insult had allegedly taken place, demanding to see the Austrian employee. When their demands were ignored, the soldiers ransacked the establishment, overturned tables,

²⁰⁶ "Few Canadians Badly Wounded" (ed.), *Globe*, 19 April 1917, p. 1.

²⁰⁷ "Waged At An Awful Price" (ed.), *Canadian Baptist*, 19 April 1917, p. 2.

smashed crockery, and were only halted when the manager stood on a table waving the Union Jack and pleaded with them to stop. In the meantime, a large crowd had gathered outside the restaurant, blocking streetcar traffic.

The soldiers' search yielded up one Russian and one Swiss employee, mistaken in the heat of the moment as enemy aliens, who were taken by the men to police headquarters. A mob mentality had taken over, and soldiers left Child's restaurant and went to another Yonge Street restaurant just above Queen Street "carrying pandemonium with them,"²⁰⁸ looking for other enemy aliens. Provost-Marshal Alexander Sinclair ordered the crowd to disperse, but little attention was paid to him. The soldiers continued moving from restaurant to restaurant, seizing enemy aliens as they went. As word of the disturbance spread, General W.A. Logie²⁰⁹ was hurried away from a dinner at the Army Medical Service Corps to take charge of the situation. He dispatched a picket of 50 men from the 220th Battalion stationed at Exhibition Camp to quell the disturbance, a task they duly performed.

Once the disorder was under control, military and police officials took turns blaming the other. General Logie argued, "I think the police should do their part to quell disorder and restore conditions by keeping the general public moving." Inspector Samuel

²⁰⁸ "Soldiers in Small Riot," *Telegram*, 13 April 1917, p. 20.

²⁰⁹ Logie was born in Hamilton in 1866. A distinguished student, he was called to the Bar in 1890. He was also a long-time member of the militia, joining in 1883, rose to the rank of Lieut.-Colonel by January 1909 when he was placed in charge of 15th Infantry Brigade, Western Ontario Command. He continued to perform and to be promoted during the war, promoted Brigadier-General in September 1915, and Major-General in May 1916. He was the officer in command of the Military District in which Toronto was located (Number 2) from 1 January 1915 onwards. (Greene, ed., *Who's Who and Why, 1921*, p. 894.).

Dickman²¹⁰ of the Toronto police also shrugged off responsibility, "There was no profane language, no damage was done to property, and no necessity for the police to take action against any civilian. I did not intend to precipitate a riot by giving a wrong order."²¹¹

Ultimately, the enemy aliens were blamed. The next day, Mayor Church sent a message to the Chief of Police: "Cannot something be done by the commissioners to require the downtown restaurants to file returns showing the number of alien enemies in their employ? A restaurant is no place to employ Austrians and Germans, as their very presence tends to a breach of the peace at times. I think these downtown restaurants should be notified that some action will be taken by the commissioners unless they get rid of these men."²¹² The City Council took action only days later. With the unanimous approval of the Council, the chamber moved that "...all natives of alien enemy countries now domiciled in Canada who are known or who may in future be found guilty of using seditious language, or of sympathy with the German cause, be at the close of the war deported, and that legislation be enacted to debar subjects of alien enemy countries entering Canada in future..."²¹³

Torontonians were intolerant of enemy aliens, blaming the victim, but when it came to remembering Second Ypres and celebrating Vimy Ridge, they focused on the

²¹⁰ Samuel J. Dickman was a prominent local law official. After the war, in 1920, he rose to the rank of Chief of Police. (Metropolitan Toronto Police Museum and Discovery Centre, Display on History of the Force.).

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto for the Year 1917*, 30 April 1917 (Toronto: Industrial and Technical Press, 1918), Toronto City Hall Archives, pp. 96-97.

soldiers. A memorial service was set in St. Paul's Anglican church, Bloor Street East, on 22 April. The service had a twofold purpose, to honour the brave dead from Second Ypres, and to offer thanksgiving for the victory of Vimy Ridge, embodying both the glory and the grief of Toronto's war effort. Under the auspices of the Great War Veterans' Association, over 900 veterans²¹⁴ were led by Col. John A. Currie, M. P., commander of the famous 15th Battalion which had fought so valiantly at Ypres. The men "...marched and hobbled and limped through the lines of cheering thousands"²¹⁵ to a "densely packed" St. Paul's church. At the back of the church was a huge Union Jack, while along the edges of the balcony hung the flags of the Allies. The centre of the church was reserved for veterans and representatives of the city regiments, while the public occupied the side seats. Among the dignitaries in attendance were Ontario Premier William Hearst,²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Many of these veterans lived at the military hospitals which had been a feature of the city since late 1915. In October 1915 City Council had ordered that the Toronto General Hospital reserve space to take care of returned men "...at the expense of the city." (*Appendix "A" to the Minutes of the City Council, 1915*, 18 October 1915 (Toronto: Carswell Company, 1916.), Toronto City Hall Archives.). A week later, the Old Bishop Strachen School property on College Street was refurbished with \$1,954 of civic money to serve as a more permanent hospital, with a capacity for 25 men. The City paid the taxes and insurance. (*Ibid.*, 27 October 1915, p. 1047.). By April 1917, the needs of returned men had grown exponentially, prompting the City Council to pay \$10,000/year to lease the Toronto General Hospital to the military until two years after the end of the war. (*Appendix "A" to the Minutes of the City Council, 1916, 17 April 1916* (Toronto: Industrial and Technical Press, 1917), Toronto City Hall Archives, pp. 307-308.). For a discussion of the experience of returned soldiers, particularly after the war was over, see Desmond Morton, *Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

²¹⁵ "Toronto Cheers Marching Heroes," *News*, 23 April 1917, p. 7.

²¹⁶ Hearst was born in February 1864 in Arran Township, Bruce County, Ontario. He trained as a lawyer, and was called to the Bar in 1888. He was first elected in 1905 to the Provincial Legislature, and returned in 1911 where he served as Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines in Premier Whitney's cabinet. When Whitney died on 2 October 1914, Hearst took over, remaining as Premier throughout the war. While some of his papers are

Mayor Church, General W.A. Logie, Lieut. Gov. Sir John Hendrie, N.W. Rowell, and members of the City Council.

The process of filling the church was slow, as men who had previously attended the church in prime condition returned after their service overseas, many bearing signs of wounds: "Empty sleeves, crutches; here a soldier, both of whose legs were gone, and who was carried by his comrades; there one whose sight was partially destroyed, told the tale with silent, sorrowful eloquence."²¹⁷ Once all were seated, and with the early spring sun shining through the windows to rest on the former soldiers, the service commenced with "Mendelssohn's Funeral March." Rev. Archdeacon Cody conducted the service, led the singing of the national anthem, and stood at attention during the sounding of "The Last Post." After the benediction, "...many of the bereaved women dropped into the seats to shed a few quiet tears, before following the veterans into the sunshine of a peaceful Toronto Sunday."²¹⁸ This description was a metaphor for Toronto's war effort; once sacrifice was made and tears shed, those who survived the struggle could exit the cauldron of the Great War into a brighter future.

kept at the Archives of Ontario, the collection is "far from complete." The only sources which have survived related to the Great War are copies of speeches he delivered. The correspondence available deal mostly with the housing question of 1918-1919, and is "...only a fraction of the original collection." (Archives of Ontario, Inventory of the William Hearst Papers, Finding Aid 6, February 1953, pp. 1-6.).

²¹⁷ "Honoured Men of St. Julien; Veterans' Parade and Service," *Telegram*, 23 April 1917, p. 8.

²¹⁸ "Thousands Honour Canada's Bravest," *World*, 23 April 1917, p. 3. See also, "Anniversary of St. Julien; Pensions and Memorials," *News*, 23 April 1917, p. 1; "Grateful Canada Pays Tribute to St. Julien Men," *Globe*, 23 April 1917, p. 9; "Returned Men Gave Thanks for Victory," *Mail and Empire*, 23 April 1917, p. 5; "Toronto Honours Its St. Julien Heroes," *Star*, 23 April 1917, p. 7; "Veterans' Parade Inspiring Sight," *World*, 23 April 1917, p. 4.

The demands of the war would continue, however. Shortly after the memorial service, troops that had wintered in Toronto began their departure for "points East." On 24 April, two battalions departed Toronto, the 220th and 176th, to be followed by the 208th (Irish) battalion on the 26th.²¹⁹ After the exodus, Toronto's Exhibition Camp was virtually empty: "A sort of holy calm has descended upon the headquarters of Military District No. 2. After almost three years of feverish activity, culminating last week in the despatch of several thousand troops, all the work seems to be done."²²⁰ This report was not, however, referring to an end to troops being raised in Toronto. Voluntarism had run its course, and Torontonians were awaiting a government announcement regarding conscription. After the sacrifices made over three years, it was up to the government to provide the necessary impetus to continue the war.

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The war as it was experienced in Toronto changed dramatically over those three years. The opening of the war with all its flag waving and enthusiasm, seen across the chasm of thousands of local soldiers killed and wounded, must have seemed as if it had taken place in another lifetime. The assumptions which Torontonians had in the early days of September 1914 had been changed by their experiences with the war.

No longer did they believe in the inevitability of a quick victory. Their experience with the number of casualties from even a modest offensive forced them to realize that the war would be a long one. As its demands grew, the ad hoc approach which

²¹⁹ "Irish Battalion Leaves for East," *World*, 27 April 1917, p. 2.

²²⁰ "Lull at Exhibition Before Borden Opens," *Globe*, 2 May 1917, p. 8.

Torontonians had assumed would see them through was abandoned. Citizens recognized that the successful prosecution of the war demanded an increasingly organized effort, and they lobbied the government to take an increased role in their daily lives, all in the name of victory. Throughout this process, the war revolved around the contradictions of glory vs. grief. When confronted with the first news from Second Ypres, glory was the dominant emotion. Learning of the cost to Canadian troops was a process in itself, as Torontonians only gradually pieced together the scale of the sacrifice. Only later, as casualties filtered back, did citizens come face to face with grief. Over the next two years, glory sometimes looked more like grief -- and grief was touched with glory.

The climate of Toronto had changed as well. In the early days of war, residents had been told to be tolerant of enemy aliens, a process which most appeared to endorse. Living through the reports of German atrocities in Belgium, the German gas attack at Second Ypres, the sinking of the passenger-ship *Lusitania*, and the grizzly attritional warfare, produced an "us" vs. "them" mentality. Enemy aliens were targeted as scapegoats at home, providing soldier and citizen alike with an avenue to vent frustration. The war's events also changed the way in which Torontonians said goodbye. In the early days of the war, a carnival atmosphere dominated the train platform; in the following years, a much more somber mood prevailed.

There were several constants, however. One was the dedication of the population to seeing the war to a successful conclusion. The climate in which the population held this belief changed, but their dedication did not. As the demands of the war grew, the commitment of local residents to winning it increased exponentially. They gave more

money, more soldiers, more time, and more of themselves in order to win. Another constant was the collective nature of the war effort. From the time when citizens gathered to hear of the news from Second Ypres, through the patriotic campaigns and the grief engendered by the war to the celebration of Vimy Ridge, Torontonians proceeded through the conflict as a community. Thousands turned out for rallies and funerals, sharing grief and joy, supporting one another in a great effort.

In the months between August 1914 and April 1917, the war intruded in an ever increasing way on the lives of average Torontonians. Initially welcomed as a source of employment, the war quickly became associated with deprivation. Higher prices for basic necessities, including coal, mixed with growing casualty lists to reinforce the notion that war was not a grand adventure. Within Toronto, the discourse from the war began to infiltrate the language used to describe events. "Battles" were fought against "King Alcohol," "struggles" were waged against high prices, and "campaigns" were conducted to raise money. The war gradually seeped into virtually every aspect of life: war had altered the frame of reference. Prior to the outbreak of war, and before Canadians became engaged in fighting, war was conceived of as heroic and as a great possibility for the Empire. As time went by, the costs associated with war forced Torontonians to change their outlook. By 1916, and certainly by April 1917, war was something to be endured, not celebrated.

The word "endured" is appropriate because at no time did Torontonians question the need to continue the war. Patriotic donations and loans were consistently over-subscribed, even as casualty lists took their awful toll. Sacrifices made for the war did

not undercut or undermine support for war, they reinforced it. A war fought solely for glory was not sustainable; however, the public discourse widened to include grief to underpin the effort. Torontonians were no longer fighting for 19th century concepts of glory, but to live up to the memory and sacrifice of those who had died. Lives had been sacrificed for the cause, and nothing less than total victory would vindicate them. Their support was not about blind faith in leaders, but grew out of an informed and measured response to the demands of the war. Torontonians understood from soldiers' letters that the cost of fighting was high, and the demands on Canada's youth enormous. And yet, to vindicate all the sacrifices that had been made, they endured. One of the ways in which this resilience can be clearly seen is in the way Torontonians adapted to the changing demands of the war, recruiting local men to serve with the colours.

Chapter 4

Enlistment and Recruiting

Historical accounts of the process by which Canadians enlisted in the Armed Forces during the First World War have been dominated by post-war concerns about the impact of conscription on Canadian unity. Historians have consequently focused on three questions: Why did voluntary enlistment dry up? Whose fault was it? and Was conscription necessary? There is remarkable consensus on the answers to the first two questions.¹ However, statements that voluntary recruiting ceased in mid-1916 as the supply of willing volunteers was exhausted, tell us little about the process of recruiting or the context within which recruits came forward.

The debate over the third question, the necessity of conscription, features A.M. Willms' "A Brief for the Defence" (1969), versus Jack Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman's *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (1977). Willms maintains that Borden imposed conscription because of military necessity in a context where plans were being drawn up for final offensives in 1920, and it was therefore necessary. In contrast, Granatstein and Hitsman argue that Borden imposed conscription as a political expedient to ensure election victory in 1917, and while it won him the election, it unnecessarily

¹ F.H. Underhill, "Canada and the Last War," Chester Martin, ed., *Canada in Peace and War: Eight Studies in National Trends Since 1914* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 120-49; Jean Bruce, "The Toronto *Globe* and the Manpower Problem: 1914-1917," Queen's University, 1967; John English, *The Decline of Politics: The Conservatives and the Party System, 1901-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977); Robert Craig Brown and Donald Loveridge, "Unrequited Faith: Recruiting and the CEF, 1914-1918," *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, No. 51, 1982, pp. 53-78; Ronald G. Haycock, *Sam Hughes: The Public Career of a Controversial Canadian, 1855-1916* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1986); C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, Volume I: 1867-1921* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977), p. 235; C.A. Sharpe, "Enlistment in the Canadian Expeditionary Force: A Regional Analysis," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Winter 1983-84, pp. 15-29.

ripped apart the country along linguistic lines. The sources used in all cases are quite similar: nationally generated statistics and the papers of prominent political officials. While these sources allow an overview of trends, they cannot help in understanding how recruiting was experienced at the local level. Recruiting officer and prospective recruit alike did not have the benefit of hindsight to know that conscription would eventually be imposed. Quite to the contrary, they both believed in voluntarism and an ad hoc war effort. This chapter moves away from the standard questions used to understand recruiting. It avoids post-war presentism and examines the way in which recruiting *unfolded* rather than how it *unraveled* between September 1914 and the announcement of conscription in May 1917. In doing so, it breathes some life and context into the numbers so long used to describe recruiting.²

* * *

Any examination of enlistment, however, must begin with an assessment of the number of potential recruits available. The population of Toronto in the 1911 Census was 376,538³, while the 1921 Census records 521,893⁴ residents. This data can be used to estimate the total number of men eligible for overseas service. In the 1921 Census, the number of men between the 19 and 40 was 100,853, or 19.3 percent of the total population. Applying that same percentage to the 1911 total population yields 72,672 potential recruits. The number available during the war years lies somewhere between

² A record of the Toronto infantry battalions recruited during this voluntary phase of recruiting is contained in Appendix C, following the Conclusion.

³ *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911*, Vol. II, p. 372.

⁴ *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. I, p. 542.

these two extremes, the middle point being 86,723. Very little information is available from military sources, but an August 1916 document reinforces this interpretation, listing the total population of Toronto at 470,444, and the total number of eligible men (including those who had gone overseas) at 87,300.⁵ Each year of the war, new recruits became available as men turned 19, but this rise was largely offset by other men becoming too old to serve.⁶ The military figure of 87,300 will be used to place the total number of Toronto volunteers in context.

* * *

The enlistment rush characteristic of the opening days of the war continued through September and October 1914. Even as papers carried reports of the British Retreat from Mons and opposing sides began to dig the trenches that would be home for months and years to come, recruiting in Toronto proceeded rapidly.⁷ By the end of September, the Queen's Own Rifles was 200 over its peacetime establishment, the Royal Grenadiers over quota by 150, and the Highlanders were only 200 shy of their maximum despite having supplied a battalion for the First Contingent.⁸ In early October, Prime Minister Borden announced that recruiting for a Second Contingent would begin, sending

⁵ No author listed, "Recruiting Returns, Military District Number 2 Up To and Including Month Ending August, 1916," September 1916, PAC, RG 24, Vol. 4303, File 34-1-59, Military District Number 2, General Recruiting, Vol. 8.

⁶ The 1921 Census lists the total number of men between 14 and 18 at 21,270 while those between 41 and 45 number 17,366, a difference of only 3,904. Divided equally over the war years, that means an increase of less than 1,000 new eligible recruits each year. (*Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. II, pp. 104-105.).

⁷ See for example, "Uniforms Are Scarce But No Lack of Men," *World*, 11 September 1914, p. 2.

⁸ "Regiments Again At Peace Strength," *News*, 29 September 1914, p. 5.

a "...patriotic thrill across Canada."⁹ The University of Toronto responded by making a direct appeal to students to join the University Battalion.¹⁰

These appeals were met by a broad constituency, including more than just Protestant British and Canadian men. Throughout the enlistment period, Irish Catholics from both the working and the middle classes came forward just as readily as their Protestant neighbours. Before the voluntary period of enlistment ended, over 3,500 local Catholics enlisted, approximately eight percent of Toronto's Catholic population.¹¹ Italian residents also strongly supported the war, demonstrating their patriotic enthusiasm by volunteering, and by taking to the streets in parades where shouts of "Viva l'Italia, Viva il Canada" rose above the crowd.¹² Ukrainian men also answered the call of service. Their status as "enemy aliens" barred them from service in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, but the desire of many men to serve was so strong that many reported Russian ancestry to enlistment officers. By the end of the war, more than 17 local men had died in service of their adopted country.¹³

⁹ "Second Call of Canada For Men Sends a Patriotic Thrill Across the Dominion," *News*, 7 October 1914, p. 1. See also, "The Second Contingent," *Telegram*, 7 October 1914, p. 8.

¹⁰ "Students to Emulate Other Universities," *Globe*, 21 October 1914, p. 6.

¹¹ Mark G. McGowan, "Sharing the Burden of Empire: Toronto's Catholics and the Great War, 1914-1918," in Mark George McGowan and Brian P. Clarke, eds. *Catholics at the 'Gathering Place': Historical Essays on the Archdiocese of Toronto 1841-1991*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993), p. 183.

¹² John Zucchi, *Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1875-1935* (Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p. 164.

¹³ Zoriana Yaworsky Sokolsky, "The Beginnings of Ukrainian Settlement in Toronto, 1891-1939," in Robert F. Harney ed., *Gathering Place: Peoples and Neighbourhoods of Toronto, 1834-1945* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1985), pp. 299-300.

When the quotas for the Second Contingent were announced the local regiments were disappointed. Toronto was to supply only 938 of the 16,000 men required, and had over 5,500 men from which to choose. On the first day they were eligible, 200 members of the Royal Grenadiers volunteered for active service even though the regiment could only send 120.¹⁴ The 48th Highlanders encountered a similar rush, with over 275 men volunteering to fill 150 places.¹⁵ Forced to select from this large pool of recruits, officers gave preference to men who had already seen active service. When this criterion still yielded too many recruits, those with the greatest amount of service were enrolled.¹⁶

Against the backdrop of patriotic enthusiasm and the desire to measure up and be part of the "great adventure," men had a decision to make. Would they try and join the CEF? Were they physically strong enough to pass the stringent medical tests?¹⁷ The common thread in these questions was individual choice. Enough men would surely be secured, so it was not a question of necessity to volunteer. It was a personal decision made by each man to serve the Empire. This public expression of patriotic enthusiasm was the result of hundreds of private decisions, prompted by the needs and aspirations of each of these individual men.

The Canadian army, however, began to show signs of strain as it exploded from a small pre-war militia to a full-fledged overseas infantry division within months.

¹⁴ "Too Many Grenadiers Offer for Overseas Service," *World*, 23 October 1914, p. 2.

¹⁵ "Rush for Service in City Regiments," *Globe*, 24 October 1914, p. 6.

¹⁶ "Keen Competition for Active Service," *News*, 23 October 1914, p. 2.

¹⁷ A recruit had to be at least 5 feet, 3 inches tall, with a chest measurement of 33 and a half inches. (Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* (Toronto: Random House, 1993), p. 9.).

Canadian soldiers suffered through the miserable winter of 1914-15 on Salisbury Plain fighting with inferior Canadian made equipment until it was discarded and replaced with more serviceable British kit. Historians have argued Minister of Militia Sam Hughes was at the root of the problem. Even while pressing for an overseas command for himself, he appointed officers on the basis of political, not military ability. He also awarded contracts to powerful friends, often accepting inferior products for Canadian troops, resulting in boots which virtually dissolved in the squalid conditions of Salisbury Plain where it rained for 89 out of the 123 days the Canadians were stationed there.¹⁸

Despite the stories of corruption and mismanagement,¹⁹ the Toronto press foresaw no difficulties in securing the required recruits.²⁰ The real difficulty would be selecting a contingent from the thousands of men clamouring to serve. It would not have been surprising if all the negative stories from Salisbury Plain had prompted a drop in local recruiting. However, when Prime Minister Borden announced in early January 1915 that recruiting would begin immediately for a Third Contingent, militia officers again had the luxury to select only the best recruits.²¹ The entire city was to supply just one battalion, leaving space for only 908 new men after surpluses from the previous contingent took the first 200 places.²² The ranks were filled in a matter of days.

¹⁸ G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919: Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1962), pp. 32-39.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ See for example, "Third Contingent Enlistment Starts," *World*, 5 January 1915, p. 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² "Toronto to Have 908 in Third Contingent," *Star*, 5 January 1915, p. 2.

* * *

After the Third Contingent left, there was a lull in recruiting as local officers awaited orders from Ottawa. Events from the battlefield brought home a sense of urgency. The 6,000 casualties at Second Ypres at the end of April 1915 affected military personnel as profoundly as it had civilians, and militia units held ceremonies to honour their comrades. The 48th Highlanders took part in the funeral procession for Capt. Darling, and the Queen's Own Rifles held a ceremony on 5 May to honour their fallen. The regiment paraded 1,166 strong, accompanied by 97 new recruits. Commanding officer Lieut.-Col. Arthur Godfrey Peuchen²³ addressed the men regarding the solemnity of the occasion before introducing the regimental chaplain. Standing between two lines of flashing swords held in the hands of the unit's officers, Archdeacon H.J. Cody spoke of expecting losses, but never having expected such an overwhelming blow. He promised, however, that even though "...the great cup of sorrow has been pressed to the lips of our Canadian people we shall strive to drink it with calm courage, with endurance, with self-control."²⁴ After a short prayer for the dead, Cody retired, and commanding officer Peuchen gave the order, "In honour of the dead, present arms!"²⁵ As the rifles raised, and

²³ Peuchen was born in Montreal in April 1859. He helped organize the Standard Chemical Company and served as its President and General Manager from 1897-1914. In addition, he maintained a long-term relationship with the Queen's Own Rifles, beginning as a Lieutenant in 1888, rising to command it during the first two years of the Great War. (B.M. Greene, *Who's Who and Why, 1921* (Toronto: International Press Limited, 1921), p. 1340.)

²⁴ "Canadian Losses," *Canadian Churchman*, 13 May 1915, p. 295.

²⁵ "Church News," *Canadian Churchman*, 13 May 1915, p. 302. See also, "Queen's Own Honour Their Heroic Dead," *News*, 6 May 1915, p. 3; "Solemn Memorial for Lost Q.O.R. Men," *Globe*, 6 May 1915, p. 6.

officers' swords rose, circled and pointed downward, the band began "The Dead March," followed by the "Last Post."

Official ceremonies like this one and the one for Capt. Darling established Second Ypres as a turning point in the war effort. Torontonians had their first experience with the demands of the war on the lives of its citizens, and this experience formed part of their evolving memory of glorious deeds done together. Second Ypres cemented the already strong commitment of Toronto and its citizens to the war effort with the glory and blood of its soldiers and the grief and tears of its citizens. Recruiting was influenced by the scale and scope of the sacrifice because additional soldiers would have to be enlisted to ensure that the ideals which had prompted this sacrifice were upheld.

Fallen soldiers had to be replaced. Preoccupied with the cost to its soldiers and with marking the passing of *Lusitania* victims, militia regiments continued to prepare to meet Ottawa's new call for recruits. As the city waited, more Canadians fell in action, this time 2,468 were killed or wounded in a largely diversionary attack at Festubert on 23-24 May 1915. Replacing the escalating casualties would take more men, and on 26 May the Militia Council ordered the mobilization of a Fourth Contingent of 10,000 men. The Toronto Divisional Area was to supply one battalion, the 58th; Lieut.-Col. Harry A. Genet, a sixteen year veteran of Brantford's 38th Dufferin Rifles, was given command.²⁶ Disappointment was expressed that Toronto could only supply eight officers and 253 non-commissioned officers and men; it had been hoped that it could contribute the entire

²⁶ "Recruiting Begins for New Battalion," *News*, 27 May 1915, p. 2.

battalion.²⁷ Even in the face of the dire news from Second Ypres, recruiting numbers were shaped by the relative lack of opportunity compared to the number of men who wanted to serve.

Filling this call for recruits, however, prompted an innovation which remained a fixture on the streets for months to come: the recruiting sergeant. The 109th Regiment sent recruiting sergeants marked by red, white and blue rosettes in their caps out into the streets, drawing recruits after them to their armories at 73 Pearl Street.²⁸ Even though medical officers turned down many applicants for physical defects, the ranks were filled quickly. Recruiting had passed into a new stage, however, as recruiting officers changed the way they interacted with prospective recruits. No longer content to announce enlistment details and wait for the men to come forward, recruiting officers actively pursued troops, making recruits justify why they were not enlisting, rather than allowing their own consciences to serve as guide. Recruiting drives were taken out of the private and thrust into the public realm.

Recruiting efforts increased considerably after 9 June 1915, when Sam Hughes announced from Montreal that 35,000 more men would be recruited immediately for the Fourth Contingent. Three new battalions would be raised in Toronto: the 74th, 75th, and 76th. To meet these new demands, recruiting became an ongoing process.²⁹ No longer would recruiting offices be open only long enough to secure enough recruits for the latest contingent: recruiting continued for the duration.

²⁷ "Fix Proportions for New Battalion," *News*, 27 May 1915, p. 10.

²⁸ "Parade City Streets in Quest of Soldiers," *Globe*, 31 May 1915, p. 7.

²⁹ "Call Sent Out to Canada For 35,000 Fresh Recruits," *World*, 9 June 1915, p. 1.

Before the campaign began, however, there were signs that the city would be required to send even more men. Rural areas in the Military District had failed to recruit their numbers, forcing Toronto to fill vacancies left in the 58th battalion. In the face of such a radical increase in the number of men demanded, military officials re-examined the stringent physical requirements for service in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. The most likely target was the dental standard, which military dentists claimed accounted for the rejection of many men who were otherwise fit.³⁰ While awaiting reduced standards, however, recruiting shifted into high gear. Plans were put in place to open a central recruiting office at 215 Simcoe Street, the former military headquarters of the district, with Lieutenant Colonel R.C. Windeyer of the 36th Peel Regiment in command.³¹

For the first time since the war began, there was a noticeable drop in the enthusiasm and the number of men volunteering. The 109th Regiment reported that there was only "a little more life at the Armories" in the wake of Sam Hughes' call for 35,000 men.³² In addition, the Canadian 1st Division suffered the loss of another 366 men killed or wounded at Givenchy-lez-la-Bassée on 15 June. Despite the obvious need, men were not coming forward in sufficient numbers. Recruiting officers knew that Britain had success with recruiting posters, and the Royal Grenadiers experimented with a text-only poster to appeal to local men:

Canada's New Army for Overseas.
Recruits wanted.

³⁰ "Volunteers Rally to Empire's Cause," *Globe*, 11 June 1915, p. 6.

³¹ "Central Recruiting Office In Toronto For New Units," *News*, 17 June 1915, p.

1.

³² "109th Regiment Gets a Call for 360 Men," *Star*, 30 June 1915, p. 3.

Apply at once to Royal Grenadiers Orderly Room.
Come, boys, do your bit by rallying around the flag of freedom.³³

This poster was typical of the appeals to men in the early stage of recruiting. It was at base an announcement of the need for men, and allowed men to make their own decision about whether or not to enlist. Reference was made to the justice of the cause, but there was no overt pressure to join: it was a call to join an elite club.

On Dominion Day 1915, recruiting sergeants spread out into the streets, with each militia unit aiming to secure two hundred recruits. The results were disappointing. The most common obstacles to enlistment were defective teeth and eye sight. The problem was further compounded by the fact that very few men volunteered, the Royal Grenadiers securing only ten men who could pass the medical.³⁴ Throughout the city, fewer than 30 recruits were attested. Recruiting sergeants reported that the crowds seemed to be avoiding them, and the attitude of "...those who ought to enlist was one of defiance when tackled. 'They can get along without us,' said a couple of likely recruits who were buttonholed by a Sergeant in Yonge Street. 'But the country needs you,' said the Sergeant. 'They won't get us,' was the reply."³⁵ Men resisted the attempts of recruiting officers to tell them their duty, again providing ample evidence that the call of Britain and Empire was not enough to overcome their obligations to self, family or employers. Men had made a personal decision not to enlist, and resented the pressure placed on them by the early pleas of recruiting sergeants. It would take something more persuasive to encourage

³³ "Recruiting Sergeants and Appealing Posters," *Globe*, 30 June 1915, p. 8.

³⁴ "Eyes and Teeth Spoil Day's Recruiting," *Star*, 2 July 1915, p. 3. See also, "Recruiting Slow on Dominion Day," *Mail and Empire*, 2 July 1915, p. 4.

³⁵ "Recruiting Sergeants Got Poor Results," *Globe*, 2 July 1915, p. 6.

men to enlist.

The Royal Grenadiers, however, had secured twice as many volunteers as the other regiments, and that success was attributed to their use of recruiting posters and active campaigning. Local initiative produced returns, resulting in a dramatic increase in activity, and a new phase of recruiting beginning around 3 July 1915. Rather than pushing men into service directly, recruiting officers created an atmosphere which promoted service and involved the local population. Returned soldiers spoke at rallies, stressing the need for volunteers. Religious leaders emphasized to their congregations the virtues of signing up. Bands played martial music at street corners to help gather a captive audience.³⁶ Militia regiments established recruiting offices downtown: the Mississauga Horse opened a branch at 111 King Street West; the 36th Peel Regiment adapted offices at 1425 Dundas Street and 28 Adelaide Street West; the 12th York Rangers set up at St. Paul's Hall, Yonge Street, and at 58 King Street West;³⁷ and the 48th Highlanders even erected a large tent at the foot of University Avenue to serve as a temporary recruiting office. General W.A. Logie, commander of the Toronto Divisional Area, called a meeting of local officers to coordinate efforts.³⁸ They hoped that the minimum height requirement would be lowered from 5 feet 3 inches, to 5 feet 1 inch, and

³⁶ "More Efforts Needed to Enlist Men Here," *Globe*, 3 July 1915, p. 8. See also, "Say Conscription Is the Only Recourse," *Star*, 3 July 1915, p. 5.

³⁷ "Open More Offices to Aid Recruiting," *News*, 5 July 1915, p. 9.

³⁸ "Military Men Meeting to Plan Recruiting," *Star*, 5 July 1915, p. 3. Each of the Toronto regiments were represented by its commanding officer: Queen's Own Rifles, Lieut.-Col. Peuchen; Royal Grenadiers, Lieut.-Col. Brock; 48th Highlanders, Lieut.-Col. Donald; 109th Regiment, Lieut.-Col. Stewart; Governor General's Body Guard, Major Cameron; Mississauga Horse, Major Beckett. "Plan to Put 'Pepp' In Call To Arms," *Globe*, 6 July 1915, p. 6.

that the chest measurement would be reduced from 33 1/2 to 33 inches. In upcoming campaigns, recruiting posters would play a much more prominent role, along with streamers flown across principal streets.³⁹

Another fundamental difference was the target group for recruits. Recruiting in Toronto had stalled because earlier drafts had taken the intensely patriotic and/or unemployed men, leaving those men who had jobs. Militia officers told reporters that they would now specifically target this previously untapped source of recruits. This new recruiting tactic, they hoped, would create a climate in which employed men would come forward.⁴⁰ To this end, recruiting officers planned a big parade through the downtown, accompanied by every military band in the city. They solicited the aid of the City of Toronto, being granted the use of City Hall and other public buildings.

Recruiting boomed. The sudden increase in the number and scope of appeals prompted many men to come forward, leading officers to report that recruiting was "crowned with success."⁴¹ Capt. Wandless,⁴² recruiting officer of the 36th Regiment, greeted men walking by his recruiting station on Adelaide Street West by saying "'Step inside my boy, the doctor is in there waiting to see you."⁴³ His efforts secured roughly two percent of the passing men. Other units scoured the city looking for advantageous recruiting stations, the 9th Mississauga Horse selecting the Labour Temple at 167-169

³⁹ "Draw Top Schemes to Aid Recruiting," *News*, 6 July 1915, p. 9.

⁴⁰ "Shameful Response to Call for Recruits," *Globe*, 3 July 1915, p. 8.

⁴¹ "Success Follows Recruiting Call," *World*, 7 July 1915, p. 1.

⁴² An attempt has been made to locate the first names, or initials, of all people mentioned in this dissertation. Unfortunately, such information is not always available.

⁴³ "Good Response to Call for Recruits," *News*, 8 July 1915, p. 3.

Church Street. With the exception of a small recruiting sign tacked up in the poolroom in the basement, there had been no concerted attempts by recruiting officers to use the buildings. Accordingly, the Mississauga Horse left behind a number of officers and men to appeal for recruits.⁴⁴ No longer were recruiting officers willing to wait for men to come to them; throughout the city, young men were constantly appealed to by the military.

Men volunteered by the hundred. Between 3 and 10 July 1915, over 1,000 were attested.⁴⁵ In the wake of such a dramatic increase resulting from local activity, regiments continued to experiment with new methods. Capt. D. F. Keith of the Mississauga Horse suggested a special badge be given to men who volunteered, but failed to pass the medical. Doing so allowed rejected recruits to avoid the stigma and reproach of failing to serve, and would aid recruiting officers in their search for "shirkers."⁴⁶ The Queen's Own Rifles capitalized on the appeal of the automobile, taking "gaily decorated cars" down to the Exhibition grounds, securing 11 recruits.⁴⁷ The Queen's Own kept up its presence by parading 1,400 officers and men through downtown streets for the purpose of stimulating recruiting. Two battalions marched up University Avenue to College, turned East to Yonge Street, went down Yonge Street to King, turned West onto Bay Street, following it up to Queen Street, and then back to the Armories. Thousands turned out to watch.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ "Pick Out Places Where Men Meet," *World*, 8 July 1915, p. 7.

⁴⁵ "1,000 Toronto Men Enlisted This Week," *Globe*, 10 July 1915, p. 6.

⁴⁶ "Badge for Those Who Are Rejected," *World*, 12 July 1915, p. 4.

⁴⁷ "Proved Good Day for Recruiting," *Globe*, 13 July 1915, p. 6.

⁴⁸ "Plans Formed After Parade to Secure Further Recruits," *News*, 15 July 1915, p. 10; "Queen's Own Parade Tracks Recruits," *World*, 15 July 1915, p. 2.

The Queen's Own parade was just part of the general move away from individual appeals to young men, towards creating a climate in the city which would stimulate recruiting. Officers took advantage of whatever opportunities presented themselves, using a home leave visit by Colonel J.A. Currie to arrange a patriotic rally on the lawn in front of City Hall. Recruiters correctly assumed that thousands would turn up to see the man who had led the Toronto Highland Battalion (15th) at Second Ypres. The band of the 10th Royal Grenadiers played the anthems of the Allies to the delight of a "vast crowd." When Colonel J.A. Currie rose to speak, he was greeted by a chorus of cheers.⁴⁹ Popular songs were played, and once the martial spirit of the men had been raised, the recruiting sergeants got busy. Ministers also helped the campaign, organizing a Toronto Ministerial Association meeting on 16 July for the specific purpose of taking steps to aid recruiting. It was decided to print a letter for local ministers which stressed the importance of the war, and asked them to encourage recruiting from their pulpits.⁵⁰ Local labour officials also endorsed recruiting activities, sending representatives to Militia Headquarters to discuss arrangements.⁵¹ Even the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario passed a resolution which "...suggests and urges upon its members as well as their clerks and students that all who are physically fit should at once enlist."⁵²

The focal point of this new tactic was General Logie's 20 July monster rally at

⁴⁹ "Cheer Clarion Call to Canada's Manhood," *Globe*, 16 July 1916, pp. 1,6; "Toronto Welcomes Home Colonel John A. Currie," *World*, 16 July 1915, pp. 1,3.

⁵⁰ "Ministers Asked to Assist Recruiting From the Pulpit," *News*, 17 July 1915, p. 14.

⁵¹ "Officials Endorse Recruiting Action," *Star* 18 July 1915, p. 4.

⁵² "Urges Its Members to Enlist At Once," *Globe*, 19 July 1915, p. 7.

Massey Hall. Designed to raise the profile of recruiting and to launch the Toronto Recruiting League, the rally promoted the fact that the League had members from many prominent local organizations: the Board of Trade, the Manufacturers' Association, the Trades and Labour Council, the Speakers' Patriotic League, the Canadian Defence League, the City Council, and representative clergy.⁵³ This new appeal was broadly based and made use of organizations representing the working, middle and business classes.

Anticipating more people than the 4,000 seats at Massey Hall could accommodate, organizers also planned an overflow meeting two blocks away outside City Hall. With a captive audience, over 1,000 recruiting sergeants would get to work. The size of the crowd exceeded even the most optimistic projections. Massey Hall was filled to capacity, men occupying most of the seats on the main floor, while women gathered in the galleries. Soldiers served as ushers, and the platform was taken up by the band of the Queen's Own Rifles. Behind them were draped the flags of the British Empire, along with posters which urged men to do their duty and enlist. The program was scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m., and all available seats were filled well before that time. The rally was so successful that by 10 p.m. Lieut.-Governor Hendrie could announce that 92 recruits had been secured. To the cheers of the crowd, Provincial-Secretary W.J. Hanna⁵⁴

⁵³ "Big Recruiting Meeting," *Star*, 13 July 1915, p. 5; "Foster and Graham To Join in Plea," *Globe*, 13 July 1915, p. 7; "Recruiting League to Embrace Toronto," *World*, 15 July 1915, p. 3.

⁵⁴ Hanna was born in 1862 in Middlesex, Ontario. An Irish descendent, Hanna studied law before becoming active in politics in a career that spanned three decades. He was elected several times as a Conservative member of the Ontario Legislature (Ernest J. Chambers, ed., *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1918* (Ottawa: Mortimer Company Limited, 1918), p. 264.).

declared that future recruiting efforts would be defrayed by a provincial gift of \$25,000.

For those not fortunate enough to get a seat in Massey Hall, there was another, larger rally at City Hall. While citizens walked the few blocks South and West from Massey Hall to City Hall, military bands gave concerts at the main downtown corners. An enormous white banner greeted them: "You said you would go when you were wanted. You are wanted now."⁵⁵ Even before the patriotic speeches began, over 20 men volunteered. Carefully lined up at the East side of the platform, the ranks of the recruits grew steadily as the evening went on, totaling over 150 by evening's end. The patriotic spirit of the more than 15,000 assembled people was cultivated by the regimental bands of the Governor-General's Body Guards and the 109th Regiment, stationed on the stone platform in front of City Hall. As each man stepped up to the platform to offer his services, the crowd cheered him along to the nearby recruiting tent. The results shattered all previous records. Between the rally at Massey Hall, the gathering at City Hall, and the recruiting tents stationed in the downtown area, more than 500 men had been attested and joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in one evening.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ "Enthusiasm Reached High Pitch At Monster Massey Hall Meeting," *Star*, 21 July 1915, p. 3.

⁵⁶ The above account is taken from the following articles: "500 Men Enlisted; More Still Coming," *Star*, 21 July 1915, p. 4; "Enthusiasm Reached High Pitch At Monster Massey Hall Meeting," *Star*, 21 July 1915, p. 3; "Enthusiasm Reached High Pitch At Monster Massey Hall Meeting," *Star*, 21 July 1915, p. 3; "Fifteen Thousand Hear Speakers At City Hall," *World*, 21 July 1915, p. 1; "The Recruiting Drum" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 21 July 1915, p. 6; "Flame of Patriotic Fervor to Stimulate Recruiting," *Globe*, 21 July 1915, pp. 1, 6; "Great Enthusiasm Prevailed At Immense Recruiting Meeting," *World*, 21 July 1915, p. 1. Sir George Foster, Member of Parliament, recorded in his diary that the "meeting was a great one." The whole evening, he noted, "combined to a climax which will never be forgotten by those who participated...It will have a great effect on recruiting." (George Foster, Diary Entry, 20 July 1915, PAC, Sir George Foster

These giant patriotic rallies marked a remarkable turnaround in recruiting fortunes. When recruiting sergeants went after men individually during the first couple of days of July their efforts were largely unsuccessful. However, when recruiting officers shifted their focus to creating a climate conducive to enlistment drives, men volunteered by the thousand. Even with the poor recruiting results in the first days of July, by 21 July the city had recruited over 3,000 men.⁵⁷ The 9th Mississauga Horse managed to recruit 1,143 men and a full complement of officers in only three weeks, thereby completing recruiting for the 75th overseas battalion.⁵⁸ Success translated into the authorization of another battalion, the 81st, to be filled with surpluses already enlisted for other battalions.⁵⁹ Local elites serving in the Recruiting League also got down to business. Toronto Labour representative T. A. Stevenson asked the organization to have a band and parts of military units join in the Labour Day parade "...in order that some of the boys might get enthused enough to join the colours."⁶⁰

Giant patriotic rallies were staged all over the city, part of the process of creating a climate conducive to recruiting. On 26 July about 40 recruits were secured at a High Park rally. A crowd of over 14,000 people thronged around the pavilion to hear speeches by Rev. A. Logan Geggie,⁶¹ MPP. Thomas Crawford,⁶² and Mr. A. E. Donovan, MPP for

Papers, MG 27 D7, Vol. 4.).

⁵⁷ "City Has Lately Recruited Over 3,000 Men," *News*, 22 July 1915, p. 7.

⁵⁸ "Baby Battalion Sets Fast Pace," *Globe*, 26 July 1915, p. 6.

⁵⁹ See for example, "More Men! Is Call From Niagara Camp," *World*, 24 July 1915, p. 6.

⁶⁰ "Recruiting League Down to Business," *World*, 24 July 1915, p. 6.

⁶¹ Geggie was born in the Border District, Scotland, in 1862. He arrived in Canada as a Presbyterian missionary in 1887, and had served as the Pastor of the Dunn Avenue Presbyterian Church since 1899. (Henry James Morgan, ed., *The Canadian Men*

Brockville.⁶³ Citizens were crowded so tightly that the Police Pipe Band had difficulty forcing its way to the pavilion after leading a parade of over 1,000 men up Roncesvalles Avenue to the Park entrance. Since the crowd was too big to be addressed by one speaker, each of the speakers spoke simultaneously from a different corner of the pavilion.⁶⁴

Enjoying the crest of another successful recruiting wave, new battalions were authorized as quickly as they could be filled. The latest additions were the 83rd and 84th Overseas Battalions, to be commanded by Lieut.-Col. Reginald G. Pellatt and by Lieut.-Col. W. T. Stewart of the 109th Regiment, respectively. To help recruiting officers meet their goals, recruiting standards were relaxed: the minimum height dropped to 5 feet 2 inches, and a chest measurement of 32 1/2 inches was now acceptable for young, growing recruits.⁶⁵

The effect of such a dramatic increase in recruiting began to be felt by local business. An employee of the Merchant's Bank of Canada, H. Anson Green, wrote to his mother to tell her that the recent campaign had resulted in the enlistment of many bank employees. Green tried to enlist, but suffered the same fate as almost 40 percent of those

and Women of the Time, 2nd edition (Toronto, William Briggs, 1912), pp. 437-438.).

⁶² Crawford was born in County Fermanagh, Ireland in August 1847. A cattle merchant by trade, he served on the Toronto City Council for three years before being elected to the Provincial Legislature in 1894, and returned six more times before war broke out in 1914. (Chambers, ed., *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, 1918, p. 257.).

⁶³ Donovan was born at Portland, Leeds County (no date). He taught school as a first career before turning to life insurance sales, eventually becoming General Manager of the Mutual Life Company of New York. First elected to the legislature in a by-election in 1907, he was returned 3 times before the war began. (*Ibid.*, pp. 258-259.).

⁶⁴ "Single Men Urged to Fight For Country," *Globe*, 27 July 1915, p. 6

⁶⁵ "Lt. Col. Stewart Will Command the New 84th," *Globe*, 28 July 1915, p. 6.

who volunteered, and was rejected on medical grounds. He had reason to hope, however, as the medical officer informed him that if he had an operation, he would likely qualify.⁶⁶ Green underwent surgery, at his own expense, only to be told by his employer that the Bank could not afford to lose any more men to the army.⁶⁷ After making a full recovery, Green applied for a commission despite the pleas of his manager. Tired of waiting for a commission, he proceeded overseas as a private with the University Corps, enlisting in November 1915.⁶⁸

As Green struggled to find a place in the army, other battalions were authorized. In early August 1915, another Highland battalion, the 92nd, was authorized to be filled by Toronto and Hamilton men, the 48th Highlanders assigned to recruit all but one company. Commanded by Capt. George Chisholm, an 18 year veteran of the militia unit, the 92nd would serve as a replacement unit for the Highland battalions in the firing line. Recruits continued to come forward in significant numbers, filling the ranks of these new units. On 4 August, the medical officer of the Royal Grenadiers passed 53 men while his

⁶⁶ H. Anson Green to his Mother, 30 July 1915, PAC, H. Anson Green Papers, MG 30, E440, File 10, Green Family Correspondence, 1914-1915, p. 2. The letter does not state the nature of the physical defect which prevented him from being accepted in the first place, nor the nature of the corrective operation.

⁶⁷ H. Anson Green to his Mother, 13 August 1915, PAC, H. Anson Green Papers, MG 30, E440, File 10, Green Family Correspondence, 1914-1915, p. 1.

⁶⁸ H. Anson Green to his Mother, 25 November 1915, PAC, H. Anson Green Papers, MG 30, E440, File 10, Green Family Correspondence, 1914-1915, p. 1. Green's military career was relatively short. He was sent overseas in April 1916, and was commissioned a lieutenant in England. He proceeded to France as part of the Royal Canadian Regiment, but was severely wounded soon after his arrival. He recuperated in England and was discharged as medically unfit in 1917. (PAC, H. Anson Green Papers, MG 30, E440, File 12, Green Family WWI Correspondence, 1916-1917.).

counterpart at the Queen's Own passed another 52.⁶⁹

Even organized labour took part in the big recruiting campaign, demonstrating that support for recruiting and the war was not just a middle-class phenomenon. The Street Railway Men's Union, the Builders' Labourers Union, the Typographical Union, were among many unions who continued to carry hundreds of members who had enlisted, "...carrying them at a great financial sacrifice in good standing on their books."⁷⁰

Organizers on the Labour Day Committee specifically asked the Citizens' Recruiting League to make full and complete use of the Labour Day parade to help stimulate recruiting.

Throughout the city recruiting rallies were organized by the Citizens' Recruiting League. Beginning on 7 August, these efforts became a common sight. One of the first rallies was highlighted by the Queen's Own Rifles band playing at the corner of Logan and Danforth Avenues. The assembled crowd of 8,000 was addressed by Lieutenants Nicholl and Rogers, two men recently back from the front.⁷¹ As always, recruiting sergeants were available to escort men to recruiting offices, 33 taking advantage of the opportunity.

The largest of these rallies took place at Riverdale Park on 9 August 1915. Originally scheduled to mark the anniversary of the declaration of war, the rally was delayed five days because of poor weather. Once the weather cooperated, Riverdale Park

⁶⁹ "Men Come Forward to Serve Country," *Globe*, 5 August 1915, p. 6.

⁷⁰ "Labour Men Prove Their Patriotism By Enlisting," *Star*, 7 August 1915, p. 5.

⁷¹ "Open Recruiting Campaign To-Night," *News*, 7 August 1915, p. 2;
"Enthusiasm Puts Conscription Out," *World*, 9 August 1915, p. 3.

was the scene for the "...vastest and most spectacular patriotic military demonstration which has been held in Canada since the outbreak of war."⁷² Between 100,000 and 200,000 people lined the natural amphitheatre formed by hills sloping from Broadview Avenue to the Don River. Looking up from the platform, even the crest of the hill a thousand yards away was filled with people. Several hundred square feet had been cordoned off for a tattoo by all the military bands of the city, led by Bandmaster Lieut. Waldron of the 10th Royal Grenadiers. Boy Scouts acted as torch bearers and behind the platform, hundreds of automobile lights twinkled in the darkness.

Even the process of amassing such a great crowd of people was not without incident. People began arriving as early as 6 p.m., and Broadview Avenue and other streets leading to the Park were choked with spectators. Unfortunately, the small foot bridge over the Don River was not equipped to handle more than a few hundred people at a time. Police officers were on hand to ensure that the sheer weight of the 50,000 people who passed over it would not overwhelm the bridge's supports. Police constables Fairweather and Townsend, along with Park Constable Butler, managed the other difficulty, the level train crossing over four sets of tracks. Southbound trains advanced unseen from around a curve and no one had stopped train traffic for the occasion. At any given point in time, between 400 and 500 people moved slowly across the tracks. Tragedy almost struck at 8:25 p.m. when an engine backing up from the South, with no headlight visible, bore down on the crowd. There was a very real danger of a panic, with

⁷² "Hundred Thousand Witness Tattoo in Riverdale Park," *World*, 10 August 1915, p. 1.

the engine bearing down, and the water of the Don River below. A Royal Grenadiers recruiting officer, Pte. McGowan, averted a tragedy: "He slipped out without commotion and with the utmost coolness split the crowd in two, crushed it back on each side of the track, and a panic or worse was avoided."⁷³ In the interests of safety, Pte. McGowan stood watch until it was learned that all trains had been notified to slow down.

The tattoo began at 8 p.m. with the Queen's Own Rifles Bugles Band sounding "First Post." A combined march was conducted by all the bugles and bands, followed by the separate marching of each band, culminating in a massed band concert. Traditional martial songs and hymns were rendered: "The Maple Leaf," "Rule Britannia," "O Canada," "The Buffs," "Tipperary," "Boys of the Old Brigade," "Soldiers of the King," "Onward Christian Soldiers," "Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past," and "Abide With Me." Report after report in the papers remarked on the power and poignancy of the thousands of voices joined together in song, particularly during the singing of "Abide With Me." Accompanied by the skirling pipes of the 48th Highlanders, fireworks began at 9:30.

The whole extravaganza had been organized to encourage recruiting. A giant electric sign was erected in the centre of the valley, showing a large coloured Union Jack, over which was printed in lights: "Your King and Country Need You. Enlist Now." Organizers had arranged to have speakers address the crowd, but the sheer size of the gathering made that impossible. Mayor Church and Colonel Peuchen were among the dignitaries scheduled to speak, but they were content to watch the ceremony along with

⁷³ "Toronto's Patriotic Heart Stirred by Martial Music," *Star*, 10 August 1915, p. 5.

the thousands in attendance. Recruiting sergeants found the density of the crowd daunting, restricting their recruiting efforts to the immediate area surrounding recruiting tents until the crowd began to disperse. As men filed past on their way home, their patriotism was appealed to by recruiting officers. Recruiters dubbed the evening a success, securing over 400 volunteers, and successfully promoting the participation of local residents in recruiting drives.⁷⁴

Recruiting was no longer about personal decisions made by individual men in the comfort of their own homes, according to their own conscience. Recruiting was now an incredibly public phenomenon, drawing half the city's population to a rally to help promote recruiting. Men now had to justify to themselves as well as to others why they were not in khaki. Sitting with friends or family on the hillside overlooking the rally, watching the military tattoo and seeing other men cheered as they stepped forward to enlist must have exerted a profound pressure on the men still in civilian clothes. It was no longer about choosing the best because only a few could go. Recruiting was now an ongoing process and the goal was to fill the ranks as quickly as possible. In the early months of the war recruiting was about patriotism and the privilege of serving: now it was very publicly about patriotism and duty.

Recruiting officers continued to seek ways to keep up momentum, opening the

⁷⁴ For accounts of this rally, see the following: "Sergeants Busy Among the Crowd," *World*, 10 August 1915, p. 2; "Tens of Thousands of Hearty Voices Joined in Singing 'Rule Britannia' and 'Tipperary,'" *News*, 10 August 1915, p. 10; "Riverdale Park Filled to Limit," *Mail and Empire*, 10 August 1915, p. 4; "Greatest Throng City Ever Saw Reveled in Patriotic Concert," *Telegram*, 10 August 1915, p. 7; "Vast Singing Throng Sweeps Riverdale," *Globe*, 10 August 1915, pp. 1, 6.

Toronto Recruiting Depot on 16 August 1915. Located in a large new suite of offices at the University Avenue armories, the Depot allowed new recruits to go through the entire enlistment process in one place, from signing attestation papers to passing final medical exams. A staff of 22 men, and one woman, were to handle all the medical exams and paperwork.⁷⁵

Volunteers overwhelmed the staff the first day. Patriotic spirit encouraged by patriotic rallies coupled with curiosity prompted 75 potential recruits to line up hours before the 9 a.m. opening. They buried recruiting officers in application forms, attestation papers and medical certificates when finally admitted. The demand was so great that two hours after opening Depot officers called for reinforcements, prompting recruiting Depot officer Lt. Le Grand Reed to send another half dozen clerks to assist. The first hurdle for the would-be soldiers was the medical exam which had medical doctors passing judgment on the fitness of volunteers in 40 seconds: one-quarter were dismissed for poor eye sight or varicose veins. Other men were rejected because of poor teeth and flat feet. Those who passed the medical filled out insurance forms, attestation papers, and were assigned to a local battalion for training. The frenetic activity continued well past official closing at 10 p.m., taking until 10:30 p.m. to examine each man. By the end of the day over 500 men had volunteered, but only 143 had passed the medical exam

⁷⁵ For a description of the structure of the Depot, see "Circular on the Structure of the Toronto Recruiting Depot," PAC, RG 24, Vol. 4304, File 34-1-59, Military District No. 2, Recruiting Generally, Vol. 2. The daily operations of the Depot were funded by donations from the militia regiments. ("Statement on the Toronto Recruiting Depot," *Appendix "A" to the Minutes of the City Council, 1915*, 20 December 1915 (Toronto: Carswell Company, 1916), Toronto City Hall Archives, p. 1260.).

and been sworn in as members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.⁷⁶ Recruiting was an increasingly centralized and organized activity. Paralleling the attitude of Torontonians about the need to better organize the war effort, militia officers worked to ensure as efficient a recruiting system as possible.

It must be emphasized that recruiting officers were struggling against more than just winning the hearts and minds of potential recruits. Even as the medical standards were relaxed, they still posed an insurmountable barrier to a significant number of men who volunteered for service. Successfully passing only 143 out of 500 potential recruits, was not atypical. In this case more than 70 percent of potential volunteers were rejected on physical grounds. This incredible number of men who were willing, but unable, to serve with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, has escaped the attention of historians. However, they constitute a further example of the willingness of local men to serve overseas. Typically, for every ten men who volunteered, three or four were rejected for failing to pass the medical exam, but it was not unusual for six or seven to be turned down.

Enjoying high levels of success, recruiting officers continued to try innovative techniques. Noon hour rallies at City Hall were organized by the Citizens' Recruiting

⁷⁶ "Civilians Storm Recruiting Depot," *News*, 16 August 1915, p. 1; "Consent Required Say New Orders," *World*, 16 August 1915, p. 4; "Recruiting Depot Has Busy Opening," *Star*, 16 August 1915, p. 2; "Recruiting Depot Will Open To-Day," *Mail and Empire*, 16 August 1915, p. 4; "All Day Busy Rush At Recruiting Depot," *Globe*, 17 August 1915, p. 6; "Bad Teeth No Bar: Good Ones Supplied," *Globe*, 17 August 1915, p. 7; "Five Hundred Recruits on Opening Day of New Depot," *News*, 17 August 1915, p. 12; "Had to Increase Number of Staff," *World*, 17 August 1915, p. 3; "Recruiting Depot A Great Success," *Mail and Empire*, 17 August 1915, p. 4.

League in co-operation with Eaton's and Simpson's department stores. The directors of both companies agreed to release their men from store duties on 17 August to attend. A large recruiting tent was set up to enlist immediately any men persuaded by speeches by Right Rev. Bishop James Fielding Sweeney,⁷⁷ and Colonel Henry Brock, the chief recruiting officer for Toronto.⁷⁸ Innovations also consisted of the removal of previous obstacles to enlistment, the latest casualty being the requirement for a recruit to secure the consent of his wife to enlist.⁷⁹ The second day at the Recruiting Depot built upon the success of day one, passing another 194 soldiers for overseas service.⁸⁰

Recruiting continued to proceed at the pace of a battalion every week. Between 1 July and 21 August 1915, the city recruited over 7,000 for overseas service. By 27 August, the Toronto recruiting total for the entire war had risen to over 25,000. Given that at this point in the war there were about 125,000 Canadians under arms, Toronto was providing one out of every five recruits for the Canadian Expeditionary Force.⁸¹ The 25,000 men who came forward, however, did not include those who have volunteered, but failed the medical exam. Given that between 30 and 40 percent of those who volunteered were rejected, securing 25,000 meant between 35,714 and 41,666 men came

⁷⁷ Sweeney was born in London, England, in November 1857. He came to Canada at an early age and was educated in Montreal, and throughout his career in the church, held numerous appointments in Toronto. (Morgan, ed., *Canadian Men and Women*, p.1079.).

⁷⁸ "League's Venture Promises Success," *World*, 17 August 1915, p. 3.

⁷⁹ "Wife's Consent Is Not Now Needed," *World*, 21 August 1915, p. 6.

⁸⁰ "Men Come Forward for Overseas Service," *Globe*, 18 August 1915, p. 6.

⁸¹ "Toronto Has Given Twenty-Five Thousand Men to Fight the Battles of the Empire," *News*, 27 August 1915, p. 2.

forward.⁸² Even using the lower number to account for the number of men rejected as medically unfit, in just over one year of the war, more than 40 percent of the *total* number of eligible local men had volunteered for war: more than one in every three men.⁸³

Recruiters continued to take advantage of every opportunity to appeal to young men, and the Toronto Exhibition was a perfect opportunity. During the length of the fall fair, one recruiting officer and two recruiting sergeants from each militia unit staffed a recruiting tent at the southwest section of the grounds.⁸⁴ Recruiters also took advantage of the opportunity to march in the annual Labour Day parade, demonstrating the continued support of organized labour for the war effort. The parade was smaller than in previous years, owing to the sheer number of union men who had joined the Army. For those who did march, their ranks were "shot through with the King's uniform's," and each local carried a board showing the number of men at the front or working on munitions.

As with virtually every other public activity, recruiting dominated the parade. Twenty motor cars were filled with children of labour men serving at the front. Many carried banners promoting recruiting: "'Daddy's at the front. Why not you?' 'Daddy loves his union and serves his Empire,' 'Our Daddy's fighting for peace and fair wages,' and 'Our Daddy carries a union card and a rifle.'"⁸⁵ Other appeals to patriotism were

⁸² The number of rejected volunteers was calculated assuming that between 30 and 40 percent of volunteers were rejected on medical grounds.

⁸³ The percentage was arrived at by comparing the number of men in the army or rejected after having volunteered, with the total number of men available in 1915 as revealed above.

⁸⁴ "Exhibition Visitors Get Chance to Enlist," *Globe*, 31 August 1915, p. 6.

⁸⁵ "Labour Day Parade Liberally Besprinkled with Men Wearing Uniform of the King," *News*, 7 September 1915, p. 13; "Soldiers Swelled Parade," *Telegram*, 7 September 1915, p. 11.

plastered on the carriages of the Citizens' Recruiting League. The parade took about an hour and a half to reach the Exhibition grounds, arriving just before noon, having passed an estimated crowd of 200,000. Once again, local battalions benefitted from the enthusiasm, securing another one hundred recruits.⁸⁶ To allow for the training of all these new men, City Council granted permission to close University Avenue from 9 a.m. until noon and from 2 to 5 p.m. weekdays so that the thoroughfare could be used for drill purposes.⁸⁷

There were limits, however, to the number of men who could be reached through general patriotic appeals. Even as the 2nd Canadian Division was joining with the famous 1st to form a Canadian Corps of 2 Divisions on 13 September 1915, it became clear that recruiting was dropping again. It was the end of a summer of bad news for Allied forces, typified by the disastrous landings at Gallipoli. On the Eastern Front, things were little better as the Russian forces teetered on the brink of collapse. The combination of these two factors forced the British into an agreement with the French that the war would be won on the Western Front. A combined British-French assault at Champagne and Artois from late September to early November 1915 advanced the line but little. The casualties of this offensive included British Commander in Chief Sir John French, fired and replaced by Sir Douglas Haig.

⁸⁶ "Crowds Cheer for Labour Day Parade, *World*, 7 September 1915, p. 5; "War Themes Rampant in Labour Parade," *Globe*, 7 September 1915, p. 6; "When Big Parade Reached Grounds," *World*, 7 September 1915, p. 4.

⁸⁷ Le Grand Reed, to A.A.G. 2nd Division, Niagara Camp, 1 September 1915, PAC, RG 24, Vol. 4301, Papers of Military District No. 2, File 34-1-59, Recruiting Generally, Vol. 2. A bell tent was set up for a guard room, and the drilling ground was patrolled by 18 soldiers each day, each outfitted with rifles and sidearms.

Despite the bad news from the front, recruiting had boomed in Toronto up to the middle of September. The news from the front provided the backdrop for recruiting, but it did not exert as great an influence on recruiting numbers as the incredibly successful campaign to promote a climate in which men could make their decision to come forward. When they did enlist, men did so knowing that the deadlock at the front was now over a year old. As with any campaign, however, there were limits to the number of men willing to come forward, and by the middle of September, the numbers began to drop and recruiting officers searched for new ways to re-energize the campaign. During July and August daily recruiting totals had been measured in the hundreds; in September and October daily totals rarely broke the one hundred mark.⁸⁸ While these totals are remarkable, they were significantly lower than previous daily totals measured in the 400-500 range.

Concerned about the decline, Colonel W.A. Logie called a meeting of prominent recruiting officers, Colonel Brock, Major Le Grand Reed, and the commanding officers of the city regiments to discuss the situation. They decided to further systematize their efforts. At the start of October, the city was divided into 32 "posts," chosen from the most populated sections. Each militia regiment contributed four recruiting sergeants to be moved each day to a different station, thereby covering the whole city and allowing each regiment equal access. Once a man enlisted, he would immediately be taken down to

⁸⁸ See for example, "Toronto Recruiting Not Up to Standard," *Globe*, 24 September 1915, p. 6; "Recruiting Slackens; Information Wanted," *Globe*, 27 September 1915, p. 7; "Less Recruiting; Average is Low," *World*, 30 September 1915, p. 7; "Recruiting Lags Now, 47 Men in Latest List," *Star*, 30 September 1915, p. 4.

the Central Recruiting Depot for examination so that "...an applicant will not have a chance to forget or change his mind about reporting at the central Depot."⁸⁹

Despite the innovation, recruits did not come forward as they had done in July and August. Further innovations followed, including appealing to men at picture shows. Proprietors granted military personnel the use of their property on Sunday nights, free of charge, to conduct recruiting rallies.⁹⁰ Recruiting did not pick up. It was at this point in late October 1915 that Sam Hughes announced a new scheme for raising recruits. Modeled after Lord Derby's British plan, Sam Hughes authorized the creation of individual battalions to be raised by prominent local men. Although the minimum number required was only 25 men, Hughes authorized whole battalions throughout the Dominion. The rationale was that locally appointed Lieut.-Col.'s chosen from among prominent local residents could appeal to men in a more personal way, thereby re-energizing recruiting. This increase was necessary to meet the demands of the war and the new ceiling on the maximum size of the CEF: 250,000 men.

For Toronto, the new battalion scheme meant six new battalions.⁹¹ The Queen's Own Rifles, the 10th Royal Grenadiers, the 36th Peel, the 48th Highlanders, and the 109th Regiment were each responsible for raising one battalion. The Governor General's Body Guard and the 9th Mississauga Horse, the two cavalry units, would unite to organize a sixth battalion of infantry. Canadian historians have argued that the battalion

⁸⁹ "Start New Plan to Get Recruits," *World*, 5 October 1915, p. 5; "Thirty-Two Posts to Take Recruits," *News*, 5 October 1915, p. 3; "To Organize City for More Recruits," *Globe*, 5 October 1915, p. 6.

⁹⁰ "Recruiting Depots At Picture Shows," *News*, 26 October 1915, p. 12.

⁹¹ "Local Regiments to Recruit Battalions," *News*, 1 November 1915, p. 10.

scheme immediately degenerated into a campaign whereby battalions looking for recruits engaged in ruinous competition.⁹² Militia officers, however, were conscious of the difficulty of having several battalions compete for recruits. To avoid that problem, Colonel W.A. Logie and recruiting officers decided to raise one battalion at a time, with all militia units working together. After securing the necessary complement of men for Lieut.-Col. R.K. Barker's 95th Battalion, authorized on 2 November, Colonel W.B. Kingsmill of the 10th Royal Grenadiers would raise the next one, the 123rd.⁹³ The newly authorized battalions increased the number of men who came forward.⁹⁴ Local men now had the opportunity to serve under a commanding officer they knew, and they could choose the battalion and the men with whom they wished to enlist. For thousands of men this incentive was enough to prompt them to offer themselves for service.

As volunteers filled the ranks, officers capitalized on the return of thousands of soldiers from summer training at Niagara Camp to stimulate recruiting. Hoping that the sight of old comrades in khaki would stimulate others to come forward, recruiting officers planned an enormous 12-mile military march through the streets.⁹⁵ Beginning at the Exhibition grounds, over 10,000 soldiers marched North up the slight rise of Dufferin Street to King Street, passing block after block of two-storey townhouses. Units turned right on King Street, proceeding down a slight grade towards the downtown, passing St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at King and Simcoe and the massive St. James' Anglican

⁹² See for example, Haycock, "Recruiting 1914-1916," p. 65.

⁹³ "Colonel Kingsmill for Commander," *World*, 2 November 1915, p. 2.

⁹⁴ "Artillery Arrives in Pelting Rainstorm," *Globe*, 5 November 1915, p. 6.

⁹⁵ The troops that marched were from the following units: 58th, 37th, 74th, 75th, 83rd, 92nd, 81st, and the newly authorized 95th battalions.

Cathedral at King and Church. At Jarvis Street, the parade swung North, uphill away from the lake, passing St. Michael's Cathedral at Shuter Street. At Wellesley Street battalions marched West, proceeding towards Queen's Park before heading down University Avenue to Queen Street, West back over to Dufferin and South to Exhibition Camp. Accompanied by 16 military bands, the soldiers marched with all their war equipment, including field kitchens, ambulances, transports and the big gun carriages of the field artillery. Troops were reviewed from a saluting base in front of the Parliament Buildings, Queen's Park, by Major-General Hon. Sir Sam Hughes, Hon. William Howard Hearst, Premier of Ontario, His Worship Mayor T.L. Church, and other prominent citizens. Crowds began to gather two hours before the parade arrived at Queen's Park, and young citizens climbed monuments or sat on window sills of the Legislative building to get a better look. As always, recruiting took centre stage. Motor vehicles in the parade carried signs, "Your King and Country Need You. Step on Board." By the time these moving recruiting depots arrived at Queen's Park, they were filled with young volunteers waving to the cheering crowd.

A testament to the importance of the event, the Board of Education gave its students a half holiday, and business was practically suspended. The whole route was decorated with flags hanging from homes, offices and businesses. Automobiles, too, were outfitted with Union Jacks, and men, women and children carried miniature flags. People arrived in crowded street cars, hanging off side rails, cheering. Every time the parade stopped, the populace cheered, and showered the soldiers with gifts of "sweet meats," cigarettes and tobaccos. Keeping with the spirit of the occasion, officers "gazed

solemnly in another direction" while troops gathered their prizes. Practically the whole city saw the parade, citizens crowding six or seven deep over the entire route, while others sought better vantage points from rooftops, trees and the tops of automobiles. With the sheer number of flags, "...the avenues of humanity made a veritable Union Jack through which the soldier boys passed."⁹⁶

Recruiting officers were taking advantage of the two most important elements of Sam Hughes' recruiting scheme: familiarity and peer pressure. Not only would prospective recruits know who their commanding officer would be, but they had the chance to volunteer with friends and be initiated to the rigors of military life surrounded by friends. In addition, men still in civilian clothes had to watch parades such as this one and witness the praise accorded to service men. Seeing old friends or classmates parading to the cheers of tens of thousands must have caused many men to further question their decision to stay at home. Surely the whole city must be correct, they might have reasoned, in its support of the men heading overseas; after all, in a wartime economy business had been all but halted out of respect for the men. The pressure to join must have been enormous.

The combination of the parade and the new recruiting scheme prompted another rush at the Central Recruiting Depot. The Depot had its best day yet, successfully

⁹⁶ For reports on the parade, see the following: "Monster Parade Through City To-Day," *Globe*, 9 November 1915, p. 6; "Ten Thousand Men on March," *News*, 9 November 1915, p. 1; "10,000 Men in Khaki Capture Toronto," *Globe*, 10 November 1915, p. 9; "Enthusiastic Welcome to Toronto's Khaki Soldiers," *News*, 10 November 1915, p. 7; "Ten Thousand Troops March in Big Parade," *World*, 10 November 1915, p. 1; "Military Parade Inspiring Sight," *Mail and Empire*, 10 November 1915, p. 4.

enrolling 172 men.⁹⁷ For the three days after the parade, the daily average for recruits once again exceeded 100. The 95th battalion quickly recruited up to strength. By 10 November, just eight days after being authorized, its complement was up to 825.⁹⁸ Each day the battalion marched through the streets, drumming up support and appealing to men it passed to join the ranks: it took less than two weeks to fill the entire battalion.⁹⁹ It was then the turn of Lieut.-Col. W.B. Kingsmill and the Royal Grenadiers to move to centre stage and recruit the 123rd. Their first day of recruiting broke all previous records, 204 attested out of the 345 who offered, one-third refused for medical reasons.¹⁰⁰ Recruiting officers were securing in one or two days the number of recruits that had taken a week in October. To further stimulate recruiting, arrangements were made to hold recruiting meetings in city churches following regular services.¹⁰¹

During the winter, Major Le Grand Reed asked that route marches be planned through the downtown, instead of sending battalions into rural areas. This measure, he hoped, would remind civilians of their duty to enlist. Lieut.-Col. Kingsmill used a much more direct approach, extending the scope of recruiting appeals even more broadly. Beginning in December, the men already serving in the 123rd battalion instituted a city-wide campaign to appeal to men directly in their homes. "Flying squadrons of soldiers" were also sent to factory districts to interview men at their desks and work benches. Each

⁹⁷ "Largest Number Enlist in a Day," *World*, 9 November 1915, p. 2.

⁹⁸ "Toronto Averages 100 Recruits a Day," *Globe*, 11 November 1915, p. 6.

⁹⁹ "Over 500 Enlisted During Last Week," *Globe*, 15 November 1915, p. 6.

¹⁰⁰ "Biggest Day in Depot's History," *World*, 16 November 1915, p. 6.

¹⁰¹ "Five Toronto Churches Assist in Campaign to Raise Recruits," *World*, 22 November 1915, p. 1.

man was equipped with patriotic literature to serve as a reminder even after they had gone. To ensure that no man could plead ignorance of the 123rd campaign, over 5,000 postcards were mailed to likely prospects.¹⁰² Lieut.-Col. Kingsmill promised that "...the young men will be approached at meetings, in the restaurants, at work and at play."¹⁰³ He also sent letters to each of the 1,800 men who had previously volunteered for service, but had been rejected because of poor eye sight. The circulars informed the men that guidelines had been relaxed considerably, and urged them to offer themselves once again.¹⁰⁴

On the first official day for recruiting by the 123rd battalion, 6 December 1915, the Recruiting Depot had another record day, enlisting 216 men. To keep up momentum, recruiting officers conducted a military census in the downtown, asking store and factory managers how many men they could spare. At downtown restaurants, officers placed recruiting literature on each seat, and passed circulars to every man attending a picture show. As soon as they volunteered, new recruits were arranged in line, and paraded through the downtown streets carrying a banner, "We have joined; why not you?" Even the Boy Scouts were used to help distribute handbills from house to house:

- (1) If you are physically fit and between 19 in 40 years of age, are you really satisfied with what you are doing to-day?
- (2) Do you feel happy as you walk along the streets and see other men wearing the King's uniform?
- (3) Do you realize that you have to live with yourself for the rest of your

¹⁰² "Go Into Homes in Search of Recruits," *News*, 2 December 1915, p. 13.

¹⁰³ "Need of Recruits to Be Accentuated," *News*, 4 December 1915, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ The nature and scope of Kingsmill's campaign is confirmed by a letter he wrote to W.A. Logie, 2 December 1915, PAC, RG 24, Vol. 3401, Papers of Military District No. 2, File 34-1-59, Recruiting Generally, Vol. 3, 3 pp.

life? 'Gee! And have to look at yourself in the looking-glass every time you shave, too.'

(4) If you are lucky enough to have children do you think it is fair to them not to go unless you are going to leave them hungry?

(5) What would happen to Canada if every man stayed at home?

Your King and Kitchener and 100,000 more Canadians at the front are calling you.¹⁰⁵

The first Saturday of the 123rd campaign provided a great opportunity to appeal to crowds downtown. While half of the Royal Grenadiers home service regiment paraded, the remaining Grenadiers and 123rd men patrolled the streets making personal appeals to every man not in uniform. In one week, the 123rd secured 712 volunteers, over 400 additional men having been rejected for medical reasons.¹⁰⁶ Consistently, more than one-third of those who volunteered were denied the chance to serve because of failing to meet the medical standards.

These circulars played on the insecurities of the remaining young men. Planting doubts in the resolve of recalcitrant men, circulars had the effect of making volunteering a cure-all for a host of doubts. Volunteering would provide job satisfaction, a sense of

¹⁰⁵ "Toronto Recruiting Breaks All Records," *Globe*, 7 December 1915, p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ "Grenadiers Make Recruiting Jump," *News*, 7 December 1915, p. 12; "Recruiting Campaign Is Bringing Results," *World*, 7 December 1915, p. 2; "More In Two Days Than in Last Week," *News*, 8 December 1915, p. 12; "Recruiting Proceeds At A Splendid Pace," *World*, 8 December 1915, p. 2; "Recruiting Drive Goes Merrily On," *News*, 10 December 1915, p. 1; "Special Attack on Saturday Crowds," *News*, 11 December 1915, p. 6; "Double Record of the Previous Week," *News*, 13 December 1915, p. 3; "Recruiting Record Broken Last Week," *Globe*, 13 December 1915, p. 8; "Seven Hundred Secured in a Week," *World*, 13 December 1915, p. 2. Divisional Commander W.A. Logie wrote to Minister of Militia, Sam Hughes, confirming for him what military officers had known for months: "the fact remains that a personal appeal must be made to individuals who may be wavering as to whether they will join or not." (W.A. Logie to Sir Sam Hughes, 8 December 1916, PAC, RG 24, Vol. 3401, Papers of Military District No. 2, File 34-1-59, Recruiting Generally, Vol. 3.).

purpose, the self-confidence needed to look oneself and one's children in the eye, and a place in the great struggle of the Empire. Heady stuff, and evidently very appealing.

This new style of recruiting, however, cost money. Lieut.-Col. Kingsmill spent the entire budget for recruiting the 123rd battalion in one week. Once those resources were exhausted, Kingsmill made public appeals through the press for more money: "I cannot organize a battalion and carry on a recruiting campaign at the same time without funds, so I have decided to call in all my men who have been engaged in recruiting work, and they will start to drill instead."¹⁰⁷ Without the strenuous campaign of the 123rd battalion, recruiting dropped immediately. On 14 December only 87 volunteers were attested, compared with 123 the previous week.¹⁰⁸ Recruiting officers once again met to discuss recruiting strategies, debating the merits of a gradual return to recruiting competition between battalions. The rationale was that this approach would dissuade militia regiments from discouraging its members to join overseas units organized by other battalions.¹⁰⁹ In the meantime, recruiting continued for the 123rd battalion, newly energized by a \$1,000 donation from the Sportsmen's Patriotic Association.¹¹⁰ Recruiting immediately improved, owing to the renewed presence of the 123rd on city streets.¹¹¹

At another meeting, recruiting officers decided to reintroduce recruiting competition beginning 15 January 1916. This decision was made, however, after careful

¹⁰⁷ "Men Called From Recruiting Work," *News*, 14 December 1915, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ "Census Necessary," *News*, 15 December 1915, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ See for example, "Holding Back Men For Their Regiment," *News*, 16 December 1915, p. 11.

¹¹⁰ "Ginger Up, Men! Don't Be Slackers," *Globe*, 17 December 1915, p. 8.

¹¹¹ "Recruiting Shows Slight Increase," *News*, 17 December 1915, p. 13.

consideration. The confusion of having several battalions recruit at once was deemed acceptable if it was accompanied by an increase in volunteers. Once the 123rd had completed its establishment, Lieut.-Col. Vaux Chadwick¹¹² could begin recruiting the 124th battalion, the combined effort of the 9th Mississauga Horse and the Governor-General's Body Guard. Chadwick would have until 15 January, then the 48th Highlanders and Queen's Own Rifles would begin recruiting their overseas battalions, followed by the 109th Regiment on 25 January.¹¹³ Lieut.-Col. Kingsmill, however, was having difficulty getting men to enlist just before Christmas as men elected to be at home for the holiday.¹¹⁴ Confident that he would ultimately succeed, however, he allowed Chadwick to begin recruiting the 124th on 22 December.

Lieut.-Col. Chadwick had a different approach than did Lieut.-Col. Kingsmill. While the latter directed an organized campaign to promote enlistment, Chadwick advertised that friends could serve together. Dubbing his battalion the "Pals Battalion," Chadwick asked friends to enlist together. After a lull during Christmas, men rushed to join the 124th battalion on the 27th, several hundred enlisting the first day.¹¹⁵ Even without much advertising, men came forward. On 28 December 64 men volunteered for the 124th, while only 8 men signed on with the 123rd, now up to 1,100.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Chadwick was born in Toronto in December 1868, and trained as an architect, working as such in the city since 1895. He entered the militia as a lieutenant in 1889, rising steadily through the ranks. He was also a prominent local sportsman. (Morgan, ed., *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 215.).

¹¹³ "Each Battalion to Recruit Its Own," *Globe*, 18 December 1915, p. 8.

¹¹⁴ See for example, "Recruiting Sags Again, But Week Brought 483," *Globe*, 20 December 1915, p. 8.

¹¹⁵ "Big Morning Rush to New Battalion," *News*, 27 December 1915, p. 1.

¹¹⁶ "Recruits Pour In for New Battalion," *News*, 29 December 1915, p. 2.

At the front, events guaranteed that more men would be needed. As soldiers suffered through a cold and wet Flanders winter, word was received Christmas Day 1915 to prepare for the arrival of the 3rd Canadian Division.¹¹⁷ Canadians now had three times as many men at the front than during Second Ypres with the potential for much higher casualties. The ceiling of the CEF was also increased. In his 1916 New Year's address Prime Minister Borden announced that the authorized strength of the CEF was to be raised to 500,000 men, just two and a half months since 250,000 had been set as the goal. Whether or not Borden was using this gesture as a lever to increase Canada's voice in foreign affairs remains subject to debate.¹¹⁸ For Toronto, as for the rest of the country, it meant recruiting would have to be increased.¹¹⁹

Lieutenant Colonel Chadwick's 124th battalion appeared up to the task, recruiting half its complement in one week. The honeymoon for the 124th battalion continued in the first days of 1916, as it regularly secured more than 100 men a day. At the Recruiting Depot totals were at record levels, consistently exceeding 200.¹²⁰ The police attempted to help the process by conducting a military census of available recruits. Some business

¹¹⁷ Nicholson, *Official History*, p. 127.

¹¹⁸ See for example, C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict, Volume I*, pp. 191-193.

¹¹⁹ Local Minister S.D. Chown wrote to Borden to commend him on his decision to increase the allotment, and to promise that he could "depend on the Methodist church contributing its full share of recruits until the victorious end." (S.D. Chown, Superintendent of the Methodist Church, to Robert Borden, 1 January 1916, PAC, Borden Papers, MG 26, H1 a, Vol. 16, p. 36,295.). Toronto Member of Parliament, George Foster also wrote to congratulate Borden on his "...support of our forward movement in the defence of the Empire." (George Foster to Robert Borden, 3 January 1916, PAC, Borden Papers, MG 26, H1 a, Vol. 16, p. 36,325.).

¹²⁰ "246 Men Don Khaki: Record Again Broken," *Globe*, 4 January 1916, p. 6.

leaders, however, were unwilling to cooperate. Owners argued that recruiting efforts should be directed at those men without employment before drawing even more men from the workforce. Cards left at T. Eaton company were accepted, but Sir John Eaton made no promises that they would be distributed: "We have sent approximately 1,400 men to the front from this store, and while I am not prepared to say that we will not have a census taken among our employees, I believe that it should be taken at the homes."¹²¹ Similar objections were made by other employers throughout the city. Police Col. Grasett defended the choice of businesses, arguing that conducting a house to house canvass to distribute 40,000 cards would be too time consuming. The police census was dubbed a farce, and only 30 percent of the forms were completed, even fewer having been properly filled out. Citing their reasons for not enlisting, many men were quite candid, replying: "Safety First," and "It's dangerous." Others referred to family obligations and the fact that there were still plenty of single men available.¹²² Police officials blamed the press for criticizing the campaign, and for publicizing the fact that it was strictly voluntary.¹²³

The response to the police census, however, illuminates the thoughts of men on the war effort. The reasons for staying behind clearly demonstrate that they understood the nature of the fighting, no doubt aided by the kinds of graphic letters published in the

¹²¹ "Military Census Got Poor Encouragement," *Star*, 3 January 1916, p. 3.

¹²² "Various Reasons for Not Enlisting," *News*, 25 January 1916, p. 2.

¹²³ "Military Census Meets Opposition," *Star*, 5 January 1916, p. 3; "Military Census Is Going To Be Difficult," *World*, 4 January 1916, p. 5; "Employers Opposing Police Military Census," *World*, 5 January 1916, p. 5; "Idle Men Should First Be Enlisted," *News*, 5 January 1916, p. 13; "Seek Loafers First, Says Sir John Eaton," *Globe*, 5 January 1916, p. 7; "Some Police in Recruiting Census Not Well Received," *News*, 6 January 1916, p. 1.

papers. Enlisting meant a real chance of being killed or wounded. Men also understood that the war would be a long one, and that if they enlisted it would have a significant impact on the lives of families left behind. When recruiting totals went up it was not an expression of the ignorance of men, but a result of the skill and persuasiveness of local recruiting officers in finding a way to present the call for men in a way which stressed the importance of the war effort over and above demands of safety and family.

Despite the known dangers, the message continued to get through in January 1916: recruiting record after recruiting record was shattered. At the forefront was the 124th battalion, growing to 736 men in only nine days.¹²⁴ Another massive parade of 13,000 soldiers wound its way through the downtown on 7 January. The week ended with the largest recruiting total for one week ever, over 1,200 offering and 844 accepted.¹²⁵ Once again, for every two men accepted into the CEF, another man was refused for medical reasons. Just two days later, the Pals Battalion (124th) was complete, having secured its 1,200 men in two weeks.¹²⁶

Due to its success, recruiting for the new Queen's Own Rifles and 48th Highlander battalions was moved up to 12 January. Lieut.-Col. Duncan Donald¹²⁷ of the 48th Highlanders commanded the 134th, while his Queen's Own Rifles counterpart

¹²⁴ "'Pals' Battalion Has Rapid Growth," *Globe*, 5 January 1916, p. 7.

¹²⁵ "City's Biggest Week: 1,200 Volunteered," *Globe*, 10 January 1916, p. 6.

¹²⁶ "Battalion Complete," *News*, 12 January 1916, p. 15.

¹²⁷ Donald was born in Toronto in December 1869. He trained as a lawyer, and was called to the Bar in 1894, and practised law until 1910 when he was appointed Secretary and Sub-Treasurer of the Canadian Social of Upper Canada. Like many of the other local Lieut.-Colonel's, Donald had a long history with the militia, serving for many years with the 48th Highlanders. (Morgan, ed., *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 334.).

Lieut.-Col. R.C. Levesconte raised the 166th. Buoyed by the success of the 95th and 123rd battalions, new units continued to use innovative methods to secure recruits. The 48th Highlanders hung giant posters throughout the downtown. At the end of the first day of recruiting, the Highlanders and Queen's Own Rifles were in a dead heat, each securing 50 men.¹²⁸ Recruiting successes, however, were raising new problems. During the winter months, there were not enough buildings to accommodate the new battalions. Various suggestions were made to rectify the situation: the most commonly expressed was the wisdom of renting space in unused factories, particularly the Conboy Carriage factory on the Don River near Queen Street East, and the Crown Stopper Company factory at King and Parliament Streets.¹²⁹

While these proposals were debated, City Council took action. Military officials accompanied Mayor Church and members of the Board of Education to examine the newly constructed School of Commerce on Shaw Street as a potential barracks. The Board decided later that afternoon to provide the building to the 123rd battalion, with one proviso: "...that the building shall be returned to the Board in proper condition."¹³⁰ Recruiting officers also extended their pleas to include appeals to manufacturers to release men for service. At a meeting of the Board of Trade, General Logie requested permission for recruiting sergeants to address employees during working hours for ten minutes. He also asked that employers guarantee the positions of men who enlisted until

¹²⁸ "Fifty Enlistments for Each Battalion," *World*, 20 January 1916, p. 2

¹²⁹ "Rush to the Colours Taxes Accommodation," *Globe*, 12 January 1916, p. 8.

¹³⁰ "Brand New Barracks for the Grenadiers," *Globe*, 15 January 1916, p. 9.

their return.¹³¹

In the midst of all this activity, a grand military review before the Governor-General, the Duke of Connaught and his family, took place on a cold January day. At Queen's Park and University Avenue, the Duke inspected 10,000 Toronto troops.¹³² The day after the Duke's visit, a record number of men were attested: 247.¹³³ These men would be needed to help reinforce the 3rd and 4th Canadian Divisions Prime Minister Borden had authorized. In late December 1915, the 3rd Canadian Division had been formed and moved to France. A 4th Division was authorized and spent the early part of 1916 organizing, eventually moving into the line in April 1916. Canada now had four times as many men at the front as they had during Second Ypres, and the continued "wastage" at the front made ever-increasing demands on recruiting at home.

As the demand for men increased, the scope of recruiting drives continued to expand. A newly authorized battalion, the 169th Overseas Battalion raised by Lieut.-Col. J.G. Wright of the 109th Regiment, appealed for recruits during regular Sunday church services. In 36 churches and 12 Bible classes of various denominations, recruiting sergeants spoke directly to congregations. One hundred and thirteen men volunteered as a result, and were quickly ushered out into motor cars waiting to take them to recruiting headquarters.¹³⁴ Another major innovation was methodical recruiting in places of

¹³¹ "Get York Men Lined Up Is Advice of Gen. Logie," *World*, 15 January 1916, p. 6.

¹³² See for example, "Great Royal Review to Be Held To-Day," *Globe*, 17 January 1916, p. 6.

¹³³ "Records for Recruits Was Made Yesterday," *World*, 18 January 1916, p. 1.

¹³⁴ "Appeals for Recruits in Toronto Churches," *World*, 24 January 1916, p. 3; "Gather in Recruits From the Churches," *News*, 24 January 1916, p. 4.

business. Recruiting officers of the 169th had been given permission by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association to appeal directly to employees at local companies. On the first day, Nielsen's Limited, Langmuir Manufacturing Company, and WR Johnson Company were visited, and recruiting officers planned to speak to men at three large warehouses or factories each day for over a week.¹³⁵ The result was the largest recruiting day since the first day of war, 544 men offering themselves for service.¹³⁶ By mid-week, over 1,000 had offered, 197 on Wednesday alone. At the end of the most successful week of recruiting in the war, 1,257 men were attested out of the almost 2,000 men who volunteered for service.¹³⁷ Recruiting officers for the 169th even stopped a dance at the Pavlowa Dancing Academy at 212 Cowan Avenue on Saturday night, addressing about 200 "young male fairies" and inviting them to leave the revelry and enlist.¹³⁸

Additional units were authorized and entered the recruiting arena immediately. Provincial Crown Attorney, Richard H. Greer was given command of the 180th Overseas Battalion named the "Sportsmen's Battalion." Lieut.-Col. Greer entered the recruiting ring in late January, advocating a strategy similar to the one used so successfully by Lieut.-Col. Chadwick's 124th Battalion. Greer appealed to sporting associations, asking men to take advantage of the opportunity to serve with former teammates.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ "Hundred Recruits Before Noon Hour," *News*, 25 January 1916, p. 1.

¹³⁶ "RECORD FOR RECRUITING IN TORONTO -- 544 OFFERED," *World*, 25 January 1916, p. 1.

¹³⁷ "Appeals At Sunday Meetings Bring Forth Many Recruits," *News*, 31 January 1916, p. 2.

¹³⁸ "Halted the Dance to Hear Recruiter," *Globe*, 31 January 1916, p. 6.

¹³⁹ "Toronto Recruiting Takes Another Leap," *Globe*, 29 January 1916, p. 8.
Greer was successful in enlisting many Toronto athletes of country- and world-wide reputation. The result eventually translated into an above average showing by the 180th

January 1916 was the best month for recruiting in the war. Gradually increasing as the month went on, totals for the weeks climbed from 628 in the first week, to 790, 840, and 1,257 in subsequent weeks.¹⁴⁰ The recruiting totals for January alone more than doubled those for November and December combined.¹⁴¹ And still the momentum continued, thanks in large part to the appeals made by the 109th to the employees of Toronto's biggest firms. The Ford Motor Company at 106-110 Richmond Street West, Gunn's Limited at 25 Toronto Street, Gunday Clapperton and Company at 61 Albert Street, and the Swift Canadian Company at St. Clair and Keele, all closed down their works so that recruiting officers could address their employees. At the Ford Plant, of the 90 men gathered to listen to appeals, eight offered to enlist even though they were paid an average salary of \$1,200, almost three times the salary of an enlisted man.¹⁴²

New unit after new unit was authorized. Lieut.-Col. Le Grand Reed was given command of the 170th, to be raised under the auspices of the 9th Mississauga Horse.¹⁴³ The former editor of the *Canadian Courier*, Capt. John A. Cooper, was given the provisional command of another battalion, the 186th.¹⁴⁴ Lieut.-Col. E.W. Hagarty, Principal of Harbord Street Collegiate,¹⁴⁵ proposed to call his 201st Battalion the

Battalion in inter-battalion sporting competitions. (Hubert Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit'* (Toronto: Municipal Intelligence Bureau, 1918), Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, flem0704, p. 24.).

¹⁴⁰ "New High Record Set in Recruiting," *News*, 31 January 1916, p. 5; "Day's Recruiting Again Sets Record," *Mail and Empire*, 1 February 1916, p. 4.

¹⁴¹ "Toronto Is Now a Huge Armed Camp," *News*, 11 February 1916, p. 2.

¹⁴² "First Half of Week Recruiting Figures," *World*, 3 February 1916, p. 2.

¹⁴³ "Canadians are Seven to One for Sportsmen's," *Star*, 1 February 1916, p. 3.

¹⁴⁴ "Under Surgeon's Knife to Qualify for Army," *Globe*, 3 February 1916, p. 6.

¹⁴⁵ Hagarty was born in Brantford in September 1862. He was a prominent member of the Toronto education scene since his own distinguished academic

"Toronto Light Infantry," referring not to its equipment but to its temperate character.¹⁴⁶

Also entering the competition was the 204th Overseas Battalion, to be commanded by W. H. Price, MPP for Parkdale.¹⁴⁷ Preliminary discussions were conducted on the possibility of organizing a Bantam Battalion, to be made up of men who failed to meet the minimum height requirements.¹⁴⁸ In addition, the 208th Battalion was authorized, the Irish Fusiliers.¹⁴⁹ By the middle of February, nine overseas battalions were competing with one another for recruits; only three were anywhere near full strength: the 134th (Highlanders) Battalion, the 166th (Queen's Own Rifles), and the 169th (109th Regiment).

Innovations continued, however, and men were still found to fill the ranks. Lieut.-Col. Greer of the 180th Sportsmen's Battalion held a rally at Massey Hall. The night began with boxing matches, wrestling and bayonets contests. After the festivities, Lieut.-Col. Greer spoke to the assembled men, concluding with an appeal for volunteers. As the first men came forward, other recruiting officers shouted at the assembled men for reinforcements. When it was all over, 325 responded to the call, forming the basis of

achievements at the University of Toronto. (Morgan, ed., *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 487.).

¹⁴⁶ "All Temperance Men in New Battalion," *Globe*, 8 February 1916, p. 7.

¹⁴⁷ Price was born in May 1878 at Owen Sound, Ontario. He trained as a lawyer, and became a prominent member of the local business community, serving on the boards of numerous companies, including the Western Brick Company and the American Potash Company. He was first elected to the Legislature in the summer 1914 election. (Chambers, ed., *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, 1918, p. 277.).

¹⁴⁸ "Bantam Battalion to Be Considered," *News*, 17 February 1916, p. 15.

¹⁴⁹ "Battalions Will Be Recruited by Shifts," *Globe*, 19 February 1916, p. 8.

another daily record total of 574 men.¹⁵⁰ Despite the success, recruiting officers were concerned about the high-level of competition. At a meeting of chief recruiting officers and officers commanding newly authorized units, it was decided to restrict competition. The 180th (Sportsmen's) and 170th (9th Mississauga Horse) battalions were given exclusive rights to recruiting campaigns until 7 March. It was expected that these units would be complete no later than 14 March, at which point the 201st (Light Infantry), 204th (under Lieut.-Col. Price) and the 208th (Irish Fusiliers) would enter the arena together. The other unit seeking recruits was Lieut.-Col. F.L. Burton's Bantam Battalion (216th), which recruited throughout the period since it could only accept men too short for service in the other units.¹⁵¹ Recruiting continued strongly through to the end of February, with daily totals regularly approaching the 200 mark.¹⁵²

This recruiting boom continued amidst gloomy news from the front. The Germans attacked at Verdun on 21 February 1916, and the papers were filled with tales of

¹⁵⁰ See for example, "New Record for Recruiting Made in Toronto Monday," *World*, 15 February 1916, p. 1; "Sportsmen's Rally Attracted Record Number of Recruits," *News*, 15 February 1916, p. 10.

¹⁵¹ "Battalions Will Be Recruited by Shifts," *Globe*, 19 February 1916, p. 8. Burton had already been overseas with the 75th Battalion and been wounded. While convalescing in England, he saw British Bantams training, and upon his return to Toronto was one of the loudest and most colourful advocates of a Bantam Battalion. Several hundred recruits were secured in the opening hours, but eventually the battalion was granted the right to recruit from the entire Central Ontario District. By July 1916 they were up to over 1,000 recruits, and proceeded overseas in April 1917. The unit was broken up for reinforcements almost immediately upon its arrival, its members serving out the war in construction and labour units, as well as in front line formations. (Sidney Allinson, *The Bantams: The Untold Story of World War I* (London: Howard Baker Pres, 1981), especially Chapter 9, "The Canadians," pp. 175-201.).

¹⁵² See for example, "Good Recruiting Day With 199 Attested," *Globe*, 29 February 1916, p. 6.

hundreds of thousands of German and French casualties. Toronto, however, had every reason to be proud of its contribution. The full scale of the winter's recruiting was displayed to its citizens in a massive parade of local soldiers on 1 March 1916 to mark the visit of Sam Hughes. Described by papers as the "greatest military parade in the history of Canada," 18,000 men marched 12 miles through the downtown on a clear winter day. With Sam Hughes at the front, followed closely by the senior 74th and 75th battalions, the parade left Exhibition Camp at 1 p.m. When the column reached Queen's Park, Sam Hughes dismounted and took his place on the reviewing stand. It took almost an hour and a half for the five-mile stream of khaki to pass. Accompanying each unit was one of the 31 musical organizations, including brass, bugles, pipe, trumpet and fife bands. Still in "civies" the newest recruits marched with the soldiers.

In practically the whole business section of the city, a half-holiday had been taken by civilian workers, and tens of thousands lined the parade route. Even after months of feverish recruiting activity, Torontonians continued to take a keen interest in the success of its recruiting efforts, and the need to reinforce their loved ones already at the front. Over 300 policemen were assigned to keep the crowds back, four stationed at almost every intersection.¹⁵³ Standing several people deep as the parade passed, children clung to

¹⁵³ See for example, "Sir Sam Hughes Leads Parade of 18,000 Men," *Star*, 1 March 1916, p. 1; "Toronto Troops Made Fine Showing," *Mail and Empire*, 2 March 1916, p. 8; "Parade of 17,997 Soldiers," *Telegram*, 1 March 1916, p. 13; "Six Miles of Fighting Men Marched Through the City," *News*, 1 March 1916, p. 1; "Spirited Recruiting Keeps Up In Toronto," *Globe*, 1 March 1916, p. 8; "TORONTO VIEWS GREATEST PARADE EVER IN CANADA," *News*, 1 March 1916, p. 1; "Five Miles of Troops March Through City," *Globe*, 2 March 1916, p. 6; "Marching Soldiers Greeted by Great Admiring Crowds," *News*, 2 March 1916, p. 13; "Toronto Sees Finest Parade in Its History," *World*, 2 March 1916, pp. 1, 2.

their parents' shoulders for a better view. Others availed themselves of vantage points from store windows, houses and factories. One of the most remarkable sights was the passing of the four artillery batteries complete with their full complement of 16-pounder and 12-pounder quick-firing guns. Each time the parade stopped and soldiers were ordered to "stand easy," crowds showered the soldiers with cigarettes, chewing gum and candy kisses while the troops responded with cheers and camp songs. The crowd got considerable amusement out of an incident at the corner of King and Yonge Streets. One of the men from 48th Battery was "carrying on" with several young ladies watching from a second story window: he was thrown from his gun carriage seat when the carriage bounced over the streetcar tracks.

Recruiting continued well in the wake of the giant parade. Overseas, on 2 March 1916, Britain imposed conscription to reinforce its troops already at the front.¹⁵⁴ In Toronto, innovations continued in an attempt to keep up voluntary recruiting, including rewarding soldiers if they successfully recruited a friend. The 95th Battalion, short 60 men lost through attrition during training, unleashed its men on the city, promising an extra day's leave to any man who brought forward a recruit: 78 were secured.¹⁵⁵ By 14 March, the 134th (Highlander) Battalion was full, and the 180th (Sportsmen's) and the 166th (Queen's Own Rifles) had 1,051 and 1,048 men respectively. With those units almost complete, recruiting officially began for Lieut.-Col. W. H. Price's 204th Battalion,

¹⁵⁴ Brigadier-General J. E. Edmonds and Captain G.C. Wynne, *History of the Great War Based on Official Documents: Military Operations, France and Belgium, 1915* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1927), p. 51.

¹⁵⁵ "Prize for a Recruit Extra Day's Leave," *Globe*, 3 March 1916, p. 6.

headquartered at 155 Richmond Street West. Price divided the city into nine sections, each section to provide a company. Each man in the unit signed a pledge to secure another recruit, and circulars were given to residents asking them to find a recruit before 1 May 1916. Price believed that personal appeals would go farther than patriotic demonstrations, so he attempted to turn every citizen into a recruiting agent. He asked that each person in a position to appeal to a man to enlist should do so, be it at the dinner table, the church meeting, or the union hall. Price's campaign was another example of the ever-expanding scope of recruiting drives which attempted to touch the nerve that would prompt men to take the final step and enlist.

Other units tried different methods. After setting up headquarters at 13 Queen Street East, Lieut.-Col. Hagarty began recruiting for the 201st (Toronto Light Infantry), hoping that the temperate character of his unit would attract many of the better educated of the younger generation. Another MPP, Lieut.-Col. T. Herbert Lennox¹⁵⁶ began recruiting for the 208th (Irish Fusiliers), supervising events from his offices in the Stair Building at the corner of Bay and Adelaide Streets. Lennox began recruiting on St. Patrick's Day, signaling the beginning of the campaign by having each factory whistle in the city sound at 10 a.m.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Lennox was born in April 1869 in the Irish Township of Innisfil. He moved to Canada early in life, and was educated in Barrie, Ontario. He served on the Town Council of Aurora, and the local Board of Education, for years. He ran unsuccessfully twice for the York North Provincial seat before being elected in 1905, and returned 3 more times before war began. (Chambers, *Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1918*, pp. 268-269.).

¹⁵⁷ "Sunday Recruiting Brought Host of Men," *Globe*, 14 March 1916, p. 6; "Toronto Lives Up To Magnificent Record," *World*, 14 March 1916, p. 4; "Friends of Lieut. Col. Price Signed Pledge to Secure Recruits for 204th Battalion," *News*, 15 March

As had been the case with previous recruiting booms, this latest one also began to fade as the number of men moved by this style of recruiting was exhausted. Despite the publicity accorded each of the battalions recruiting in the middle of March, recruits were no longer coming forward in daily totals over 200. Daily recruiting totals were now consistently under 100 men, producing weekly totals around 600, lower than the worst recruiting week in January.¹⁵⁸ Sam Hughes' battalion scheme re-energized recruiting. Instead of the minister preaching the virtues of the Allied cause, recruiting officers appealed directly to congregations. Rather than appealing to men in small groups, recruiting agents spoke to hundreds of men at work. Battalion commanders used "niche marketing techniques" to secure recruits, appealing to friends, teammates, or temperance advocates to enlist together. Local initiative was supported by a continuous supply of money for recruiting purposes, and when the money dried up, as was the case with the Sportsmen's Battalion, recruiting slowed. This recruiting phase was focused around public appeals, public rallies, public parades and celebrations, and public pressure. The dwindling numbers at the end of March and into April prompted a switch once again in the sphere in which recruiting was conducted. Up until this point in the war, men could take refuge from recruiting appeals in the privacy of their own homes. However, that would soon change as recruiting officers continued to expand their appeals to target men not only at work and at play, but at home.

1916, p. 5; "Irish Fusiliers Start Recruiting," *News*, 17 March 1916, p. 3.

¹⁵⁸ See for example, "Enlistments Dropped in Toronto Yesterday," *World*, 18 March 1916, p. 4; "Recruiting Again Sags Despite Many Efforts," *Globe*, 17 March 1916, p. 6.

These personal recruiting attempts took place against the backdrop of renewed Canadian activity at the front. On 27 March, near St. Eloi the British exploded six giant mines under German lines, hoping to pour troops into the breach. Unfortunately, holes in the German lines were quickly filled and the fighting focused around the newly created craters, around 50 feet deep and 180 feet across. German artillery had a clear view of Canadian positions, resulting in awful carnage. The fighting continued until 16 April, costing over 1,000 Canadian casualties.

While Canadian soldiers struggled under German artillery at St. Eloi, recruiting efforts in Toronto were increasingly relying on individual appeals directed at men in their homes. In early April the 204th Battalion planned to send recruiting officers to visit every home in the East End to allow each man to have the "opportunity" to tell the recruiting sergeants just why he thought he should not be in khaki.¹⁵⁹ The canvassing process was painstaking, but it showed that recruiting officers were forced to target specific men in specific locations. General appeals alongside a climate of patriotic enthusiasm were no longer effective. Recruiting officers surveyed Enderby Road and discovered there were eight eligible men living there. Similar surveys revealed there were thirteen men on Main Street East, three on Lyall Avenue, one on Kimberly Avenue, and so on.¹⁶⁰

The Bantam Battalion also undertook direct appeals, believing that recruiting had reached the point where only "...the direct personal appeal brings results."¹⁶¹ The unit

¹⁵⁹ "Adopt New Plan to Secure Recruits," *News*, 6 April 1916, p. 8.

¹⁶⁰ "Are Locating the Young Eligibles," *News*, 10 April 1916, p. 9.

¹⁶¹ "Bantams Start on Personal Canvass," *News*, 6 April 1916, p. 2.

arranged for a house to house canvass in the section of the city bounded by Queen, Bloor, Yonge and Sherbourne Streets. Only three recruits were secured, along with 800 names of men who could be approached later. Their personal canvass revealed why recruiting was dropping: "the canvass along All Street reveals the fact that, with the exception of two or three houses, every house on this Street has given at least one man for active service, and throughout the entire evening it was the rule rather than the exception to find that one or all of the eligible men in house after house had already enlisted."¹⁶²

There could be no doubting the efforts of local recruiting officers to secure recruits. Lieut. R.V. Jones wrote to W.H. Price, Commander of the 204th Battalion, to inform him of an incident which had taken place involving a recruiting officer and a prospective soldier:

Pte. James Brown stopped Mr. Drummond and in a polite and unoffending way asked if he had any desire to sign up to-day, at the same time laying his hand on Mr. Drummond's arm. Mr. Drummond attempted to walk on but Brown persisted and again asked him if he would care to join up to-day, and for some apparent and unknown reason [Mr. Drummond] lost his temper and made a remark, 'To Hell with all of you,' and again attempted to proceed along his way, but Brown held onto his coat and Mr. Drummond in an effort to tear himself loose tore a button off his coat. Brown picked up the button and offered it to Mr. Drummond, but he [Mr. Drummond] was still offensive in his manner and language and Brown said, 'I'll just keep this button now seeing that you are so fresh.'

Now I would point out that Mr. Drummond is a young fellow not over 25 years and he appears to be physically fit and eligible and he has not at any time offered a good reason for not enlisting, nor has he shown the recruiters a rejection slip.

I am of the opinion that Mr. Drummond owes to and should offer an apology to Pte. Jas. Brown for his nasty insulting remarks.¹⁶³

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Lieut. R.V. Jones to W.H. Price, Chief Recruiting Officer, 204th Battalion, 24 April 1916, PAC, Papers of Military District No. 2, RG 24, Vol. 4302, File 34-1-59,

The letter reveals much of the climate of Toronto for the young men still resisting the call to serve. The aggressor, Pte. James Brown, was excused, and Mr. Drummond's lack of patriotism was blamed for the whole incident.

Papers recorded that 25,000 men had left by August 1915. Between August 1915 and March 1916, another nine battalions of infantry were filled, adding another 10,800 to the total. The resulting total of 35,800 men does not include men who volunteered for artillery batteries, pioneer or construction battalions, or the Royal Flying Corps. Nor does it include men essential to war industry who could not leave their jobs, nor those unable to reach the minimum height or physical standards who never attempted to enlist. In addition, it must be remembered that the number of men who came forward was usually one-third higher than the number accepted, meaning that some 53,700 had to volunteer just to fill the infantry positions, let alone the ancillary places. Comparing 53,700 against the 87,300 eligible men provides a tremendous record of achievement: more than 60 percent of the eligible men had volunteered. Rather than demonstrating that the patriotic enthusiasm of Toronto's men had run out, recruiting officers were discovering that the patriotic appeals had been so successful that there were very few men left to recruit. Recruiting officers were fighting, not the recalcitrance of local men, but their own previous success in calling men to the colours.

With the arrival of spring, the battalions quartered in the city for the winter prepared to leave, either for the front or for further training at Niagara Camp. To keep recruiting at the forefront of life, there was one more large public ceremony involving

men recruited over the past year and a half. The largest divine service ever staged in a Canadian city was held on 1 May 1916 at Queen's Park for the more than 18,000 men leaving for the front. The day dawned bright and crisp, the early spring growth just beginning to emerge on the trees in the park. Troops filed into the Park between 9:15 and 9:30 a.m., each unit having taken a different route. On surrounding streets through which the units advanced on the Park, crowds had congregated, particularly on University Avenue. There was a sharp divide between civilian and soldier, the Sunday best of the civilians standing in stark contrast to the dull khaki tones of the soldiers. An estimated crowd of 100,000 framed the troops, as children scampered up trees to get a better view. Just before 10 a.m., the Duke of Connaught and his family, accompanied by Sir John Hendrie and other dignitaries, including General Logie and Mayor Church, moved to their reserved places. As they arrived, the massed bands played "God Save the King."

Hon. Major G. H. Williams, senior chaplain, assisted by the chaplains of the 92nd and 95th Battalions, led the service from a flag-draped enclosure placed on a slight rise at the northern end of the Park. Standing beside the Union Jack, the Major began to speak as church bells rang out throughout the city, calling the city at-large to join with the men in their supplications. Major Williams chose as his text the words, "'Think not that I am come, to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword.'"¹⁶⁴ Due to the sheer size of the crowd, most of the troops and spectators could not hear the service, but everyone joined in the singing of the hymns: "Old Hundredth," "The Son of God Goes Forth to War," "Oft in Danger, Off in Woe," "All People That on Earth Do Dwell Sing to

¹⁶⁴ "Mighty and Impressive Was Military Service," *Globe*, 1 May 1916, p. 9.

the Lord With Cheerful Voice," and "God Save the King." After the service was complete, there was a crush of civilians moving to see their favourite soldiers. While the police did their best to control the situation, three women fainted in the altercation, prompting members of the St. John Ambulance Association to step forward to care for the sick.¹⁶⁵

With the coming of spring, units proceeded overseas. Thousands of Torontonians turned out to watch each battalion march through the streets one last time before boarding trains. When the 83rd Battalion departed, the 92nd and 169th Battalions were used to hold back the surging crowds who were throwing cigarettes and extra socks to the soldiers.¹⁶⁶ Three weeks later it was the turn of the 92nd Highland Battalion to entrain for the East. Over 5,000 citizens turned out at Riverdale Barracks to take their leave of the Highlanders, held back by men from the Sportsmen's and the Queen's Own Rifles Battalions: they were only partially successful. Several hundred relatives and friends passed through the assembled guard, rushing to say good-bye to the men. Civilians and soldiers continued to fraternize until policemen and soldiers broke up the crowd at the junction of Queen Street and the Railway. "I didna' think the 92nd had so many friends," remarked one Highlander when asked about the size of the crowd. Almost 1,200 officers

¹⁶⁵ "H.R.H. Duchess of Connaught and Col. Septimus Denison at Toronto's Largest Open-Air Church Service Yesterday Morning in Queen's Park," *Star*, 1 May 1916, p. 5; "18,000 Soldiers in Queen's Park," *Mail and Empire*, 1 May 1916, pp. 1,7; "Overseas and City Battalions Massed at Queen's Park Service on Sunday," *Telegram*, 1 May 1916, p. 13; "Sacred Military Pageant," *Telegram*, 1 May 1916, p. 13; "Eighteen Thousand Soldiers At Service in Queen's Park," *News*, 1 May 1916, p. 7; "Great Gathering At Queen's Park," *World*, 1 May 1916, p. 5.

¹⁶⁶ "Thousands Say Good-Bye to Departing Battalions," *World*, 26 April 1916, p. 1.

and men boarded 34 train cars and headed for "points East" while the notes of "Auld Lang Syne" were played by Pipers.¹⁶⁷

If troops were not proceeding overseas, they were heading to Niagara Camp after its official opening on 13 May. While troops departed, recruiting continued to drop, a week's recruiting in the middle of May yielding only 359 recruits.¹⁶⁸ The needs of the Canadian Expeditionary Force were competing with full employment and high wages, making it more difficult to convince men to enlist. Recruiting totals continued to drop, with daily totals now hovering at or below the 50 men per day mark, and weekly totals rarely surpassing 300.¹⁶⁹ Still remarkable results, they were undeniably lower than earlier in the year even as casualties continued to mount.

The Bantam Battalion conducted a house-to-house canvass, tabulating the total number of eligible men still in the city. Each local man was approached three separate times by different recruiting sergeants. The names of 18,000 men of military age were duly recorded, 1,500 eligible only for the Bantam Battalion.¹⁷⁰ It was obvious that the current system of securing recruits was not yielding results, leading to criticisms of the battalion scheme.

Even as papers reported in early June 1916 that Field Marshal Kitchener had drowned as a result of a German submarine attack, and that the Canadian Corps was

¹⁶⁷ "Highland Unit Is Bound For East," *World*, 18 May 1916, p. 4; "Will Ye No' Come Back Again, Kilties?" *Globe*, 18 May 1916, p. 8.

¹⁶⁸ "Military Review of City's Troops," *World*, 22 May 1916, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ "Recruiting Drops Below Average," *World*, 27 May 1916, p. 2 .

¹⁷⁰ "18,000 Men in Toronto Are of Military Age," *Globe*, 20 May 1916, p. 8.

Unfortunately, there are no further details on how the survey was conducted, or who was included.

engaged at Mount Sorrel, officers in charge of recruiting for Military District No. 2 met at Niagara Camp to discuss the recruiting slump. They decided that no further units should be authorized until present units were up to strength, and many officers believed that some form of government registration would be of material benefit to recruiters.¹⁷¹

Organization after organization pledged its support for some sort of conscription. The Anglican Synod of Toronto unanimously passed a resolution which supported conscription under the Militia Act, the Defence of the Realm Act, or "otherwise as may seem advantageous, for the more complete and effectual mobilization of the entire resources of Canada in men and materials."¹⁷² A similar resolution was debated and passed at the Toronto Methodist Conference in Carlton Street Church calling for a more effective and equal scheme to raise recruits, by conscription if necessary.¹⁷³ The Toronto Trades and Labour Council supported the voluntary survey.¹⁷⁴ Women crowded into Massey Hall for a patriotic rally, endorsing a resolution calling for national registration and conscription if necessary.¹⁷⁵ The Board of Trade was also supportive of national registration as a more efficient way to run the war effort.¹⁷⁶ The Speakers' Patriotic League passed a resolution that the people of Canada would stand behind the Government in "any plan...as may seem most advantageous for the more complete and effectual

¹⁷¹ "New Recruiting Ideas Discussed," *World*, 6 June 1916, p. 2.

¹⁷² "Synod Willing to Favour Conscription," *News*, 9 June 1916, p. 4.

¹⁷³ "Methodists Demand National Register," *News*, 13 June 1916, p. 10.

¹⁷⁴ Martin Robin, "Registration, Conscription and Independent Labour Politics, 1916-1917," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XLVII, No. 2, 1966, pp. 101-118.

¹⁷⁵ "Women of Toronto Demand a National Registration," *Star*, 13 June 1916, p.

7. Women's involvement with recruiting is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

¹⁷⁶ "Manufacturers Talk Recruiting," *Globe*, 15 June 1916, p. 7.

mobilization of the entire resources of our community in men and materials."¹⁷⁷ All these appeals began to have an effect. On 16 June papers reported that Prime Minister Borden had promised that a more effective way would be found to recruit.¹⁷⁸

Public opinion leaders made another push to fill up the ranks using voluntary recruiting. The Clerical Patriotic Association sent a circular to all religious leaders in the community, reminding them that "...it is imperative that the Canadian Division now in action be kept at full strength."¹⁷⁹ To help military officials with recruiting, the Association unanimously approved the setting aside of 18 and 25 June 1916 as "Patriotic Sundays, on which appeals shall be made to our people emphasizing the spiritual aspects of the call to sacrificial service for our Empire."¹⁸⁰ The letter closed by reiterating the holy nature of the war, and the necessity for "...all Christians to make every possible contribution, which, under the blessing of God, will help to bring victory and a righteous peace."¹⁸¹

General Logie also made a public appeal for recruits on the front pages of the daily papers, addressing his letter to the Citizens of Toronto:

Speaking with authoritative knowledge of the immediate need for men, I make this appeal to the City of Toronto. Toronto's quota required to complete her Battalions now authorized is 2440 men. This City has never in its history failed to rise to its full responsibility. Surely the women, the

¹⁷⁷ "Mobilization of Men and Resources," *News*, 28 June 1916, p. 7.

¹⁷⁸ See for example, "More Equitable Recruiting Plan," *Globe*, 16 June 1916, p. 1.

¹⁷⁹ Letter from T. Crawford Brown, Chairman of the Clerical Patriotic Association, Toronto, to Religious leaders in Toronto, Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, Neil McNeil Papers, War Box, 1914, FWWE01.09, 14 June 1916.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Churches, the Board of Trade, the Canadian Club, and other Patriotic and Fraternal Societies, and the business interests will, by one last united effort, give the men so urgently needed.¹⁸²

The result was a "big day" for recruiting in Toronto, 93 men being attested.¹⁸³ Despite the best efforts of recruiting officers, the terminology used to refer to a successful recruiting day had changed. In the boom time of the battalion recruiting scheme in January 1916, a big day meant over 500 volunteers, whereas by June 1916, it meant almost 100. A civilian committee appointed to deal with the question of further recruiting was frustrated. Made up of representatives from women's organizations, the Board of Trade, the Labour Council, the Sportsmen's Patriotic Association, the National Service Week, the Orange Order, the Recruiting League, and other organizations, it passed the following resolution: "This committee is of the opinion that a whirlwind campaign to raise recruits is not practicable at the present time."¹⁸⁴

The officer in charge of recruiting the 170th Battalion agreed. Lieut.-Col. Le Grand Reed wrote to General W.A. Logie about recruiting. His letter encapsulates the struggles of recruiters over the previous months, and reveals the depths of the efforts to reach every man in town:

Since I organized the Toronto Recruiting Depot, 1st August 1915, there have been Recruiting Meetings, District Recruiting Meetings, Free Moving Picture attractions, Visits to men in their places of employment, Free Sunday Theatres, Church Rallies, Political Branch Meetings, Boxing Bouts, Midnight Shows, Burlesque Theatre Performances, The Police Census, Political and other centralizations of personal appeal, Fetes and

¹⁸² "See for example, "A Call for Service From Brig.-General Logie," *World*, 17 June 1916, p. 1.

¹⁸³ "Big Recruiting Day: Over 100 Volunteers," *Globe*, 20 June 1916, p. 8.

¹⁸⁴ "Recruiting Workers At End of Their Rope," *Globe*, 28 June 1916, p. 6.

entertainments of all sorts carried on with the last degree of human effort and every one of those mediums completely exhausted and depleted of results. The cost of all their work has been borne by certain and numerous private citizens of Toronto who have thus generously expressed their loyal support of the Recruiting Cause...

During the last few months the streets of Toronto have been overrun with thousands of untrained men in uniforms accosting with such manner and expressions as have aroused constant indignation. These men perforce of circumstances untutored in their duties, have done their best.

I claim that there is not one civilian man in each thousand in Toronto who has not been most strongly and continuously urged to join the colours. The Press, the platform and the Pulpit have informed everyone of the need and yet since February 7th, despite the cost to the private purse and to the Government, with these thousands of paid soldiers daily roaming the streets, it has been impossible to recruit the men needed...

[It is time to consider] what has been obviously the unwisely postponed, the only equitable and, now and finally, the only possible medium for raising more men, -- conscription, or at least Registration.¹⁸⁵

The news of the Allied advance at the Somme on 1 July 1916 changed nothing.

Even though Torontonians celebrated the offensive as the beginning of the "big push," it did not move young men to come forward and enlist. At a Sunday evening recruiting rally at Loew's Theatre at 189-191 Yonge Street, only six men came forward at the end of the night.¹⁸⁶ In the context of a mass recruiting drive and reports of Allied advances, around 50 men were attested on any given day. Recruiting had dropped off so dramatically that securing 50 men was now considered a "big day."¹⁸⁷ A week later, recruiting dropped even more markedly, only 23 obtained on 12 July.¹⁸⁸ The following day was even worse, the four battalions still recruiting in Toronto [201st, 204th, 208th,

¹⁸⁵ Le Grand Reed to W.A. Logie, 26 June 1916, PAC, RG 24, Vol. 4302, File 34-1-59, Military District Number 2, Recruiting Generally, Vol. 6.

¹⁸⁶ "Volunteer System Becoming Obsolete," *World*, 3 July 1916, p. 4.

¹⁸⁷ "Recruiting Picks Up At the Depot," *World*, 4 July 1916, p. 2.

¹⁸⁸ "Recruiting Was Quiet; 23 Obtained Yesterday," *Globe*, 13 July 1916, p. 6.

and 216th] having to share the ten men who were accepted for service with the 69th and 70th Batteries, No. 1 Construction Corps, the 238th Forestry Battalion, and the Canadian Army Service Corps.¹⁸⁹

Dismal recruiting results were reported throughout the summer of 1916. When Canadian units were engaged in offensive action at the Somme in September, recruiting numbers continued at very low levels. Both Liberal and Conservative papers printed editorials which shamed local men into service and appealed for some form of compulsory service.¹⁹⁰ The physical standards for recruits were once again dropped, allowing men with good sight in one eye to be accepted.¹⁹¹ Recruiting officers once again took to the streets to appeal for recruits, pushing recruiting totals back up to near 40 per day, but they quickly dropped off again.¹⁹²

In the charged atmosphere of daily casualty lists from fighting at Courcellette, increased cost of living, and a war which would continue well into the foreseeable future, Torontonians looked for scapegoats. Someone or something had to be held responsible for allowing daily recruiting totals to drop to one-fifth the average daily casualties. The most likely target was the province of Quebec and its poor recruiting totals. Even as Canadian soldiers were fighting for Regina Trench, editorials in secular and religious papers raged that "...the people of Quebec have not taken the part in the war which their

¹⁸⁹ "Nine Units Share Ten Recruits," *Globe*, 14 July 1916, p. 6.

¹⁹⁰ "See for example, "The Great Task" (ed.), *News*, 6 September 1916, p. 6; "Recruiting and Enlisting" (ed.), *Star*, 12 September 1916, p. 6.

¹⁹¹ "Military Standards Are Further Reduced," *Globe*, 8 September 1916, p. 6.

¹⁹² "Recruiting Faster As Campaign Opens," *World*, 12 September 1916, p. 4.

allegiance and their racial origins seemed to require."¹⁹³ Torontonians read that the cost of imposing conscription would be incredibly divisive to national unity, but most supported whatever measures were necessary to support the troops at the front. Stating what for many Torontonians had become a truism, the *Christian Guardian* remarked, "There is no use beating about the bush or ignoring the self-evident. Quebec constitutes one of Canada's outstanding problems."¹⁹⁴

Borden's solution to the recruiting problems was a scheme called National Registration, a plan similar to the British National Registration Act used in August 1915.¹⁹⁵ National Service "cards" were to be distributed to each man between the ages of 18 and 65. Cards would request information on occupation and fitness for service, and would be returned to military authorities. This process, it was hoped, would keep men in essential war related industries and provide recruiting officers with names of men eligible for overseas service. Papers and representatives of various organizations were skeptical. An editorial in the *Globe* was typical: "It is difficult to understand what effective steps can be taken under the registration order in Council to make slackers of this sort do their duty. They have been subjected for more than two years to moral suasion, and if in that time they have not been aroused to a sense of their obligations as citizens there is little hope that any pressure short of compulsion will send them either to the front or to the

¹⁹³ "French Canada and Recruiting" (ed.), *Globe*, 27 September 1916, p. 6. See also, "Casualties and Recruiting" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 28 September 1916, p. 6; "Quebec, Canada and the Empire" (ed.), *The Presbyterian*, 28 September 1916, p. 243; "Would Conscription Arm the Nation for War?" (ed.), *Telegram*, 28 September 1916, p. 10.

¹⁹⁴ "Quebec and the War" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 25 October 1916, p. 5.

¹⁹⁵ Edmonds and Wynne, *History of the Great War*, p. 51.

munition factory."¹⁹⁶

A private letter by prominent Torontonians J.M. Godfrey to Prime Minister Borden echoed these sentiments. Godfrey warned Borden that he would find National Registration "...totally inadequate and an utter failure" for several reasons: it had no legal strength, it requested incomplete information, it targeted men already enlisting, it failed to take into consideration the failure of the voluntary Police registration scheme, and it did not make use of civilian recruiting organizations.¹⁹⁷ Borden did not answer the letter.

Throughout October, while the infrastructure of the National Registration program was put in place, citizens dedicated themselves to the British Red Cross Fund. Volunteers continued to enlist in small numbers, but large recruiting drives were a thing of the past.

In stark contrast to the results of a referendum in Australia which rejected conscription,¹⁹⁸ recruiting rallies in Toronto were more about public expressions of support for conscription than about appealing to the patriotism of local men. At a 29 October rally at the Hippodrome Theatre, to the "vociferous applause" of the crowd,

¹⁹⁶ "In The Place of Conscription" (ed.), *Globe*, 10 October 1916, p. 6. See also, "The National Registration" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 11 October 1916, p. 5; "Recruiting For All" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 14 October 1916, p. 6; "War and Recruiting" (ed.), *News*, 17 October 1916, p. 6.

¹⁹⁷ J.M. Godfrey, writing in his capacity as President of the Canadian National Service League, to Robert Borden after National Registration was announced 18 August 1916, PACanada, Borden Papers, MG 26, H1 a, Vol. 16, p. 34695.

¹⁹⁸ For a fuller discussion of recruiting in Australia, see the following: Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia, Volume 4, 1901-1942*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1986), F.W. Perry, *Commonwealth Armies: Manpower and Organization in Two World Wars*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), and Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Mayor Church emphatically advocated conscription as the most fair and equitable way to obtain recruits.¹⁹⁹ At a meeting of the chief officers from Military District No. 2, the assembled recruiting officers decided that "the voluntary system of recruiting has about reached its limit, and some form of compulsion will have to be introduced if Canada is to obtain the hundred thousand men recently called for by Prime Minister Borden to reinforce the divisions now at the front."²⁰⁰ Prominent religious figure, Rev. Dr. S.D. Chown "...boldly and with pride openly confessed his conversion to conscription as a national necessity."²⁰¹ In a private letter to a colleague, Chown defended conscription: "Does it not appear to you as a most horrible thing that our boys should become voluntary murderers? Would it not be much better for their character if they should kill only at the stern compulsion of the state?"²⁰² Even before National Registration was undertaken, papers and civic leaders believed in the ultimate necessity of conscription.

In this increasingly tense atmosphere, Sir Sam Hughes was fired. Dealing with a rising man-power crisis at home, rising Canadian casualties from the Somme offensive, and Hughes' penchant for wild public statements, Prime Minister Borden no longer had the patience to deal with Hughes' antics. On 9 November 1916 Borden demanded his resignation, which he received along with a list of complaints.²⁰³ Hughes symbolized the

¹⁹⁹ "Audience Approves Conscription Call," *World*, 30 October 1916, p. 2.

²⁰⁰ "Ask Compulsion to Get Recruits," *Globe*, 9 November 1916, p. 1.

²⁰¹ "Get the 100,000 Recruits Even by Conscription," *Globe*, 10 November 1916, p. 1.

²⁰² Letter From S.D. Chown to Rev. Kenneth Kingston regarding conscription, United Church of Canada Archives, Samuel Dwight Chown Fonds, 86.008C, Box 1, File 13, Correspondents Regarding World War I, 1915-1916, 30 November 1916, pp. 1, 2.

²⁰³ See for example, Haycock, *The Public Career*, pp. 288-310.

voluntary spirit which had dominated the Canadian war effort, but his firing was partially the result of a recognition that the time for voluntarism was passing. The war's demands were too great for ad hoc measures, and few people lamented his dismissal. Most people viewed it as a positive sign that the government was taking a firmer grip on recruiting.

Before withdrawing at the end of November to rest and train for spring offensives, the casualty totals of the Canadian Expeditionary Force clearly demonstrated the pressing need to solve the recruiting dilemma. Casualties greatly exceeded enlistment, and new recruits were needed to fill the ranks. It was in this context that Torontonians undertook what would become their last major recruiting drive of the war. The Clerical Patriotic Association was formed throughout the Toronto Military District to help recruiting officers secure the almost 7,000 recruits needed to fill up the units which had already been authorized in the district.²⁰⁴ The basic recruiting tactic was "moral compulsion" to push men into service.²⁰⁵ The needs of individual men no longer took precedence; at stake was the patriotic reputation of the city and its ability to live up to its commitments. Patriotic appeals were largely dispensed with, and citizens openly attempted to shame men into service.

The centre of this campaign was a new unit to be raised by the Queen's Own Rifles, the 255th, commanded by Lieut.-Col. George L. Royce. Advertisements were run in the papers announcing the "Give Us His Name" campaign. Recruiting officers hoped that citizens who knew the names and addresses of potential recruits would send them to

²⁰⁴ "7,000 Recruits Needed in Toronto District," *Globe*, 17 November 1916, p. 6.

²⁰⁵ "Moral Compulsion Will Be Employed," *News*, 17 November 1916, p. 2.

recruiting sergeants. The following advertisement was designed to secure the aid of local citizens:

GIVE US HIS NAME. We ask You to help our Men at the Front. We ask You to Help Win this War. We ask You to Perform An Urgent Duty. Nearly everyone knows of ONE MAN who should be in khaki to-day. We ask you to give us his name so we can call upon him and give him this opportunity to join an Overseas Battalion -- the 255th Q.O.R. [Queen's Own Rifles]. Reinforcements for the 3rd Battn [Battalion].²⁰⁶

At the bottom of the form was a "coupon" which asked for the eligible man's name, address, business address, and occupation. Respondents were asked to mail the form to the Queen's Own Rifles: it was up to them to decide if they wished to sign the form. Despite the effort, recruiting did not pick up.

The winter of 1916-1917 saw the Canadian Corps free of any major operations. Units engaged in trench raids and trained for the upcoming 1917 offensives. Throughout December, Torontonians were preoccupied with the ever increasing cost of living, the discussions about Germany's and Wilson's peace proposals, and the upcoming visit of Robert Borden to Toronto as part of his cross-country tour to promote National Registration. On 22 December, Prime Minister Borden spoke to a crowd which did not even fill Massey Hall, appealing for support of National Registration as one last attempt to avoid conscription. Imposing conscription, he warned, would divide Canada precisely at the point when it had to be united.²⁰⁷ In the wake of his visit, editorials debated the

²⁰⁶ "Advertisement," *World*, 30 November 1916, p. 3.

²⁰⁷ See for example, "Cause of National Service Before a Toronto Audience," *News*, 23 December 1916, p. 1; "Forced Service in Canada Would Produce Civil War," *World*, 23 December 1916, p. 1; "National Service" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 23 December 1916, p. 6; "Premier Borden Brings Call for National Service Home to All," *Telegram*, 23 December 1916, p. 10.

merits of National Registration. For their part, the Conservative *World* and *Telegram* did not support it, arguing that the system was flawed because it was not compulsory, and that Canada should emulate Great Britain and introduce conscription.²⁰⁸ Other papers and religious periodicals, however, said that voluntary enlistment was worth one last try.²⁰⁹

Beginning on 29 December National Service cards were circulated to every male resident between the ages of 18 and 65. Respondents had three days to fill out the cards, at which point postmen would return to retrieve them, forwarding to Ottawa the names and addresses of all those who refused. Civic and religious leaders urged Torontonians to fill out their cards,²¹⁰ as did Labour leaders.²¹¹ The end of National Service Week also saw the end of some voluntary recruiting associations. The Citizens' Recruiting League ended its tenure as the leading organizer of patriotic speeches, formally disbanding on 12 January 1917.²¹² There was no turbulent discussion in the wake of the end of National Service week. Nationally over 1.5 million cards were returned, roughly 80 percent of the number circulated. However, over 200,000 were blank or only partially complete. After deducting essential workers and the disabled, the National Service Board determined that

²⁰⁸ See for example, "The Call to Arms" (ed.), *World*, 26 December 1916, p. 6; "Compulsory Service Necessary" (ed.), *World*, 27 December 1916, p. 6; "Stop Fooling With Quebec Racialists" (ed.), *Telegram*, 28 December 1916, p. 8.

²⁰⁹ See for example, "The Critical Year" (ed.), *News*, 27 December 1916, p. 6; "National Service" (ed.), *Catholic Register*, 28 December 1916, p. 4; "National Service" (ed.), *Canadian Churchman*, 28 December 1916, p. 827; "Conscription the Last Resort" (ed.), *Globe*, 29 December 1916, p. 6; "Fill In and Return the Cards" (ed.), *Star*, 29 December 1916, p. 6.

²¹⁰ "Patriotic Duty to Fill Out Cards," *Globe*, 3 January 1917, p. 8.

²¹¹ "'Fill Out the Cards,' Says Labour Council to Unions," *Star*, 5 January 1917, p. 5.

²¹² "Let It Rest in Peace," *Telegram*, 13 January 1917, p. 14.

just over 250,000 men were available for service. Very few of these men volunteered: they were willing to wait for the force of the state to compel them to serve.²¹³ In Toronto, the subject was quickly dropped, and the attention of the people and the papers was focused on the upcoming patriotic campaign to raise money for the Toronto and York Patriotic Fund.²¹⁴

Towards the end of January, as the city at large conducted the drive for the Patriotic Fund, militia officers met in the University of Toronto's Mining Building to discuss recruiting. The "Give Us His Name" drive had failed to fill the ranks of the 255th Battalion, and officers favoured conscription.²¹⁵ The more than 200 officers believed that all single men and widowers without families "...should be taken completely away from their ordinary avocation and trained in the same manner as overseas troops."²¹⁶ The conference asked that an Order in Council be passed by the Dominion Government to enforce the Militia Act.²¹⁷

Global events proceeded rapidly while the Canadian government hesitated over imposing conscription. On 1 February 1917, Germany declared that it would begin unrestricted submarine warfare. The March Revolution toppled the Tsar in Russia, weakened the Russian effort, and threatened to pull it out of the war. The Russian weakness was partially offset by the entry of the United States into the war on 6 April, but

²¹³ Nicholson, *Official History*, pp. 220-221.

²¹⁴ An extensive search was conducted at the Public Archives of Canada for the National Service files for Toronto. Unfortunately, such files are not available.

²¹⁵ See for example, "Militia Act Should Be Put the Into Force," *Star*, 24 January 1917, p. 1; "Military Conference to Talk Recruiting," *Globe*, 23 January 1917, p. 8.

²¹⁶ "Want Militia Act Enforced," *News*, 24 January 1917, p. 1.

²¹⁷ "Enforce the Militia Act," *Globe*, 25 January 1917, p. 1.

it would take months to get an American force across the Atlantic. As these global events unfolded at a frenetic pace, many Torontonians lobbied for conscription. These pleas escalated in the wake of the Canadian attack at Vimy Ridge in April 1917. Editorials blasted the Canadian government for failing to realize that National Registration had failed and voluntary recruiting was no longer viable.²¹⁸ Editorials in secular and religious papers lobbied for conscription throughout April and into the early part of May 1917.

With the coming of yet another war-time spring, those battalions recruited over the winter began to depart. The 208th (Irish) Battalion left in a downpour on 26 April 1917, along with other units over several weeks. While the spring of 1916 had heralded new recruiting attempts, such renewed energy was not forthcoming in May 1917. In five months of recruiting, the Queen's Own Rifles 255th Battalion had secured only 385 men, only 54 in the last month, less than two men per day.²¹⁹ While Exhibition Camp stood largely empty, Torontonians waited for the return of Prime Minister Borden from his trip overseas: it was widely expected that upon his return he would announce his intentions with regards to conscription. Before Borden returned, City Council again put itself on record as supporting conscription with a resolution which argued that the voluntary "...system is not now sufficiently effective for our military requirements, and therefore [the Council] urges upon the [Canadian Government] to enforce our present militia act,

²¹⁸ See for example, "The 'Vital Necessity,'" (ed.), *World*, 10 April 1917, p. 6; "Vimy Ridge Loss Calls for Heavy Recruiting in Canada," *Star*, 14 April 1917, p. 1; "Is Canada Through?" (ed.), *Star*, 24 April 1917, p. 6.

²¹⁹ "Lull At Exhibition Before Borden Opens," *Globe*, 2 May 1917, p. 8.

and to forthwith call out class No. 1."²²⁰ Headlines on 19 May marked the end of one chapter in Canada's history, and the beginning of a new one: "CONSCRIPTION FOR CANADA."

* * *

This last phase of voluntary recruiting was both its longest and its least productive. The cycle of voluntary recruiting was completed however, and when all attempts at voluntary recruiting were exhausted, conscription was the natural choice. The resulting complex portrait of voluntary recruiting stands in stark contrast to that provided by numerically based assessments. Voluntary recruiting passed through many stages, edging ever closer to calls for conscription. The first two phases, August 1914 - December 1914 and January 1915 - April 1915 were about private choices made by individual Toronto men. In the privacy of their own homes, men consulted their own consciences to determine whether or not to enlist. Their decision to volunteer reflected the period, a private decision to take up the King's shilling.

Recruiting stalled however, as not enough men decided that the call of the war superceded other demands on them. The solution was to push recruiting into the public sphere. The initial period from May 1915 to early July 1915 was not successful as men did not take well to recruiting officers telling them their duty. Rejecting such appeals, men refused to enlist, openly defying the public appeals of militia authorities. Recruiting

²²⁰ *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto For the Year 1917*, 14 May 1917 (Toronto: Industrial and Technical Press, 1918), Toronto City Hall Archives, p. 102. City Council was reiterating the position stated in a similar resolution passed three months earlier on 19 February 1917. (*Ibid.*, p. 47.).

officers, however, learned from their failures, and began a subtler form of public appeal. From early July to late October 1915, recruiting officers solicited the help of the local population to create an atmosphere where young men might be encouraged to enlist. Patriotic rallies involving 200,000 people persuaded many men through enthusiasm or peer pressure to place the demands of country before self. Sam Hughes' battalion recruiting scheme built upon this framework and extended it, successfully re-energizing the campaign from the end of October 1915 to mid-March 1916. The combination of the possibility of serving with friends, coupled with patriotic appeals which moved from patriotic gatherings to public appeals at places of work and worship, prompted thousands more to enlist. But this phase, as with all the others, had limits.

The solution was to move back into the private sphere. Not into the private realm of individual conscience, but physically into the homes of remaining men. Citizens provided the names of those men still available for service, and recruiting officers visited each house many times, appealing to the young men inside. Successful in maintaining recruiting numbers between the middle of March and early June 1916, this method encountered trouble shortly thereafter. This period stood in stark contrast to the early part of the war when enlistment resulted from an individual decision to place the country before individual interests. By the beginning of 1917, the rights of the individual had been gone for a long time. The collective entity of Toronto, through its leaders, militia officers, church leaders, organizations, and its citizens, engaged in a process of imposing their desires on individual men. Having exhausted public and private appeals to patriotism, duty and shame in an attempt to impose their desire, militia officers and many

Torontonians turned to the only remaining option: conscription.

Voluntary recruiting had succeeded, however, in securing approximately 40,000 men before conscription was announced.²²¹ Since one-third of the men who volunteered were rejected on medical grounds, 60,000 must have offered to serve King and Country overseas. Placed alongside the total number of eligible men available, 87,300, more than two-thirds of Toronto's eligible men volunteered for duty. The "failure" of the voluntary has been noted by many historians of recruiting, but such conclusions assume a limitless number of recruits. What would have constituted success? Measuring the record of Toronto's voluntary enlistment figures against an assumed counter-factual model of perfect success undercuts the enormous commitment made by tens of thousands of men to the war effort. Their behaviour underscored the persistent level of dedication of the people of Toronto to do what was necessary to win.

The dynamic force in this process was local initiative. News from the front and the Department of Militia defined the boundaries of local recruiting activity, but did not determine its shape. It was events in the city which persuaded men to come forward. Public events during these years were dominated by the issue of recruiting. Labour Day parades, New Year's celebrations, and the anniversary of the war's beginning were all used as public forums to promote recruiting. Unlike drives for the British Red Cross or the Toronto and York Patriotic Fund which were conducted for finite periods of time, recruiting was continuous -- and ubiquitous. All facets of Toronto society took part in the process of securing recruits. City Council, militia units, prominent citizens, average

²²¹ Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit,'* p. 7.

residents, ministers, and various organizations like the Labour Council, the Board of Trade, and the Local Council of Women, all took part in recruiting activities. The result was a climate which made it impossible for young men to escape recruiting appeals. Men were confronted at work, at play, at fairs, on major holidays, at the dinner table, at restaurants, at home, at the Labour Temple, at church, and while walking downtown.

Torontonians had an option, of course. They could have acknowledged that even though men were not coming forward, conscription was too alien and divisive a measure, and they could have scaled back the war effort. But the majority of Torontonians could not accept this path. The memory of thousands already sacrificed in battles like Second Ypres made breaking faith with the dead impossible. Recollections of thousands of Toronto's soldiers marching in column through the downtown were too strong to be dismissed. The men who had made the sacrifice and left for the front demanded that their ranks be replenished when necessary. Appeals for national unity over the French-Canadian issue fell on deaf ears as Quebec's poor recruiting totals epitomized precisely why conscription was supported. Resolutions were passed by City Council, representative churches, women's organizations, political leaders and militia officers endorsing conscription as the only available way to secure men for overseas. In the context of May 1917, it appeared as the only way to continue the war.

Throughout the process of appealing for recruits, the Toronto war effort became more and more organized, abandoning the ad hoc system of calling for recruits and waiting for them to enlist. Locally, complex military censuses and canvasses were in place long before the federal government introduced the National Registration system.

Decentralized recruiting at the armories of individual militia units gave way to a Central Recruiting Depot which processed all recruits after August 1915. This trend paralleled the gradual process of moving towards conscription as voluntarism was exhausted. Even as military officers were pushing appeals further and further into the lives of local men, they were also acclimatizing the public to the idea of a government and a military system which intruded into their lives. By the time voluntarism was finished, the military had extended its appeals even to the living rooms of prospective recruits. Conscription was only the final step in a process which had already removed virtually all places of refuge, with the exception of the illegality of forcing service.

Toronto men provided ample demonstration that they were not uninformed about the nature or costs associated with enlistment. Letters home from soldiers which were printed in the papers provided testimony on the nature of the fighting. Casualty lists filled the pages of Toronto's papers and an increasing number of returned veterans could be seen in the city streets clearly demonstrating the war's demands in the form of a missing arm or leg. The process of recruiting in Toronto was about emphasizing to prospective recruits that the demands of the front ought to supercede the demands of the home. The stages that recruiting passed through reflected different attempts to make the same argument to Toronto men. With each passing stage, more men were persuaded and they enlisted. The sheer complexity and extent of the recruiting effort, then, is testimony to the degree to which local men understood what enlistment meant.

Recruiting activity paralleled what the war meant for Torontonians. A great adventure meant that it was a privilege to serve, and if a man would not come forward of

his own volition, he was not fit to participate. As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, however, the meaning of the war changed after Second Ypres, evolving into a great crusade. This was the point at which the impetus behind serving changed completely. While up to April 1915 it was a *privilege* to serve, after 6,000 Canadians had been killed or wounded, it was a *duty*. The rest of the voluntary campaign was conducted in a way to help Toronto's men recognize their duty, and when all attempts to persuade them had failed, the only recourse left was conscription.

Recruiting was not, however, uniquely a male preserve. Throughout the two and a half years of voluntary recruiting, women were closely linked with the success and failure of voluntarism. Organizing tag-days to supply the money required for local recruiting, appealing to young men to enlist, taking places of men who left their jobs for the front, or marching in patriotic parades to promote enlistment, Toronto's women formed a visible part of the war effort. Their experience with the war effort closely paralleled the recruiting drives, shaping their contributions to the war effort, and making demands on them previously unheard of in Victorian Toronto.

Chapter 5

Women and War -- Public and Private Spheres

As place names like Ypres, the Somme, and Vimy Ridge became commonplace on the pages of local papers, the war passed from a "great adventure" to a "great crusade." Women experienced the same events as the city's men, but they did so from a different perspective. When war was declared, women participated in the "great adventure" by providing comforts to departing soldiers and maintaining their homes as a refuge for their families. By the time conscription was announced in May 1917, women had moved a long way into the public life of Toronto, forming a vital part of the wage labour force and actively campaigning to help the war effort.

This chapter builds on the work of women's historians.¹ It reflects the growing recognition of the importance of gender history which posits that identities are made in

¹ See for example, Linda Kealey, *Enlisting Women for the Cause: Women, Labour, and the Left in Canada, 1890-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 14; Veronica Strong-Boag, "'Ever a Crusader': Nellie McClung, First-Wave Feminist," in Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, eds., *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1986), pp. 178-190; Deborah Gorham, "Flora Macdonald Denison: Canadian Feminist," in Linda Kealey, ed., *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s* (Toronto: Women's Educational Press, 1979), pp. 47-70; Deborah Gorham, "Vera Brittain, Flora Macdonald Denison and the Great War: The Failure of Non-Violence," Ruth Roach Pierson, ed., *Women and Peace: Theoretical, Historical and Practical Perspectives* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 192-221; Barbara Roberts, "Women Against War, 1914-1918: Francis Beynon and Laura Hughes," Janice Williamson and Deborah Gorham, eds., *Up and Doing: Canadian Women and Peace* (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1989), pp. 48-65; Barbara Roberts, "Women's Peace Activism in Canada," in Linda Kealey and Joan Sangster, eds., *Beyond the Vote: Canadian Women and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), pp. 276-308.

However, historian Thomas Socknat has demonstrated that there was virtually no anti-war movement in Canada at all during the First World War, suggesting that these chronicles of the struggles of leading women's activists were atypical of the experience of most English-Canadian women during the war. (See for instance, Thomas Socknat, *Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), and T. Socknat, "Canada's Liberal Pacifists and the Great War," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Winter 1983-84, pp. 30-44.).

relationships. Previous studies have examined women's experience using documents generated by prominent women working contrary to the patriotic majority. This chapter examines newspapers and personal records which reveal what women thought and did in the gendered world they inhabited. It chronicles women's support for the war, and it places their activities within the context of wartime Toronto; throughout the war, women formed an integral part of the war effort. Their activities were limited by societal norms and traditional notions of work and the family, but these norms were greatly influenced by the course of the war, dramatically altering the boundary between public and private spheres. This chapter explores the profoundly important role that women played in the struggle. Throughout the war, women's activities paralleled, challenged, and reinforced the local approaches taken to prosecute the war.

* * *

At the outset, women's first patriotic duty was seen to be to allow husbands, lovers or sons to enlist. Consenting to let loved ones serve the Empire was viewed as the epitome of selflessness, and women were praised for their patriotism.² While women demonstrated their enthusiastic support of the war in these ways, many wanted to play a more active role in the war effort outside of the home. Nursing was one avenue which provided a chance to go overseas, but the competition for places was intense. Nationally, the Red Cross had positions for 100 nurses, and over 600 applicants.³ The scale of their reactions underscores women's support for the war effort. The Women's Patriotic

² See for example, "Canadian Heroines" (letter to the editor), *News*, 30 September 1914, p. 6.

³ "101 Red Cross Nurses to be Selected To-day," *Globe*, 16 September 1914, p. 6.

League, organized to direct the patriotic activities of women, held emergency meetings to confront the tragic Belgian situation and organized the shipment of relief supplies to the war-torn nation.⁴

After three months of war, the leading women's periodical, *Everywoman's World*, took stock of women's role in the war effort. Published monthly by Continental Publishing in Toronto, this literary women's magazine catered to the social and economic elite. Established in 1913, most issues contained 40 pages, with three or four columns of text per page, allowing for large, clean print. *The Canadian Newspaper Directory* claimed that *Everywoman's World* was "...the dominant national magazine, far over-topping all others in Canada in point of circulation, proven buying power of subscribers, high quality of editorial contents and reader influence."⁵ Its circulation exploded during the war from 67,570 to almost 120,000 by 1915, almost *twice* the distribution of *Maclean's*. According to a poll of more than 25,000 readers, 52 percent of subscribers had an average worth exceeding \$8,000, 12.1 percent owned automobiles, and another 15.9 percent were in the market. One out of every four English-Canadian households subscribed.⁶

The November issue asked what women had done to support the war. At the forefront of the list was the fact that Canadian women had "...sent Britain the flower of their nation. Then, knowing that while it was man's pitiable duty to go forth to slay, it

⁴ "Send Help to the Belgians," *News*, 12 October 1914, p. 4. See also, "Tons of Clothing for Belgian Refugees," *Globe*, 16 October 1914, p. 5.

⁵ *The Canadian Newspaper Directory, Eleventh Edition, 1918* (Montreal and Toronto: A. McKim Limited, 1918), p. 95.

⁶ *Ibid.*

was women's duty to succour, they instantly set about their work."⁷ The August 1914 campaign for a hospital ship fund and offers to serve as nurses were the immediate manifestations of the desire to aid in the effort. The Toronto Women's Patriotic League, located in Sir Henry M. Pellatt's former residence at 559 Sherbourne Street, quickly became "a ceaseless hive of activity."⁸ On the third floor, 12 donated sewing machines were in use for all but a few hours each day. On the second floor, volunteers ceaselessly packed the garments destined for the city's poor, the Belgians or the Red Cross. On the main floor, a labour bureau recorded the names of any girl or woman seeking employment, serving as a link with employers in need of help. Mrs. L.A. Hamilton headed the social service branch of the League,⁹ which divided the city into 25 districts, each with a captain on the lookout for cases of distress which required immediate aid.¹⁰

The League also organized "home work" for women able to knit for the Empire:

⁷ Lucy Swanton Doyly, "Canadian Women Help the Empire: 'What Could Women Do In Time of War?'" *Everywoman's World*, November 1914, p. 8. Unfortunately, surviving issues of this journal do not include issues for 1915-1918.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32. Sir Henry was a prominent local investment broker known for his generosity, subscribing \$25,000 in 1901 to the Trinity University Endowment Fund, and donating money to create a surgery wing at Grace Hospital in 1903. He also built Casa Loma. (Henry James Morgan, ed., *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 2nd edition (Toronto, William Briggs, 1912), p. 894. For a detailed biography, see Carlie Oreskovich, *Sir Henry Pellatt: The King of Casa Loma* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1982)).

⁹ Mrs. Hamilton was one of the first local women to become involved in the war effort, becoming active as soon as war was declared. A prominent suffragist before the war, she directed most of her attention once war began to helping secure recruits. During the first three winters of the war when voluntary recruiting was still in place, Hamilton spoke often "...in Toronto and in the country districts to enthuse men to answer the call to the colours." (Hubert Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit.'* (Toronto: Municipal Intelligence Bureau, 1918), Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, flem0704, p. 70.

¹⁰ Doyly, "Canadian Women Help the Empire," p. 8.

"And not alone are white-haired grandmas at it. Stern ladies with college degrees who scorned such elemental things are hard at work. Lonely women on farms are knitting long into the night, Society women take their knitting to theatres and concert halls. Everywhere women have got back to their needles."¹¹ Women's support for the war, as was true in the rest of Toronto, was not tied to a particular class. Once Exhibition Camp was set up, women donated pies and knitted socks to ease the burden assumed by the city's soldiers.¹² The Women's Liberal Association created a hospital to administer to the needs of the men at the camp.¹³ Upon hearing of the British casualties at the front, other women organized a campaign to supply the wounded with cigarettes.¹⁴ The work continued to appeal to women of all classes, and campaigns were conducted to secure knitting and sewing material for those unable to supply their own, but willing to donate their time.¹⁵

Few personal diaries are available, but those that survive demonstrate that the private sentiments of many women were in accord with public expressions. Women conceived of the war as an honourable struggle for the survival of the Empire.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Helen Ball, "Comfort For Soldiers at the Exhibition," *News*, 16 November 1914, p. 4.

¹³ "Hospital for Camp at Exhibition Grounds," *Globe*, 25 November 1914, p. 5. This organization maintained a high profile throughout the war years, prompting a local commentator to observe that of all the women's groups, "None have worked more assiduously than the members of the Liberal Women's Organization, who through their various circles did splendid things in the way of piling up thousands of various articles for the comfort of the men overseas." (Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit'*, p. 70.)

¹⁴ "Providing Smokes for the Wounded," *News*, 17 November 1914, p. 4.

¹⁵ Jean McPhedran, "Socks for the Soldiers," *The Presbyterian*, 28 January 1915, pp. 110-111.

Everywoman's World carried an editorial in September which argued that the Empire was engaged in "...battles of righteousness."¹⁶ References were also made to keeping faith with ancient British traditions, as women strived to be "...worthy of the race of Nelson."¹⁷ A lengthy article on what women wanted from the war quoted the views of several local women. Mrs. Willoughby Cummings, President of the Toronto Women's Patriotic League, was a long-time visible member of the local community.¹⁸ She believed that while everything had to be done to win the war, "It [was] altogether too soon to attempt to define what will be, or may be, the outcome of a war that may last for years, when it is only three months old."¹⁹

Local artist Elizabeth A. McGillivray Knowles²⁰ hoped a better world would result from the struggle: "Will sorrow soften, will the desire to help foster unselfishness, will the discovery of that joy which is born of loving service make the striving after extravagant social display seem futile and wearisome? One might at least hope for this

¹⁶ "Mightier Than the Sword" (ed.), *Everywoman's World*, September 1914, p. 5.

¹⁷ Swanton, "Canadian Women," *Everywoman's World*, November 1914, p. 32.

¹⁸ Cummings was widowed in 1892 when her lawyer-husband died. She was a correspondent to the *Globe* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* during the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago. On the editorial staff of the *Globe* for ten years, she served on the boards of many other organizations, before war began in 1914 (Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 287.). A tireless worker, she was described as the "backbone of the National Council of Women" in her capacity as member of the executive. (Toronto Public Library, *Biographies of People*, Film T686.3, Volume 16, p. 357.).

¹⁹ "What Twelve Canadian Women Hope to See as the Outcome of the War," *Everywoman's World*, April 1915, p. 6.

²⁰ Knowles was the great-niece of the late Colonel Dyde, Aide-de-Camp to Queen Victoria, and descended from United Empire Loyalists. She studied art under the supervision of her husband, F. McGillivray Knowles, in Canada and in Europe. Before war began, she was already noted as "a woman of wide and discriminating taste," and several of her paintings were displayed in the National Gallery, Ottawa (Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 621.).

result."²¹ Just before Second Ypres, women's groups were firmly behind a war effort which was engaged in a struggle with "...the armed criminal whose liberty is a menace. In such a conflict neutrality has no merit."²² Women's public discourse was similar to that of the rest of the population. They were part of an epic struggle, and hoped that they would live up to the examples set by their ancestors.

Women shared the glory and grief with the rest of the community when news gradually filtered back about the 6,000 Canadian soldiers who had been killed or wounded at Second Ypres at the end of April 1915. In addition to grieving in the home, women publicly carried out their role as nurturers of the sick and wounded. A towel drive was conducted to secure enough fabric to make bandages for wounded Canadian soldiers: "There they lay, those men you have known and loved, in the fields of France, bleeding, dying for the Empire, while their comrades in arms, to avenge their death, to keep clean Britain's -- Canada's honour, swept along determined on the victory which is theirs."²³ Women endorsed the necessity of continuing to fight for the same reasons offered in the mainstream press: to keep faith with those already sacrificed, and to support the honour of the country and the Empire.

Within days, prominent women again demonstrated their support of the war effort. Jane Addams, President of the International Congress of Women at the Hague, requested delegates from Canada to attend an international women's peace conference. Speaking on

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²² "Women's Manifesto on Peace Proposals," *Globe*, 2 April 1915, p. 8.

²³ "Canada's Sons Are Wounded: We Must Equip Hospital," *News*, 26 April 1915, p. 4.

behalf of the National Committee of Women for Patriotic Service in Canada, Recording Secretary Mrs. H.P. Plumptre²⁴ of Toronto responded: "The committee is composed of the presidents, or their representatives, of the nationally organized societies of women in Canada. Many women represented on this committee have received invitations to be present or to elect delegates to represent them at the [peace] congress. *None* [emphasis added] have felt able to accept the courteous invitation, because they believe that the time for peace has not yet arrived, and therefore *no women* [emphasis added] from Canada can speak as representing the opinion of Canadian women."²⁵ It is a remarkable demonstration of the commitment of Canadian women to the war effort that "...Canadian women's groups were hostile and refused invitations to send delegates to The Hague."²⁶

²⁴ H.P. Plumptre was born in 1874 in Shackleford, England, and came to Canada in 1901 after marrying a clergyman and relocating. A social worker by training, she had studied at Oxford before degrees were granted to women. She settled in Toronto where she taught history at Havergal College, and was a Lecturer in social service at the University of Toronto. A dedicated supporter of the war effort, one of her contemporaries remarked, "There have been few if any women who have stuck closer to patriotic service than Mrs. Plumptre." (Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit,'* p. 59.). Plumptre worked for the Canadian Red Cross, and was a member of the executive of such organizations as the National Council of Women and the Young Women's Christian Association. (Institute for Behavioural Research, *Canadian Women of Note* (Downsview, York University Press, 1981), Volume 3, p. 724.).

²⁵ "Canadian Women and the 'Peace' Congress," *Saturday Night*, 1 May 1915, p. 21.

²⁶ Barbara Roberts, "Women's Peace Activism in Canada," in Kealey and Sangster, eds., *Beyond the Vote*, pp. 279. Only one woman attended, unofficially as a Canadian delegate, the niece of Minister of Militia Sam Hughes, Laura Hughes. A consistent anti-war activist, Laura Hughes was harassed by the public wherever she went (Kealey, *Enlisting Women for the Cause*, pp. 279-281.). Even Hughes' anti-war stance has been overplayed. By her own admission, her efforts to establish a peace league were not part of a "stop the war movement," but rather an attempt "to ensure that there never was another war." (Barbara Roberts, *'Why Do Women Do Nothing to End the War?': Canadian Feminist Pacifists and the Great War* (Ottawa: CRIAW, 1985.).

Plumptre's response to Adams also included a commentary on her reasons for rejecting peace. First and foremost, was the memory of the actions of the Germans in Belgium. The atrocities in Belgium had crystallized the support of the Allied nations for the war effort, and prompted continued support even in the face of the casualties from Second Ypres: such was the level of international outrage at the behaviour of the conquering German army. Plumptre also maintained that spiritual losses which would accompany a premature peace would far outweigh the physical and material losses of continued fighting. How could the international community, Plumptre asked, sign a peace agreement which sanctioned the destruction of a country whose "sole crime was her geographical position?"²⁷ The war had to be continued for the sake of the Empire, whose soul had been pledged when it drew its sword to defend Belgium. Failure to endure the war's demands would mean the Empire's failure.

As women struggled with the combination of the glory and grief associated with Second Ypres, many contributed poems to the newspapers. "The Maple Leaves" was written by poet H. Isabel Graham in the wake of the stories of Second Ypres:²⁸

The maple leaves on Flanders' plain
 Fell in a hail of hellish rain
 Their bright hues scattered o'er the sod,
 Far from their home, but near to God.
 The forest grieves,
 And softly sheathes
 Her dear, dead leaves.

²⁷ "Canadian Women and the 'Peace' Congress," *Saturday Night*, 1 May 1915, p. 21

²⁸ A noted poet, Graham studied at the Toronto College of Music and was a frequent contributor to the Canadian and United States Press (Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 464.).

The maple leaves were heroes all;
 They rose at duty's clarion call,
 And grimly held the wavering line,
 Pouring out precious blood like wine.
 Now Glory weaves
 Immortal wreathes
 Of red, red leaves.²⁹

The opening part of the poem is a lament for the dead, stressing the grief associated with Second Ypres. But even in this discussion of costs, there is a positive reference to men being close to God, and being taken "softly" away from this earth. The men are praised for having responded to the patriotic call, and out of their sacrifice comes their glory: the greater their sacrifice, the greater their glory. Associating sacrifice with glory was one way of coping with the extent of the casualties. Women experienced Second Ypres as the turning point which transformed the great adventure into a great crusade.

In the midst of newfound grief and determination, women increased their efforts, steadily extending the idea of the "nurturing role." A project was undertaken to provide for the comfort of Canadian soldiers in France, spearheaded by prominent women's organizations, which created a threefold approach to help wounded soldiers;³⁰ first, to create home-like surroundings which would allow convalescents to recover quickly and return to the front; second, to establish a refreshment canteen with recreation and reading rooms to see to the comfort of the soldiers; third, to distribute refreshments and comforts to wounded soldiers passing through to neighbouring railway stations.³¹ The place

²⁹ H. Isabel Graham, "The Maple Leaves," *Globe*, 5 May 1915, p. 4.

³⁰ Mrs. H. D. Warren, Mrs. Christopher Robinson, and Mrs. J.F.W. Ross were among the local women behind the scheme.

³¹ "Women Will Care for the Wounded," *World*, 6 May 1915, p. 4.

selected for the Canadian rest home was, ironically, a little known town which would have enormous resonance with Canadians a generation later: Dieppe. Women were supporting a more effective war effort by creating mechanisms to get men back to the front as soon as possible.

After learning that the new weapon used by the German Army was asphyxiating gas, women secured authorization from the Militia Department to make respirators. Directions appeared on the women's pages of papers on how to construct a gas mask. A pattern of a respirator was available at the Women's Patriotic League. Women who could not make respirators were asked to help defray the cost of purchasing materials by sending donations.³² There was no naivete about the consequences of a man being caught without a respirator when a gas attack commenced. Women understood the importance of the introduction of gas to the front, and the demands that it would make on the lives of their loved ones: they worked to provide the equipment necessary to survive it.

Women were also encouraged to refrain from wearing the traditional black mourning clothes in the wake of the casualties from Second Ypres. The National Council of Women published an appeal "to those whose dear ones may be killed or who may die in this war to refrain from wearing the conventional mourning, and to wear, instead, a band of royal purple on the arm, to signify that the soldier they mourn died gloriously for his King and Country."³³ This appeal was done for two reasons: the first had to do with the economics of purchasing mourning clothes. The more important reason, however,

³² "Making Respirators for the Soldiers," *Globe*, 11 May 1915, p. 8.

³³ "When Bowed Head is Proudly Held," *Globe*, 8 May 1915, p. 10.

had to deal with recruiting. Toronto's women, along with national women's organizations, feared the negative impact on recruiting of thousands of women walking through the streets in black. The solution was to change both the fabric and the meaning of traditional mourning. The simple purple arm band was an innovation which associated bereavement with sacrifice, glory and the cause of the Empire, rather than with loss and sadness. Thus, this badge of honour could circulate through the city and stimulate further recruiting, calling upon people to live up to the sacrifice of others.³⁴

Women's reaction to the news of Second Ypres paralleled the behaviour of the city at large. While women worked to care for soldiers, they did so with a view to returning them to the front. The mechanisms created to oversee this process were similar to the ad hoc arrangements used elsewhere at the time. Women reacted to events from the front, demonstrating their patriotism and commitment to the war, but they did so in the spirit of the amateur enthusiasm which Torontonians believed would see them to victory. All these efforts demonstrated the commitment of women to the war effort, and the necessity of continuing what had become a great crusade.

In the months after Second Ypres, the news continued to be grim. Thousands of women took part in the public mourning for Capt. Darling and attended his funeral.

³⁴ A search was conducted to determine whether similar arrangements were made in Britain. No mention could be found of a purple arm band, but there are examples of *local* traditions to mark the death of soldiers. In the home town of the Lancashire Fusiliers, Bury, local residents pulled the blinds in the homes of the deceased soldiers. At times whole streets were darkened as news filtered back from the front. (Geoffrey Moorhouse, *Hell's Foundations: A Town, Its Myths and Gallipoli* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1992), pp. 90-96). Thus, Toronto's experience with the purple arm band may have been an adaptation of the British tradition of local measures to mark the passing of young men.

Others lost loved ones on the *Lusitania* which drove home the ability of the war to affect their lives. More of their husbands and sons were killed at Festubert later in May 1915, and they watched as recruiting sergeants took to the streets for the first time to fill the holes left by the fallen soldier-heroes. New contingents were authorized in June 1915 and recruiting became an ongoing process, providing further evidence that the war would not be short. In late June 1915 recruiting was at a low point, but recruiting officers changed their approach and involved the men and women of Toronto in helping to secure recruits: it was enormously successful.

These changes in recruiting strategies altered the way women participated in the war effort. In July 1915 recruiting became a public phenomenon, and an increased role for women was central to this new campaign. The giant recruiting rally at Massey Hall on 20 July featured the first overt participation of women in promoting recruitment. The Women's Patriotic League received a request from recruiting officers to help organize the rally. In response, the League drafted plans and appointed a committee of 60 women from different patriotic organizations to distribute literature before the meeting and to consider participating in recruiting after the speeches were over. Two days later, a meeting of "representative women" was held at City Hall in the Council Chamber to further discuss how women could help. Mrs. Willoughby Cummings presided, and a resolution was adopted which suggested that women offer their services to the recently formed General Committee and work in "whatever manner this committee felt would be best" to facilitate recruiting.³⁵

³⁵ "Offer Services to Help Recruiting," *News*, 17 July 1915, p. 1.

While it was a major change to involve women in recruiting, women's groups and recruiting officers decided to keep the public involvement of women to a minimum. Women formed a public part of the 20 July rally, but they served as helpers, distributing literature before the meeting opened. Recruiting officers decided that women could best help at the fringes so that attention could be focused on prospective recruits, rather than on the novelty of women serving as recruiting sergeants. Women, however, were expected to promote the virtues of enlisting, but they were to do so in private, in "a quiet way," among their friends and acquaintances rather than out in the public sphere.³⁶ Nevertheless, women were early participants in the public drive to ensure sufficient volunteers for the Canadian Expeditionary Force, and an important precedent was set. As the demands of the war progressed, women would assume a greater role in promoting public campaigns: moving to an ever-increasing degree into the public sphere.

In the meantime, in the wake of the 20 July rally at Massey Hall, a column in the *News* reported on the big recruiting meeting from a woman's point of view. Commenting on Sir George Foster's assertion that it was a privilege to be living at this time, the leading women's columnist for the *News*, Helen Ball, wrote, "Yes, it is a privilege."³⁷ The opportunity was based in the possibility of helping make history of a more vital character than "...any since the days when the first Christians began to teach humanity."³⁸ Referring to the glory of General Brock at Queenston Heights, Ball reiterated appeals to women to

³⁶ "To Bid God-Speed to Canadian Boys," *Globe*, 19 July 1915, p. 6.

³⁷ Helen Ball, "The Big Recruiting Meeting From Woman's Point of View," *News*, 21 July 1915, p. 4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

play their part in sending their men to the recruiting depot, and praised the creation of a women's auxiliary to the Recruiting League. Women knew that they would be ashamed, she argued, if the men came back victorious from the front and the men belonging to them were not amongst those who had upheld the honour of Canada: "Yes, even if they were left lying in rough graves in France, you knew last night you could bear it better than having a shirker by your side."³⁹ The ultimate sense of pride was felt by a woman at the rally, Ball related, when she could look up and see "...her husband or her son, little more than a boy, standing facing that vast throng of people, while they cheered him to the echo."⁴⁰ Ball reminded Canadian women that they were of the stock of Laura Secord, could endure hardships unflinchingly, and could not allow their men to be shirkers by tying them to apron strings. If any of her readers found this rhetoric unacceptable, no record has been left of their views.

Women were an integral part of the new recruiting scheme which depended upon creating a climate conducive to enlistment for success. For recruiting drives to succeed, men had to be pushed from both the public and the private sector to join the forces. If women had not supported the idea of continuing the war effort, this new recruiting strategy could not have worked. A man might be willing to endure public pressure, if privately he could retreat to the home and have his convictions supported by the women in his life. Many women, however, willingly participated in the recruiting drives, and publicly committed themselves to work within the private sphere to promote enlistment.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Men who had previously declined to enlist, or failed to secure a place, did so by the thousands.

Celebrating the success of securing over 500 men for overseas service the day of the Massey Hall rally, over 3,000 women and children whose men were at the front gathered at Massey Hall the next day. Dependents of the Toronto and York Patriotic Fund, these women and children gathered for a rally of their own. The doors opened at 3 p.m., but long before that a "...line of mothers, most of them bearing babies in their arms and leading small children by the hands -- a line of infinite tragedy never before seen in Canada, stretched back as far as Yonge Street."⁴¹ Within minutes the Hall was filled. The front row was occupied by 42 small children who scrambled about restlessly, despite the best efforts of their mothers to keep them quiet. The band of the 48th Highlanders entertained the crowd, accompanied by a series of "lantern slide pictures" of Canadian and British soldiers at the front.

The keynote address was given by Sir William Mulock, president of the Patriotic Fund, who took as his theme the necessity of being thrifty during wartime. He warned that following the war, there would likely be a depression, so women would be well advised to save now against the possibility of a downturn later. Representing the Women's Patriotic League, Mrs. L. A. Hamilton asked assembled women, "Are we downhearted?" The answer, a resounding "No!" Hamilton addressed the crowd, telling the women that they must "...show the world that we are not tired of our duties. A good nation is the nation that has good women. Canada will be a good nation because the

⁴¹ "Massey Hall a Vast Sea of Women's Faces," *Star*, 21 July 1915, p. 3.

women are doing their part, not only in giving, but in thinking of the future and in caring for the nation's children."⁴²

This meeting was not about blind patriotic enthusiasm, but was rather about ensuring a calm and rational approach to the demands of the war. Women understood that the deprivation associated with the war would likely last longer than any victory parade and were told to prepare against that possibility. They were soldiers on the home front, and the war effort depended upon their ability to stretch scarce resources. Thus, sheltering their families in the home would contribute to the public process of winning the war. The showing of slides from the front prompted cheers from some women, and tears from others. There were no illusions about the potential cost of the effort. Women were determined to continue the war because they believed in the cause and in the necessity of keeping faith with men already sacrificed for its sake.

As the summer of the 1915 progressed, women continued to play a prominent role in helping to create a climate conducive to recruiting, and men continued to enlist. At the enormous patriotic rally at Riverdale Park on 9 August to mark the anniversary of the declaration of war, women had a public part. Half of the 200,000 people who filed into Riverdale Park were women, demonstrating that women were as inclined as men to attend military festivals and recruiting rallies. A few of these women used the occasion to push men into service. Mimicking the actions of women in Britain who acted to shame men into service, two young women paraded through the crowd with a torn pillow, presenting

⁴² *Ibid.*

white feathers to men not in uniform.⁴³ In another part, two other women each carried a sofa cushion from which they removed the chicken feathers and placed them in the lapels of jackets belonging to men still in civilian clothes. The *Star* described the process as a deadly method of attack: "You would be standing with strained neck watching the bands in the valley. Someone would brush past and quietly lay something white on your lapel. It did not dawn at first what the white thing was. Then when you saw, in the dim light, your single violent impulse was to crawl, on hands and knees, out of the crowd and climb a tall tree."⁴⁴ What made this attack so devastating was that women had not yet previously participated so publicly in the campaign for recruits. Men were unaccustomed to being publicly shamed by women, and would do virtually anything to avoid it, including enlisting. It was partly the fear of public ridicule and the desire to avoid the social stigma of failing to do one's duty that prompted so many men to come forward that night, and in the days and weeks to come.

Throughout the rest of the summer, women's activities paralleled those of the war effort in general, gradually moving away from an ad hoc approach to a more organized war effort. Rather than waiting to react to an event, women began organizing campaigns

⁴³ "Riverdale Park Filled to Limit," *Mail and Empire*, 10 August 1915, p. 4. The practice of bestowing a white feather on young civilian men originated in Britain in the early days of the war. The phenomenon began with a patriotic speech by Admiral Penrose Fitzgerald in a speech from a bandstand in Folkestone, England, in August 1914, where he called upon women to mark shirkers with white feathers. Militant suffragists were among the first to act on his suggestion, but soon many other women joined in the process. (Peter Simkins, *Kitchener's Army: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914-16* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).).

⁴⁴ "Toronto's Patriotic Heart Stirred by Martial Music," *Star*, 10 August 1915, p. 5.

to address future needs in a proactive manner. As early as the middle of August, a "tag day" was discussed as a way to raise recruiting funds. On 13 August, representatives from various women's organizations met at City Hall to confer with the finance committee of the Citizens' Recruiting League. Labour representatives, Mayor Church and women's groups decided that Labour Day provided the best opportunity as a large number of the people could be canvassed while they watched the parade.⁴⁵ The organization for this meeting demonstrated the increasing efficiency of women in responding to the war's demands, but it also showed that they understood the nature of recruiting campaigns. Creating a climate conducive to recruiting required money to purchase advertisements in the papers, to print posters, and to equip the military bands that paraded through Toronto's streets.

Women working for a wage began organizing their own campaign to raise money to purchase a machine gun or a motor ambulance. Newspaper articles estimated that some 45,000 women were employed in "every sort of labour open to the sex." The idea originated amongst stenographers who sent out over 2,000 letters urging fellow-workers to donate money to purchase machine guns. When they discovered that enthusiasm for the scheme was widespread, they merged their efforts with the Business Women's Club. A call went out to all wage-earning women in Toronto to attend a meeting at 114 1/2 Yonge Street on 24 August to help arrange a mass meeting of women to be held towards

⁴⁵ For an account of this meeting, see the following: "'Tag Day' To Raise Recruiting Funds," *News*, 11 August 1915, p. 5; "Women Will Help Recruiting Cause," *World*, 14 August 1915, p. 4.

the end of September.⁴⁶ This campaign raised the profile of women working in the public sphere, and demonstrated that women's organizations continued to parallel the war effort and became more and more centralized as the demands of the war grew. Moreover, the earlier focus of women's groups on nurturing and comforting those harmed by war blurred. This campaign was not directed at equipping hospital ships, running towel drives, or outfitting convalescents homes; rather, it was about equipping the soldiers at the front with the weapons necessary to win the war.

Women continued to rally in support of the war effort, and formed a visible part of the 1915 Labour Day Parade. The vast majority were members of the working class as it was a union parade. As union members paraded from Queen's Park down to Exhibition Park in front of hundreds of thousands of spectators, women were front and centre. Twenty motor cars donated by the Ontario Motor League were filled with the wives and children of union men who had joined the colours. The Women's Patriotic Association also entered a float which featured women making toys for the children of departed soldiers or sewing for the soldiers. The float was decorated in red, white and blue to show support for the Empire. The Belgian colours were displayed as well, demonstrating the degree to which the trials and tribulations of the Belgian nation had penetrated the consciousness of Torontonians.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ "What Business Women May Do," *Globe*, 15 August 1915, p. 5; "Business Women Are Organizing," *Globe*, 24 August 1915, p. 5.

⁴⁷ "Crowds Cheer for Labour Day Parade," *World*, 7 September 1915, p. 5; "Labour Day Parade Liberally Besprinkled With Men Wearing Uniform of the King," *News*, 7 September 1915, p. 13; "War Themes Rampant in Labour Parade," *Globe*, 7 September 1915, p. 6; "When Big Parade Reached Grounds," *World*, 7 September 1915, p. 4; "Soldiers Swelled Parade," *Telegram*, 7 September 1915, p. 11.

The tag day discussed in August was put into motion in November 1915. This effort was conducted in a climate of bad news about the war. There were now two Canadian divisions in the front line, Allied efforts at Gallipoli had been a fiasco, the Russian army was in disarray, and new fall offensives on the Western Front advanced the line only marginally, at great cost. Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia, authorized the creation of new battalions in late October, re-energizing recruiting, but putting even more demands on local resources. Women understood that local recruiting would cost an enormous sum of money, and set about organizing a tag day to coincide with the massive parade of 10,000 soldiers through the downtown.

The parade marked the anniversary of the late King Edward's birthday and was known as "Khaki Day," taking as its slogan, "Keep Toronto Ahead." A small army of 2,500 women volunteered to sell the tags. Even before the date arrived, women raised the profile of the campaign by driving motor cars decorated with banners announcing the upcoming campaign and displaying recruiting posters. The tag was in the shape of a shrapnel shell, with the words "King Edward VII, Memorial, Khaki Day," emblazoned across it. The flag of Britain was featured prominently, and at the bottom was a picture of a Canadian soldier in khaki with bayonet fixed, along with the words "In aid of regimental recruiting." Anticipating a big day, 350,000 tags were made, one for almost every man, woman and child in town.

On the day of the parade, women fanned out in the chill of an early November morning to cover the city, in place by 8 a.m. At each transfer corner in the city, a captain in an automobile oversaw 10 other women. In the downtown area, virtually every corner

had a unit appealing to citizens to "Keep Toronto Ahead." Each woman carried a tray made of red cardboard with a money box glued on, and patrolled up and down the street until she encountered a tagger from another car. At this point, the two women exchanged progress reports, and turned back. Only the soldiers were not to be tagged: they had already demonstrated their patriotic enthusiasm by donning a khaki uniform. Young men wearing a tag, therefore, formed a visible target for recruiting officers.

The tag day was a resounding success. Virtually everyone going to work could be seen wearing a tag, and almost all the tags were sold within hours. By noon hour, there were no more tags, prompting women to pin British flags on those who donated money. One woman raising funds at the corner of King and Bay Streets reported that of all the citizens she had approached, she had only been refused twice, and the cause of those rejections was lack of money. Another woman scaled the scaffolding of a new Hydro station being built at the corner of Garlaw and Gerrard Streets, tagging brick layers, mechanics, labourers, firemen and architects alike. In another incident, a woman reported encountering only one unwilling donor all day about whom she commented, "I just begged his pardon and said I hadn't known he was a German."

At the end of the day, the women in charge of different sections of the city proceeded to the main corridor of City Hall which had been made available to count the money. Counting tables were placed in the hall, each one bearing a number corresponding to the district covered by its captain. Forty bank tellers were in charge of the counting. At 9 p.m., all the returns were counted, and a cheque made out for the amount received was given to Major-General Sir Sam Hughes, to be turned over later to

Mayor Church in his capacity as chairman of the Citizens' Recruiting League. Over \$34,000 was raised in a single day, surpassing the previous record established by the campaign for the hospital ship in August 1914. This number was added to by the City of Toronto and the Ontario Government to bring the total up to \$50,000, and was announced at a patriotic gathering at Massey Hall to a chorus of cheers.⁴⁸

This tag day was the first time that women organized a campaign which contributed directly to prosecuting the war, as distinct from working to ensure the comfort of soldiers. It demonstrates that public and private spheres of activity were beginning to blend as the demands of the war grew. The tag day also demonstrated the steps made in conducting an organized campaign. In contrast to the early ad hoc arrangements, this tag day was thoroughly planned months in advance, resulting in the most successful tag day in the history of Toronto. Judging from the reaction of citizens to appeals for donations, they continued to show overwhelming support for the war effort. It was a day for young people, with the city's men parading in uniform, and its women securing the funds necessary to continue recruiting. The youth of Toronto were actively

⁴⁸ "Tag Day to Aid Recruiting Here," *News*, 4 November 1915, p. 3; "2,500 Women to Aid in Recruiting Tag Day," *Globe*, 5 November 1915, p. 7; "Keep Toronto Ahead Is Tag Day Slogan," *World*, 5 November 1915, p. 4; "Plans Completed for Big Tag Day," *World*, 6 November 1915, p. 7; "Keep Toronto Ahead Is Tag Day Motto," *Globe*, 8 November 1915, p. 7; "Must Buy Tag to Be Really Dressed," *News*, 8 November 1915, p. 10; "Ran Out of Tags Before Noon, And Used Flags," *News*, 9 November 1915, p. 1; "Army of Girls Will Tag Toronto," *Mail and Empire*, 9 November 1915, p. 10; "Toronto Gives With Free Hand," *Mail and Empire*, 10 November 1915, pp. 1, 7; "Fair Taggers Do Job Well," *Telegram*, 9 November 1915, p. 10; "Took a Clever Man to Dodge the Tag Girls," *Star*, 9 November 1915, p. 1; "Tag Day Gifts May Reach \$60,000 Total," *Star*, 10 November 1915, p. 3; "Should Wear Tag to View Parade," *World*, 9 November 1915, p. 2; "To-Day Is the Day to Keep Toronto Ahead," *Globe*, 9 November 1915, p. 7; "Everyone Wore Tag of League for Recruits," *World*, 10 November 1915, p. 1.

participating in promoting the war effort, and the rest of the population supported their activities by attending the parade and generously over-subscribing to the tag day fund. Collectively, the people of the city understood the voracious demands of the war, and were working together to ensure they provided their share of the cost of victory, both in terms of men and money.

In the wake of this successful tag day, the Central Ontario Women's Institute Convention was held from 10-12 November 1915 at the Central Technical High School, 275 Lippincott Street. The reports for the convention emphasized the enthusiasm for patriotic work on the part of local women. They were more than living up to their motto, "For Home and Country," which dedicated itself to working to the "...betterment of home and the advancement of the nation."⁴⁹ Gathered to celebrate women's work for the Belgians, British Red Cross, and to plan future activities, the convention heard from Pte. Cockburn who had been in the trenches with the Toronto Battalion at Second Ypres. He spoke of how the enemy trenches were only 150 yards from the Canadians. He described how men walked to the front-line trenches, the dangers they faced, and how the trenches were organized. He also spoke of the desperate need to aid the Belgians and to supply new socks and comforts to the soldiers. He concluded with an appeal to women to tell their men that their King and Country needed them: "Please tell the young men to come down off the fence and play the game."⁵⁰

Private Cockburn's speech typified the patriotic activities expected of women at

⁴⁹ Ontario Sessional Papers, Vol. XLVIII, Part X, *Report of the Women's Institute of the Province of Ontario, 1915* (Toronto: A.T. Wilgress, 1916), p. 111.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

the end of 1915. They understood the nature of front-line fighting, and knew that more men were needed to fill the places of men killed or wounded. Their patriotic duty was to work to ease the damage inflicted by the war on civilian and soldier alike, even as they pressed loved ones to volunteer to fill the depleted ranks.

In the coming months, the distinction between private and public spheres of activity continued to blur. The demands of the war effort had a great deal to do with this transformation as a third Canadian division prepared to enter service at the front in December 1916. In Toronto, as large numbers of men left their jobs in the recruiting boom between December 1915 and February 1916, the first reports began to circulate of participation by women in the workforce in non-traditional jobs. Women's organizations like the Local Council of Women,⁵¹ and the Liberal and Conservative Clubs,⁵² recruited women to fill the ranks of wage earners who had enlisted. Women expressed their willingness to canvass and drive jitneys, and some "even registered for work as streetcar

⁵¹ This council was one of the most prominent local women's organizations. It was an umbrella society which represented a federation of 72 other women's groups. Under its guidance and leadership, in addition to their regular activities, "...every one [of the subsidiary societies]...has done 'war work' of one kind or another, the total amount handled annually amounting to thousands of dollars." (Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit'*, p. 54.). It drew most of its membership from the middle- and upper-class of the Anglo-Saxon and Protestant population, and it argued that "...women and particularly mothers, had the capacity to infuse social institutions and political life with superior moral virtue and maternal qualities." (Kari Delhi, "Love and Knowledge: Adult Education in the Toronto Home and School Council, 1916-1940," *Ontario History*, Vol. LXXXVIII, No. 3, September 1996, pp. 207-208.).

⁵² The Women's Conservative Club functioned in much the same way as its Liberal counterpart, working hard to send over 1.4 million articles of clothing and comforts overseas to the soldiers, in addition to "...35 barrels of jam, 800 pounds of sugar, and Christmas boxes." (Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit'*, p. 68.).

conductors to free men conductors so that they may enlist for military service."⁵³ The language describing this phenomenon demonstrates that women were moving into these occupations because they had been left vacant by men who joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force. The word "enlist" was used to describe the activities of both men and women, referring to the fact that they would work in this capacity for the duration of the war, but no longer. Like the men going overseas, women assumed that these jobs were temporary, part of their patriotic duty to help the war effort.

Early December 1915 also saw women become an integral part of the whirlwind campaign by Lieutenant Colonel W.B. Kingsmill of the 124th Overseas Battalion. Kingsmill was the first Toronto officer to conduct an all out campaign to secure recruits. In addition to conducting appeals for recruits downtown, in restaurants, and in the papers, Kingsmill asked that each young woman of courting age be presented "with a recruiting leaflet and asked to pass it onto her young man."⁵⁴ Recruiters believed that men would be more likely to volunteer if they received a recruiting poster from a loved one, than if they were handed an appeal by a stranger. A few days later women walking downtown were handed the following circular:

Bar them out, you women. Refuse their invitations, scorn their attentions. For the love of heaven, if they won't be men, then you be women. Tell them to come in uniform. Tell him to join the colours while he can do so with honour. The day is not far off when he will have to go. The old mother has issued the last call to her sons.⁵⁵

Only a few days later, Lieutenant Colonel Kingsmill continued to press for an increased

⁵³ "Women Enlist As Street Car Conductors," *Globe*, 4 December 1915, p. 10.

⁵⁴ "Toronto Recruiting Breaks All Records," *Globe*, 7 December 1915, p. 8.

⁵⁵ "An Appeal to Women to Make Men Enlist." *World*, 8 December 1915, p. 4.

role for women in recruiting work and in the war effort in general, arguing that "the women will have to be organized -- not only to take positions in the factories and offices now occupied by men -- but to engage in actual recruiting campaigns. The women of Toronto must realize, at once, that they will have to equip themselves to perform men's duties sooner or later. A great deal will depend on them."⁵⁶

The recruiting net continued to be cast further afield by recruiting officers. It was inevitable that women would be called upon to help sooner or later, given the ever-increasing demands of the war. According to Kingsmill, women could best fulfil this role in two ways: first, by pushing men into service by refusing to speak with those not in uniform, a tactic particularly effective when practiced by young women being courted by civilian men; second, by offering to take up the positions traditionally filled by men, freeing them for overseas service. Kingsmill's address spoke to a wide constituency. He warned young men that if they failed to see their duty and enlist, they would be shunned by young women. He called upon women to formally move beyond traditional private sphere activities and assume the positions of men who could then leave for the front. Finally, he demonstrated to traditionally-minded citizens that the war effort demanded the movement of women into the workforce in an organized manner. By doing so, Kingsmill deflected criticism of women performing non-traditional work because it was seen publicly as temporary and essential to winning the war.

Christmas 1915 found women's positions in a state of flux. Citizens retained their prewar notions of gender roles, however, which included a public recognition of the

⁵⁶ "Day of Recruiting Meeting Is Over," *News*, 13 December 1915, p. 1.

sacrifice of women to the war effort at a dinner given to the dependents of the Toronto and York Patriotic Fund. The whole city assumed the paternalist role in the absence of so many soldiers/fathers. On 23 December, two separate rallies were held at Massey Hall, entertaining 10,000 mothers and children. The recently formed Sportsmen's Patriotic Association⁵⁷ sponsored the event, ensuring that there was an ample supply of entertainers and a present for each child. Mothers were presented with a gift as well, although it was a gift which reminded them of the ubiquitous demands of the war: each basket contained wool to be knit into socks for soldiers.⁵⁸

This rally epitomized the role women were expected to play by Christmas 1915. Women were to shelter their families, provide for their children, and work for the war effort. While many women continued to work in the private sphere knitting socks as part of their contribution to the war effort, in 1916 women were moving steadily into the public sphere. Kingsmill's recruiting drive proved prophetic, and women were required to take the positions of men so that they might enlist. This was doubly necessary after Prime Minister Robert Borden announced on 1 January 1916 that the upper limit for the Canadian Expeditionary Force had been increased to 500,000 men. Wartime demands made it impossible to keep a clear gender division between men's and women's work. While the ultimate responsibility of fighting lay solely with men, civilian jobs that had

⁵⁷ The organization was formed in August 1916 under the guidance of R.H. Greer (the man in charge of the 180th Battalion recruited later in the war). Designed to raise funds to supply athletic goods for the soldiers, the organization was so successful that it donated excess resources to help the families of departed soldiers. (Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit,'* p. 36.).

⁵⁸ "Huge Christmas Party For Soldiers' Kiddies," *Globe*, 24 December 1915, p. 8.

been previously reserved for men were opened up for the first time to women.

Even as recruiting in January continued to set new records, women prepared to take on a greater role in the wage economy. Recruiting officers and local businessmen recognized that to maintain "business as usual," "a patriotic appeal must be made to the young women to take the places left vacant wherever it is possible to substitute."⁵⁹ The necessity of conducting a campaign demonstrates that societal norms still exerted enormous influence on the young women and their families who had been brought up to believe that a woman's proper place was in the home. It took the demands of wartime to prompt women to come forward, and to allow society not only to accept this transformation, but to encourage it.

One of the first places considered for female labour was unskilled industrial work. It was believed that, with proper training, women could fill the places of several hundred young men. Clerks and salesmen, along with the Provincial civil service, and many jobs in newspapers requiring editorial and reporting staff could be done by women. Even the dangerous labour associated with the manufacture of munitions came to be considered a likely place for women to replace men. In report after report discussing possible locations for women, one word appeared again and again: "temporary." Women knew that they were fulfilling these roles as part of their patriotic duty, and realized that they would be asked to vacate the jobs when the war was over to make jobs available to returned soldiers. While there was a blurring of the roles associated with the public and the private sphere, it was assumed that the distinction would return as soon as the war

⁵⁹ "Womanhood Will Work to Assist Enlistment," *Globe*, 6 January 1916, p. 6.

was over.

Reflecting the increased organization of the war effort, women from all over Military District No. 2 met to discuss how they could help recruiting. Held at the Provincial Parliament Buildings on 14 January 1916, the meeting promoted the sympathy and cooperation of women in recruiting. Organizers recognized that if the district was to meet the quota of 90,000 men required under Prime Minister Borden's new limit of 500,000 men, it was a mathematical and economic necessity that women would have to take over men's jobs. A scheme to register women willing to fill men's positions was discussed, and a Women's Emergency Corps⁶⁰ was formed with Mrs. A.M. Huestis⁶¹ as its president, Mrs. Willoughby Cummings elected president of the Toronto branch. This new organization would actively help recruiting efforts, and prepare to replace several thousand men with women. The following were cited as likely places for women to replace men: sales clerks, streetcar conductors, policemen, bookkeeping agents, tailoring

⁶⁰ This organization was organized by women of the upper and middle classes to do "...anything that might arise and required doing in the interests of the country." Despite the heavy emphasis in the leadership from these two classes, the thousands of women who attended rallies and events were also from the working class. The main purpose of the group was to orchestrate the movement of women into jobs vacated by men who left for the front. (Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit,'* p. 66.).

⁶¹ Huestis was active in Toronto's war effort from the very beginning. It was at her "Birchknoll" house at 1184 Mount Pleasant Road that the Women's Hospital Ship Campaign was inaugurated in August 1914. A "lifelong fighter for social welfare and consumer causes" (Michael Kluckner, *Toronto the Way It Was* (Altona, Manitoba: Friesen Printers, 1988), p. 282.), Huestis was active at local and national levels in women's organizations such as the National Council of Women, the National Committee for Combating Venereal Diseases, and the Local Council of Women. Not only a tireless worker, she had a reputation as one of the "...sweetest and most capable of women" among contemporaries. (Toronto Public Library, *Biographies of People*, Film T686.3, Volume 16, p. 357.).

cutters and trimmers, chauffeurs, grocery delivery people, bank employees, professional workers, munitions workers, and farmers.

There could be no mistaking this movement, however, as anything other than a response to the demands of the war. The word "emergency" in the organization's name clearly indicated that it was temporary. Even as the organization was formed, threats to traditional men's work were downplayed. Mrs. Huestis carefully pointed out that she wanted it understood that the object of the Corps was not to take work away from men. Rather, the priority for the organization was to place appropriate workers in essential jobs according to the following priority sequence: returned soldiers, men not fit for military service, suitable women. She added further, "I want it to be distinctly understood that we are approaching this matter entirely from the standpoint of patriotic service. It has nothing to do with any women's suffrage movement in any shape or form."⁶² The president of the local Branch, Mrs. Cummings, took pains to reassure Torontonians that women were assuming these positions only during wartime, and would vacate them when the war was over. Mrs. Cummings dismissed fears that women's involvement in the workforce would reduce men's wages, maintaining that the problem would be avoided simply by paying women at the same rate as men.⁶³

⁶² "Toronto Women Have Plan to Free 14,700 Men for War," *Star*, 6 January 1916, p. 2.

⁶³ "How All Ontario Women Can Aid in Recruiting," *News*, 8 January 1916, p. 4; "Preparing for the Release of Men for the Front," *World*, 8 January 1916, p. 4; "Toronto Women Have Plan to Free 14,700 Men for War," *Star*, 6 January 1916, pp. 1, 2; "Women Discuss Labour Problem Caused by War," *Star*, 7 January 1916, p. 1; "Nothing Coercive in Women's Movement," *Star*, 8 January 1916, p. 2; "Women of Ontario to Unite in Effort to Aid Recruiting," *Mail and Empire*, 8 January 1916, p. 10; "Women Form Corps to Aid Recruiting," *Globe*, 8 January 1916, p. 9. See Kealey, *Enlisting Women for the*

This point is emphasized to balance the views expressed in Linda Kealey's recent study *Enlisting Women For The Cause: Women, Labour, and the Left in Canada, 1890-1920* (1998). Kealey's examination of women's activities during the war begins from the same assumption which has guided virtually every study of the conflict, namely that the war was futile and meaningless. This assumption frames her analysis, painting those who opposed the war as heroes, and those who supported it as villains. Her focus is on the minority of socialist women who consistently opposed the war, and used the phenomenon of full employment in the late war years to promote women's militancy. While useful in establishing a chronicle of activities outside the mainstream, it does not help to explain the beliefs and assumptions which guided the patriotic majority.

The Women's Emergency Corps was a patriotic movement. Women joined the workforce "for the duration" just as their male counterparts joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force. It was still assumed that at the end of the war everyone would return to "normal" roles. There was also a certain amount of resentment on the part of Torontonians to the idea of women working in non-traditional jobs. The number and extent of the quotations from women in charge of the Women's Emergency Corps indicate a need to pacify fears that this movement would destroy the fabric of the traditional family and undermine male wages. Nevertheless, the women's experience in wartime Toronto continued to parallel that of the general population, becoming steadily more organized as time went by. Even in the midst of a recruiting boom, plans were being made to continue recruiting and to maintain the productive capacity of industry by

Cause, pp. 161-162, for a discussion of the conflicts over wage rates.

employing female labour. Traditional societal norms provided only a temporary obstacle; the demands of the war were simple: if the war effort was to be expanded, women would have to work outside the home, and society would have to accept it.

In the weeks and months ahead, the Women's Emergency Corps registered women who offered to fill the positions of men who volunteered for overseas service. Throughout the process, Mrs. Huestis, Mrs. Cummings, and other prominent women continued to emphasize the temporary nature of women's work. In a typical statement to the press, Women's Emergency Corps President, Mrs. Huestis, informed readers, "When a woman is enlisted we will make it clear to her that she will not be given a position until it has been found impossible to get a returned soldier, or another man, to do the work left by the man who enlists. Secondly, we will make it plain that her only object in taking the work is to release the man who wants to go to the front, in other words, that she holds the position only as long as the man is away."⁶⁴ Whatever the goals and aspirations of the women's labour movement, and the drive for equality and the vote, women registering for the Emergency Corps could not have failed to hear statements on the temporary nature of their work. It was its temporary nature which rendered it patriotic. Women sacrificed their spare time and family obligations to help in the war effort: just as the men had done by enlisting for the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

While women set about organizing a reserve force of labour, recruiting officers lobbied local manufacturers and the Board of Trade to restructure their businesses to allow men to enlist. Meeting with Board officials in their plush offices on the 19th and

⁶⁴ "Emergency Corps to Register Women," *Globe*, 12 January 1916, p. 10.

20th floors of the Royal Bank Building on the North-East corner of Yonge and King Streets, officers requested that manufacturers determine how many men could be done without, and how many women would be necessary to fill their places. It was pointed out that the employers should guarantee the positions of men when they returned.

In the meantime, the Women's Emergency Corps continued to work. In addition to organizing women to work in the labour force, the organization stressed the need for women to persuade the men in their family to enlist.⁶⁵ At their inaugural meeting, the following resolution was passed:

The changing conditions due to the progress of the war having enlarged the scope of patriotic service for which women are needed, it seems desirable that the various societies whose members are already working so earnestly for those who are serving the King should co-operate in order to meet these new requirements. With this desire in view, the Women's Emergency Corps has been formed by the 2nd Military Division. The Corps is formed for patriotic service in connection with the war only, and is in no way identified with any political or other organization.⁶⁶

This resolution demonstrates the high level of awareness of the nature of the war and its future demands. Women knew that the demands of the war had escalated constantly since its declaration, and that the pattern would continue well into the foreseeable future. There was a clear recognition that meeting Prime Minister Borden's new commitment of 500,000 men required the movement of several thousand women into wage work.

Organizers arranged to have the purpose of the Emergency Corps clearly presented to women at various meetings of women's societies and church groups. Central

⁶⁵ See for example, "Plans of the Women in Emergency Corps," *World*, 15 January 1916, p. 4.

⁶⁶ "Women's Emergency Corps Outlines Recruiting Plans," *News*, 15 January 1916, p. 4.

headquarters was set up in the Women's Patriotic League. Drafts of a registration sheet to be filled out by each registrant were prepared. These forms gave employers details on the physical and mental efficiency of the woman who registered.⁶⁷ The target was middle-class women. Working-class women were either already employed in wage work, or did not have the financial or support networks necessary to secure child support while they worked. Moreover, many of the positions to be filled required basic levels of education which could more easily be provided by women of middle-class or "leisure" class backgrounds. The process of linking vacancies with suitable women involved the alumni of various colleges who had contacts with the business world and could place women in employment efficiently.⁶⁸ Business leaders met to discuss the ideal woman labourer. The general opinion was that they needed healthy women with good educational backgrounds who were able to work steadily and regularly in clerical and responsible positions.⁶⁹ Middle-class women most closely approximated this ideal.

Society, however, did not suddenly abandon the working-class women who were dependent upon the Toronto and York Patriotic Fund for survival. Caring for the women who had given their husbands to the Canadian Expeditionary Force remained one of the focal points of patriotic enthusiasm. On 24 January 1916, the largest formal reception ever held in the city took place, a tribute to the women whose husbands were in France. Citizens had become accustomed to thousands of men parading through the streets in khaki. However, they had never before witnessed such an awesome testament to the

⁶⁷ "Will Release Men for Active Service," *World*, 22 January 1916, p. 4.

⁶⁸ "Women Organize to Replace Enlisters," *Globe*, 22 January 1916, p. 8.

⁶⁹ "Registration of Women for Service," *News*, 22 January 1916, p. 4.

demands of the war as they watched more than 10,000 women and children left behind by departing soldiers converge upon City Hall. The building was decorated with giant British flags which draped down over the arched entry-way. Thousands gathered to watch the arrival of Lieut. Gov. Sir John and Lady Hendrie. Upon their arrival, the band of the 83rd Battalion played "God Save the King," and then the Lieut. Gov. and his wife proceeded inside.

For the next three hours, mothers and little children streamed into the City Buildings, through the guard of honour provided by the 83rd Battalion, up the wide marble staircase and down the corridor to the Council Chamber. Expecting a large crowd, organizers had placed an orchestra in the upper Hall to entertain the women and children while they waited. The Council Chamber was decorated with ferns in each window-sill and the flags of the Allies. There was a festival atmosphere, but interspersed with the joy of the reception were signs of mourning, silent testimony to the cost of war. In the Council Chamber, thousands of tiny citizens, accompanied by their mothers, were received by Sir John and Lady Hendrie, and by Mayor Church and his sister. The official announcer from Government House announced each woman as she came into line. After exchanging greetings with the Lieut. Governor, women left by way of the members' corridor out into the upper Hall along to the Westside of the building, downstairs to the Terauley Street exit and out into the fresh air. The entire route was lined by soldiers.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ "Monster Reception for Wives and Mothers of Soldiers," *News*, 25 January 1916, p. 8; "Soldiers' Folks at Big Reception," *Mail and Empire*, 25 January 1916, p. 4; "Great Crush at Reception," *Telegram*, 25 January 1916, p. 6; "Reception of 10,000 Soldiers' Dependents at City Hall," *Star*, 25 January 1916, p. 2.

Even during this week, the most successful recruiting week in the city during the entire war, residents were constantly reminded of the increasing demands of the war. Even as this group of more than 10,000 women and children were received by the Lieut. Gov. and his wife, the wives and children of more than 1,000 other men were taking leave of their husbands who enlisted for overseas service. Another 1,000 women said goodbye the following week as recruiting records continued to be set, and so the process of feeding the demands of the war effort continued. There was no question, however, of the potential for grief and loss, as women and their soldier-husbands or sons saw the signs of mourning among women gathered in ceremonies like this one. People understood that they were involved in a crusade, and both women and men had their roles to ensure victory.

It was in this context that the Women's Emergency Corps continued the process of organizing and employing women in the wage labour force. Women were doing so under increasing pressure from recruiting officers who were agitating for the mobilization of women, boys, and retired men to take the place of men who enlisted. A special Emergency War Corps of the Boy Scouts was organized to place boys on farms in any capacity that would relieve the labour shortage which accompanied the growing size of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.⁷¹ The question of just how many women would be required to work in munitions continued to be debated, but manufacturers and citizens alike had accepted the fact that continuing industrial work would require women

⁷¹ "Plans to Mobilize Boys, Men and Women," *Globe*, 11 February 1916, p. 6.

workers.⁷²

Recognizing the organizational efficiency of the Women's Emergency Corps, several banks requested women to serve as bank tellers since several branches had been closed due to the lack of clerks, over 200 having enlisted.⁷³ These requests reinforced the nature of women's work already established by the reaction to the formation of the Women's Emergency Corps. Bank officials wanted well educated women, thereby reinforcing the demand for mostly middle class women. They also wanted reassurance that the women taking these positions would realize that it was only for the period of the war after which men would return to their former jobs. Within the context of wartime Toronto, citizens did not have the luxury of slow societal change, but they continued to cling to pre-war notions of gender divisions of labour.

Throughout March and April, the precise nature of women's involvement in the wartime economy continued to be debated. Even as the mines at St. Eloi exploded in another costly disaster, recruiting slowed again. Recruiting officers became bolder, confronting men in their homes if they failed to show at the Recruiting Depot. The efforts of recruiting officers were complemented by organizers at the Women's Corps who continued encouraging women to come forward and work. In conjunction with the Toronto Manufacturers' Association the Corps sent forms to factories to be filled in by employers requesting information on how many skilled workmen they required, and how many positions could be filled by women.⁷⁴

⁷² "Women for Men's Positions Needed," *News*, 12 February 1916, p. 16.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ "Manufacturers to State Need for Women's Work," *News*, 3 April 1916, p. 8.

In the meantime, the Emergency Corps participated in campaigns to secure recruits. At a meeting of the Corps in St. Margaret's College, Bloor Street, women listened to presentations by the commanding officers of different battalions. The general consensus was that the present system of recruitment was not meeting demands. Women were asked to speak to the parents of eligible young men and make them see the need for their sons to do their part.⁷⁵ As military canvasses were conducted throughout the city, many women joined the census-takers. As the recruiting situation became progressively more desperate, women's organizations paralleled the activities of the city and took increasingly extreme measures to stop the recruiting decline. Deciding that the leaders of the Women's Emergency Corps should set a good example for other women and other organizations, a resolution was passed without a dissenting vote: "no woman will preside at its meetings, and no speaker will be sent out under its auspices who has male relatives who are shirking their duty."⁷⁶

As the public role of women expanded, it did not lessen or replace expectations of their role as nurturer and protector. Time and time again women proceeded to the trains to watch the departure of loved ones. Society demanded that women not impose their concerns and fears upon the men leaving to fight the Empire's battles. A stiff upper lip was required when taking leave of soldier-husbands and sons. The departure of the 83rd Overseas Battalion on 25 April 1916 was typical as the unit marched through the downtown, shadowed by loved ones who knew they would not see these men again until

⁷⁵ "Reaction Necessary to Help Recruiting," *World*, 3 April 1916, p. 12.

⁷⁶ "Emergency Corps Bans Shirkers' Relatives," *Globe*, 10 April 1916, p. 4.

after the war. Women passed parcels to the soldiers through the cordons of the 92nd and the 169th Battalions, society women bade farewell to officers, and other women took what might be their last look at beloved privates. Tears, however, were shed in private, not at the station: "It was a British farewell."⁷⁷ Invoking the imagery of the first major engagement by the Canadian Expeditionary Force, one newspaper report argued that the scenes at the train station were women's Second Ypres.⁷⁸

These sacrifices were made by women in the name of the Empire's cause. As women continued to move into traditional male jobs, or participated in further recruiting campaigns, the backdrop to their activities was the all too common scene at train stations. Taking leave of loved ones for a period of years, and possibly forever, women were ardent supporters of the war effort. The war effort meant keeping faith with those men who had already sacrificed their lives and supporting the men still at the front. The harder women worked, they believed, the sooner the war would be over, and the sooner their loved ones would be able to return. Women continued to play a large role in securing funds to continue with recruiting drives. Just a few days after the large religious ceremony in Queen's Park for the departing soldiers, another \$22,000 was raised by women in a tag-day held on 4 May 1916.⁷⁹

By June 1916, monthly recruiting totals were still much lower than in the peak of

⁷⁷ "Thousands Say Good-Bye to Departing Battalions," *World*, 26 April 1916, p. 1.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ For an account of the day's activities, see "Whole City Tagged for Kitchener Day," *News*, 4 May 1916, p. 8; "Ablaze with Union Jacks for Kitchener's Day," *Telegram*, 4 May 1916, p. 20.

January 1916. The 204th Battalion made an appeal at its noon hour rally at Yonge and Temperance Streets for women to enlist with the battalion for recruiting purposes. The new scheme was to raise several platoons of women who were prepared to accompany recruiting sergeants in approaching young men whom they thought should be in khaki. It was suggested that women visit the places of employment when they found a young eligible man doing work which a woman could do, and have her volunteer to hold his position until he came back from the war.⁸⁰ In two hours, 108 women came forward and gave their names. The distinctions between public and private spheres continued to change. At the beginning of the war, a woman was patriotic if she supported her man in the private sphere and took care of his children. By June 1916, women were entering the public sphere to push men to do their duty: something which would have been abhorred in August 1914. Within the framework of mid-1916, it was celebrated.

Preparations were also underway for a meeting of women at Massey Hall on 12 June 1916. After 22 months of war, women met for the specific purpose of ensuring that their efforts were organized and coordinated in a manner best suited to helping the war effort. The impetus for the meeting came from General W.A. Logie, Director of Military District No. 2, asking that a large meeting be called to draw attention to the increased role that women had to assume in the war effort. Mrs. Willoughby Cummings was put in charge of the arrangements. All women were invited to the rally, particularly those with relations at the front. Massey Hall was filled to capacity on 12 June 1916 with an audience of women, most of whom knitted throughout the meeting. On the platform sat

⁸⁰ "Enlist Women to Get After City Young Men," *Globe*, 6 June 1916, p. 8.

representatives from women's organizations, as well as the wives of the commanding officers of the city battalions. While part of the meeting witnessed commemorative speeches given in the honour of those men who had fallen for the cause, the real purpose of the meeting was to interest women in recruiting. It was not a time to mourn losses, but rather "...to see how still more useful women might become along other lines of patriotic endeavor."⁸¹ The focus was on patriotic duty and winning the war. Mrs. Cummings informed the crowd that the Women's Emergency Corps had registered over 300 women who were willing to take men's places to release them for enlistment, but more were required.

Several resolutions were passed, including one which called upon the Canadian government to enact National Registration in order that the country might more efficiently prosecute the war effort. Such a scheme would prevent the departure of a skilled labourer with a wife and small children, and ensure that an unskilled labourer working as a shop clerk would be required to serve. Another resolution recognized that the call to patriotic service came as insistently to women as to men, and women pledged to do their utmost to set free every eligible man. To this end, Mrs. Huestis encouraged women to come forward and take temporary control of men's jobs. Women need not be concerned, she argued, about having to work longer than the duration of the war: "We are not looking for women to replace men permanently; we are not looking for a position that a returned soldier could fill; we are not looking for a position that an unfit man holds;

⁸¹ "Mass Meeting of Women Finds All Ready to Serve," *News*, 13 June 1916, p. 8.

but we are looking for positions that are held by men who ought to be in khaki."⁸² Col. G.H. Williams, a prominent recruiting officer, reinforced this point by telling women that if they failed to come forward and take men's places, these positions would have to be filled by enemy aliens.⁸³ Given the climate towards enemy aliens, this was something to be avoided at all costs.

Having secured women volunteers willing to work in positions typically held by men, the last obstacle to employing women was the attitude of manufacturers. This small group of men was as much the audience of the resolutions passed at this meeting as were the women in attendance. It is likely for this reason that the Women's Emergency Corps and prominent women patriotic speakers stressed the temporary nature of war work, and the need to use returned soldiers and unfit men first. Women were fighting on two fronts: first, against Germany; second, against traditional societal norms.

The turning point in the latter was announced during this meeting. The Munitions Department at Ottawa gave permission for over 4,000 women to work in munitions in Canada in the coming months; thereby lifting the gates barring women from working in munitions factories. This relaxation of employment restrictions was

⁸² "Women of Toronto Demand a National Registration," *Star*, 13 June 1916, p. 7.

⁸³ For an account of this meeting, see the following: "Women's Mass Meeting At Massey Hall Monday," *World*, 9 June 1916, p. 12; "Issued Statement Regarding Meeting," *World*, 12 June 1916, p. 2; "Women to Honour the Fighting Men," *Globe*, 12 June 1916, p. 10; "National Registration for Canada Demanded by Women's Mass Meeting," *Globe*, 13 June 1916, p. 1, 6; "Women Plan to Fill Men's Places," *World*, 13 June 1916, p. 7; "Huge Mass Meeting of Women Ask National Registration," *Telegram*, 13 June 1916, p. 16; "Women to Free Eligible Men," *Mail and Empire*, 13 June 1916, p. 1, 10.

absolutely the product of the demands of the war. Both women and men at the forefront of the war effort were clamoring for the government to increase its involvement in recruiting and the war effort in general. Women's organizations and recruiting officers recognized that women would be required to work in non-traditional jobs. Gradually, between January 1916 and June 1916, manufacturers were persuaded of this necessity, culminating in the announcement from the Department of Munitions that women would be required in munitions plants. Women celebrated this official recognition of the role they could play as a victory for the efficiency of the war effort.

Over the next several weeks, women continued to move out into the public sphere. As part of a general search for areas of employment where women could replace men, it was decided that hotel management was uniquely suited for female employment. Not only could women put their considerable knowledge of running a household to good use, it was reasoned, but they would also be better suited than male managers to make the adjustments necessary when the Temperance Act came into force in September 1916. Prior to the women's mass meeting, the number of women who enlisted to take men's positions were counted in hundreds. In the wake of the meeting, over a thousand women offered their services.⁸⁴ Arrangements were also begun to have women march on Dominion Day 1916 (1 July) as a public demonstration of their support for recruiting and the war effort. It was thought that the several hundred women's societies would take part, resulting in a parade of several thousand women. As preparations continued, requests filtered in to the Women's Emergency Corps asking for women willing to work in

⁸⁴ "Thousand Women Offer Services," *World*, 20 June 1916, p. 12.

factories. At a meeting of the Corps in the private dining room of the Robert Simpson Company, a letter was read from John Bertram of Dundas requesting 75 women to work in his factory. Along with the request came an invitation to the members of the Corps to visit the factory and see the women making 18 pound shrapnel shells.⁸⁵

On the same day that British troops began the Somme offensive on the Western Front, women took to the streets in a parade to promote recruiting. In her private diary, Elizabeth Cawthra recorded that it "...was a procession of women, anxious to do work to release the men to go to the war."⁸⁶ Papers were filled with accounts of the women's parade. At 3 p.m., the drums of the 170th Battalion band announced the start of the march. Over 3,000 women took part in this public appeal for recruits. On a beautiful summer day, Queen's Park was filled with spectators waiting to see the procession, the chief interest being the mothers, wives and children of the soldiers marching at front. Wanting to demonstrate their ability to sacrifice and endure the demands of the war, most women walked, with motor cars provided only for the elderly. On Canada's national holiday, women were the principal actors in a patriotic display promoting greater participation in the war effort. Throughout the entire length of the parade route, residents cheered the marching women. It was hoped that the most conspicuous result of the parade would be a renewal and an expansion of the patriotic work of women.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ "Emergency Corps Meeting Yesterday," *World*, 23 June 1916, p. 5.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Cawthra Diary Entry for July 1, 1916, Metro Reference Library, Baldwin Reading Room, S259, Cawthra Family Collection, Box 2, Series I: Elizabeth Cawthra Diaries 1900-1921.

⁸⁷ "Crowds Line Route of Women's Parade," *News*, 3 July 1916, p. 4; "Inspiration Parade of 3,000 Women," *Globe*, 3 July 1916, p. 9; "Inspiring Site As Women Marched," *World*, 3 July 1916, p. 5; "Most Wonderful Procession in Toronto's History," *Telegram*, 3

The order of the procession was determined by the level of sacrifice of the participants, demonstrating the breadth and depth of their support for the war effort. Leading the parade marched mothers who had given sons to the cause, carrying a banner which read "Our Sons Serve." Next in the hierarchy came the wives of men serving overseas, followed by children holding a sign which read "Our Fathers Serve." Following behind the women and children who had given loved ones to the cause, were women serving on the Women's Auxiliaries of the Toronto battalions. Behind these women followed various women's patriotic organizations, including the Daughters of the Empire and the Women's Patriotic League. Next walked the women involved in church groups organized to see to the welfare of soldiers, followed by Liberal and Conservative political associations, Temperance societies, and the women's auxiliaries of various unions. Towards the end of the parade, the obvious connections between the war and organizations represented became less marked, but women from various musical clubs and Christmas associations were moved to participate in this parade in support of recruiting. Next to last walked members of the Women's Emergency Corps members and women who had registered for service. Those without links to any of these organizations marched last.⁸⁸

According to the hierarchy established by the order of marching, the greatest contribution a woman could make was to provide one of her sons for the war effort. It was considered a greater sacrifice to part with a son, than to surrender a husband or a

July 1916, p. 18; "Toronto Women Took Part in Grand Parade," *Mail and Empire*, 3 July 1916, p. 5; "Women's War Work in Inspiring Parade," *Globe*, 3 July 1916, p. 10.

⁸⁸ "Plans Complete for Big Parade," *World*, 30 June 1916, p. 4.

father. These women were demonstrating to women watching that the single most important patriotic activity they could perform was to ensure that the men close to them recognized their duty and went to the front. All other patriotic duties, in employment, in patriotic societies, in religious groups, and in other organizations, were secondary to the all important task of securing recruits. Next in importance was the attention drawn to the tasks performed by women who had been serving in an auxiliary capacity with Toronto's battalions for the past several months. Women performing this task were accorded the honour of marching before women attached to patriotic societies. Thus, the parade reinforced the notion that it was more important to serve than to belong to an organization which supported the war. It is interesting to note that secular patriotic societies were placed in front of church groups, suggesting that despite a strong religious component, secular reasons for fighting took precedence over religious justifications.

The fact that the Women's Emergency Corps and those women who had recently registered for service were marching towards the end of the parade speaks volumes of societal norms towards women working in non-traditional jobs. The fact that they had a place in the parade indicates growing acceptance of women in the workforce, but in a parade designed to promote recruiting, these women followed far behind others who had donated loved ones to the cause. The hierarchy of the parade reflected contemporary visions of women's duties. Her first duty was to her family, followed by serving in an auxiliary capacity to traditional male occupations and participating in women societies designed to promote the war effort. Even in a parade organized by women, those working in non-traditional jobs were not recognized as having sacrificed as much as

women performing in traditional areas. After all, the Women's Emergency Corps was temporary, and after the war -- it was still assumed -- the hierarchy clearly displayed by this parade would be resumed.

In the wake of the parade, women moved increasingly into the public sphere to work in non-traditional jobs. Articles commented on the novelty of this new movement. *Saturday Night* observed that 1916 had become a year of plentiful employment for women anxious to work. Along with recognizing that women performing these duties were unusual, the article praised the adaptability of modern women to adjust to life as munitions workers.⁸⁹ Thus, while there may have been some opposition to women working in these jobs, when it was clear that they could perform their duties adequately and aid the war effort, citizens offered their support.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1916, women read about the great Somme offensive at the front and followed the activities of the Canadian Expeditionary Force closely when it returned to the line in September. Local units continued to finish their training and march one last time through the streets before proceeding overseas. The emphasis on maintaining a cool composure and stiff upper lip remained the norm, as women and children continued the pitiable task of saying goodbye to loved ones.⁹⁰ In the middle of September, women took stock of the number and value of the articles that the Women's Patriotic League had sent to Europe in two years of war. All told, just under four million articles at an estimated value of \$429,000 had been shipped from the city:

⁸⁹ "Women's Section," *Saturday Night*, 15 July 1916, p. 21.

⁹⁰ See for example, "Five O'Clock," *Saturday Night*, 9 September 1916, p. 22.

surgical supplies, sheets, towels, socks, cigars, cigarettes and canned vegetables.⁹¹

Shipping this much material required careful organization at the local level, demonstrating that women continued the process of increasing their efficiency as the demands of the war effort rose.

The public focus of women's activities, however, continued to be shaped by the now difficult recruiting situation. The casualties the CEF was sustaining at Courcelette greatly exceeded the intake of new recruits, and articles proclaimed Quebec's failure to do its duty in regards to recruits. In this tense atmosphere, it was clear that voluntary enlistment was not working well enough. Recruiting officers responded by appealing to employers and potential employees to move women into the workforce as soon as possible to release men for the front. The driving force was patriotism. Women were asked to give up their free time in its name, and men were supposed to be pushed by it into enlisting. Editorials appeared in Liberal and Conservative papers extolling the virtues of women moving into the workforce.⁹² In response, women transferred into war work by the thousand. Only one certificate was required: a note from their doctor attesting to the fact that they could bear the burden.⁹³

Despite this attention accorded to women performing non-traditional tasks, women continued to work in the public sphere as an extension of their more private roles. The 17-19 October 1916 campaign for the British Red Cross owed much of its success to

⁹¹ "Shipped Comfort Valued At \$429,379," *Globe*, 12 September 1916, p. 4.

⁹² See for example, "Manufacturers, Labour, Profit and Sacrifice" (ed.), *News*, 26 September 1916, p. 6; "The Recruiting Director Needs Help" (ed.), *Globe*, 20 September 1916, p. 6.

⁹³ "Increased Number of Women Given Places," *Star*, 11 October 1916, p. 4.

the more than 1,400 women workers who did most of the campaigning. Women who attended church encouraged donations from other members of the congregation. Over 200 cars were donated to help women in their city-wide campaign.⁹⁴ The work of local women, and the generosity of citizens, ensured that the Red Cross Fund enjoyed a 30 percent increase from its 1915 total, successfully raising over \$700,000 in three days.

Even while the British Red Cross campaign was being waged, the organization to move women into the public sphere to work in war industries was being enhanced. The Government declared that it would employ "inspectresses" in munition plants and appealed to women with education to volunteer. Suitable candidates must have spent one year in high school, take one week of special training at a Technical School, sign for a period not less than six months, and be willing to go to whatever part of the country where they might be sent. Their railway fees would be paid for them along with their hotel bills for two days while they secured lodgings.⁹⁵ In banks, too, women were an increasingly common sight. Gazing through the windows of any downtown banking office demonstrated the profound changes the war was having on the workforce. Women now occupied the places of desk clerks who had enlisted, and the banks were actively recruiting their staff from the city's female population. These changes had taken place in a remarkably short period of time, not having begun in earnest until January 1916.⁹⁶

Despite the movement of women into the workforce, recruiting numbers

⁹⁴ "Labour of Love for Red Cross," *News*, 14 October 1916, p. 1; "Toronto's Women's Day," *News*, 16 October 1916, p. 8.

⁹⁵ "Demand for Women Workers Increasing," *Globe*, 18 October 1916, p. 10.

⁹⁶ "Women Flocking to Banks and Perhaps to Stay," *Globe*, 26 October 1916, p.

continued to decline, and many organizations and citizens began to openly support conscription. Various women's organizations supported the move towards conscription. Representing 72 local women's organizations, the Local Council of Women put itself on record in favour of conscription on 21 November 1916.⁹⁷ Independent women's groups followed its lead. For its part, the Women's Patriotic League announced that the efforts directed at suffrage should wait until the end of the war, and declared itself in favour of conscription. Nationally, the suffrage movement was divided by the war. The Canadian Suffrage Association sponsored speakers who supported and rejected the war. Its rival organization, the National Equal Franchise Union refused anything but total victory, and paralleled the attitude of the Toronto Women's Patriotic League.⁹⁸ Securing the vote would be meaningless if the Germans won the war.⁹⁹

As another winter of war settled over the city, it was obvious that the place women had taken in the war effort was dramatically different from the previous Christmas. While Christmas 1915 had seen a banquet for the dependents of the Toronto and York Patriotic Fund, the Christmas Season of 1916 witnessed a gathering of women's munition workers. Throughout Canada, 4,000 women were working on munitions: 2,500 worked in Toronto. Just under half of these women turned up on New Year's Eve for a banquet that was held for them in the transportation building at the Exhibition grounds.

⁹⁷ "Local Council Votes in Favour of Conscription," *Globe*, 22 November 1916, p. 10.

⁹⁸ Kealey, *Enlisting Women*, p. 146.

⁹⁹ "Should Not Ask Vote in War Time," *World*, 29 November 1916, p. 4.

Coloured electric lights and hundreds of flags decorated the building. To ward off the cold, huge stoves were set up and "awning walls" were stretched around the tables. At the South-East corner, a dressing room was arranged where women could take off their wraps before forming in line, and marching to the table reserved for their munition plant. The regimental bands of the 198th and 204th Battalions entertained the workers, and men from these battalions served as waiters. At the conclusion of the evening, Rebecca Church¹⁰⁰ rose, raised her glass, and said, "Ladies, the King!" Just as the officers of a battalion rise after mess dinner at the word of their commanding officer, over 1,200 women rose and toasted their King while the band played "God Save the King."¹⁰¹

This banquet celebrated the very public work that women were doing to help win the war. This dramatic transformation in the number and scope of women working in the public sphere had taken place within the year. In January 1916, women were in the opening stages of organizing to work in non-traditional jobs. The demands of the war outweighed the reservations of societal norms and manufacturers, and by the end of 1916 women were an essential part of the munitions workforce.

The beginning of 1917 saw the public discourse about women working in munitions factories further develop. The head of the Imperial Munitions Board, Sir Joseph Flavelle, argued that fully 95 percent of the munition work in Canada could be

¹⁰⁰ Miss Rebecca Church spearheaded a campaign to raise funds for the Great War Veterans to be able to secure a headquarters and club room at 22 Carlton Street in November 1916. (Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit,'* p. 51.).

¹⁰¹ "Women Munition Workers' Banquet," *World*, 1 January 1917, p. 4; "Of 4,000 Women Workers on Munitions, City Has 2,500," *Star*, 2 January 1917, p. 10; "Thrilling Sight When 1,500 Women Toast King," *Telegram*, 2 January 1917, p. 18.

done by women.¹⁰² There had been no relaxation of the demands traditionally placed on women to serve as nurturer and protector, requiring women to keep the home as a place of refuge. In addition to these duties, however, women were now expected to work if they were able, and they continued to support public patriotic campaigns.

In the January 1917 campaign for the Toronto and York Patriotic Fund, women were actively engaged in soliciting funds, accounting for 1,842 of the 2,052 campaign workers. In addition, they were targeted for donations themselves. One campaign poster illustrates the widening of possibilities for women wishing to participate in the war effort:

WOMEN OF TORONTO! FOR THE SAKE OF THE BOYS IN KHAKI
LEND THIS CRUSADE YOUR HELP! To the women who have made
the sacrifice of giving a man, to all who know what the sacrifice means,
we particularly appeal. Every Woman has a two-sided opportunity. She
can serve by giving money, and she can serve by giving work and
money.¹⁰³

Front and centre, the greatest contribution a woman could make remained the donation of a man close to her for the war effort. However, unlike the beginning of the war when such a sacrifice was considered sufficient demonstration of patriotic dedication, women now had to give more. Their choices were to give money, or to work. The choice was theirs, but there was no mistaking the increased demand on women or the options available to them to fulfil their duty.

¹⁰² "Women Could Make Merely All Munitions," *Globe*, 15 January 1917, p. 4. For a complete discussion of Flavelle and the IMB, see Michael Bliss, *A Canadian Millionaire: The Life and Times of Sir Joseph Flavelle, Bart, 1858-1939* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978). See also, Peter Rider, "The Imperial Munitions Board and Its Relationship to Government, Business and Labour, 1914-1920," PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1974.

¹⁰³ "Advertisement," *Globe*, 17 January 1917, p. 7.

Whether women elected to work or to pay to support the Patriotic Fund, all were asked as part of a Thrift Campaign to conserve resources at home. Throughout January, February and March 1917, women were informed of the many ways they could help the war effort by practicing thrift. Instructions appeared on women's pages on how women could grow their own salads in a back garden. Columns extolled the virtues of preparing a nutritious meal without using meat. As the Canadian troops rushed to victory at Vimy Ridge in early April 1917, they owed their success in no small part to the sacrifices and work of women at home who functioned as an integral part of the collective response to the demands of the war.

* * *

Between September 1914 and May 1917, women's experience with the war effort passed through several phases. Between September 1914 and March 1915, women remained largely in the private sphere, working in traditional roles to nurture and comfort the soldiers. They were expected to maintain the house as a refuge from the demands of the outside world, and use their spare money to donate to hospital ship funds organized by women's societies. The Second Battle of Ypres, however, expanded the scope of women's activities. As casualties filtered back to the city, women increased their commitment to the war, conducting traditionally private sphere tasks in public, and organizing campaigns to supply bandages to care for wounded soldiers. The increasing demand for recruits by the end of June 1915 prompted another change in women's activities. Beginning in July 1915, extending through December 1915, women's involvement pushed out further into the public sphere. While still doing traditionally

private sphere activities, women were seen publicly on floats and in parades demonstrating what a patriotic woman should be doing. They were also, however, pushing men to enlist, proving that their role as passive observers of the war effort was at an end. Women believed as strongly as men in the causes for which the Empire was at war, and played a key role in the success of recruiting in the summer of 1915.

Another increase in recruiting totals in January 1916 ushered in a new phase. To secure the 500,000 men required for the Canadian Expeditionary Force, women would have to replace men in non-traditional public sphere jobs. The formation of the Women's Emergency Corps, and the gradual introduction of women into non-traditional jobs was supported by militia officers, but greeted with suspicion by Toronto manufacturers. During this period which extended until June 1916, women emphasized the need for their participation and the temporary nature of their work, citing the demands of the war as the driving force behind their efforts. The final phase began in mid-June 1916 at the mass rally of women at Massey Hall to organize their participation in the war effort. This rally coincided with Ottawa's declaration that women would be employed to make munitions, and marked the first time in 22 months of war that women had organized in such a public forum to discuss their participation in the war effort. In the wake of the meeting, women moved into non-traditional jobs by the thousands, participated in public parades to support recruiting, and passed resolutions supporting national registration and conscription. By May 1917, women were active participants in the successful prosecution of the war effort, equipping soldiers with the resources and weapons necessary to ensure victory: by conscription if necessary.

Pre-war distinctions between public and private spheres of activity could not withstand the demands of the war. Such distinctions could be maintained so long as the war remained a "great adventure," but a "great crusade" required a dramatic increase in effort. Financing the war effort, caring for dependants, and recruiting soldiers proved too demanding to be done according to traditional societal divisions of labour. Women were required as a reserve force of labour to dramatically increase the scope of their involvement. Despite the gradual movement of women into the public sphere, there was no lessening of the demands made on them in the private sphere. Women were still required to exhibit poise and reserve when taking their leave of husbands and sons at the train station, departing for overseas. Women still had to knit for soldiers in their spare time, and provide shelter and comfort to the next generation. All their activities in the public sphere in support of the war effort were in addition to their traditional duties.

Women's participation in wartime Toronto paralleled that of the city in general. Early attempts at confronting the demands of the war were met by ad hoc arrangements, designed to meet the emergency of the moment. The towel drive in the wake of Second Ypres is a case in point. As the demands of the war increased, women began organizing in a pro-active way, orchestrating tag-days to raise money for recruiting, culminating in the creation of the Women's Emergency Corps to oversee a smooth transition of women into non-traditional jobs. All of Toronto gradually centralized and organized activities to maximize the efficiency of the war effort.

Throughout this process, women did not act out of ignorance. Rather, they were kept up to date on the nature and cost of the fighting, and responded in a calculated way.

They understood that taking leave of soldiers at the train station might be the last time they saw their loved ones, and yet they decided to keep a brave face. They knew that poison gas was killing people at the front, and undertook a campaign to equip soldiers with the equipment necessary to survive. Knowledge about the destructive capacity of machine guns led to campaigns to provide such weapons for Canadian soldiers. Women did not remove themselves from the war effort, or distance themselves from the cost of the conflict. Women were ardent supporters of the war effort, and behaved in a manner consistent with this outlook.

The appeal of patriotism and the demands of the war effort resonated with women of all classes. The demands of recruiting were so great that no class was immune. At the train station, society women took their leave of loved ones just as did women from the middle or working classes. At patriotic rallies, women of all classes knitted socks for the soldiers, and for those who could not afford the wool, supplies were provided. Women of all classes also attended public rallies in support of recruiting and the war effort. Given the nature of the fighting at the front, society women were just as likely to lose a loved one as were working-class women. There were differences, of course, in the home lives of women of different classes, as working-class women were more profoundly affected by increases in the cost of living than were middle-class women. Most women, however, supported the war effort, and worked to ensure its successful conclusion.

As conscription was introduced in the Canadian Parliament by Prime Minister Borden, women activists had every reason to be proud of their activities to support the war effort. They had helped make possible the dramatic increases in recruiting which

characterized 1915 and early 1916, had participated in campaigns to provide dependents with the resources required to keep body and soul together, had provided the workers necessary to conduct victory loan campaigns, and had moved successfully into non-traditional jobs to help Canada ensure that its troops at the front were kept reinforced and supplied. They were part of a collective response to the demands of the war which put country before self, and believed in the necessity of further sacrifice to meet the demands of the war. The debate over conscription provided just such an opportunity.

Chapter 6

Conscription -- A Decided Commitment

As the polls closed on the evening of 17 December 1917, thousands of people began to gather around the newspaper offices to wait together for both the Toronto and the national results. Despite the cool temperatures, the crowd was good humoured, confident that the voters of English-speaking Canada would endorse the cause of conscription by electing Unionist members. Toronto, as we shall see, voted overwhelmingly for candidates pledged to support the Military Service Act. Despite three long years of ever more costly war, Torontonians were virtually unanimous in their support for conscription.

When Prime Minister Robert Borden's announced in May 1917 that he intended to introduce a bill to conscript not less than 50,000 men, he knew that he could count on the editorial support of all of the Toronto papers. From the Liberal *Star*, which described the action as "absolutely necessary" to the Conservative *Mail and Empire*, the daily press offered ringing endorsements of the new policy.¹

Religious periodicals were also fully supportive. Reflecting opinions expressed in other religious periodicals, an editorialist from the *Canadian Churchman* was "...certain that it was with a sigh of relief that the vast majority learned on Saturday last that it [conscription] was really coming. The need of reinforcements, coupled with the

¹ "The Government Will Enforce Selective Draft" (ed.), *Star*, 19 May 1917, p. 1. See also, "Greatness Thrust Upon Them" (ed.), *World*, 19 May 1917, p. 6; "Compulsory Service" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 19 May 1917, p. 6; "Conscription and Empire" (ed.), *News*, 19 May 1917, p. 6; "Conscription Is Welcomed" (ed.), *Globe*, 19 May 1917, p. 1; "Let Borden Finish Canada's Work" (ed.), *Telegram*, 19 May 1917, p. 20; "Conscripting Wealth" (ed.), *The Weekly Sun*, 23 May 1917, p. 1; "Conscription, At Last" (ed.), *The Weekly Sun*, 23 May 1917, p. 1; "Conscription Vs. Politics" (ed.), *Saturday Night*, 2 June 1917, p. 1.

lamentable falling off in recruits, made it inevitable."² Even as they waited for the bill's details, public opinion leaders endorsed the decision: University of Toronto President R.A. Falconer, Sir William Hearst, N.W. Rowell, Brigadier General W.A. Logie, and Archdeacon H.J. Cody were among those prominent citizens who endorsed the idea. On 28 May 1917, City Council declared itself in support of compulsory military service without referring the question to the people.³ At their annual meeting, the Women's Christian Temperance Union declared itself in support of conscription, and argued that the wealth of the nation should also be made to serve.⁴ At their annual meetings, Anglicans and Baptists also recorded their endorsement.⁵ At the club rooms of the Great War Veterans' Association at Church and Carlton Streets, the announcement was cheered. One of the more than 3,400 members of the local G.W.V.A. commented, "We are tickled to death that the powers that be have realized their duty and the pressing need of the time for men and still more men."⁶ At recruiting meetings all over the city, "every mention of

² "Editorial" (ed.), *Canadian Churchman*, 24 May 1917, p. 327. For examples of support for conscription from the other major religious periodicals, see the following: "Enforced Military Service" (ed.), *Catholic Register*, 24 May 1917, p. 4; "Selective Conscription" (ed.), *Canadian Baptist*, 24 May 1917, p. 2; "The Story of the Week" (ed.), *The Presbyterian*, 24 May 1917, p. 592; "The Government and the Crisis" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 30 May 1917, p. 5.

³ "In Favour of Conscription," *News*, 29 May 1917, p. 9.

⁴ "W.C.T.U. Would Have The Selective Draft," *Globe*, 8 June 1917, p. 6. Other women's organizations were similarly dedicated to supporting conscription. See Letter from the Toronto Home and School Council to Robert Borden, 24 May 1917, PAC, Robert Borden Papers, MG 26, H1 a, Vol. 16, pp. 32195.

⁵ "Decisive Vote in Synod for Conscription," *World*, 6 June 1917, p. 1; "Laymen Urge Conscription," *News*, 15 June 1917, p. 3.

⁶ "Pleased With Conscription," *News*, 19 May 1917, p. 21. Originally called the Returned Soldiers' Association when formed in May 1916, the local Great War Veterans' Association grew to 3,400 members by the end of 1916. Miss Rebecca Church, sister to Toronto Mayor T.L. Church, organized a campaign in November 1916 to raise funds to

scription was received with cheers and applause by the audience."⁷

There was one section of the community, however, which was not entirely pleased with the announcement. Labour leaders agreed to support conscription provided the government also conscripted wealth. They did not object to the idea of conscription. They objected to a conscription policy which was, in their eyes, not broad enough. Labour leaders said they wanted not just a centralized military manpower scheme, but a centralized economic one as well. Mr. James Simpson,⁸ Vice-President of the Trade and Labour Congress of Canada, was also upset that Borden had not consulted with labour leaders before announcing conscription. Simpson, however, did not object to conscription, and became a strong supporter of the measure after a meeting with Borden in Ottawa.⁹

secure a headquarters and club rooms for the organization. Resulting donations greatly exceeded expectations, allowing the rental and refurbishing of a 26-room house at 22 Carlton Street. (Hubert Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit,'* (Toronto: Municipal Intelligence Bureau, 1918), Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, flem0704, pp. 35, 36, 51.). Representing 72 local women's organizations, the Minutes of the Local Council of Women record that the Local Council "....most heartily endorse the Women's Tribute Night to help provide a club house for veterans and urge that all federated societies contribute that night." (Archives of Ontario, Minutes of the Toronto Local Council of Women, File F805-1-0-3, Minutes 1914-1922, Entry for 21 November 1916.).

⁷ See for example, "Audience Cheers for Conscription," *World*, 28 May 1917, p. 4.

⁸ Born in the North of England in 1874, Simpson came to Toronto in 1888. Educated in the city, he trained as a practical printer before becoming a reporter for the *Star*. A long-time political activist in Labour's interests, he served on the Board of Education, ran unsuccessfully for the Mayoralty in 1908, and was a prominent member of the organized labour movement before the war. (Henry James Morgan, ed., *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 2nd edition (Toronto, William Briggs, 1912), p. 1025.).

⁹ "How Toronto Labour Leaders Regard Conscription Policy," *News*, 19 May 1917, p. 1. Simpson's attitude, which was quite typical of labour leaders in Toronto, contrasts sharply with the portrait offered by Craig Heron and Myer Siemiatycki in their

While public opinion leaders put themselves on record, ordinary citizens of military age responded by heading to the Toronto Recruiting Depot to enlist in the local battalion of their choice. Men lined up hours before the examination centre opened, and by 9: 30 a.m. a considerable crowd had gathered. Clerks and medical officers had not anticipated such a demand on their services, and the Depot was filled with men in various stages of the attestation process.¹⁰ By 10 a.m., over 60 men had been assigned to local battalions for training. By the end of the week, 968 men had applied to serve, though less than half, 408, had met the medical standard and been attested. The mere announcement of conscription had accomplished what months of cajoling had failed to deliver, but the sudden rush to enlist turned out to be short-lived and recruiting totals soon declined to normal levels.¹¹

The public discourse on conscription during the summer of 1917 demonstrated that Torontonians were determined to influence events, not simply react to them. Initial anger at Laurier's decision to reject a coalition with Borden gave way to a conviction that

1998 article, "The Great War, The State, and Working-Class Canada." Filling a large gap in the treatment of labour during the war, the article presents the Great War as an opportunity for government to increase its power at the expense of labour. The fact that "voluntarism was giving way to state compulsion," and that the state used its power to enact prohibition legislation is used to show the power of the state run amok. (Craig Heron and Myer Siemiatycki, "The Great War, The State, and Working-Class Canada," in Heron, ed., *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 13-14.). The article does not, however, consider that a significant majority of the population supported conscription and prohibition. Martin Robin notes in his 1966 article that the Toronto Trades and Labour Council passed a resolution in favour of the conscription of wealth with manpower. (Martin Robin, "Registration, Conscription and Independent Labour Politics, 1916-1917," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. XLVII, No. 2, 1966, p. 107.).

¹⁰ "Recruiting Is Booming," *News*, 21 May 1917, p. 1.

¹¹ "Nearly Thousand Men Examined," *World*, 28 May 1917, p. 6.

English-speaking Canadians must now have their way. Citizens turned out by the thousand to attend rallies in support of conscription. At a mass rally at Queen's Park on 2 June 1917, under a glorious blue sky, 10,000 men, women and children endorsed a resolution supporting conscription. The crowd demanded that the government "...take immediate steps to put down sedition in Canada." Crowds were so large that they were addressed from two platforms. Cheer after cheer was raised when one speaker declared that the government should "Put a revolver to the head of the fit man who refuses to go." The strongest cheers were for the more than 200 khaki-clad former soldiers who had limped, with the banners of the Great War Veterans' Association, to their seats surrounding the dais. Mayor T.L. Church presided, and after speeches were given, the entire crowd sang, "Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past."¹²

A large group of returned soldiers decided to put down "sedition" on their own by confronting an anti-conscriptionist meeting at the Labour Temple. The veterans forced their way into the hall where around 500 men and women, including many "foreigners" of non-British descent, were meeting to condemn the Military Service Act. The veterans demanded that the first item of business be the singing of the National Anthem. The Finnish band refused. In response, the *Star* reported that "disabled veterans of Ypres and the Somme plied their crutches and sticks with a will and the bedlam that followed was

¹² "Thousands Call For Conscription," *World*, 4 June 1917, p. 4; "Conscription Resolutions," *News*, 2 June 1917, p. 1; "Thousands of Torontonians Advocated Conscription Law," *News*, 5 June 1917, p. 5; "10,000 Gather at Queen's Park to Endorse Conscription Act," *Telegram*, 4 June 1917, p. 6; "Mass Meetings for Conscription," *Mail and Empire*, 4 June 1917, p. 5; "Women Unanimous at Conscription Meeting," *Star*, 4 June 1917, p. 4; "Toronto to Speak for Conscription," *Globe*, 2 June 1917, p. 8.

indescribable. Tables and chairs were upset and sent spinning across the room. As if to add to the din, a bugler sounded several calls. Persons offering resistance were knocked to the floor or thrown downstairs, and some who attempted to escape by the rear were chased through the windows, over roofs and down the fire escapes."¹³ Quite a large crowd gathered during the altercation, filling both sidewalks from Queen to Wilton Avenue, and cheering the soldiers. After the building had been cleared, Sgt. Major Lowery addressed the soldiers from the steps, led the cheers for conscription, and paraded the troops to City Hall. On the way, however, another incident took place. A man dressed in German colours threw a bottle at the soldiers. He was chased to St. Michael's Hospital where the veterans deferred to staff and police to locate the man, out of respect for the patients.¹⁴

Labour and union leaders stated "very emphatically" that they had no sympathy with the objects of the Socialist meeting, and that it had been organized by extremists. Caretaker William Fordham of the Labour Temple declared that there would be no more socialist meetings at the Labour Temple, telling reporters, "If I had known what was going to take place last night, Socialists never would have got the hall."¹⁵ Chief Constable Henry James Grasett¹⁶ of the Toronto police claimed that he was powerless to

¹³ "No More Conscription Talk at Labour Temple," *Star*, 4 June 1917, p. 2.

¹⁴ For other articles reporting on this incident, see the following: "Anti-Conscription Meeting a Fizzle," *Mail and Empire*, 4 June 1917, p. 10; "Broke Up Socialist Meeting Enraged Returned Soldiers," *Telegram*, 4 June 1917, p. 11; "Returned Men Spoil Meeting for Socialists," *World*, 4 June 1917, pp. 1, 3.

¹⁵ "No More Conscription Talk at Labour Temple," *Star*, 4 June 1917, p. 2.

¹⁶ Grasett was born in Toronto in 1847, and had a life-long association with the military. He served as a Lieutenant in the British Army, became the Lieut.-Col. of the 10th Royal Grenadiers in 1880 and commanded it during the Northwest Rebellion. He

stop indoor meetings. British subjects were allowed freedom of speech, and he would protect that right. However, enemy aliens were accorded no such privileges, and he promised that any anti-conscription rally involving enemy aliens would be shut down immediately.¹⁷ Grasett blamed the victims for precipitating the conflict, arguing that they were "...foolish to try to hold anti-conscription meetings when the people are so excited over the matter."¹⁸

A week later, the Labour Temple was the site of a very different meeting. The Greater Toronto Labour Party met to pass a resolution which endorsed conscription based "...upon the principle of equal liability to service and the policy of controlling finances, food and resources in Canada to prosecute the war."¹⁹ This rally was part of a feverish few days of activity which coincided with the tabling of the Military Service Act in the House of Commons on 11 June 1917. Since Laurier had rejected coalition on 6 June, Borden decided to push the Military Service Act through Parliament before it was dissolved. The Act made all men between 20 and 45 liable for military service. Given the Conservative majority in the House of Commons, the Act's passage was a certainty, but it was debated vigorously in the House.²⁰

During this period, Toronto demonstrated little of the division apparent in Ottawa.

also saw action with the Queen's Own Rifles during the Fenian Raids in 1866. The longest serving Chief of Police in Toronto history, he had been at the post since 1886. (Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women*, pp. 470-471).

¹⁷ "Police Must Allow Indoor Meetings," *News*, 4 June 1917, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ "Labour Men Endorse Conscription Policy," *World*, 11 June 1917, p. 4.

²⁰ J.L. Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 66-68.

Massey Hall was the site of a bipartisan rally on 10 June, involving prominent politicians from the Conservative and Liberal parties. The unity of the parties was symbolized by the joining of hands by Liberal Ontario Provincial leader, N. W. Rowell, and Conservative Ontario Premier, Sir William Hearst. Soldiers who had returned from the front were once again a prominent feature of the pro-conscription rally, as several hundred veterans were accorded a place of honour by the platform. As the veterans hobbled on crutches or were pushed in wheelchairs, the crowd erupted into a chorus of cheers.²¹ The gathered thousands adopted a resolution giving the government a blank cheque: "This mass meeting of citizens of Toronto...places on record its conviction that our people, irrespective of party or of creed, are ready to support any immediate legislation as promised by the Prime Minister of Canada to provide through some equitable system of compulsory selection the necessary reinforcements for our Canadian Divisions now so heroically battling at the front."²²

Not only were Torontonians in favour of conscription, but the vast majority supported measures which made it difficult, if not impossible, to organize opposition to it. A second anti-conscription meeting was arranged at the corner of Queen and Bathurst Streets for 10 June by the Social-Democratic Party. There were fewer people at this rally than at the previous anti-conscription meeting, likely due to the fear of reprisal from veterans and citizens. When the police heard of the rally, plainclothes and uniformed

²¹ "Leaders Join Hands to Back Conscription," *Globe*, 12 June 1917, p. 1; "Citizens Join in Supporting Conscription," *World*, 12 June 1917, pp. 1, 4; "Conscription in Demanded by Toronto's Citizens," *Telegram*, 12 June 1917, p. 19.

²² "Toronto United for Compulsion," *Mail and Empire*, 12 June 1917, p. 4.

police officers arrived quickly, took over the platform, ordered the speaker to be silent, and examined "...every individual with a view to finding out how many were naturalized British subjects, how many [were] alien enemies, and how many [were] alien enemies without the necessary qualifications to be at large."²³ True to his promise to clamp down on seditious activities, Chief of Police Col. Grasett arrested 80 Ukrainians and Austrians. Grasett told reporters that it was his duty to stop meetings which were anti-government, and attending an anti-conscription rally at this time was proof enough of anti-government activity.

Throughout the summer of 1917, the Military Service Act wound its way through the House of Commons. The situation heated up on 5 July 1917 when the House of Commons passed the bill through second reading. The voting lines were drawn along linguistic, not party lines, with a large majority of English-speaking members of Parliament voting for conscription, and all French-speaking members opposing it.²⁴ Laurier's forces were bolstered by the desertion of nine Quebec Conservatives, but were hurt by the crossing of 25 English-speaking Liberals to the government side.²⁵ Ultimately, the Act found its way to the Senate, becoming law on 28 August 1917.

At the front, Canadian General Currie clashed with British General Haig over a proposed attack at Lens, France, in July 1917. Currie argued that if the Canadians took the town, the Germans could shell them from nearby Hill 70 with impunity. In an

²³ "Police Arrest Eighty Aliens," *World*, 11 June 1917, p. 5.

²⁴ English, *The Decline of Politics*, p. 139.

²⁵ Desmond Morton and J.L. Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and the Great War, 1914-1919* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1989), p. 146.

attritional battle, Currie argued, the Canadians would be better served by taking Hill 70 and destroying the inevitable German counter-attack. Haig reluctantly agreed, and the Canadian Corps spent July preparing for the assault. The battle began on 15 August 1917 as the Canadians fought their way onto Hill 70 and defended it against wave after wave of counter-attacks: the cost was 9,000 Canadian casualties against over 20,000 for the Germans. By the standards of attritional warfare, it was a victory. The rest of August and September was spent in front-line duty, recuperating and absorbing replacements.²⁶

As Canada's soldiers prepared to attack Hill 70, Toronto hosted a win-the-war convention.²⁷ All public-spirited citizens were urged to attend, and offer suggestions "...as to the way in which the war may be speedily brought to a close with a victory for the allied nations."²⁸ Meeting at the arena, the convention opened at 3 p.m. with the "people of Ontario" listed as the speakers for the first three hours. These patriotic speeches would later be followed by a concert by the Queen's Own Rifles, speeches by Great War Veterans, and addresses by Premier William Hearst and Provincial Liberal Leader N.W. Rowell.

More than 6,000 people filled the arena to capacity on 2 August 1917. Miles of

²⁶ For a complete examination of the Hill 70 Battle, see G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919: Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1962), pp. 292-297.

²⁷ R. Matthew Bray argues that these win-the-war conventions demonstrated clearly that the overwhelming majority of English-Canadians supported the war effort, while most French-Canadians did not. See his analysis of a win-the-war convention in Montreal in 1917, "A Conflict of Nationalisms: The Win the War and National Unity Convention, 1917," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4, Winter 1980-81, pp. 18-31.

²⁸ "Win-War League Plans Convention," *World*, 25 July 1917, p. 6.

"fluttering green paper grasses" hung from the huge supports up near the roof. Streams of electrical lanterns were strung from the floor to the ceiling. Bands were stationed on either side of the platform to entertain the audience. The whole assembly stood on its feet and cheered as more than 2,000 veterans marched in to take their place of honour at the front. Once the speeches began, the target was the Province of Quebec and its failure to provide as many recruits for the Army as had English-speaking provinces. "Don't call them French. They're not French," one ex-soldier exclaimed, "They're traitors!"²⁹ The audience also opposed any discussion of the motivations behind Sir Wilfrid Laurier's rejection of the conscription bill. When Liberal Hugh Guthrie attempted to explain his break with Sir Wilfrid over conscription, Guthrie was met by a chorus of boos, and shouts calling Laurier a "traitor." Despite repeated appeals for order, Guthrie was unable to discuss Laurier. He shifted his focus back to winning the war and endorsing conscription, and was rewarded by a chorus of cheers.³⁰

On the evening of 3 August, the arena was taken over by the women of Toronto for a mass meeting to support the continuation of the war. Advertisements announcing the meeting declared that "Every woman who has a Husband, Father or Relative at The Front or in training in Canada, Every Patriotic Society worker, every Red Cross worker, every Woman engaged in Munition or other work connected with the war is urged to attend the meeting, so that all women's efforts may be further unified and greater

²⁹ "Tense and Deep Emotion in Win-The-War Audience," *Star*, 3 August 1917, p. 1.

³⁰ "United Action Demanded of Canada's Statesmen," *World*, 3 August 1917, pp. 1, 4. See also, "Win The War People Opposed to Any Election at Present," *News*, 3 August 1917, p. 3; "Win the War is a Pledge to the End," *Globe*, 3 August 1917, p. 1.

inspiration *to go on* [emphasis in original] may result from this first Mass Meeting of Ontario Women."³¹ Mrs. A. Huestis presided, calling for conscription as soon as possible. Over 2,000 women crowded into the arena, many of whom maintained their commitment to the men overseas by knitting throughout the meeting. Resolutions were passed which endorsed pleas for unity and for the effective mobilization of the country's resources to prosecute the war effort. An election, it was argued, would only slow the process of supplying the needed recruits and was, therefore, rejected.³²

The Win-The-War Convention demonstrates that there was a large and growing pro-conscription and anti-French-Canadian sentiment. The unwillingness of the crowd to allow speakers to explain Sir Wilfrid Laurier's actions speaks volumes of the mood in Toronto. Leading this condemnation were members of the Great War Veterans' Association. These men had fought and been wounded at the front, and would not tolerate anti-conscription talk. Far from being on the periphery of civic life, they were physically present in great numbers and were quick to voice their opinions. Veterans were ardent supporters of selective service, branding all those who opposed it as traitors. In addition, the mass rally of women continued the process of having women literally sharing the same public space occupied by men, and participating in the public campaign to secure conscription as soon as possible.

³¹ "Advertisement," *World*, 3 August 1917, p. 5.

³² For other descriptions of the women's mass meeting, see the following: "Women Grimly Knitted as Before French Guillotine," *Star*, 4 August 1917, pp. 1, 6; "Women United in Opposing Election Now," *World*, 4 August 1917, pp. 1, 4; "Women Pledged to Aid in War," *News*, 4 August 1917, p. 15; "Women of Province Want Reinforcements to Support Heroes in the Trenches," *Globe*, 4 August 1917, p. 1.

This public support for conscription took place in a climate which was increasingly demanding of the resources and emotions of citizens. As the war effort continued to exact its toll, it also placed an incredible strain on the food supply. The summer of 1917 had yielded a good crop, but the labour shortage was such that there were not enough workers to bring in the harvest. Premier William Hearst wrote an open letter to the people of Ontario, under the heading "10,000 Men Needed Now: Ontario's Crop Must Be Harvested."³³ Directed at the urban population, it asked employers to release employees for service, and for the latter to work where they were needed.

In response, Toronto organized to send its complement of 4,000 workers. Articles appeared in the daily papers which stressed the necessity of volunteering to serve on the farms. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the Retail and the Wholesale Manufacturers met to discuss the situation, endorsed the necessity of supplying farmers, and agreed to work with all haste to supply them. At this point, the issue of wages for these temporary farmers was dismissed as of secondary importance. Initial attempts were successful, a canvas at the Eaton's department store at 198-210 Yonge Street yielding 300 volunteers.³⁴

Advertisements appeared in the papers which emphasized the necessity of helping the farmers. Men were asked to register at the War Production Club, 15 King Street East, and "Help Build the Bulwark Against Famine!"³⁵ [Figure 6.1] This slogan accompanied a picture of two farmers struggling to bring in the fall harvest as another man in urban

³³ "10,000 Men Needed Now," *Telegram*, 4 August 1917, p. 19.

³⁴ "Will Get Men for Harvest," *Globe*, 4 August 1917, p. 7.

³⁵ "Advertisement," *Star*, 7 August 1917, p. 6.

clothes arrives, taking off his jacket to assist them. All three men are standing behind a pile of harvested wheat, forming a bulwark to fend off the grim reaper stalking them from the other side of the barrier.



Figure 6.1: "Advertisement," *Star*, 7 August 1917, p. 6.

Another advertisement [Figure 6.2] showed a farmer and an urban worker shaking hands in a field, while across the divide, as a result of their work, a soldier is able to stand his post.³⁶

³⁶ "Advertisement," *World*, 9 August 1917, p. 5.



Figure 6.2: "Advertisement," *World*, 9 August 1917, p. 5.

Two weeks after the campaign was launched, it appeared that men newly recruited to serve on the farms were doing well. In interviews, farmers expressed surprise at the effectiveness of urban workers, but were concerned about the high wages they were paying for amateur farm-hands.³⁷ Over the coming days, this friction over wages resulted in fewer men volunteering than were needed. By 21 August, over 6,000 men had volunteered province wide: just over 2,000 of these men came from Toronto.³⁸ However, still more men were needed, and the major obstacle was wages. The high cost of living had driven wages upward, and farmers found it difficult to pay the wages now demanded by urban workers.

³⁷ "City Men Working Well on the Farms," *News*, 16 August 1917, p. 10.

³⁸ "Labour Campaign Great Success," *World*, 21 August 1917, p. 7; "Need 4000 Men to End Harvest," *Globe*, 21 August 1917, p. 7.

By August 1917, the cost of weekly staple goods was \$11.68, up from \$8.63 in August 1916, and an increase of 57 percent from the July 1914 total of \$7.42.³⁹ The problem was severe enough that the *Labour Gazette* published an in-depth article on the cost of living in September 1917. The situation in Toronto was more desperate than in many other parts of the province. While prices for many basic goods were similar to those in the rest of the province, rent in Toronto was almost double that of any other city. Rent in the only other city of its size in the Dominion, Montreal, was almost 50 percent lower.⁴⁰ Analysts blamed the rise in prices on a variety of factors resulting from the war: "...inadequate supplies, insistent and inelastic demand, and costly transportation by sea and land."⁴¹ Toronto was one of the most expensive cities in the country to live in by the end of 1916, and Canada was in turn was more expensive than Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.⁴²

In addition, a fundamental shortage of labour remained. The shortage was so great that papers reported that more than 50 percent of the 7,000 Boy Scouts in the province of Ontario were already engaged in some form of war production.⁴³ A sign of the severe strain on farm labour capacity, farmers' wives came to the city to take back

³⁹ *Labour Gazette*, September 1917, pp. 661-662. The cost of living includes the average cost of staple foods, laundry starch, coal, wood and coal oil, and rent across 60 Canadian cities with a population of 10,000 or more. See also Michael Piva, *The Conditions of the Working Class in Toronto -- 1900-1921* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979), pp. 27-60.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, September 1917, pp. 704-705.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 712.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 743-744. Belligerent countries closer to the fighting like Britain, France and Germany were all much higher.

⁴³ "Six Thousand Men Placed This Month," *News*, 21 August 1917, p. 5.

workers to help with the harvest. One woman reported, "They say men are scarce, but I started out to get a man to help my husband, and I am going to keep looking until I find one."⁴⁴

The difficulty of securing the fall harvest provides ample testimony to the scarcity of labour in Ontario in the summer of 1917. Failing to locate enough farmers to bring in the harvest had nothing to do with lack of patriotism, and everything to do with the high cost of living and the demands of the war on human resources. The city attempted to confront the labour shortage in an organized fashion, pulling together representative employers and employees to discuss the situation. Unfortunately, the demands of the war were so great that Torontonians had to face the fact that not everything could be done. There were only so many projects that the city could take on at any given time. The imposition of conscription would further stretch these resources, but even in the face of the ever-increasing demands of the war, the people did not lessen their support for it.

September 1917 saw the creation of the War-Time Elections Act, a political maneuver by Prime Minister Borden to bolster support for his party. The Act disenfranchised recent immigrants (who typically voted Liberal) and enfranchised women who had relatives serving with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Having increased his chances of winning an election, Borden dissolved Parliament on 6 October, calling an election for 17 December 1917. Just days after Parliament was dissolved, Borden announced on 12 October the formation of a Union coalition of prominent Conservatives

⁴⁴ "Woman In Role of Man-Hunter," *Globe*, 23 August 1917, p. 7.

and Liberals.⁴⁵

At the front, the British were embroiled in the fight for Passchendaele Ridge, a battle which opened in July 1917 and continued into November. In September 1917, however, the Canadians were not directly involved. They were engaged in the familiar trench routine "...characterized by mud, boredom, disease, and misery, sometimes punctuated by the excitement and terror of an occasional trench raid or artillery duel."⁴⁶

Much of Toronto's attention in early September 1917 was directed at the Canadian National Exhibition, as it drew its largest crowds ever. On Labour Day, the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada used the Exhibition to announce its full support of conscription. Spokesmen pointed out that labour had done its part in the war, although they continued to point out that they would be *even more* [emphasis added] supportive if wealth was also conscripted.⁴⁷

The passage of the Military Service Act on 28 August 1917, however, could not suddenly erase all of the war's other demands. Food shortages remained, and just as residents had participated in harvesting the fall crop, they now turned their attention to stretching those resources. What had been a private sphere concern for women -- feeding

⁴⁵ John English, *The Decline of Politics: The Conservatives and the Party System, 1901-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 153-185.

⁴⁶ Bill Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare: Technology and the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 143.

⁴⁷ "Labour Bodies Accept the Conscription Law," *Star*, 4 September 1917, p. 6; "Labour Day Magnificent Exhibition Achievement," *World*, 4 September 1917, p. 4; "Conscription Act Has Labour Support," *Mail and Empire*, 4 September 1917, p. 5; "Labour Stands Ready to Accept Full Conscription," *Globe*, 4 September 1917, p. 9. For an in-depth discussion of labour's endorsement of conscription, see Heron and Siemiatycki, "The Great War, The State, and Working-Class Canada," in Heron, ed., *The Workers' Revolt*, pp. 11-42.

families -- suddenly became a public issue for the entire city with women directing a thrift campaign. Advertisements appeared in the papers which portrayed women doing their part for the war effort. One image [Figure 6.3] showed a long line of women carrying platters of food which they passed across the Atlantic to the outstretched arms of Canada's soldiers struggling under shell-fire. Below the picture, women were told that they must "Stand in the Gap and hold back the spectre of hunger from our troops."



Figure 6.3: "Advertisement," *Star*, 15 September 1917, p. 16.

Instructions told of the food value of fish, and the need to substitute beef and bacon with such "nutritious foods" as peas, lentils and potatoes.⁴⁸

These advertisements were supplemented by an open letter by Food Controller W.J. Hanna to the women of Ontario. Hanna informed women that there was a worldwide shortage of beef and bacon, precisely those commodities most required by the troops. He requested that women "...not use beef and bacon on two days a week or at

⁴⁸ "Advertisement," *Star*, 15 September 1917, p. 16.

more than one meal on any other day, that they reduce their consumption of wheat bread by one-quarter, and that they use perishable and non-exportable products to the greatest possible extent as substitutes for the staple foods required for export."⁴⁹ The centrepiece of the thrift campaign was the distribution of the food service pledge to every household. Women volunteers asked other women to sign the pledge, and display the card prominently in their windows: "To Win The War, This Household is Pledged to Carry Out Conscientiously the Advice and Directions of the Food Controller."⁵⁰

In the middle of September 1917, women fanned out over the city to distribute cards. Canvassers reported that most women signed and displayed the food service pledge gladly. Planners had hoped to secure 1,200 volunteers to do the canvassing, but they received over 1,500 applications. At the end of the first day, 32,000 signatures had been secured. At one house, the canvasser was greeted by a woman who insisted upon showing her tiny vegetable garden, and her little two and a half year old baby who had never seen its soldier-father. The woman signed gladly.⁵¹

The thrift campaign was assisted by the publication of numerous advertisements in the papers. One illustration [Figure 6.4] showed a tall woman standing with her arm outstretched to ward off the grim reaper, shielding Canadian soldiers behind her.

⁴⁹ "Says 'Substitute' is Thrift War Cry," *World*, 17 September 1917, p. 2.

⁵⁰ "To Win The War, This Household is Pledged to Carry Out Conscientiously the Advice and Directions of the Food Controller," *News*, 17 September 1917, p. 8.

⁵¹ "Thirty-Two Thousand Women Have Signed the Food Pledge," *News*, 19 September 1917, p. 1. See also, "What the People Said About Pledge Cards," *News*, 18 September 1917, p. 8; "Few Refuse to Sign the Card," *Globe*, 19 September 1917, pp. 1, 8; "32,000 Signed Up the First Day," *Globe*, 20 September 1917, p. 8; "Pledge Card Distribution to Continue All Week," *News*, 20 September 1917, p. 8; "Pledge Campaign Gathering Force," *Mail and Empire*, 21 September 1917, p. 10.



Figure 6.4: "Advertisement," *World*, 21 September 1917, p. 5.

Another showed a line of women proffering the food they had saved to soldiers in bunkers in France [Figure 6.5].



Figure 6.5: "Advertisement," *News*, 20 September 1917, p. 7.

In each advertisement, headings were used to urge women to participate: "For All We Have and Are -- Serve Our Heroes -- Sign and Live Up to Your Food Service Pledge;" "Will They Let Famine Fight Against Us? Sign The Food Service Pledge Before It Is Too Late;" "Waste Not That He May Want Not, Grant That You May Be Worthy of His Sacrifice." At the bottom of each advertisement was a list of practical housekeeping hints, informing women about how to use left-overs to stretch food resources, how to care for food, how to can fruits with sugar, and how to shop effectively.⁵²

By the time the campaign was over in early October, more than half of the Service Cards had been signed by the city's women. Organizers felt that even more success had been achieved in driving home to women the necessity of economizing at home in order that men not starve at the front. The campaign illustrates the context in which support for conscription occurred. Even as they supported an even greater demand on the manpower of Canada, Torontonians understood that the war effort had pushed the resources of the nation to the limit. Throughout this process, citizens understood the nature of the war effort and the sacrifices involved in continuing. Women were not simply forced to economize; campaign workers explained why they had to stretch their food. Failure to do so, women were informed, would translate into starvation conditions. The campaign also reflected the high-level of organization characteristic of this stage of the war.

Advertisements appeared in papers before the campaign began, and reinforced its mission

⁵² These advertisements appeared in all the major daily papers, but copies of the illustrations discussed above can be found in the *World* on the following dates: 20 September 1917, p. 5; 21 September 1917, p. 5; 27 September 1917, p. 5; 4 October 1917, p. 5.

as women visited homes in the city. Women were now working in the public and the private sphere to further enhance the capacity of the nation to successfully prosecute the war.

Against this backdrop of dwindling food resources and a scarcity of labour, the details of the Military Service Act were explained in the papers. The Military Service Act outlined eight grounds for exemption, details that were included in each of the daily papers:

1. The importance of continuing employment in habitual occupation.
2. Importance of continuing employment as _____, for which he is specially qualified.
3. Importance of continuing education or training.
4. Serious hardship owing to exceptional financial obligations.
5. Serious hardship owing to exceptional business obligations.
6. Serious hardship owing to exceptional domestic position.
7. Ill-health or in infirmity.
8. Adherence to religious denomination of which the articles of faith forbid combatant service.⁵³

The grounds left ample opportunity for the men who sat on the exemption tribunals to use their own discretion in determining what constituted "serious hardship," "exceptional" circumstances, "specially qualified," "ill-health," or a religious denomination which forbade active service. The tribunals were made up overwhelmingly of professional men, many of whom were "...represented at the front by sons, or close relatives, which augers well for the strict enforcement of the act."⁵⁴

⁵³ See for example, "Allow Eight Grounds in Exemption Forms," *Star*, 17 September 1917, p. 5.

⁵⁴ "Exemption Tribunals Men Conscripted by County," *Globe*, 7 September 1917, p. 3. Twenty-eight local tribunals heard exemption claims. Organized along the same 6 wards used in municipal elections, and then further sub-divided, each tribunal was responsible for an area large enough to comprise around 3,000 registered voters. There

Prior to the official calling up of recruits, the Military Recruiting Depot announced that it would inspect men without any obligation to enlist. Even as the city's women dedicated themselves to the thrift campaign, military officials were confronted with another massive rush to the armories as men took advantage of the opportunity to determine whether or not they were fit for active service. Men were slotted into five categories: class A for general service overseas; class B for service abroad, but not for general service; class C for service in Canada only; class D for men temporarily unfit; class E for men unfit for service.⁵⁵

The busiest day in the history of the Recruiting Depot was 15 September.⁵⁶ The rush continued into the following week, with more than 500 men coming forward each day. Outright rejections were only one in each ten men who faced the doctors, but only about 40 percent of the men were fit for the trenches.⁵⁷ On 6 October 1917, 775 men passed through the Mobilization Centre in Toronto, but only 51 were attested. The others were only interested in securing their medical papers and determining their status for the upcoming call of Class One recruits.⁵⁸ These free medical exams continued until 13

were more Liberal members chairing tribunal hearings than Conservatives. Eighteen Liberals were appointed against only 10 Conservatives. Most chairs were Protestant, accounting for 24 of the 28 appointments, with 3 Catholics and 1 Jew. ("Toronto: 28 Districts for Exemption Tribunals," PAC, Sir Edward Kemp Papers, MG 27, II, D9, Vol. 76, File "Tribunals -- Toronto Area 1917.").

⁵⁵ "Medical Board Ready for Draftees," *Mail and Empire*, 15 September 1917, p. 4; "Will Examine Men for Draft at Armories," *World*, 15 September 1917, p. 1; "Rush of Men at Armories," *News*, 15 September 1917, p. 1; "Ready for First Class," *Globe*, 15 September 1917, pp. 1, 2.

⁵⁶ "Wild Rush Before Medical Examiners," *World*, 17 September 1917, p. 4.

⁵⁷ "Rejections Are One in Each Ten," *Globe*, 20 September 1917, p. 8.

⁵⁸ "Record Number Take First Step," *Globe*, 6 October 1917, p. 8.

October 1917, with the pace of those coming forward actually increasing as time went by.

When voluntary recruiting finally reached its close on 13 October 1917, over 45,000 local men had donned khaki uniforms in just over three years of war.⁵⁹ However, as the medical tests in the final days of voluntary recruiting demonstrate, the percentage of those men fit for duty had dropped from about 60 percent of those who presented themselves, to closer to 40 percent. Even taking the lower percentage as a guide for the number of local men who volunteered but were rejected for medical reasons, approximately 75,000 local men offered to serve their country. Compared against the total 87,300 eligible, the numbers translate into a stunning percentage: 86 percent of eligible local men had volunteered, more than four out of every five.

Even as these free medical exams were being conducted, the Canadian Expeditionary Force was moving into place to take a more active part in the Passchendaele Battle. Suffering along with their British counterparts in the mud and squalor common to the sector, the Canadian Corps fought three major engagements on 26 October, 30 October and 6 November.⁶⁰ When operations came to a close on 10 November, the Corps had sustained 16,041 casualties, including 3,042 killed,⁶¹ giving new urgency to the need to successfully implement conscription at home.

In Canada, the first day for Class One men to report for duty was 15 October 1917, but they could wait as long as 10 November before coming forward. Toronto had

⁵⁹ Groves, *Toronto Does Her 'Bit,'* p. 7.

⁶⁰ For a discussion of this period at the front, see Nicholson, *Official History*, pp. 298-337.

⁶¹ Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare*, pp. 146-166.

to conscript 6,750 men, and papers hoped that the calling of Class One men would be enough to fill the quota. As the registration period opened, nowhere near as many men registered as had been hoped. Military officials expected Military District No. 2 to register 82,000 with Toronto choosing its 6,750 from among the 20,000 local men assumed to be in Class One. The total of 20,000 meant that approximately 3,280 should have come forward to register each day in the district, and 800 in Toronto. However, at the end of the first day only 374 men in the *entire district* had put their names forward, and most of them had applied for exemption.⁶² Only 15 men had accepted service, the other 359 claiming exemption. In other words, 24 men had to register to secure one recruit, and there was a 60 percent chance that the one recruit would not be fit for service in the trenches.

To assist military officials, Toronto residents flooded the Registrar for Ontario, Mr. Glyn Osler, with anonymous letters informing him of potential slackers. While the names of the correspondents were often not included, most indicated that they had several relatives at the front. Osler promised that the letters would be put to good use after 10 November when officials began tracking down all Class One men who failed to register. It appeared by 17 October that these letters might be required, as only 3,000 registrants reported, with only 264 accepting service; the rest filed for exemption.⁶³ Registering carried on for the next few weeks, but many waited as long as possible before coming

⁶² "Woefully Small Start Towards Toronto's [District] 82,000," *Star*, 16 October 1917, p. 1. See also, "Very Few Draftees Report for Service," *Mail and Empire*, 16 October 1917, p. 4.

⁶³ "Registrar is Being Warned of 'Slackers,'" *News*, 18 October 1917, p. 1.

forward. With only two weeks left in which to comply with the law, only 20 percent had come forward.⁶⁴

Wider events were conspiring to ensure that even greater demands would be placed on Canadian manpower. Not only did the Western Allies have to make good the casualties suffered at Passchendaele, but they had to prepare against renewed German attacks in the winter of 1917 and the spring of 1918. The Kerensky government in Russia had been overthrown by the Bolsheviks in the November Revolution, and a truce was signed between the Russians and Germans in late December 1917. As a result, tens of thousands of fresh German troops took up positions on the Western Front, hoping to exploit their newfound advantage before the Americans arrived in strength in 1918.⁶⁵

Against this backdrop, conscription plans were rigidly followed. As the 10 November 1917 deadline approached, every attempt was made to ensure that as many men as possible would register. Newspapers warned of the consequences of failing to register: five years imprisonment or immediate service in the ranks. The Garrison Military Police roamed downtown Toronto on 7 November stopping every Class One man they encountered, asking him if he had been examined or made his report. If the likely recruit acknowledged that he had not yet registered, the penalties of failing to comply with the law were explained. Young men were warned to carry with them, at all times, the receipt attesting to the fact that they had registered, as failure to do so was

⁶⁴ "It Is Slow March With Class One," *Globe*, 27 October 1917, p. 8.

⁶⁵ John Swettenham, *To Seize the Victory: The Canadian Corps in World War I* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1965), p. 192.

"...apt to lead to great unpleasantness."⁶⁶

After the 10 November 1917 deadline passed, the scope of the attempts to locate those who had not complied increased. Mr. Glyn Osler, speaking through the press, announced that he would abide by the law and leave "...every so-called deserter, who has failed to register, to suffer the consequences."⁶⁷ Half a dozen men appealed to Osler directly to be allowed to register, but he refused, citing the need to avoid creating such a precedent. These efforts were directed at what military officials estimated to be the 17,000 men in Military District No. 2 who had failed to report (65,000 had reported).

Unfortunately, there are no specific numbers for the city of Toronto.

Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that almost 80 percent of the men in Military District No. 2 in Class One registered by the deadline. Military District No. 2 included the cities of Hamilton and Toronto, but also the surrounding rural areas where the pressure to enlist was less intense, and the willingness to enlist less pronounced. It is entirely likely that Toronto supplied a greater percentage of registrants, given that it had consistently outpaced the pattern of rural recruiting for the entire war. There were no reports of opposition to the draft. There were no organized efforts to oppose the registration scheme. Individual men made decisions not to register on their own, and many came forward in the days after the deadline and complied with the law.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ "Military Police After Eligibles," *Mail and Empire*, 8 November 1917, p. 4.

⁶⁷ "No More Eligibles Allowed to Register," *Star*, 12 November 1917, p. 2.

⁶⁸ An extensive search was conducted at the Public Archives of Canada for the records of the Military Service Act, and the Tribunals proceedings. Unfortunately, as discussed by David Richards Williams, these records were intentionally burned after the war because they would have been "a living menace to national unity." E.L. Newcombe, Chair of the Military Service Council burned all records, and believed that "...he had

In the meantime, police drew up a list of eligible young men who, they believed, were attempting to avoid service, and supplied a copy to Mr. Osler.⁶⁹ Given the number of men who had not registered, the Military Service Council in Ottawa announced that if men in Class One who were in default surrendered themselves to authorities without delay, they would not to be subject to civil proceedings.⁷⁰ Employers assisted military officials in requiring men to report for service. Owners of businesses were required to submit names of all men who had evaded the Military Service Act by 17 November, but many did so earlier.⁷¹ Gradually, the issue of finding delinquent Class One men receded from the papers, as fewer and fewer men were left to be found, and as attention focused on the progress of the next stage, the exemption tribunals.

The tribunals opened on 8 November 1917, two days before the deadline for all men from Class One to register. A pattern quickly developed in the way the tribunals worked: they became stricter over time. The *Star* reported that a large percentage of those men going before the tribunals on the first day were being granted exemption, at least temporarily.⁷² The procedures were tightened in the coming days, ensuring that borderline cases were "...being decided oftener against the applicant than was the rule

acted in the national interest by denying future researchers the opportunity of ascertaining the truth." (*Duff: A Life in the Law* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), p. 95).

⁶⁹ "Many Thousands Failed to Report," *World*, 12 November 1917, p. 4.

⁷⁰ "One More Chance For Class A Men," *Mail and Empire*, 13 November 1917, p. 3.

⁷¹ "Employers Send Men to Report," *Mail and Empire*, 15 November 1917, p. 4.

⁷² "Toronto Tribunals Begin Sitting; Most Applicants Get Exemptions," *Star*, 8 November 1917, p. 1.

during the first two days."⁷³ The case of Mr. Roy McCauley of 106 Gould Street demonstrated the tightening of procedures. While two days earlier he might have been granted exemption on the grounds of exceptional domestic situation, his hearing on 10 November, before Tribunal #353 at 77 High Park Boulevard, was not sympathetic. Mr. McCauley claimed that his brother had been wounded at the front, leaving him as the only support for their mother. "What would become of your mother if you were to go out on the street and be killed by a motor car?" replied Exemption Tribunal Chairman, Judge John Winchester, "Don't look on the black side of things. Your brother is not dead, and instead of being killed you might come back with the Military Cross."⁷⁴ McCauley was drafted.

By 12 November, several reports appeared in the papers which argued that the tribunals were becoming tougher. The *News* reported that its survey of the different tribunals indicated that a greater proportion of applicants were having their claims disallowed than had been the case the previous week.⁷⁵ Requesting exemption on the basis of exceptional business obligations did not work for Thomas Aveling, 491 King Street East. Mr. Aveling managed a printing business, and informed the tribunal that if

⁷³ "Local Tribunals Tightening Up Their Procedure," *Star*, 10 November 1917, p. 1.

⁷⁴ "Tribunals Are Tightening Up on Exemptions," *News*, 10 November 1917, p. 1. Winchester was born in Elgin, Scotland in 1849, but emigrated with his family to Toronto and was educated at the Toronto Grammar School. Presbyterian, he served on the board of the local church and was also a long-time supporter of the Liberal Party. He trained as a lawyer and practiced in the city until becoming a judge for York County. He was repeatedly asked to investigate and report upon public matters. (Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 1179.).

⁷⁵ "Fast Work is Accomplished by Tribunals," *News*, 12 November 1917, p. 1.

he left, the business would fail as all attempts to get the owner to manage the business had failed. The tribunal replied that the failure of the business would then be the responsibility of the owner, not Mr. Aveling, and the claim was denied.⁷⁶ By 16 November, the standards had been further tightened. One claimant appeared before the tribunal, accompanied by his wife. The man cited a wooden leg as grounds for his claim, and his application was accepted, but not before the tribunal had a look to confirm that the leg was in fact wooden.⁷⁷

As the days went by, report after report in the papers cited the ever-tightening controls. Tribunals related that given the emergency the nation now found itself in, "no man is indispensable" with regards to business or financial obligations.⁷⁸ In effect, the tribunals elected to selectively ignore the grounds for exemption on the basis of these two obligations contained in the Military Service Act. In addition, despite earlier exemptions granted for men supporting infirm parents, by 19 November this basis for exemption had also been largely dispensed with. Even claimants with two or more brothers at the front were often refused exemption, the tribunals citing the emergency confronting the country as grounds for refusal.⁷⁹ The Military Service Act also allowed men to defer service to continue education, but tribunals often disallowed this claim as well. A third year medical student, William Kennedy, claimed exemption until he graduated, but Tribunal

⁷⁶ "'War is Murder,' Said Pennington, But He Must Go," *Star*, 12 November 1917, p. 10.

⁷⁷ "New Record Set Up by the Tribunals," *News*, 17 November 1917, p. 7.

⁷⁸ "Exemptions Now Harder to Get," *World*, 19 November 1917, p. 4.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

351 "...thought this too long and disallowed the claim."⁸⁰

Claiming exemption because of religious beliefs was no guarantee to evade service either. Cecil H. G. Stovell, of 290 Church Street, cited his Christadelphian faith, specifically the fact that it was against his religion to take part in the Army, as grounds for exemption. Judge Winchester, however, had no patience: "What is the use of me sending my boy overseas and other people sending their sons to fight, and then leave you behind? Do you think that we have not as much faith in God as you have? In England they make Christadelphians serve in the army." When Stovell replied that he believed he should not serve, Winchester replied, "Well, I don't. Those are exhortations of our Lord to all mankind. Cowardice alone influences you people to take the stand you do. You will have to go overseas even if you go as a cook or a stretcher-bearer."⁸¹

By 4 December 1917, the last day of the exemption tribunals, relatively few cases remained. On the same day, the Appeal Court began its proceedings. Providing one final opportunity for men to plead their case, few appeals were allowed. Judge Winchester opened the first appeal tribunal in City Hall on 4 December, moving quickly through the cases. The first man called, Francis Moran of 5 Hambly Avenue, claimed exemption on the grounds of being the only support for his mother. One of the men sitting on the panel, Mr. Alexander Snow,⁸² asked if Mr. Moran was seeing a girl. When the reply was in the

⁸⁰ "Crushing Blow for Mother Was Verdict of Tribunal," *Telegram*, 14 November 1917, p. 13.

⁸¹ "This Man Wants to Fight; Quits Christadelphians," *Telegram*, 15 November 1917, p. 15.

⁸² Snow was another prominent Toronto lawyer who served on the exemption tribunals. Born in Hull, Quebec in 1857, Snow was educated at Ottawa Collegiate Institute and by private tutor. He was called to the Ontario Bar in 1884 and served as a

affirmative, Snow pressed, "Is this girl keeping you back?" "Maybe," came the reply. The case was dismissed.⁸³ Of the 47 men who appeared before Judge Winchester, only seven were granted exemption.⁸⁴

The tribunals became more efficient over time. While they had been receptive initially to pleas for exemption, when it became clear that most men were applying to have their cases dismissed, the tribunals sped up proceedings and granted fewer exemptions. The activities of the tribunals were consistent with the recruiting pattern which had begun in August 1914. Recruiting officers had gradually expanded the scope of their appeals until it became necessary to conscript men for service. Given the nature of the support of the population for the war, the only way conscription could have been avoided would have been for the war to end before 1917. When a man appeared before the tribunal, it quickly became apparent that he could not take much comfort in the grounds for exemption included in the Military Service Act. Making full use of the latitude contained in the Act, tribunals ensured that as many men were made to serve as possible. The burden of proof resided with the men appearing before the tribunal, not the State. Being granted an exemption was as much a product of *when* the application was made, as *why* it was made, at least in metropolitan Toronto.

There were few objections, however, to the way area tribunals were run. The fact

Crown Prosecutor. During the war he acted as Registrar of Aliens in 1915. One of his two sons had been killed fighting at Courcellette in 1916. His other son was serving overseas, and was wounded during the attack on the Hindenburg Line in August 1918. (B.M. Greene, *Who's Who and Why, 1921* (Toronto: International Press Limited, 1921), p. 1352.).

⁸³ "Few Appeals Are Allowed by Tribunals," *News*, 4 December 1917, p. 1.

⁸⁴ "Few Exemptions by Appeal Court," *Mail and Empire*, 4 December 1917, p. 4.

that there was no outcry against the curt dismissals or treatment of potential soldiers indicates a general level of acceptance of the tribunals. The hearings themselves indicate that voluntary recruiting had been enormously successful. More than half the total eligible men had already left, with another third having offered themselves and been rejected on medical grounds. Even in this context, there was no objection to the process set in place to conscript even more men. Examining the reasons that men still at home offered for applying for exemption reveals the extent to which the local population had participated in recruiting. Families with two or more soldiers at the front were commonplace. Judging from the number of anonymous letters sent to Mr. Osler, the Chief Registrar of Ontario, many citizens wanted to make those who had avoided service join as soon as possible. They could read the reasons for which men wished to be exempt from service, and could imagine the hardships imposed on families and the sorrow of relatives left at home. However, as an election loomed in the fall of 1917, there was no sign of significant anti-conscription sentiment.

While the tribunals were meeting, Toronto was also engaged in one of the largest financial campaigns of the war. Along with the rest of the country, the city focused on the 1917 Victory Loan campaign. The issue dominated the papers for weeks, often pushing election coverage off the front page. Following what had become the pattern for loan campaigns, advertisements appeared in the papers for weeks prior to the campaign emphasizing the importance of the financial drive. Papers offered extensive editorial support which aimed to secure \$75 million from Toronto, half of the \$150 million quota

for the Province of Ontario.⁸⁵ Campaign organizers arranged to have a tank available for a parade downtown. Citizens cheered as the "...great mechanical fabric which had instilled terror into German hearts at Courcellette and at other points on the Western Front, lumbered heavily through Toronto streets, its quick-firing guns peeping wickedly from the various embrasures and whirling around in response to the human touch within its armored interior."⁸⁶ Other Victory Loan parades involving thousands of civilians wound through the downtown area in the following days.⁸⁷

By the end of November 1917, just before the end of the campaign, Toronto was in danger of failing to meet its target. The Honorary Chairman of the Toronto Committee published an open letter in the papers. He informed citizens that as of midnight on 30 November, \$63 million had been donated to the Victory Loan, the culmination of subscriptions by 101,467 residents.⁸⁸ As the totals for the final few days were tallied, many worried whether or not the quota would be achieved, but by 3 December, it was clear that it had been. Once again the city had over-subscribed, donating \$76 million to the fund: an average of \$5.4 million each day over the two week period.⁸⁹

As the Victory Loan campaign demonstrates, the war effort continued to draw broad support. However, it was becoming increasingly clear that even well organized patriotic campaigns had their limits. Just as the elaborate campaigns to secure voluntary

⁸⁵ "The Sinews of War" (ed.), *World*, 12 November 1917, p. 6; "Buy a Bond" (ed.); *News*, 13 November 1917, p. 6; "Everyone Should Buy a Bond" (ed.), *Star*, 13 November 1917, p. 10; "Lend to Your Country!" (ed.), *Globe*, 13 November 1917, p. 6.

⁸⁶ "City Cheered As Huge Tank Rumbled Past," *News*, 21 November 1917, p. 10.

⁸⁷ "12,000 March As Tribute to Victory Loan," *Star*, 28 November 1917, p. 1.

⁸⁸ "Advertisement," *World*, 1 December 1917, p. 5.

⁸⁹ "Toronto Loan Total Was Over \$76,000,000," *Star*, 4 December 1917, p. 8.

recruits had ultimately proven unable to secure the volume of men demanded, the 1917 Victory Loan campaign suggested that voluntary financial contributions were also nearing their limit. The 1917 campaign was remarkable in its level of participation, averaging more than one donation per household. However, the patriotism of Torontonians was not reaching its limit. The level at which citizens participated in this campaign indicates that they supported the war effort. The difficulty was not securing the patriotic support of citizens, but struggling to keep voluntary contributions up to the ever-increasing demands of the war.

Nationally, the 1917 election was a de facto plebiscite on conscription. A vote for Borden's Union platform was a vote for conscription and winning the war -- every other issue was accorded secondary importance. According to historian John English, this emphasis was necessary to hold together the fragile Union coalition. Laurier, on the other hand, chose to focus on conscription even though the support of his party did not require it. English argues that Laurier did so "to become a martyr to conscription,"⁹⁰ thereby securing French-Canadian and immigrant support for the Liberal Party in the future. Borden ensured the potential opposition in English-speaking Canada would be at a minimum by promising in early December 1917 to exempt agricultural workers from conscription.⁹¹ Voting patterns were, therefore, drawn largely along linguistic lines with most English-Canadians supporting conscription, and most French-Canadians opposing it.

⁹⁰ English, *The Decline of Politics*, p. 189.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

In Toronto, the most ardent supporters of the conscriptionist cause were the members of the Great War Veterans' Association. Beginning early in the campaign at nomination meetings, soldiers made their presence felt. At one preliminary meeting, a Laurier supporter called for three cheers for his leader. In response, several soldiers "...seized the demonstrative one and dragged him down the aisle. He uttered a loud piercing shriek as somebody administered a kick to part of his anatomy. Finally he was released, but not before he had been pretty well pummeled."⁹² In another incident, another Laurier supporter was chased by soldiers up a lane. It happened, "...unfortunately for him, to have no outlet. His escape cutoff, the soldiers captured him and dragged him the full length of the lane and after administering some punishment allowed him to go."⁹³

Conscription set the context for the election, but most local campaigns were not waged between anti-conscriptionists and conscriptionists: four out of the six ridings did not even offer an anti-conscriptionist candidate. In North Toronto, long-time Conservative Member of Parliament and Minister of Trade and Commerce, Sir George Foster⁹⁴ was selected as the Union candidate to run against Independent Liberal, Mr. A.J.

⁹² "War Is The Only Issue," *Telegram*, 20 November 1917, p. 18.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Foster was born in Apohaqui, New Brunswick in September 1847 and was of United Empire Loyalist descent. He had a distinguished career at the University of New Brunswick and was eventually appointed a Professor of Classics and Ancient Literature. First elected to Sir John A. Macdonald's Conservative government in 1885, and returned several times before war began in 1914. In addition to parliamentary duties, Foster served on the boards of several mining and development companies, among them the Union Trust Company of Toronto. (Ernest J. Chambers, ed., *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1918* (Ottawa: Mortimer Company Limited, 1918), pp. 137-138.).

Young.⁹⁵ Mr. Young argued, however, that he was no longer able to support Laurier. Young had three sons at the front, and pledged to support aggressively all measures which would help bring about the successful conclusion of the war and reinforce the soldiers overseas. His reasons for opposing the Union government, he maintained, had nothing to do with its policy of conscription, and everything to do with the scandals which had plagued the Borden government since the beginning of the war.⁹⁶ Young continued to emphasize this theme throughout the campaign, arguing that "The Military Service Act must be supported. That is my position, and it is the position of a true Canadian, who is bound to support our boys overseas, and kill graft at home."⁹⁷

South Toronto was contested by two candidates, former Toronto Mayor Dr. Charles Sheard,⁹⁸ Unionist, and prominent labour organizer Mr. D.A. Carey, Labour.⁹⁹ Naturally, Sheard supported conscription, but so did Carey. The Labour candidate challenged "...anyone to say that organized labour has not done its share, and more than

⁹⁵ "A.J. Young As Independent Liberal in Toronto North," *Star*, 19 November 1917, p. 1; "Sir George Foster Will Be Opposed," *News*, 20 November 1917, p. 11.

⁹⁶ "2 Candidates Nominated," *Telegram*, 20 November 1917, p. 18.

⁹⁷ "A.J. Young Promises Support to M.S. Act," *Star*, 5 December 1917, p. 13.

⁹⁸ Born in February 1847, Sheard was born, raised and educated in Toronto. He practiced medicine in the city throughout his life, while also serving on the City Council and on the boards of numerous medical associations such as the Toronto League for the Prevention of Tuberculosis. (Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, p. 1015.).

⁹⁹ Carey was born in Dublin, Ireland in January 1859, and came to Canada with his parents two years later. Living for a time in Quebec and Montreal, the family eventually settled in Toronto where Carey trained as a machinist, but later served as a reporter on the *Telegram*. He began his long-time association with the labour movement in 1880 and was elected to the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada where he served as president from 1896-7, and later became the President of the Toronto Labour Temple. (Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, p. 199.). "Mr. Carey Opposes Dr. Charles Sheard," *News*, 20 November 1917, p. 11.

its share, in this war."¹⁰⁰ To avoid being labeled a Laurier supporter, Carey sent Sir Wilfrid Laurier a telegram which was reprinted in the *Telegram*:

I am the candidate of the Greater Toronto Labour party in South Toronto -- not the candidate of any political party -- and do not desire your endorsement of my candidature for the House of Commons, especially as I am most emphatically opposed to the war policy of the Opposition as declared in Parliament and in your manifesto.¹⁰¹

The issue for Carey was not conscription, but securing a voice for Labour in the upcoming Union government.

East Toronto also witnessed a contest between a Unionist and a Labour candidate. Former Minister of Militia Sir Edward Kemp¹⁰² ran against G.T. Vick, the business manager of the Bricklayers' Union. Conscription was an issue in this riding, but only its form, not its substance, as Vick argued that wealth should be conscripted along with manpower.¹⁰³ Thus, East Toronto electors could vote for the nature and breadth of conscription, but they could not cast an anti-conscription vote.

There was no anti-conscriptionist candidate in Centre Toronto either. Unionist

¹⁰⁰ "Carey and Sheard Named," *Telegram*, 20 November 1917, p. 18.

¹⁰¹ "Carey Is For Conscription; Doesn't Want a Laurier Tag," *Telegram*, 20 November 1917, p. 21. The telegram also appears in the Public Archives of Canada, Wilfrid Laurier Papers, 19 November 1917, p. 198485.

¹⁰² Kemp was born in Clarenceville, Quebec in August 1858, and became a noted manufacturer. Beginning in 1895 Kemp devoted much of his energy to public life, serving as the President of the Toronto Board of Trade 1899-1900, and a member in good standing of many prominent social and philanthropic societies. First elected to the House of Commons in 1911, he served as Minister Without Portfolio before becoming Minister of Militia on 23 November 1916 when Sam Hughes was fired. He transferred to the Ministry of Overseas Military Forces in October 1917. (Chambers, *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, p. 149.).

¹⁰³ "Two Run in East Toronto," *Telegram*, 20 November 1917, p. 18.

candidate Edmund Bristol had been elected three times on a Conservative platform.¹⁰⁴ One of his opponents was a Liberal endorsed by Wilfrid Laurier, J.G. Ramsden, and the other was an Independent candidate, A. Drainin.¹⁰⁵ The latter withdrew from the campaign, but did so after the deadline had passed to remove his name from the ballot. Despite the endorsement from Laurier, Ramsden differed from the Unionists only on the form conscription should take, not its necessity. He believed that not only men, but also wealth should be made to serve the Empire.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the campaign in Centre Toronto was between two pro-conscriptionists candidates. As a result, the campaign revolved around support for the Military Service Act, and support for a broader form of conscription which would also conscript wealth.

Unionist organizers decided that one of the six Toronto ridings should be contested by a Unionist Liberal candidate, choosing the traditional Conservative riding of Parkdale.¹⁰⁷ The result was not without controversy, however. Upset that Toronto would have anything to do with the Liberal party, many returned soldiers chose not to support Unionist Herbert Macdonald Mowat,¹⁰⁸ and threw their support behind a soldier

¹⁰⁴ Bristol was born in 1861 at Napanee, Ontario, and was of United Empire Loyalist descent. Educated at Toronto University, he amassed a solid academic reputation. After graduating he served on the boards of several prominent companies, including the Prudential Trust Company. First elected in 1905, he was re-elected in 1908 and 1911. (Chambers, *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, pp. 115-116.). For a more detailed examination of his life and times, see Alan Gordon, "Patronage, Etiquette, and the Science of Connection: Edmund Bristol and Political Management, 1911-21," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 80, No. 1, March 1999, pp. 1-31.

¹⁰⁵ "Former Member Answered Critics," *News*, 20 November 1917, p. 11.

¹⁰⁶ "War Is the Only Issue," *Telegram*, 20 November 1917, p. 18.

¹⁰⁷ "Three Candidates in Parkdale Field," *News*, 20 November 1917, p. 11.

¹⁰⁸ Mowat was born in Kingston, Ontario in 1863. He moved to Toronto and was a prominent member of the Queen's Own Rifles, becoming the Brigade Major at Camp

candidate, returned soldier Major Carmon McCormack. The result was a contest between two men who both claimed the label of win-the-war candidate. Speaking to a rally at his headquarters at Dundas and Lansdowne Streets, McCormack argued: "I recognize the Union Government whether they recognize me or not. It is time that we cut out politics, and it is time that we mobilize this country as it should be mobilized for the winning of the war. I would not go to Ottawa if I did not think that I could not do more for the soldiers than men who do not understand their needs."¹⁰⁹ McCormack was pro-Union government, and the election in Parkdale was about representation for soldiers in the Union government. Also running as a Laurier Liberal was Gordon Waldron, but his campaign was virtually buried in coverage accorded to the fight between Mowat and McCormack for the Union vote.

There is no conclusive evidence in the Toronto papers about Waldron's position on conscription. However, it is possible that he ran as a Laurier Liberal, along with his colleague in West Toronto, C.W. Kerr.¹¹⁰ In a campaign rally, Kerr made it plain that he was a Laurier supporter, and he believed "... that the policies of Sir Wilfrid Laurier should be decided by the people."¹¹¹ However, Kerr's campaign had a different tone to it than did Laurier's campaign in Quebec, probably because Kerr had no illusions about winning if he did not openly support conscription: "I...look upon it [the chances of

Borden in 1916. The 1917 general election was his first political campaign. (Chambers, *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, pp. 168-169.).

¹⁰⁹ "G.W. [Great War] Veterans Stand by Major Carson McCormack," *Telegram*, 3 December 1917, p. 7.

¹¹⁰ "A.J. Young As Independent Liberal in Toronto North," *Star*, 19 November 1917, p. 1.

¹¹¹ "Three Candidates in Parkdale Field," *News*, 20 November 1917, p. 11.

winning] as forlorn hope."¹¹²

While Laurier emphasized the choice that Quebeckers would have in supporting or rejecting conscription, Kerr presented the choice as between Borden's Military Service Act and another option which would be a more broadly based conscription of wealth and manpower.¹¹³ Running against former Toronto Mayor and Unionist candidate H.C. Hocken,¹¹⁴ and Labour candidate John Bruce, Kerr made sure that Torontonians understood that he was pro-conscription, but would listen to the voice of the people. In a letter to Laurier about his nomination meeting, Kerr noted, "...I declared myself a candidate on behalf of the people, a Liberal Win-the-War man..."¹¹⁵ He was firmly committed to the war effort, his business partner serving at the front, along with "...some twenty relatives on my wife's side and my side of the family."¹¹⁶

Kerr's platform was different from Laurier's policy. Kerr made it plain that he was

¹¹² C.W. Kerr to Wilfrid Laurier, 31 October 1917, PAC, Wilfrid Laurier Papers, p. 197915.

¹¹³ Kerr's position on conscription was typical of Laurier Liberals running outside Quebec. Historian Daniel T. Byers has studied the 1917 election, arguing that Laurier "...permitted his followers to express almost any view so long as they accepted his leadership." (Daniel T. Byers, "The Conscription Election of 1917 and Its Aftermath in Orillia, Ontario," *Ontario History*, Vol. LXXXIII, No. 4, December 1991, pp. 275.). This assertion is further supported by Patrick Ferraro in his MA thesis, who concluded that "...in areas where the Liberal party did manage to attract considerable electoral support the Liberal candidates had assumed a pro-conscriptionist posture." (Patrick Ferraro, "English Canada and the Election of 1917," MA Thesis, McGill University, 1971, p. i.).

¹¹⁴ Hocken was a lifetime resident of Toronto, born there in October 1857. First known as a publisher, Hocken was a member of many local clubs and societies. He used his local reputation to help win a seat on the Toronto City Council where he stayed for five years before winning the Mayoralty in 1913. The 1917 election was his first federal campaign. (Chambers, *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, p. 146.).

¹¹⁵ C.W. Kerr to Wilfrid Laurier, 19 November 1917, PAC, Wilfrid Laurier Papers, p. 198-486.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 198487.

himself a supporter of conscription, and if elected would push for an even more broadly based measure than would the Borden government. This strategy was necessary because both of his opponents were supporters of conscription, and most Torontonians endorsed compulsory service. As the Unionist candidate, Hocken supported the Borden government, and Labour nominee John Bruce sought representation for workers in the Union government.¹¹⁷

The population was not afforded the luxury, however, of indulging in a minute following of the details of various local campaigns. In addition to war related items, Halifax literally exploded onto the front pages just over a week before the 17 December 1917 vote. In Halifax harbour on 6 December 1917, two munition ships collided, resulting in an explosion of over 2,750 tons of explosives. Out of Halifax's total population of 50,000, almost 1,600 died, and over 9,000 were injured in the largest human-made explosion in history. The blast destroyed or damaged 13,500 buildings, leaving 6,000 homeless.¹¹⁸ Newspaper headlines bluntly informed Torontonians of the disaster: "HALIFAX CITY IS WRECKED;" "HALIFAX DEAD MAY BE 2000;" and "OVER 2000 KILLED AT HALIFAX." For days, front pages were filled with the news from Halifax. Over 150 former Toronto soldiers, returning wounded from the front, had left Halifax just before the explosion.

Halifax residents who survived the blast began the process of rebuilding shattered

¹¹⁷ "Rocky Road for H. C. Hocken; Nomination Was Stormy," *Telegram*, 20 November 1917, p. 18.

¹¹⁸ David J. Bercuson and J.L. Granatstein, *Dictionary of Canadian Military History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 88.

homes in the face of a new enemy: the Canadian winter. Thousands were homeless as a blizzard blanketed the city. Torontonians responded to the call for help and sent nurses and city planners along with medical supplies and clothing. Two hundred carpenters and glaziers were sent to help construct temporary shelters. A depot was set up at 45 Richmond Street West to collect donations of clothing and blankets. As the scale of the disaster was discovered, Toronto counted its cost, again in terms of dead and wounded. Torontonians killed in Halifax numbered five, with one other missing: one petty officer; a 7 year old girl named Elizabeth Hendry; one woman who had been working with the Salvation Army, Mrs. Ensign Cornwell; a telegraph operator; and one other man. Three other cadets were injured, along with one other woman.¹¹⁹

It was against the backdrop of continued aid for Halifax residents that Torontonians went to the polls on 17 December 1917. Although there were a variety of issues before them, only a minority of them even had the opportunity to cast a vote against conscription. Throughout the campaign, citizens read in the papers of the ardent support of conscription offered by ex-soldiers returned from the front. Any who had doubt may have been persuaded to support conscription since the men returned from the front were campaigning so fervently for its implementation. Opposition candidates ran on a variety of platforms, but all supported some version of conscription. Whether they

¹¹⁹ "164 Veterans Left Halifax Just in Time," *Star*, 6 December 1917, p. 7; "Explosion and Fire Devastate Large Section of Halifax," *Telegram*, 6 December 1917, p. 15; "HALIFAX CITY IS WRECKED," *Star*, 6 December 1917, p. 1; "HALIFAX DEAD MAY BE 2,000," *Globe*, 7 December 1917, p. 1; "OVER 2000 KILLED AT HALIFAX," *World*, 7 December 1917, p. 1; "Toronto Sends Supplies, Money, Nurses and Men," *Star*, 8 December 1917, p. 1.

were displeased with the corruption associated with the Borden government, desirous of a voice for labour in the Union Government cabinet, upset that soldiers' needs were not being given sufficient priority, or annoyed at a conscription policy which conscripted men but not wealth, candidates who ran against Unionists in four ridings all supported conscription.

The other two ridings present something of an enigma. Nationally, Laurier Liberals argued that citizens would be given the opportunity to vote in a referendum on conscription. However, the two Laurier Liberal candidates in Toronto were confronted with a local population which ardently supported conscription. As a result, they presented the referendum as a forum in which citizens could decide the *form* conscription could take, not its necessity. Both expressed their support for conscription, arguing that it must be more broadly based than the Military Service Act. Thus, it is difficult to gauge what voters who cast ballots for Laurier Liberals in Toronto believed they were voting for.

It would be difficult to imagine a more complete level of support than that offered by all of the Toronto papers, Liberal and Conservative, secular and religious, for the Union government. Editorials in the daily press drew attention to the fact that there were several candidates in each riding who supported conscription. However, they were unanimous in supporting the Union government, reminding voters that despite high levels of conscriptionist sentiment, "There is only one Union Government candidate in your

riding."¹²⁰ Editorials in religious papers were also unanimous in their support for the Borden-led coalition. An editorial in *The Presbyterian* was typical of the major church reaction:

Never in the history of the Dominion has there been an election in which the clergy and the courts of the Protestant Churches have taken sides so unabashedly as now. We have been used to hear of the Roman Catholic priests telling their flock how they ought to vote, but this time we have Presbyteries and district meetings and ministerial associations passing resolutions in favour of the Union Government and urging the members of their respective denominations to vote for its candidates. And they are right.¹²¹

Papers also reported on the actions of Toronto's religious leaders which reinforced the attitudes expressed on the editorial pages of religious journals. At St. George's Church on 6 December 1917, before a meeting of the British Unity League, ministers from the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches endorsed the Union Government.¹²² Just over a week later, the day before voters went to the polls, Toronto pulpits "...spoke with one clear voice...in a direct appeal to the people to carry their consciences to the polls and vote for the Union Government."¹²³

¹²⁰ "The Name to Put Your Cross To" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 17 December 1917, p. 6. See also, "Every Vote Is Needed" (ed.), *Globe*, 14 December 1917, p. 6; "Will Canadians 'Take the Count?'" (ed.), *Saturday Night*, 15 December 1917, p. 1.

¹²¹ "The Church and the Elections" (ed.), *The Presbyterian*, 13 December 1917, p. 557. For similar examples from other religious periodicals, see the following: "Canada's Great Day of Destiny" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 28 November 1917, p. 5; "What Shall Our Answer Be?" (ed.), *Canadian Churchman*, 6 December 1917, p. 775; "How Shall We Vote?" (ed.), *Canadian Baptist*, 13 December 1917, p. 2. There was no editorial comment in the *Catholic Register* on the election, but the journal did endorse conscription when it was announced.

¹²² "United Clergy for Union," *Telegram*, 6 December 1917, p. 16. See also, "Petty Grievances Must Be Forgotten," *News*, 5 December 1917, p. 2.

¹²³ "Clear Note of the Pulpits," *Globe*, 17 December 1917, p. 1.

Women also organized to publicly proclaim their support of the Union campaign. At a meeting at Margaret Eaton Hall on 12 November 1917, the Club for the Study of Social Science met to endorse Union Government and conscription.¹²⁴ The following day, the Local Council of Women, representing 72 local women's organizations, and Presidents of Federated Societies met to discuss Union Government. The result was a resolution which argued that it was the "...duty of every patriotic woman to support the Union Government and the win-the-war movement."¹²⁵ Support for the Borden-led coalition continued to build, and a massive rally of women was held on 24 November 1917. The Royal Alexander Theatre was the site for this bipartisan rally of Liberal and Conservative women which promised that the "...women of Toronto pledge...anew to do everything in our power to support our men overseas, and to send to them at once the necessary reinforcements."¹²⁶ Two weeks later, women met again at the Young Women's Christian Association Guild Hall to emphasize the need to vote for Union government, informing both men and women that they must support the party which would help to win the war.¹²⁷

On election day, newspapers informed voters that it was their duty to go out and vote for Union. After the polling booths closed, citizens again took to the streets to take part in the collective process of learning the results of the election. The King Street

¹²⁴ "Women Endorse Union Government," *Mail and Empire*, 13 November 1917, p. 10.

¹²⁵ "Women Support the Government," *Globe*, 14 November 1917, p. 10.

¹²⁶ "Women Stand by Union Government," *Star*, 26 November 1917, p. 14.

¹²⁷ "Mass Meeting of Women Inspired by Addresses," *News*, 4 December 1917, p. 8.

offices of the *Star* were surrounded by more than 10,000 citizens who stood and watched as election results were flashed on giant screens. Every time another big majority was announced for Unionist candidates, the crowd burst into spontaneous applause. Nationally, the Union Government won a majority of the seats in the House of Commons, taking 152 of 234 seats, a majority of 82. The results were fairly evenly divided with most of French Canada rejecting conscription, and most of English Canada embracing it. By 9 p.m. it was clear that Toronto was solid for Union Government, having returned Union candidates in all six ridings.¹²⁸ Local election results, listed in Table 1 below, spoke solidly for Union Government.

There were 90,985 votes cast in the six Toronto ridings. Fully 92.6 percent were cast for candidates who, regardless of political affiliation, supported conscription. The other 7.4 percent cast votes for candidates who supported Laurier, but interpreted Laurier's no-conscription-without-referendum policy differently than did their leader. Therefore, votes cast for the Laurier-Liberal candidates in Parkdale and in West Toronto may have been cast in the name of a referendum for the public to decide on a more broadly based conscription policy, not for the chance to oppose it. Even assuming that every Laurier-Liberal vote was anti-conscription, more than 90 percent of voters, after more than three years of war and tens of thousands of casualties, supported conscription.

¹²⁸ "Cheering Was Wild When Results Known," *Star*, 18 December 1917, p. 18.

Table 6.1: Toronto 1917 Election Results.¹²⁹

Riding	Candidate	Party Affiliation	Number of Votes	Percentage of Total Votes in Riding
North Toronto	Foster	Union-Conservative	17,384	86.3
	Young	Independent-Liberal	2,763	13.7
South Toronto	Sheard	Union-Conservative	4,966	68.1
	Carey	Labour	2,322	31.7
East Toronto	Kemp	Union-Conservative	11,813	73.8
	Vick	Labour	4,204	26.2
Centre Toronto	Bristol	Union-Conservative	8,600	68.2
	Drainin	Laurier-Liberal	216	1.7
	Ramsden	Independent-Liberal	3,802	30.1
Parkdale	Mowat	Union-Liberal	9,454	45.8
	McCormack	Soldier (Pro-Union)	7,605	36.9
	Waldron	Laurier-Liberal	3,567	17.3
West Toronto	Hocken	Union-Conservative	9,385	65.6
	Bruce	Labour	1,995	14
	Kerr	Laurier-Liberal	2,909	20.4

The results indicate a Toronto voting population almost unanimous in its

¹²⁹ This table was prepared using results listed in Chambers, *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, 1918, pp. 205, 208, 209. These results are very similar to those published immediately after the election in the six Toronto papers. The total number of votes cast changed only by 185 (the papers reported 91,170 votes cast), and the percentage of conscription supporters by 0.1%.

commitment to the policy.¹³⁰ Only Parkdale had been witness to a margin of victory for the Unionist candidate which was less than 10 percent. However, the gap between the Unionist Mowat and the soldier candidate McCormick had nothing to do with conscription. A ballot cast for either man, totaling 82.7 percent of the ballots cast in the riding, was a vote for Union government. In a traditionally Conservative riding, Parkdale residents and soldiers were upset that the Union Government nominated a former Liberal to run on the Union Government ticket. As a result, McCormack drew many votes which would have gone to a Conservative-Unionist candidate.

The behaviour of women voters sparked the interest of many contemporaries. C.W. Kerr, Liberal Candidate in West Toronto, wrote to Laurier shortly after the campaign was over. A scrutineer on election night, Kerr noted that organizers "...did not anticipate that women would poll their *full* [emphasis added] registered strength."¹³¹ In West Toronto, Kerr observed, 95 percent of the women voted for Unionist Candidate Hocken.¹³² If these results could be generalized to the other ridings, it would suggest that women voted much more strongly for Unionist candidates than their male counterparts who divided their pro-conscription votes between Unionist, Win-the-War Liberals,

¹³⁰ The results from Centre Toronto provide a glimpse into the votes of non-British Torontonians. Alan Gordon has argued that one third of its residents were not British. A majority of these were Jews, accounting for 23 percent of Bristol's constituents according to the 1911 Census. (Gordon, "Edmund Bristol and Political Management," *Canadian Historical Review*, p. 5.). Despite the label of the most ethnically non-British of the Toronto ridings, the Laurier-Liberal Candidate withdrew at the very beginning. The result was a contest between two conscriptionist candidates.

¹³¹ C.W. Kerr to Wilfrid Laurier, 24 December 1917, PAC, Wilfrid Laurier Papers, p. 199121.

¹³² *Ibid.*

Soldier Candidates and Labour representatives. The behaviour of women was also noted by Borden supporter, J.M. Godfrey. Women had featured so prominently in the local campaign that Godfrey was moved to write to Borden, "The two outstanding features of the campaign are the British Canadian solidarity for the war and the splendid work of the Women."¹³³

Toronto's soldiers at the front also voted overwhelmingly for Unionist candidates.¹³⁴ Although the results of their voting were not known in the city until the end of February, soldiers supported conscription almost unanimously.¹³⁵ Even without taking into consideration their votes for non-Unionist candidates who supported conscription as a vote for the Military Service Act, the results were impressively for Union: North Toronto, 96.6 percent; South Toronto, 98.3 percent; East Toronto, 95.3 percent; Toronto Centre, 96.7 percent; Parkdale, 93.6 percent; and West Toronto, 94.8 percent.¹³⁶ Across all six ridings, 21,570 out of a total of 21,822 soldier votes were cast for candidates who officially endorsed conscription, 98.8 percent.¹³⁷

* * *

Historical accounts have examined the 1917 election in the context of its

¹³³ J.M. Godfrey to Robert Borden, 19 December 1917, PAC, Robert Borden Papers, MG 26, H1 a, Vol. 16, pp. 4047.

¹³⁴ Toronto's soldiers were consistent with the rest of Canadian soldiers in overwhelmingly supporting Unionist candidates. See Desmond Morton, "Polling the Soldier Vote: The Overseas Campaign in the Canadian General Election of 1917," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4, November 1975, pp. 39-58.

¹³⁵ See for example, "Soldiers' Vote From Ontario Favours Union," *News*, 20 February 1918, p. 1; "98.89 Per Cent. To Government," *Globe*, 26 February 1918, p. 9.

¹³⁶ Chambers, *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, pp. 205, 208, 209.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

consequences for national unity. Given its incredibly divisive effects, historians have studied the electoral contest on a national scale, commenting on the subsequent costs. Jack Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman's *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (1977), and John English's *The Decline of Politics: The Conservatives and the Party System, 1901-20* (1977), examine the political maneuverings of Prime Minister Borden and Wilfrid Laurier in their attempts to secure political gain. Using the papers of prominent politicians and leading national figures, they have pieced together the broad context and the struggle between English- and French-speaking politicians during the election campaign.

The focus in Toronto, however, was almost exclusively on the immediate goal of winning the war. Local residents interpreted French-Canadian reluctance to serve as treasonous. At Toronto's patriotic rallies, in editorial pages, and at election meetings, voicing anti-Quebec and anti-French sentiment was considered the height of patriotic enthusiasm. Citizens understood the recruiting statistics, knew that Quebec had not contributed on the same level as the rest of Canada, and wanted the full power of the state behind appeals for more recruits. This anti-French sentiment went hand in hand with an oppressive attitude towards enemy aliens. The climate was such that even attending an anti-conscription rally was considered seditious, and was grounds for arrest. There was no outrage about violations of civil rights in the papers. On the contrary, citizens appeared to endorse shutting down activities which did not help to win the war.

From May through December 1917, Torontonians maintained their support for the war effort and the necessity of imposing conscription. Even before the Military Service

Act was announced in the House of Commons in May 1917, a variety of individuals and groups pushed Borden to enact legislation as soon as possible. The daily papers, ministers, churches, organizations, women's groups, and average citizens all endorsed conscription *before* the 11 June tabling of the Military Service Act, giving Borden a blank cheque. It is important to understand that people were acting to shape conscription, not being content to just sit back and react to what the government proposed.

Few labour organizations or activists were opposed to conscription on principle; they were opposed initially to the specifics of the Military Service Act. By June 1917, however, Toronto labour groups endorsed compulsion, and were quick to distance themselves from anti-conscription activity. Opposition to the Act was rooted in the fact that labour wanted a broader form of conscription which conscripted wealth as well as manpower. Their endorsement must be seen as part of workers' sacrifice for the common goal of winning the war; not condemned as either a failure of class solidarity or a demonstration of the duplicity of the Borden government.¹³⁸ Union members and working class workers voted for conscription and were part of the gatherings to celebrate its introduction. Judging from their own actions during the campaign for conscription, labour activists, labour candidates, and union members endorsed conscription.

Returned soldiers were ubiquitous. They marched at pro-conscription rallies to demonstrate their commitment to the war. They threatened and, on occasion, used physical violence to shut down anti-conscription rallies. They marched through the

¹³⁸ Heron and Siemiatycki, "The Great War, The State, and Working-Class Canada," in Heron, ed., *The Workers' Revolt*, p. 24.

streets and were given places of honour at patriotic gatherings. They even stood a post at election meetings, ensuring that any opposition would be dealt with swiftly. Far from being a quiet and ineffectual presence, they were pro-active and did not hesitate to make their wishes known. The fact that these men had been at the front, had seen their comrades sacrificed, and still supported conscription was a ringing endorsement of its necessity.

This support, however, was not uninformed. Endorsement of conscription was made in this city in the context of food shortages, labour shortages, and ever-increasing casualty lists. Torontonians did not cast uninformed votes to continue the war. People understood what conscription meant. They recognized that voluntary efforts were not enough to keep pace with the demands of the war, and they voted to increase the level of sacrifice nonetheless. Voluntarism had reached its limit. A vote for conscription was as much as anything else a formal declaration that the demands of the war had increased to such a degree that it was necessary to formalize structures and put the authority of the state behind war measures. This dedication is clear on the issue of recruiting, as voluntary recruiting had long-since failed to produce sufficient recruits, but it was also required on the financial front. Toronto met its Victory Loan targets, but only barely. Patriotism, however, was never lacking. Donations were received on such a scale that they averaged more than one donation per household. The demands of the war had risen to a degree which required centralization of the war effort.

Women continued to promote the war effort. Working in both the public and the private sphere, their activities were an essential component. Women had already moved

into the positions of men who left for the front, and the imposition of conscription would make even greater demands upon them. What a woman did in serving food to her family, impacted upon the ability of the Canadian Expeditionary Force to feed its men at the front. The consequences of failing to practice thrift in the home were clearly outlined, and women did their best to stretch scarce resources. They also participated in the patriotic rallies and campaigns to endorse conscription, and worked to help elect Unionist candidates, and turned out in force to elect Unionist candidates.

The noose tightened around those men who had avoided volunteering for the Army prior to May 1917. Many may have taken comfort in the eight grounds for exemption outlined in the Military Service Act, but the tribunals found ways around all of them. The tribunal hearings demonstrate the breadth and depth of the commitment of Torontonians to the war effort. Hearing of three sons from one household serving with the Army was common. A great many citizens felt no sympathy for those left at home, and many wrote to officials telling them where "shirkers" could be found. Serving in the Canadian Expeditionary Force was no longer the result of a private choice. The private justifications that individual men had used to resist the pressure to serve since late 1914 were suddenly made public. Proceedings of tribunals were published in the papers, publicly recording private motivations for remaining at home. Local men now had to justify to the community why they were not at war. Many men discovered that the needs of the community were deemed more important than their private reservations, and they were made to serve.

This communal dedication for continuing the war effort carried through into the

election. Despite the contest between French and English at the national level, Toronto's election had little to do with struggles between anti-conscriptionists and conscriptionists. Candidates who opposed Unionist representatives ran on platforms which emphasized fighting government corruption, stressing labour representation, securing a voice for soldiers, or broadening conscription to include wealth. Even the so-called Laurier Liberals found it necessary to make it clear that they too supported conscription. Twisting Laurier's national policy to suit local needs, they intimated that a referendum would be about choosing a broader form of conscription, not about offering a possibility to reject it.

Torontonians learned about the election results in the same way they had learned about the declaration of war in August 1914. Gathering by the thousand outside newspaper offices, they cheered announcements that Unionist candidates had carried the day. Collectively, citizens voted overwhelmingly for a new stage in the war effort. Voluntarism had reached its limits in terms of efficiency, finances, and recruiting, but the collective decision of thousands of individual residents ushered in a new phase of the struggle: total war.

Chapter 7

Total War -- Total Victory

When the votes were counted in December 1917, no one could doubt the strength of Toronto's commitment to a total war effort. The unanimity-of-purpose, however, was not based on any belief that the end of the war was in sight. The German-Russian armistice of 3 December 1917 suggested that the enemy would soon be able to transfer additional divisions to the West, and the build-up of American forces in France was going much slower than expected. The war might last two or three more years and Torontonians would have to see their great crusade through to an apparently distant conclusion. It is fortunate that war ended in 1918 since as the year unfolded it became apparent that the people of Toronto were beginning to feel the strain. Fault lines began to show and conflict replaced community consensus.

The first crisis came in the form of a serious coal shortage which struck the city, province, and much of the country during one of the coldest winters of the century. War time industry demanded enormous amounts of coal normally used for home heating.¹ Problems of distribution compounded those of supply. On 4 January 1918 a storm ripped through the city, delaying trains filled with coal, slowing down the delivery of the fuel.² Two other blizzards buried residents in snow and ice before the end of January.³ At several points during January and February, the thermometer plunged to more than 20

¹ For a summary of the coal situation, see Chapter 3. For a more detailed discussion, see Andrew Pateman, "Keep the Home Fires Burning: Fuel Regulation in Toronto During the Great War," MA Thesis, University of Western Ontario, June 1988.

² "Swept by Tempest of Snow and Wind," *News*, 5 January 1918 p. 1.

³ "City Emerges From Third Blizzard to Find Other Places Worse," *World*, 30 January 1918, p. 1.

degrees below zero Fahrenheit.⁴

A wide array of measures were implemented to help save coal and power. Power Controller Sir Henry Drayton⁵ proclaimed the necessity of practicing "...the strictest economy in the use of electrical energy." Every man, woman and child was directed to economize wherever possible so that the manufacture of war essentials could continue.⁶ Using electrical energy to advertise was prohibited. Street lighting was reduced. Churches merged congregations for Sunday services.⁷ Residents urged that pool rooms and places of recreation be closed.⁸ Public schools temporarily shut their doors.⁹ Government regulation declared that Mondays would be "heatless" until 18 March 1918.¹⁰

These efforts, however, failed to solve the crisis and the federal government was forced to impose a three-day shutdown of industry. A Saturday, Sunday and Monday, 9-11 February 1918, were chosen. On these days, businesses could use only enough coal to

⁴ "Coldest Winter in Century; Arctic Wave Hits Toronto," *Telegram*, 5 February 1918, p. 6.

⁵ Drayton was born in Kingston in April 1869. He trained and practiced as a lawyer in Toronto before being appointed to the Toronto Power Commission in May 1911. He was one of the most ardent supporters of the war effort, and one of his first public acts during the conflict was to supervise the removal of British men and women out of enemy territory. He was designated Dominion Power Controller under the War Measures Act in November 1917. (B.M. Greene, *Who's Who and Why, 1921* (Toronto: International Press Limited, 1921), pp. 1-2.).

⁶ "Street Lighting Restricted to Aid War Industries," *Globe*, 9 January 1918, p. 1.

⁷ "Many Churches in Toronto Join in Expensive Campaign to Cut Fuel Consumption," *News*, 19 January 1918, p. 1.

⁸ "City Pool Rooms Using Up Energy," *World*, 18 January 1918, p. 1.

⁹ "Mild Weather Is In Site," *Globe*, 6 February 1918, p. 6.

¹⁰ "No Heat Saturday, Sunday or Monday and Heatless Mondays Till March 18," *World*, 5 February 1918, p. 1.

prevent injury to property from freezing, but could not conduct business. There were only three exceptions: plants which had to run continuously to prevent injury to their structure; plants manufacturing perishable foods necessary for immediate consumption; and "plants devoted to the printing and publication of daily newspapers."¹¹ A profound testament to the importance of daily newspapers, they were considered more important than war industry.¹²

Toronto adhered strictly to the guidelines, virtually shutting down the city for three days. A walk through the downtown streets would have revealed closed department stores, office buildings, banks, candy stores, jewelers and florists. Very few people were out in the streets. At noon hour the grocery stores and butcher shops closed, leaving open only the theatres, news stands, restaurants and newspaper offices. In all, 7,500 stores were closed while another 2,500 businesses closed at noon hour. Six thousand office buildings were closed, along with 900 factories, leaving 95,000 workers idle. Schoolchildren, university students and teachers remained at home. On Monday, courtrooms opened, but heat was kept to a minimum, prompting overcoat clad judges and lawyers to shiver as they worked. The few City Hall workers who went to work also kept their coats on. Employees working in the detective office were so cold that the entire staff of 36 men transferred themselves to No. 1 Police Station, announcing that they would work out of that office until Tuesday. The only place where business was

¹¹ "No Heat Saturday, Sunday or Monday and Heatless Mondays Till March 18," *World*, 5 February 1918, p. 1.

¹² "No Opposition to the Shut Down," *Mail and Empire*, 6 February 1918, p. 4; "Manufacturing Plants Ordered to Close Saturday, Sunday, Monday, February 9-11," *Globe*, 5 February 1918, p. 1.

increased was in the local theatres, and operators did a brisk business catering to citizens with time on their hands.¹³

Against this backdrop, a two-month struggle against the elements, citizens went about their business and the war effort continued. On 3 January 1918, the most visible result of total war became a reality: draftees reported for military service. On the first day 500 Toronto men reported for service at Exhibition Camp, followed by another 500 over the next two days.¹⁴ As the new recruits went through early training, visited the Dental Officer, and were outfitted for uniforms, the city undertook a campaign to catch defaulters. Police officers searched pool rooms for idle young men. Rewards of \$10 were promised to anyone who turned in a "shirker;" the defaulter was responsible for the fine. Lists were drawn up of absentee soldiers and printed in the papers. Civil and military police visited the homes of men who had not reported, demanding an explanation: "As no explanation will be accepted all men caught by the police will be taken at once to camp and will be put into uniform."¹⁵ As the weeks went by, police officers began seeking defaulters while dressed in civilian clothes. These special officers

¹³ "To-day, Saturday, Is Like a Sunday," *Mail and Empire*, 9 February 1918, p. 4; "3,500 Tons of Coal Saved During First Heatless Day," *Telegram*, 9 February 1918, p. 13; "Dearth of Trade on Heatless Day," *Mail and Empire*, 11 February 1918, p. 4; "Toronto May Have to Work at Night Now," *News*, 12 February 1918, p. 10; "Toronto Responds to Closing Order With Good Heart," *World*, 12 February 1918, p. 4; "Quiet Days in Toronto," *Globe*, 11 February 1918, pp. 1, 9; "The Heatless Days," *Canadian Baptist*, 14 February 1918, p. 1; "Editorial" (ed.), *Canadian Churchman*, 10 January 1918, p. 19; "Closing the Churches," *Christian Guardian*, 22 January 1918, p. 4.

¹⁴ "Five Hundred Men Don Khaki Today," *World*, 3 January 1918, p. 5; "First Draft Men Turn Up At The Camp," *News*, 3 January 1918, p. 1.

¹⁵ "Police are After the Defaulters," *Mail and Empire*, 23 January 1918, p. 5.

patrolled the streets and pool halls looking for defaulters to catch off guard.¹⁶

By the middle of February 1918, all men of Class One not already in uniform were required to carry their papers at all times. Failure to do so would result in immediate conscription. Under the authority of the Department of Justice, Dominion Police could arrest men who could not provide satisfactory proof for why they were not in khaki.¹⁷ Putting these powers to immediate use, 500 men were examined at the Pavlowa Dance Academy on 16 February 1918. At 10:15 p.m., a force headed by Inspector Tom Flanagan of the Dominion Police entered the dance hall and required all young men in attendance to produce identification. Over the next two hours, 15 failed to do so, and were required to report to Dominion Police headquarters on 18 February.¹⁸

Considering the supplying of troops to be a civic responsibility, citizens were asked to participate in the process of rounding up defaulters: about one out of every five men who were ordered by law to report had not done so.¹⁹ The public was asked to facilitate this process by supplying information on draft evaders. Between 50 and 60 letters a day were received by military officials from citizens offering such details. Other residents helped by telephoning in their contribution.²⁰

¹⁶ "Regular Raids on Young Men Playing Pool," *News*, 8 January 1918, p. 1; "Reward Offered For Defaulters," *Mail and Empire*, 8 January 1918, p. 4; "Awards Offered for Delinquents," *World*, 8 January 1918, p. 4; "Search Begins for Defaulters," *Mail and Empire*, 9 January 1918, p. 4; "Search Begun for Absentees," *Globe*, 23 January 1918, p. 6; "Will Launch Drive for Draft Evaders," *Star*, 12 February 1918, p. 7.

¹⁷ "Military Search Now in Full Swing," *News*, 15 February 1918, p. 8.

¹⁸ "Five Hundred Dancers Forced to Show Papers," *World*, 18 February 1918, p. 1.

¹⁹ "Draftees Respond in Early Morning," *World*, 4 January 1918, p. 4.

²⁰ "Information on Draft Evaders," *Globe*, 23 February 1918, p. 8; "Invite Public to Give Names of Defaulters," *World*, 19 February 1918, p. 1.

Even as they coped with a harsh winter, endured inadequate heating, and participated in the process of securing more recruits for the Canadian Expeditionary Force, citizens were called upon to support another round of fundraising for the Toronto and York Patriotic Fund. Scheduled for 22-24 January 1918, the campaign was to raise \$3 million in three days. As in the past, secular and religious papers printed editorials which extolled the virtues of the fund.²¹ Particularly striking, however, were the full-page advertisements used in these papers to encourage citizens to contribute. Even in the context of total war, portraits which drew a picture of a horrible front-line experience were used. One picture showed a young khaki-clad soldier kneeling in no man's land [Figure 7.1], surrounded by the wreckage and destruction of war. As shells burst around him, the soldier holds out his arms in an appeal to the people of Toronto. Beneath this picture of blood and destruction were the words from John MacCrae's "In Flanders Fields": "If ye break faith with us who die, We shall not sleep."²²

²¹ For examples from the secular papers, see the following: "Give to the Patriotic Fund" (ed.), *Mail and Empire*, 23 January 1918, p. 6; "The Patriotic Fund" (ed.), *Star*, 18 January 1918, p. 8; "The Big Drive" (ed.), *News*, 22 January 1918, p. 6; "Distinguished Service" (ed.), *World*, 22 January 1918, p. 6; "The Patriotic Fund" (ed.), *Globe*, 22 January 1918, p. 4. For examples from the religious press, see the following: "Editorial" (ed.), *Canadian Churchman*, 17 January 1918, p. 35; "\$3,000,000 for Patriotic Fund" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 30 January 1918, pp. 3-4.

²² These advertisements were duplicated in all local dailies. The examples are taken from the *News* because it was possible to get a better reproduction of the photographs.

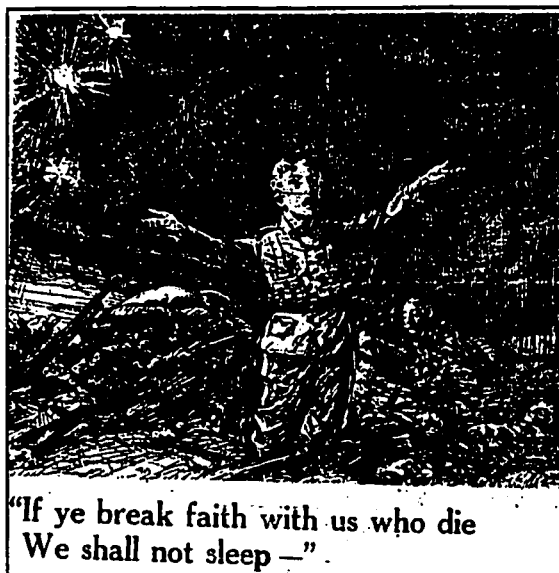


Figure 7.1: "Advertisement," *News*, 16 January 1918, p. 3.

Another portrait shows returned veterans standing in line to thank a businessman who donated to the Patriotic Fund [Figure 7.2].



Figure 7.2: "Advertisement," *News*, 18 January 1918, p. 10.

All the veterans bear some visible signs of the cost of war. One man stands at the front missing an arm, dependent upon a cane to walk. Behind him men are shown on crutches, while others require the support of their comrades to stand.²³ A final example carries the message: "When the Story is Written and Told" [Figure 7.3]. Above the caption, an elderly man and woman are pictured thinking back to the war as they read about it in a book.



Figure 7.3: "Advertisement," *News*, 19 January 1918, p. 7.

The picture shows an image of three men carrying a wounded and unconscious comrade on a stretcher across no man's land. All around them shells explode, destroying men and landscape with equal ferocity. The advertisement asks each citizen to imagine "...how you would like to change places with that man who has just crawled over the parapet to repair some wire, and whose presence has been revealed to the enemy by a 'starlight.'

²³ "Advertisement," *News*, 18 January 1918, p. 10.

Think it over, and then picture what it would be like to be wounded and lack attention because of a shortage of Red Cross supplies."²⁴

The campaign was launched with a large rally at Massey Hall. Among the local dignitaries who gave speeches was Lieut.-General Sir Sam Hughes, former Minister of Militia. The assembled crowd gave an ovation to Sir Sam and to the returned veterans who paraded into the hall.²⁵ In the days after the big rally, 2,500 women began the painstaking process of house to house canvassing to secure donations. Accustomed by this point in the war to elaborate organization, the city was divided into 20 districts to ensure total coverage. The goal was to collect half a million dollars in direct donations to add into the \$3 million dollar campaign. Mrs. H.P. Plumptre,²⁶ President of the Women's Committee of the Patriotic Fund, assured workers, "We have never been so completely organized so long ahead."²⁷ In addition to the districts, women canvassed railway stations, and civic and veterans hospitals. Every resident of Toronto was a potential donor. Possibly reflecting the fact that a greater percentage of women were working for a wage than ever before, women were specifically targeted for donations. One advertisement [Figure 7.4] showed women serving the war effort in a variety of occupations. Images of women as factory operative, canvasser, stenographer, and nurse were mingled with images of women as nurturer and caregiver to children. The message

²⁴ "Advertisement," *Globe*, 19 January 1918, p. 7.

²⁵ "Big Meeting Starts Patriotic Campaign," *World*, 22 January 1918, p. 1; "New Insight Into the War was Given at Launching of Patriotic Campaign," *News*, 22 January 1918, p. 7; "Cheering Crowds Acclaim Cause of Patriotic Fund," *Globe*, 22 January 1918, pp. 1, 6.

²⁶ A biographical sketch of Plumptre is included with Chapter 5.

²⁷ "Women Ready For Campaign," *Globe*, 19 January 1918, p. 10.

was clearly that everyone could contribute.²⁸

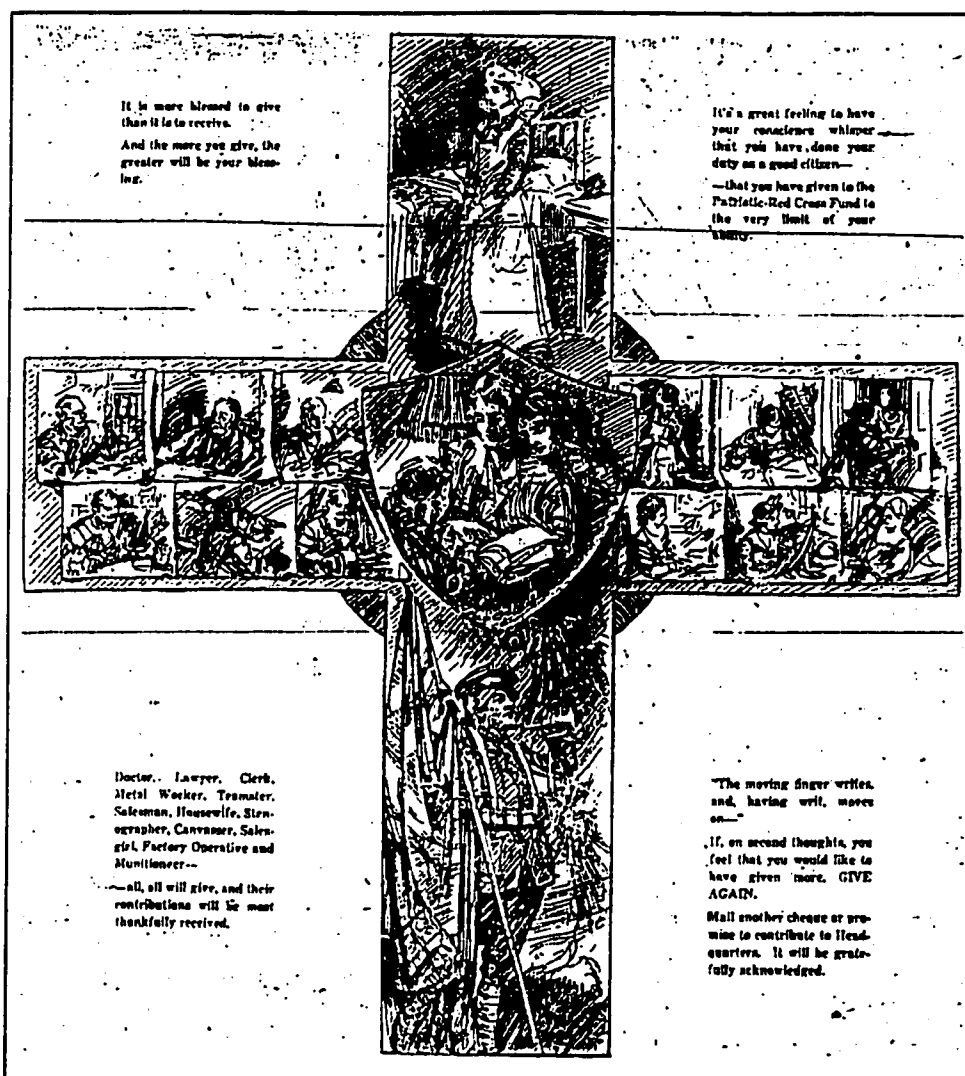


Figure 7.4: "Advertisement," *News*, 23 January 1918, p. 3.

²⁸ There were dozens of articles which covered the role of women in this campaign. For a sampling from the daily newspapers, see the following: "Women are Ready for Big Campaign," *World*, 19 January 1918, p. 5; "Will the Toronto Women Bring in Half a Million?" *News*, 19 January 1918, p. 8; "Big Army of 2,500 Canvassers Will Sweep Over City," *Star*, 21 January 1918, p. 1; "Advertisement," *News*, 23 January 1918, p. 3.

Also supportive were Great War veterans. A representative of the Great War Veterans' Association, Major Sampson, declared, "We are heart and soul behind this movement!"²⁹ Veterans promised to assist workers in whatever capacity necessary to ensure the success of the drive. At every major rally, and at every related public gathering, veterans occupied a prominent place. Many of their number gave speeches to support the fund, calling attention to the need to continue the war, and to support the families of departed soldiers.³⁰

For the first time in the war, the Patriotic Fund did not meet its target within three days. An extra day of campaigning was undertaken, after which the fund was over subscribed.³¹ The failure to achieve the goal of \$3 million dollars in three days, however, had little to do with a lack of patriotism. Total war had increased the cost of war without increasing the capacity of residents to pay for it. After recognizing that more time would be needed, organizers succeeded in reaching their goal. Throughout the process, rallies at Massey Hall were filled to capacity. In the dead of winter thousands of volunteers worked to see to the success of the campaign. Veterans continued to play an active and visible part in continuing the war effort. Even the advertisements used to encourage citizens to donate money were filled with images of the horror of war. This was a population which understood the nature and purpose of the Patriotic Fund and the costs associated with continuing to participate in the Great War.

²⁹ "Patriotic Campaign Could Not Be Better Endorsed," *Telegram*, 19 January 1918, p. 12.

³⁰ "Enthusiasm Great for Big Campaign," *World*, 17 January 1918, p. 1; "War Veterans to Take Part in Big Rally," *News*, 21 January 1918, p. 2.

³¹ "Campaigners Finally Get Over The Top," *World*, 26 January 1918, p. 1.

Torontonians worried about the build-up of German forces on the Western Front. Throughout February and into March 1918 analysts discussed not whether the Germans would attack, but when and where. They knew that Russia had withdrawn from the conflict, and were aware that Germany was transferring thousands of men to the Western Front. Early in February, the *World* carried a headline which declared: "GERMAN OFFENSIVE AGAINST BRITISH ARMY IS IMMINENT." Citing the improvement in weather conditions, and the fact that "...German troops and guns keep pouring into the Western Front," the article maintained that the "Great offensive" would take place within the next several weeks.³² The following day, the headline declared: "GERMAN DRIVE ON WEST FRONT IS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH."³³ In the days that followed, speculation continued on when and where the Germans would attack. On the anniversary of the opening of the German attack at Verdun on 16 February 1916, the *News* reported that the Allies were "ready to meet the widely-advertised enemy offensive."³⁴

In the midst of waiting for news of the resumption of offensive operations, Torontonians received some welcome good news. Married men who had left with the

³² "GERMAN OFFENSIVE AGAINST BRITISH ARMY IS IMMINENT," *World*, 12 February 1918, p. 1.

³³ "GERMAN DRIVE ON WEST FRONT IS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH," *World*, 13 February 1918, p. 1.

³⁴ "Verdun Anniversary Finds Great Armies Tense and Expectant," *News*, 16 February 1918, p. 9. Even religious periodicals carried editorials which discussed the upcoming German offensive. The *Christian Guardian* opened an editorial commenting that the "...first of March has come, and the long-predicted, long-awaited German drive that was to win the war by the slaughter of another million Germans has not yet become a reality." ("Awaiting That Drive" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 6 March 1918, p. 3.).

First Contingent of "Old Originals" in August 1914 had been granted furlough.³⁵ On 18 March 1918, newspapers reported that a ship carrying 395 married "Old Originals" home on a three-month leave of absence had arrived in Halifax harbour. The numbers themselves told a grim story of the cost of war. The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry had sent over a thousand men with that First Contingent: only 15 were left. In total, Military District Number 2 had 113 men returning, 80 of which belonged to Toronto.³⁶ Citizens waited anxiously for their arrival.

While they waited, newspapers cabled stories taken from interviewed soldiers as they traveled home. Private Frank Fallows of 90 Main Street related that "'The worst experience I ever had was when I was buried in a falling dugout, with not only the earth, but two of my comrades on top of me.'" He and his comrades were dug out of their tomb, but it was necessary to remove a piece of bone from each of his knees.³⁷

The men were scheduled to arrive in the evening of 19 March 1918, with two trains arriving at North Toronto and one at Union Station. Each train carried over 200 returning veterans, most of whom were returning wounded from the front. Only a small

³⁵ Local Great War Veterans Association members had been working to make this leave happen for almost a year. In July 1917, for example, W.G. Turley, the Secretary of the GWVA wrote to Minister of Militia Edward Kemp: "Military necessity may prevent the possibility of such a boon [i.e., leave] for the few left of that grand Expeditionary Force. No one realizes that fact more than we, but we respectfully ask that you give this matter your earnest attention." (W.G. Turley to Sir Edward Kemp, 19 July 1917, PAC, Kemp Papers, MG 27, II D9, Vol. 71, File: Great War Veterans' Association, 1917.). Kemp replied that it would be impossible for some time to come.

³⁶ "395 Married Originals Return, 113 of Them for Toronto District," *Star*, 18 March 1918, p. 1; "2,000 Originals Reach St. John," *Mail and Empire*, 19 March 1918, p. 2; "2,000 Originals Back in Canada From the Front," *World*, 18 March 1918, p. 1; "Veterans of First Arrived in Canada," *News*, 18 March 1918, p. 6.

³⁷ "Buried in a Dugout With Others on Top," *Star*, 19 March 1918, p. 9.

percentage of the occupants of each train were "Old Originals." Given the nature of the staggered arrival of the returned heroes, Mayor T.L. Church elected not to have a formal civic reception. He declared that flags should fly at full mast, and citizens should be free to demonstrate their appreciation, but that every effort should be made to allow men to return home with their families as soon as possible. A formal welcome would be arranged at a later date, involving a half-holiday and a great public gathering. Unfortunately, the returning heroes did not arrive on 19 March 1918. Scheduling conflicts confused the issue, and their arrival was changed to early in the morning of 20 March. In the meantime, "thousands upon thousands of people were vainly endeavoring to obtain information."³⁸

The men finally arrived on 21 March 1918. This homecoming was unlike the now-familiar arrival of wounded veterans: "Everyone who has had anything to do with the welcoming of wounded veterans has become pretty familiar with the scenes of scores or hundreds of wounded heroes limping home on crutches, or being carried from the trains, or walking out with a coat-sleeve dangling helpless, or with the scars or bruises of war written plainly upon their features, and they have witnessed the pathetic cheerfulness with which the relatives have tried to hide all consciousness of that in the joy of their welcome, but yesterday's scene was quite different from all that."³⁹ As the train pulled into the station just after 3:30 p.m., a military band attempted to play "Where Do We Go

³⁸ "Many Veterans Arriving Home," *Globe*, 19 March 1918, p. 2; "Three Contingents of Original Firsts Come This Morning," *World*, 20 March 1918, p. 1; "All Honour to Furlough Men!" *Telegram*, 20 March 1918, p. 9; "Welcomes for Furlough Men," *Globe*, 20 March 1918, p. 6.

³⁹ "Original Firsts Are Home at Last," *Mail and Empire*, 21 March 1918, p. 4.

From Here?" The size and crush of a crowd of 2,000 made it impossible.

Before the men disembarked, however, a strange scene was played out. While on one track the cargo was over a hundred Old Originals and another hundred convalescents discharged from the Army, the other track carried a very different load. The second train was headed for the front, carrying 500 drafted soldiers who had just taken leave of their families. For a moment the two trains stood opposite one another, the soldiers exchanging cheers and best wishes. The moment passed, the draftees proceeded to war, and the returned men turned to waiting families.

Reports spoke of the hearty look of men who had been to the front and survived the experience intact. After the "dismissed" order was given, men rushed to embrace loved ones. Tears of joy dotted faces. Words were few. Desperate hugging and cries of joy filled the air. Those who had no relatives "...gave vent to their feelings in cheers and handclappings, frequently turning their heads rather than witness scenes that seemed too sacred for mere spectators."⁴⁰ Husbands were reunited with their wives. Fathers greeted their children, some for the first time. Quietly, smiles beaming from their faces, reunited families proceeded home.⁴¹

Unfortunately, the good news and the homecoming did not last as long as promised. On the very day that the Old Originals arrived in Toronto, the German Army

⁴⁰ "Furlough Men Arrived Early Here for a Month's Vacation," *Telegram*, 21 March 1918, p. 18.

⁴¹ "Home Coming Heroes of Firsts; Keep Red Patches on Shoulders," *Star*, 21 March 1918, p. 5; "Scenes When the Original Firsts Got Home," *Telegram*, 21 March 1918, p. 16; "Originals Arrive Home on Furlough," *World*, 21 March 1918, p. 1; "City Thrilled By Return of the Firsts," *News*, 21 March 1918, p. 9; "Great Welcome for Veterans," *Globe*, 21 March 1918, p. 7.

launched its long-awaited spring offensive. Among the casualties of that action was the furlough for the newly returned fighting men. In desperate need of manpower to stop the German drive, officials canceled leaves, and many of the men who boarded troop trains in August 1914 did so again on 6 April 1918 to return to the front. Scenes of leavetaking were particularly poignant as men stood surrounded by their families, awaiting the train. Women smiled at their husbands through eyes filled with tears. As they boarded the coaches, just as they had done almost four years earlier, the men waved goodbye.⁴²

In the first three weeks of March 1918, war continued to pervade life in Toronto. Citizens emerged from a harsh winter of poor food and sporadic heating to confront a spring which promised new fighting -- and more casualties. If there remained any questions of the horrible cost of war, the return of the Old Originals put them to rest. Even allowing for the number of single men who were not granted furlough, while thousands had left amidst cheers in August 1914, only dozens returned in the spring 1918. Even the men who arrived either unhurt or recovered from wounds were heavily outnumbered by convalescents wounded so badly that they could no longer be of service. Reports spoke of the wonderful change it was for trains to arrive carrying men who could step off the platform under their own power. Torontonians had become accustomed to the arrival of hundreds of men shattered by the war. Even the Old Originals brought with them stories of the grizzly nature of front-line fighting. The war reclaimed these returned

⁴² "Heroes' Second Farewell," *Telegram*, 6 April 1918, p. 22; "Original Firsts Take Departure," *Mail and Empire*, 6 April 1918, p. 4; "Dry-Eyed and Cheery Was Farewell Given Departing Fighting First," *Star*, 6 April 1918, p. 5; "Original Firsts Return to Front," *World*, 6 April 1918, p. 5.

men earlier than had been promised, clearly reminding citizens that the demands of the conflict continued to escalate.

On the very day that the "Old Originals" returned, Germany launched its much anticipated offensive, and almost won the war. Germany had to take advantage of its temporary superiority to launch an offensive which might achieve victory before the Americans arrived in strength. British forces bore the brunt of an attack designed to separate them from the French, and drive the British into the sea. Between 21 March and 5 April 1918, the situation was desperate: "...the German advance made rapid progress on almost the entire front of attack. [British Commander] Haig's southern wing seemed beaten; separation of the British from the French appeared imminent."⁴³ Commanders searched desperately for reinforcements. Stopping the offensive cost the British 163,500 casualties and the French 77,000 casualties, while the Germans suffered 239,000: in 13 days. Included within the British figure were 796 Canadian casualties, mostly from the three cavalry regiments.⁴⁴

The news of the launching of the German offensive was transmitted quickly through the cables which stretched under the Atlantic Ocean. Headlines trumpeted that the long-awaited offensive had begun: "GERMANS OPEN OFFENSIVE," "GERMANY'S GREATEST OFFENSIVE;" and "ENEMY ONRUSH FURIOUS."⁴⁵ The

⁴³ G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919: Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1962), pp. 362-367.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 368. Canadian casualties were relatively low because the major German advance took place outside the Canadian sector.

⁴⁵ "GERMANS OPEN OFFENSIVE," *World*, 22 March 1918, p. 1; "GERMANY'S GREATEST OFFENSIVE," *Globe*, 22 March 1918, p. 1; "ENEMY

ensuing articles did not hide the fact that the Allies were driven back. The official British statement reported: "Heavy fighting continued until late hours last night on the whole battle front. During the afternoon powerful hostile attacks, delivered with great weight of infantry and artillery, broke through our defensive system West of St. Quentin."

Newspaper reports put the action in context, informing readers that for the "...first time since the war began on the Western Front, since the opposing armies established themselves in their trench systems, the defensive zone has been broken through."⁴⁶

Analysts predicted that unless the British were able to reestablish the line, they would be forced to conduct the retreat while fighting an open field battle against onrushing German forces. Reports confirmed that the Germans used poison gas and high velocity shells to spearhead their attack, and the resulting artillery duel "rocked the countryside for hours."⁴⁷

For days, headlines reported that severe fighting continued. Torontonians read and worried. An editorial in the *Christian Guardian* was typical of those printed in the press, clearly presenting the reasons for the German action, and the consequences of failing to stem the tide: "To wait until United States troops become a decisive factor in the fighting would be to insure defeat, and so Germany has determined to make one tremendous effort to smash through the British lines. If Britain can be beaten, Germany wins the war. And so these two great adversaries are now locked in the greatest death-

ONRUSH FURIOUS," *News*, 23 March 1918, p. 1.

⁴⁶ "Haig's Forces Near St. Quentin Fall Back on Prepared Positions Farther to West; Northern Line Firm and Battle Continues," *News*, 23 March 1918, p. 1.

⁴⁷ "Country-Side Rocks With Artillery Duel," *Globe*, 22 March 1918, p. 1.

grapple of all time."⁴⁸ Not since the early days of the war when the Germans approached Paris had Toronto experienced such "...anxiety as that which tested the fiber of its morale during the last two days."⁴⁹ As citizens went to their beds on Saturday 23 March 1918, they did so knowing that the German offensive had managed to puncture the Allied line. All day Sunday, residents again besieged newspaper offices looking for news.

Church services were devoted to praying for the ultimate success of Allied arms. Religious periodicals published editorials commenting on the German drive. *The Presbyterian* warned that the "...great crisis of the greatest war has arrived."⁵⁰ The article solemnly reported that as of the time of writing on 25 March 1918, "There [was] no indication yet that the enemy's drive can be stopped, though it is hoped that a line may be found upon which, with the help of reinforcements, it will be possible to make a stand."⁵¹ *The Canadian Churchman* informed its readers that the Allies were facing "... one of the most anxious periods of the war."⁵² At the behest of Mayor T.L. Church, clergy from all denominations led prayers.⁵³ Citizens prayed that the preparations that had been made against the German attack could withstand the trial.

The initial German advance was halted, but other offensive actions were initiated in the coming months. Before the end of June 1918, Germany launched two more sustained offensives, the first at Flanders from 9-29 April, and the second at the Marne

⁴⁸ "Germany Takes the Plunge" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 27 March 1918, p. 3.

⁴⁹ "German Drive Grips Toronto," *Globe*, 25 March 1918, p. 8.

⁵⁰ "The German Offensive" (ed.), *The Presbyterian*, 28 March 1918, p. 288.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁵² "Editorial" (ed.), *The Canadian Churchman*, 28 March 1918, p. 199.

⁵³ "Toronto's Call to Prayer" (ed.), *Christian Guardian*, 3 April 1918, p. 4.

River, 27 May-6 June 1918. The British once again bore the brunt of the fighting, slowing and finally halting the German advance, at incredible cost. Replacing casualties was paramount.⁵⁴ Soldiers were required to hold the line, and work towards conducting what military planners believed would be winning offensives in 1919 or 1920.⁵⁵

Canadian Prime Minister Robert Borden based his actions in the early spring and summer of 1918 on the basis of those dire predictions. He told his cabinet on 12 April that cancellations of all exemptions to the Military Service Act were necessary to reinforce troops at the front. An Order-in-Council was passed on 19 April 1918, canceling exemptions for those aged between 20 and 22 years of age.

Farmers were quick to register their discontent. At the beginning of May 1918, a delegation of 200 farmers proceeded to Ottawa to explain their case to Prime Minister Robert Borden. The call was sent out from Toronto by ex-member of Parliament for Durham, Mr. J.C. Thornton, who chaired the farmers' meeting while traveling by train to the capital. Thornton told reporters that farmers supported the war effort: "While farmers' sons have no more right to get off than others, the need of food production was great, he said. He expressed the fear that in a year and a half the situation might be worse from the lack of food than the lack of men."⁵⁶

The delegation hoped that Borden would consider modifications to the Order-in-Council which canceled exemptions for men age between 20 and 22 years of age. They

⁵⁴ Nicholson, *Official History*, pp. 369-376.

⁵⁵ C.P. Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, Volume I: 1867-1921* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977), pp. 223-224.

⁵⁶ "200 Ontario Farmers Invade Ottawa To-Day," *Star*, 3 May 1918, p. 11.

were not successful. Covered extensively in the papers, Borden's response was unequivocal: "I want you to understand there is a side of the situation which you do not seem fully to realize. I have been twice in France and I cannot bring myself to stop short of any measure to give our soldiers all the support they deserve...Production is absolutely essential and the duty of the Government is to see that it is carried on. But if we wait for longer consideration of exemption, if we have long delays and our men are destroyed or decimated, what answer can we make to them? To them who have suffered tortures in a German prison will it be any answer to say that we have increased production mightily?"⁵⁷

Unwilling to give up, farmers organized a larger march on Ottawa. On 4 May 1918, over 500 York County farmers gathered, re-affirming their belief that farmers should not be subject to military service. One farmer declared, "We want only fair treatment; we are no slackers; we want to win the war."⁵⁸ They decided to send a delegation of over 1,500 Ontario farmers to meet with the government on 14 May 1918. In the meantime, the chair of the meeting, Mr. R. L. Stiver, emphasized that he wanted "...to explain that no attempt was being made to shirk the duty of the hour. If starvation was looking the people in the face, why not try to prevent it? He wanted the government to see the situation as it was. Some other arrangement could be made to get more men. He advocated the closing of non-essential industries. 'Leave our boys till after the

⁵⁷ "Young Farmers Will Be Called," *Mail and Empire*, 4 May 1918, p. 1. See also, "Farmers Told That Youths Must Serve," *Star*, 4 May 1918, p. 9.

⁵⁸ "Farmers No Slackers, But Want Square Deal," *Star*, 6 May 1918, p. 5.

harvest, anyway, until October,' he pleaded."⁵⁹ Otherwise, he argued, farms would be left deserted as sons left aged fathers to look after acres of arable land.

The United Farmers of Ontario grew as a political force out of their opposition to the way farmers were treated during the war.⁶⁰ Their President, R. W. E. Burnaby, stressed that the protest was being made by old men, not young men subject to the draft. He declared that the young farmers were prepared to do their duty, to do what was best for the country. The hardship, however, would fall on the older men left behind. Burnaby echoed the pleas made by other speakers, calling for the shutdown of non-essential industry before farmers' sons were taken. Reducing the available manpower on the farms this year, he believed, would translate into fewer crops produced in the coming years as fields would have to be re-claimed when the men returned.⁶¹

Prime Minister Borden attempted to curb this new rally of Ontario farmers before it took flight, using the papers to send another message. He re-emphasized the demands of the day, and continued to maintain that farmers' sons would be required to serve. He reminded farmers that he had already met with the delegation of 200, and promised them that a delegation of 2,000 would receive the same answer.⁶² The *News* reported that one unnamed Member of Parliament went "...so far as to say that if 2000 men can afford to

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Two members of the United Farmers of Ontario wrote their memoirs: E.C. Drury, *Farmer Premier: Memoirs of Honourable E.C. Drury* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966), and W.C. Good, *Farmer Citizen: My Fifty Years in the Canadian Farmers' Movement* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1958).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² "Food Campaign Small Comfort To Broken Men," *News*, 9 May 1918, p. 1. See also, "Production Must Give Way to Need For More Soldiers," *Star*, 9 May 1918, p. 1.

spend two days each and enough money to pay a hired hand for a week, it would justify the Government in assuming that the shortage of farm labour is not so distressing."⁶³

The largest delegation of Ontario farmers ever to attend a conference at Ottawa proceeded with its plans. Over 2,000 farmers crowded into the Russell Theatre to plead their case.⁷⁰ The first speaker, J. I. Haycock of Lennox, reminded the government of its election pledge: "We are not coming here with our hat in hands to ask the Government for something to which we are not entitled. We simply ask them to keep a solemn pledge."⁷¹ Another speaker, John I. Suggett, maintained that the farmers supported the war effort: "We want to produce, we want to win the war, but the Government won't let us." W. A. Amos of Palmerston carefully pointed out that he had no son in danger of being conscripted, and that he had campaigned to help elect the Union Government. He objected to criticisms that the farmers were not willing to do what was necessary to win the war: "Nobody has been any more loyal than the farmers. Our young men enlisted voluntarily. They went to the munition plants to help, and the farmers have strained every muscle to produce the last possible pound of food. We are willing to assume our share of sacrifice."⁷²

⁶³ "Cannot Alter Firm Decision On The Draft," *News*, 8 May 1918, p. 1.

⁷⁰ For further discussion of farmer discontent at this meeting, see W.R. Young, "Conscription, Rural Depopulation, and the Farmers of Ontario, 1917-1919," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LIII, No. 3, September 1972, pp. 307-312.

⁷¹ "Farmers More Eloquent in Numbers Than In Sentiment," *Telegram*, 14 May 1918, p. 13.

⁷² *Ibid.* See also, "Farmers' Demand Will Be Refused," *Mail and Empire*, 14 May 1918, p. 1; "Farmers Say Production Canada's Greatest Duty," *Globe*, 14 May 1918, p. 1; "Farmers Seek Chance to State Views in House," *Star*, 14 May 1918, p. 1; "Farmers Press Their Request For Exemption," *News*, 14 May 1918, p. 1. For an examination of the broader farmer's movement, see Young, "Conscription, Rural Depopulation, and the

Despite the impressive number of attendees and the eloquent speeches, Prime Minister Borden remained immovable. He reaffirmed the demands for manpower, and reminded farmers that if Germany succeeded in taking the channel ports, shipping food would be difficult. Such a military triumph for Germany, Borden argued, would allow it to escalate the submarine campaign to a point which would endanger the entire Allied war effort. The summary of the situation in the *Globe* was typical of press reports from Toronto: "There could be no relaxation of the law. The only thing that was promised was that where there were special cases of hardship they should be brought to the attention of the Minister of Militia."⁷³

Farmers did not accept this flat refusal as the end of the debate. At the behest of the United Farmers of Ontario, three weeks later a delegation of over 2,000 farmers gathered in Toronto.⁷⁴ They filled the Labour Temple to capacity, prompting organizers to secure Massey Hall for the afternoon session. The mood was boisterous. From the middle of the floor, one delegate shouted, "'We are fighting against a military autocracy.'" The delegate had been referring to the Borden Government, not Germany, and the resulting roar of applause shook the building.⁷⁵ Farmers were upset that their case, they maintained, was not presented in a fair way in the press -- either Liberal or Conservative.

Farmers of Ontario, 1917-1919," pp. 307-312.

⁷³ "Farmers Told No Relaxation of Military Service Possible," *Globe*, 15 May 1918, p. 1. See also, "First Duty of Canada Is To Reinforce Line," *World*, 15 May 1918, p. 1; "Borden Gave Fearless Reply To Agricultural Politicians," *Telegram*, 15 May 1918, p. 9; "Government Firm, Men Most Needed," *Mail and Empire*, 15 May 1918, p. 1; "Farmers Told That Line Must Be Held," *Star*, 15 May 1918, p. 5.

⁷⁴ For a further discussion of this meeting, see Young, "Conscription, Rural Depopulation, and the Farmers of Ontario," pp. 313-314.

⁷⁵ "With Backs To Wall, Farmers Show Fight," *Star*, 7 June 1918, p. 6.

They called for the formation of a paper which reflected agricultural interests. They resented the fact that every Toronto paper had argued in the editorials that the farmers should accept the decision of the Borden Government, and realize that the need for manpower came first.⁷⁶

The only exception to the general rule of editorial support for the cancellation of exemptions came from *The Weekly Sun*. The editorials printed, however, did not question the need for men, nor the requirement to reinforce the front, but questioned whether the sending of farmers was in the best interests of the war effort. Citing the difficulties the Americans were having in securing enough ships to transport their men overseas, one editorialist wondered how the war effort would be improved by taking farmers off the land only to have them sit idly while awaiting transport to France.⁷⁷ Another editorial suggested that an effective halfway ground might be found. Since any farmers drafted in the spring of 1918 would not arrive at the front until too late to participate in stopping the German drive, it was suggested that the men be allowed to remain until the harvest before entering the army.⁷⁸ Failure to see to the needs of production, another writer argued, "would be a calamity obliging a relaxation of our war effort."⁷⁹

Despite the heightened rhetoric by farmers in Ottawa, however, the meeting opened and closed with affirmations of the loyalty to the war effort, and to the Empire. Delegate after delegate reaffirmed that they were there "in the interests of the British

⁷⁶ "Farmers of Ontario To Fight or Produce," *World*, 8 June 1918, p. 1.

⁷⁷ "The New Conscription Law" (ed.), *Weekly Sun*, 24 April 1918, p. 1.

⁷⁸ "Conscription" (ed.), *Weekly Sun*, 1 May 1918, p. 1.

⁷⁹ "The Farmers' Appeal" (ed.), *Weekly Sun*, 15 May 1918, p. 1.

Empire."⁸⁰ Earlier appeals which had called for the dissolution of Parliament were rejected by the convention. It was decided that such an appeal during wartime was inappropriate. Farmers defended themselves against charges that they were not being patriotic, and they "...also stoutly repudiated the charges that the farmers of Ontario had not been staunch supporters of the Union Government at the last election."⁸¹ Their slogan, after all, had been "Farm or Fight."⁸² In keeping with a convention which supported the war effort, each night's business closed with a rousing singing of "God Save the King."⁸³

The demands of the war caught the Union Government between two solemn pledges: to reinforce the men at the front, and to allow exemptions for young men working on the farms. Faced with a grim decision, Borden decided that the needs of the front superseded those of the farmers. Borden clearly argued that the people of Canada could not fail to reinforce the men overseas: doing so would jeopardize their lives. Both

⁸⁰ "Thousand Farmers Meet to Discuss Drafting of Stalwarts From Country," *News*, 7 June 1918, p. 7.

⁸¹ "Farmers Will Appeal Again," *Globe*, 10 June 1918, p. 1.

⁸² Farmers throughout Ontario had supported the Union government. Ronald Haycock studied the attitude of farmers in a rural riding in the election of December 1917, concluding that "...farm protest over continuing rural depopulation and the Borden government's unsympathetic attitude to the agricultural aspect of the war effort were not sufficiently developed in 1917 to replace the patriotic appeal of union and conscription." (Ronald G. Haycock, "The 1917 Federal Election in Victoria-Haliburton: A Case Study," *Ontario History*, Vol. LXVII, 1975, pp. 105-118.). W.R. Young has also argued that farmers were overwhelmingly supporters of Union Government. (Young, "Conscription, Rural Depopulation, and the Farmers of Ontario," pp. 307.).

⁸³ For other accounts of the meeting, see the following: "Farmers Are Organizing For Political Activity," *Telegram*, 7 June 1918, p. 15; "New Military Act Angers Farmers," *Mail and Empire*, 8 June 1918, p. 4; "Farmers Massed in Toronto Score Union Government," *Globe*, 8 June 1918, p. 8.

Borden and the farmers were arguing about a war which would continue well into the foreseeable future. This was not about one growing season. It was a debate about the consequences of two or three years without adequate labour to work the land and about the best way of winning the war.

Desperate fighting continued at the front throughout late June and July 1918. Germany launched what would be its last offensive on 15 July, and it was brought to a halt on 6 August 1918. Once again, the German Army failed to achieve the desired breakthrough which would have resulted in the seizure of Paris: "The great gamble of Ludendorff's [the German Chief of Staff] had failed. The million casualties suffered by the Germans since 21 March...had enfeebled their armies at a time when they were soon to face their greatest test."⁸⁴

Prime Minister Borden continued to plan to improve the efficiency of the Canadian war effort for the campaign of 1919. To this end, another National Registration Day was held on 22 June 1918. Every resident of Canada, British or alien, and over 16 years of age had to provide vital information. Much of the requested information was basic, such as name, address, and date of birth, but some parts were potentially more inflammatory. The Canadian government wanted to know whether or not the citizen in question was a British subject, and if so, by birth or by naturalization? To what country did the resident owe allegiance? What was the candidate's marital status? Did the individual have any physical disabilities? What was the present occupation, and what other work could the respondent do well? Would he/she be willing to serve the present

⁸⁴ Nicholson, *Official History*, p. 378.

national crisis by working in some other occupation? Did the candidate have any farm experience? Where? For how long?⁸⁵ The campaign proceeded uneventfully in Toronto's Military District No. 2, with fully 93 percent of District residents completing the form prior to the last official day of the campaign on 22 June 1918.⁸⁶

The Canadian government was looking for help in critical areas. Farm labour continued to pose a problem to the well-being of the country and to the Allies. The questionnaire solicited information from people who could work on a farm, and would be willing to do so for the length of the crisis. The registration scheme also wanted to locate potential enemy aliens, although the reasons are unclear. It may have been that the government wanted to locate potential dissidents, but it was more likely an attempt to locate residents which the general British citizenry believed had avoided military service. These individuals would put up the least resistance, and be missed the least, if they were moved around the country to help the war effort. Questions about marital status had a direct influence on the implementation of the Military Service Act, since it told the government how many potential recruits were in each class.

These measures were increasingly necessary to deal with the growing demands of total war. As industrial, agricultural, and human resources were stretched to the limit, other unrest followed on the heels of the farmers' demonstrations. Strikes increased throughout 1918, with a great deal of attention focused on the Toronto city workers' job action in the summer of 1918.

⁸⁵ For a sample registration card, see the *News*, 12 June 1918, p. 2.

⁸⁶ "422,000 Registered in Toronto District," *Star*, 22 June 1918, p. 1.

Previous accounts of strikes in 1918 have emphasized worker militancy to bolster arguments about the antagonism between labour and capital. Toronto's experience with labour unrest had little to do with such ideological battles. Labour was caught up in the war effort and workers had seen their real wages drop by as much as 80 percent since war began. Worker demands for 20 percent wage increases had nothing to do with what labour historian Bryan Palmer has interpreted as the ability of workers to "...extract concessions from employers."⁸⁷ Nor did it reflect what Gregory S. Kealey has termed the "...first significant nationwide working class challenge to bourgeois rule."⁸⁸ Accepting wage increases of only 20 percent were *sacrifices* by union members to ensure as little disruption to the war effort as possible, while allowing them a marginal cost of living increase.

The members of the Civic Employees' Union were upset that the Toronto City Council refused to back date their wage increases to the first of the year, or even to grant the principle of conciliation. Workers had received a \$2 increase in weekly wages beginning on 1 April 1918, and they wanted that increase applied retroactively back to 1 January 1918. Union representatives, speaking on behalf of their 3,500 members, warned that the entire workforce would strike, and that a large number of City Hall employees would join the strike in sympathy.⁸⁹ Mayor Church tried to de-escalate the rhetoric: "The

⁸⁷ Bryan Palmer, *Working Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), p. 164.

⁸⁸ Gregory S. Kealey, "State Repression of Labour and the Left in Canada, 1914-1920: The Impact of the First World War," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. LXXII, No. 3, 1992, p. 281.

⁸⁹ "Civic Employees' Challenge," *Telegram*, 19 June 1918, p. 15; "Ultimatum Sent To City Council," *Mail and Empire*, 19 June 1918, p. 4.

city wants to be just and fair to its employees, and set an example to private ownership. I hope the men will be patient, and not precipitate a strike." He promised that the City Council would recognize the union, but requested that everything be done to avoid a strike.⁹⁰ City Controller McBride was not as sympathetic, challenging the patriotism of the men, arguing that the threatened strike action "...is a mean, concerted attempt of the men to take advantage of war conditions and cause the civic administration to crawl."⁹¹ Over the next several days, the papers reported discussions between the City and its employees. Opposing positions became entrenched, and it looked increasingly likely that there would be a strike. The civic workers met at the Labour Temple 3 July 1918 to discuss whether or not to walk off the job. The fundamental issue remained back pay from 1 January through to the end of March 1918.⁹²

The *Industrial Banner* published an article in early July 1918 explaining why strikes in Canada were on the increase. It related that there had been fewer strikes in Canada since the beginning of the Great War than at any other similar period in its history, "...not because of lack of provocation but because the workers in order to help the Empire and the Dominion in the stress and strain of a colossal conflict were prepared to sink their differences in order, if possible, to ensure the greatest co-operation in the service of the state."⁹³ The article went on to lament that while workers had made sacrifices and volunteered to serve in the Army, their wages continued to decline. The

⁹⁰ "Call Special Meeting To Discuss Men's Case," *Star*, 21 June 1918, p. 3.

⁹¹ "Conspiracy By City Employees Is Allegation," *News*, 19 June 1918, p. 7.

⁹² "May Take Strike Vote At The Mass Meeting," *Star*, 3 July 1918, p. 2.

⁹³ "Why Strikes in Canada Are Everywhere on the Increase," *Industrial Banner*, 5 July 1918, p. 1.

government was blamed for failing to protect workers' wages, and it charged that wages could "...no longer compete with the even more rapidly increasing cost of living, [since] the bottom has entirely dropped out of the dollar bill...That was why the civic employees in Toronto asked for a square deal."⁹⁴

The members of the Civic Employees' Union voted 98 percent in favour of a strike, and employees walked out on 5 July 1918. About 1,200 employees failed to report for work on the first day, but many more threatened to walk out in the coming days. Virtually every aspect of City Works was affected: "street cleaning, parks, waterworks, including pumping station, sewer department, septic tanks, roadways and the filtration plant."⁹⁵ Secretary T. A. Stevenson of the Trades and Labour Council sent a telegram to the Minister of Labour, Hon. Thomas Crothers: "Civic Employees' Union on strike. Would advise endeavor be made immediately to bring about settlement or serious situation may develop, which would involve thousands of other workers."⁹⁶ Stevenson was referring to the more than 25,000 local trade unionists whose representatives were meeting on the evening of 5 July 1918 to discuss striking in sympathy with city workers. The Labour Temple was a hive of activity the entire day as a long line of strikers registered. Outside, workers crowded Church Street, overflowing onto nearby church

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* For a discussion of the steadily rising prices in Toronto during this period, see Michael Piva, *The Conditions of the Working Class in Toronto -- 1900-1921* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979), especially Chapter 2, "Real Wages," pp. 27-60.

⁹⁵ "Civic Employees Decide To Go On Strike Today," *World*, 5 July 1918, p. 1.

⁹⁶ "Labour Appeals to Government For Settlement," *Star*, 5 July 1918, p. 1. See also, "Toronto Civic Employees Declare General Strike," *Mail and Empire*, 5 July 1918, p. 1; "1,200 Civic Employees Strike; Less Than Half of the Staffs," *Telegram*, 5 July 1918, p. 13.

grounds.

Over the next two days, there was little negotiation. The city continued to claim that it would not consider arbitration and that it could not afford to pay the striking men a back dated war bonus; the men refused to return to work without these concessions. The stakes were raised, however, when other trade Unionists began to move towards sympathy strikes with civic employees. On 7 July 1918, over 1,500 machinists and specialists from Toronto met in the Labour Temple and elected to "...take any action which the District Trade and Labour Council might advise on behalf of the striking civic employees."⁹⁷

City officials were suddenly confronted with the prospect of a general strike. Other unions expressed their intention to support the civic employees. The Builders' Trades League with its 18 unions and between 5,000 and 7,000 men "...decided to vote in sympathy with the aims of the civic strikers."⁹⁸ The Toronto locals of the Gloveworkers' Union took similar action. These actions did not necessarily mean that these unions would also go out on strike, but meant at a minimum that they would help members of the Civic Employees' Union to be able to remain on strike until a settlement was secured. The *News* asked: "Is Toronto hastening towards a great industrial upheaval, which, starting in the strike of the civic employees, will ultimately include all the great branches

⁹⁷ "Machinists Place Matter in Hands District Council," *World*, 8 July 1918, p. 1. See also, "Men May Call a Sympathetic Strike in City," *Star*, 8 July 1918, p. 1; "Agitation of Labour Bodies Spreads Daily," *News*, 8 July 1918, p. 7; "Civic Employees in Defiant Mood," *Mail and Empire*, 8 July 1918, p. 4.

⁹⁸ "Many Unions Discuss Civic Strike," *World*, 9 July 1918, p. 1.

of organized labour?"⁹⁹ The *World* summarized the situation succinctly: "...the labour situation in Toronto has rarely been more serious."¹⁰⁰

Into the breach stepped Toronto Mayor Tommy Church. While the city had previously objected to the idea of arbitration, Church was now willing to discuss it, telling reporters that the strike "...is purely a question of wages, and my own personal opinion is that the men should be offered the \$2 a week dated back to January 1, and that if they return to work they should choose a representative who would meet with the representative chosen by the city and these two would choose a third. They would then be able to settle any other matter that might be in dispute."¹⁰¹ Church was offering the two key terms that the Union demanded: wage increases and arbitration. The Civic Employees' Union grasped the olive branch, putting forward a counter proposal on the form of arbitration. The Union would agree to arbitration provided both the City and the Union provided two delegates each.¹⁰²

The final hurdle remained the approval of two-thirds of the Toronto City Council. During a three-hour debate, Mayor Church pleaded with City Council: "I cannot too strongly urge you that the existing strike should be settled forthwith. Conciliation should be met with conciliation. I cannot too strongly urge on Council that action should be

⁹⁹ "Both Parties Fear Outcome of Agitation," *News*, 9 July 1918, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ "Many Unions Discuss Civic Strike," *World*, 9 July 1918, p. 1.

¹⁰¹ "Mayor Has Plan To Settle Civic Strike," *Star*, 9 July 1918, p. 2.

¹⁰² "The Men's Offer to the City," *Star*, 10 July 1918, p. 1; "Critical Stage of Civic Strike," *Mail and Empire*, 10 July 1918, p. 4; "Board of Five is Suggestion Made by Mayor," *World*, 10 July 1918, p. 1; "A Statement of Terms in Civic Strike," *News*, 10 July 1918, p. 3.

taken to-day, so that the men may return to work."¹⁰³ Church secured the two-thirds majority needed, receiving 18 out of 26 votes. Arbitration was agreed to with each side choosing two representatives, who would in turn agree to a fifth member of the board. Workers went back to their jobs and the rhetoric about widening the strike disappeared.¹⁰⁴

It is evident here, as with other labour disputes in wartime Toronto, that workers organized into unions were part of the broad community of citizens anxious to avoid conflict which might damage the war effort. Given the ravages of inflation, the motivation of labour spokespersons and workers alike is a remarkable testament to the social cohesion which characterized the city during the Great War.

The city worker strike provides a glimpse at the incredible power the unions reserved during wartime. Production and manpower were paramount, and threatened general strike action received the prompt attention of the City Council and the Union got the concessions it wanted quickly. It is truly remarkable that organized labour did *not* use this power earlier or more often. The fact that strikes were not called more frequently is a strong testament to the commitment of labour to the war. Unwilling to disrupt production or services until it was absolutely necessary, labour was one of the most consistent supporters of the war. The fundamental explanation for this behaviour lies in the commitment of union leadership and membership to the causes of the war, the necessity

¹⁰³ *Appendix "C" to the Minutes of the City Council, 1918* (Toronto: Industrial and Technical Press, 1919), Toronto City Hall Archives, 10 July 1918, p. 57.

¹⁰⁴ "Arbitration Is Carried, Civic Strike Is Ended," *Star*, 11 July 1918, p. 1; "Strike Is Over and Board Will Consider Wage Claim," *World*, 12 July 1918, p. 1; "Arbitrators Are Men of Experience," *News*, 12 July 1918, p. 3; "Civic Employees Start Work Today," *Mail and Empire*, 12 July 1918, p. 4.

of supporting the men overseas, and the belief that the war must be seen to a successful conclusion. Just as had been the case with the farmers the previous month, workers vehemently objected to claims that they were not patriotic. The debate was never about whether or not workers should stop the war with a general strike. This tactic was simply used as temporary leverage to ensure that workers secured enough money to meet the demands of family, Victory Loans, Patriotic Funds, and Red Cross drives.

It was with relief that workers returned to work. While they had been in conflict with the City Council the demands of the war had not lessened. Another chapter had been written into the annals of the horrors of war, and once again Toronto felt the tragedy directly. Headlines on 2 July 1918 told the story: "CANADIAN DOCTORS AND NURSES MURDERED, HOSPITAL SHIP LLANDOVERY CASTLE SUNK;" "CANADIAN HOSPITAL SHIP SUNK NEAR IRELAND;" and "CANADIAN NURSES ARE DROWNED WHEN HOSPITAL SHIP IS TORPEDOED." Just 70 miles off the Irish Coast, a German submarine torpedoed the Canadian hospital ship Llandoverly Castle on the evening of 27 June. There were 258 people aboard, including 14 nurses. The ship sank quickly, and survivors drifted in rescue boats for 36 hours before help arrived. Twelve of the 14 nursing sisters made their way to a life boat, only to be capsized and drowned when their boat was overturned by the whirlpool created by the sinking ship. The only survivor of the life boat accident was an unnamed Canadian sergeant who managed to crawl onto the keel. In all, only 24 survivors reached port

safely.¹⁰⁵

In the days that followed, Toronto once again counted the cost. Thirteen local residents died in the incident, with two more making it back safely to port.¹⁰⁶ Residents gathered on 14 July 1918 to hold a memorial service for the dead. Held in St. Andrews' Presbyterian Church on King Street,¹⁰⁷ the service was attended by relatives of the deceased, representatives of the medical and nursing communities, and local citizens. The first three rows were occupied by nursing sisters from Toronto, who came to give tribute to their fallen comrades. Rev. Dr. J. W. McMillan presided, telling listeners that the lesson learned from the tragedy was to "stick it through." He argued, "'We are the true pacifists, because we will have peace at any price. They will not pay the price of war.'"¹⁰⁸

Women were at the forefront of the ceremony to commemorate the sacrifice of more citizens to the cause. Those women who sat in the first pews of St. Andrews' Presbyterian Church gathered just as soldiers did to commemorate comrades lost in the line of duty. Every passing day, women were involving themselves in greater numbers in activities which took them closer and closer to the front. In early July 1918, young

¹⁰⁵ "Boat Containing 12 Nurses Capsized and All The Women Were Drowned," *Mail and Empire*, 2 July 1918, p. 1; "Hospital Ship From Halifax Torpedoed; Only 24 Survivors Have Reached Port," *Mail and Empire*, 2 July 1918, p. 1; "Canadian Hospital Ship," *News*, 2 July 1918, p. 3; "Hospital Ship, Plainly Marked, Sunk By Huns; Llandoverly Castle, With Canadian Medicals," *Globe*, 2 July 1918, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ "13 is Toronto's Toll on Hospital Ship," *Star*, 5 July 1918, p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ For a detailed examination of the history of the church, see Janine Butler, "St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Toronto's 'Cathedral of Presbyterianism,'" *Ontario History*, Vol. LXXXIII, No. 3, September 1991, pp. 169-192.

¹⁰⁸ "Most Impressive Memorial Service," *Mail and Empire*, 15 July 1918, p. 10; "'Stick It Through' Is Llandoverly Message," *Telegram*, 15 July 1918, p. 10; "Honour Nurses Lost On Hospital Ship," *Star*, 15 July 1918, p. 13; "Heroic Nurses Are Honoured," *Globe*, 15 July 1918, p. 10.

Canadian women were given a chance to qualify as transport drivers for the Royal Air Force. At \$10 week these women would work from 8 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. with an hour and 15 minutes for lunch, and were required to work half days on Saturday and Sunday.¹⁰⁹

Other women moved into factories to help build aircraft. In one plant alone, over one hundred women were employed. Maj. Newman, in charge of the unit, told a reporter from the *World*, "During the last four or five weeks we have expanded considerably, and it is within this time that most of the women have come on, and they are all doing well."¹¹⁰ Women had not been hired to do clerical work, but took part in every aspect of the factory's production: "Women dismantle the machines when they come in for repairs, they sort and clean parts, they paint and enamel, they sort belts and nuts, assist in the tinsmith shops, do sandpapering, coppering and varnishing, they make sails, prepare and knot the wires -- and so on, and so on ad infinitum -- the toll seemed endless."¹¹¹

Total war continued to escalate the demands on the local population. Toronto citizens continued to pay the unpredictable costs involved in fighting an enemy which used submarine warfare as part of its war effort. Women continued to step into places vacated by men drafted for overseas service, or newly created as a result of the demands of the war. The dedication of the population to fighting and winning the war showed no signs of slackening. This resolve and determination would be necessary to see the city and the country through the next four critical months of warfare.

Even as the Allies fought the last of the great German offensives to a standstill in

¹⁰⁹ "Women Drivers of Transports," *Globe*, 3 July 1918, p. 8.

¹¹⁰ "Women Efficient in Flying Corps," *World*, 10 July 1918, p. 5.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

the first week of August 1918, Torontonians fought their own battles: with police. Just as the farmers and labourers had taken it upon themselves to act to defend their interests, it was the turn of returned soldiers. These men constantly decried what they considered the "soft" treatment of enemy aliens, and/or the failure of non-British subjects to give returned men priority job placement. The frustration of returned soldiers escalated into a crisis on 1 August 1918. A returned soldier, Pte. Cluderay, argued with patrons and waiters at the 433 Yonge Street White City Cafe. By the time police arrived, the former soldier had a large gash in his head as a result of a fight with a Greek employee. The soldier was charged with public drunkenness and fined \$15.

His comrades sought revenge the following day. The treatment received by Pte. Cluderay at the hands of Greek restaurant owners, whatever its cause, served as a lightning rod to focus the anger of returned men. They objected to the less-than-total commitment by "aliens" to the war, and resented the fact that many aliens were benefitting financially from the war while men were dying overseas. Their solidarity with comrades demanded action, prompting returned men to take centre stage again.

Several hundred former soldiers and civilian sympathizers arrived at the Cafe around six in the evening and ransacked the business. Plate glass windows were smashed. Mirrors were destroyed. Marble tabletops were removed. Food was scattered. As the destruction proceeded, the mob was reinforced by other soldiers and civilians, swelling its ranks to over 400. The leaders were in khaki, their crutches and missing limbs silent testimony to their service in France. The group proceeded on a rampage,

targeting branches of the White City Cafe and other Greek restaurants.¹¹² The next victim was the Cafe located at 985 West Bloor Street. Police stood by, helpless to stop the destruction out of fear of causing an unmitigated riot. They did, however, send word to close other White City Cafe locations. Finished at 985 West Bloor, the mob boarded cars and proceeded to the Star Lunch at 441 Yonge Street. Even though police had closed the location, the men forced their way in and demolished the business. Crowds gathered to watch the destruction, stopping traffic in both directions. Food, furniture, and boxes were thrown through broken windows. The police did nothing.

The mob then proceeded to 822 Yonge Street, the Marathon Lunch. After it was routed, the crowd continued down Yonge Street, finally clashing with police. One Constable was struck as he attempted to arrest a soldier, but he succeeded in dragging the offender to a waiting wagon. This action infuriated the crowd, and shouts of "To the station! To the station!" filled the air. Just then two truck loads of police reinforcements arrived, setting up a picket.

Irate, the crowd continued down Yonge Street, avoiding the assembled police. Several non-British restaurant owners were dragged into the street and made to salute the Union Jack. Soldiers chanted, "We took our chance in France and we'll take it here!" Others yelled, "This is the night we will get justice!" Military officials dispatched two

¹¹² The Greek population in Toronto was very small, numbering fewer than 1000. A disproportionate number opened restaurants, with 19 of them located on Yonge, Queen and College Streets alone. (For a discussion of the Greek community in Toronto, see Lia Douramakou-Petroleka, "The Elusive Community: Greek Settlement in Toronto, 1900-1940," in Robert F. Harney, ed., *Gathering Place: Peoples and Neighbourhoods of Toronto, 1834-1945* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1985), pp. 257-258.).

truck loads of serving soldiers under the command of Maj. G. R. Rodgers, and stationed the men on the edge of the crowd. Rodgers spoke to the crowd from a window ledge of the Colonial Restaurant, 349 Young Street. He advised the men that taking part in such disturbances would accomplish nothing. He was interrupted, however, when a brick was launched through a window above him, scattering glass in all directions. Blocked from raiding this restaurant, the mob continued down Yonge.

The crowd was about to ransack Superior Lunch at 257 Yonge Street when it was discovered that some returned soldiers were employed there. Accordingly, the mob bypassed it and continued downtown, confronting a police line at the corner of Queen and Yonge Streets. No one was allowed to proceed further South. The crowd headed off in different directions in an attempt to bypass the line, but police and military officials had finally secured the upper hand, and spent the next few hours marching up and down Yonge Street, preventing further incidents.

When order was finally restored after 2 a.m., officials began to count the cost. Fifteen local restaurants had been destroyed and looted. The damage totaled \$7,000 to the first of the White City Cafe restaurants damaged in the incident: the total bill exceeded \$40,000. Scores of people had been hurt by flying objects and broken glass. One police officer was beaten by a returned soldier wielding his crutch. Another was struck in the head by a flying bottle. A soldier claimed that he was struck with the handle of a policeman's service revolver. Fifteen men were arrested, but only six had actually served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. They were released pending the posting of

\$100 bail.¹¹³

Bitterness and recrimination were felt on all sides, as each blamed the other for precipitating conflict. Unfortunately, the struggle was just beginning. On 3 August 1918, a Saturday night, returned soldiers again took to the streets demanding the outright release of the men arrested on Friday. About 200 returned soldiers paraded up Yonge until they reached Albert Street. At this point, the men began marching in fours, the crutch cases up front. By the time the procession reached Court Street the crowd numbered 2,000 strong, made up of returned men and sympathetic civilians. Their objective was No. 1 police station. Anticipating trouble, the police were ready, and they used their batons freely. When the police realized that the crowd would not disperse, about 20 charged the crowd with batons drawn. Returned men were armed with sticks, but the police did not restrict their targets to men in uniform. After a brief skirmish, the crowd scattered. No arrests were made.

The crowd reformed and shifted its attention to No. 2 police station on Agnes Street. The police were lined up at the corner of Terauley and Dundas Streets, barring access to Agnes Street. Denied a second time, the crowd withdrew slightly, and pelted the police line with rocks and bottles. Once again the police charged, dispersing the crowd and making several arrests. Two more rushes were made at police at 9:30 p.m. and

¹¹³ The above narrative has been constructed using the following articles: "Angry Crowd Wrecks Several Restaurants," *World*, 3 August 1918, pp. 1, 4; "Veterans Parade Destroys Many Restaurants," *Mail and Empire*, 3 August 1918, p. 4; "Returned Soldiers Raid Many Greek Restaurants," *Globe*, 3 August 1918, pp. 1, 3; "End the Disorder," *News*, 3 August 1918, p. 1; "Restaurants Wiped Out By an Angry Mob," *News*, 3 August 1918, p. 4; "Angry Mob Wrecks Dozen Restaurants," *Star*, 3 August 1918, p. 10; "Estimate Damage at Forty Thousand," *World*, 5 August 1918, p. 5.

again at 10:20 p.m., but each time the police forcibly dispersed the crowd. After one charge involving police on foot and on horseback, over a hundred rioters were left stretched senseless on the pavement. A detachment of military personnel was kept on standby at City Hall, but no call was made on them.

The *Mail and Empire* published a chronology of events. It reveals widespread fighting over a large section of the downtown: "7.05 -- Raid on Court Street Station. 7.30 -- Fight at Victoria and Queen Streets. 8.20 -- Raid on Dundas Street West Station. 8.50 -- Fight at College and Yonge Streets. 9.30 -- Bad attempt to storm Dundas Street West Station. 10.20 -- Third attack on Dundas Street Station. 10.50 -- Fight at Elizabeth Street. 11.30 -- Yonge Street cleared from Queen to Albert Streets. 12.15 -- Fight at College and Young Streets. 1.15 -- Bad fight on Yonge Street. 1.45 -- Yonge Street cleared from College to Queen Streets. 3.15 -- Yonge Street restaurants cleared out and closed."¹¹⁴ The final tally for the evening was ten arrests, 26 taken to hospital with injuries, and countless others tending wounds at home.¹¹⁵ The *World's* condemnation of police activities was typical of the reports in the press: "The police...did not confine their efforts to the men with weapons, women, children, a blind man, and newspaper reporters, and others whose business had taken them into that part of the town coming in for more of their attention than those who are armed."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ "Police Battle With Rioters," *Mail and Empire*, 5 August 1918, p. 4.

¹¹⁵ Estimates placed the total casualties at around the 500 mark.

¹¹⁶ "Mob Tries To Storm Two Police Stations," *World*, 5 August 1918, p. 1. See also, "Police Use Batons Freely in Dealing With Crowd," *Globe*, 5 August 1918, pp. 1, 2; "Soldiers Held in Reserve," *Globe*, 5 August 1918, p. 8; "Pitched Battles on Toronto Streets," *Star*, 5 August 1918, p. 4.

Condemnations of police activity continued in the coming days. Tensions remained high through 7 August 1918, with repeated clashes between police and civilians. A rally at Queen's Park passed declarations condemning police activity and recommending "drastic resolutions" regarding aliens: "That licenses hitherto granted to all aliens, unnaturalized, or otherwise, be canceled for not less than two years after the war. That all aliens be returned to their several countries or drafted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, and that enemy aliens be interned or put to work on the land. That all unmarried men of the Toronto police force who participated in the outrage on Saturday night be drafted into the C.E.F."¹¹⁷ Each time a resolution was read, the crowd cheered.

City and military officials took steps to ensure no further trouble. Five hundred troops arrived from Niagara Camp for use in an emergency. Morning papers declared that Mayor Tommy Church would read the Riot Act from the steps of City Hall at noon. By the appointed hour, however, he changed his mind. The crowd of over 5,000 was in an antagonistic mood, shouting at Church as he squeezed his way through the masses gathered at the entrance to City Hall. The assembled citizens appeared unwilling to listen until Church managed to communicate to them that he would not read the Riot Act. The crowd cheered. He did, however, issue a proclamation. He requested that all citizens refrain from rioting, and declared that "...the holding of meetings in parks and squares, the congregating on the streets, refusing to move on and loitering on the streets, surrounding of police stations and other concourses of people to be unlawful assemblies,

¹¹⁷ "5,000 Citizens in Park Pass War Resolutions," *Globe*, 7 August 1918, p. 6; "Demands of Veterans On Government and the City," *Star*, 7 August 1918, p. 14.

and those participating are subject to imprisonment and other penalties."¹¹⁸ Should any more rioting take place, he declared, the Riot Act would be read, and police and military officials would have the authority to fire. He did, however, promise an inquiry into the alien situation. The meeting ended with a rousing singing of "God Save The King."¹¹⁹

There were no further riots. A heavy police presence, and the threat of the Riot Act and military action, kept other disturbances from forming. For added deterrent value, a troop of mounted dragoons, carrying heavy ash pick handles instead of sabres, rode through the streets.¹²⁰ Returned soldiers and civilians alike were intimidated by their very presence, and most people stayed in their homes or went about their business quietly. Calm returned to the streets of Toronto after almost a week of unrest.

There were repercussions. Many men arrested during the disturbances were given jail time ranging from three months to a year. Returned soldiers demanded new trials, or that the charges be dismissed. They won. In one morning at court, 15 cases were dismissed. In addition, they demanded and received an inquiry into police behaviour, particularly on 2 and 3 August 1918.¹²¹ The Board of Police Commissioners formally

¹¹⁸ "Proclamation Is Read, But Riot Act Omitted," *Star*, 7 August 1918, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ "Troops Are Here To Stop Riot," *World*, 7 August 1918, p. 1; "Riot Act Will Be Read; Troops Are Held Ready," *World*, 7 August 1918, pp. 1, 2; "Mayor Is To Read Riot Act On City Hall Steps To-Day," *Globe*, 7 August 1918, pp. 1, 6; "Mayor Read Proclamation," *Telegram*, 7 August 1918, p. 13; "Proclamation, Not Riot Act, Is Read by Mayor at Noon On Steps of the City Hall," *News*, 7 August 1918, p. 1; "Mayor To Read The Riot Act," *Mail and Empire*, 7 August 1918, p. 1; "Troops Our Ready To Quell Riots," *Mail and Empire*, 7 August 1918, p. 4.

¹²⁰ "Calm Follows Storm in City Last Night," *Star*, 8 August 1918, p. 5; "City Streets Quiet Again," *Globe*, 8 August 1918, p. 1; "Mounted Soldiers Paraded Streets," *World*, 8 August 1918, p. 1; "Military Pickets Parade Streets," *Mail and Empire*, 8 August 1918, p. 4.

¹²¹ "Fifteen Riot Cases Wiped Off the Books," *Star*, 29 August 1918, p. 5.

investigated. Police officers and rioters were interviewed over 12 days; the final report tabled by 19 October 1918, totalled 1,427 type-written pages.¹²² It determined that police were guilty, "in a sense" for failing to protect property.¹²³ Several Constables were retired at once, and others were "advised" to secure other forms of employment, but the "...responsibility for the succeeding too vigorous suppression was not directly placed."¹²⁴ Other officers, however, were promoted for their leadership and success in protecting property on following nights.¹²⁵

Community interest in the riots, however, did not extend much beyond 7 August 1918 when Mayor Tommy Church effectively ended the disturbances. In peace time, citizens would have had the luxury to carefully digest what had happened. This luxury was not afforded in August 1918, as the focus shifted to the Canadian Expeditionary Force spearheading a major advance on the Western Front. The riots and their causes, however, provide an avenue to understand the climate of Toronto in early August 1918. Under the stresses and strains of total war, animosity towards enemy aliens generalized to include all non-British subjects. The Greek restaurant owners targeted on the opening night of the riots, after all, were from a nation allied with Britain. In the eyes of angry

¹²² An extensive search has been conducted for this document. Unfortunately, inquiries at the Toronto City Hall Archives, Archives of Ontario, Public Archives of Canada, and the Toronto Police Museum have not been able to produce the document.

¹²³ "Police Heads Fall As Result of Probe," *Star*, 19 October 1918, p. 10. For a brief discussion of the impact of the riots on police unionism, see Greg Marquis, "Police Unionism in Early Twentieth-Century Toronto," *Ontario History*, Vol. LXXXI, No.2, June 1989, pp. 113-116.

¹²⁴ J. Castell Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs* (Toronto: Canadian Annual Review, 1918), p. 588.

¹²⁵ "Report of Police Board Respecting Toronto Riots," *Mail and Empire*, 19 October 1918, pp. 1, 9.

returned soldiers, they were aliens, and did not belong in a "British city." Veterans continued to exert an enormous influence. Consistently numbering in the hundreds, with thousands of sympathetic citizens following their lead, they were at the vanguard of anti-alien activity. Drawn together by the stresses of total war, British citizens took deliberate action to marginalize others. Total war demanded total commitment, and the British population refused to accept anything less.

All the stresses and strains of a total war effort finally bore fruit on 8 August 1918. After months of relative rest, training and reinforcement, the Canadian Corps served as the spearhead of a new British offensive near Amiens, France. The day's successes surpassed the wildest expectations of military planners, prompting German Chief of Staff Ludendorff to write that 8 August was "...the black day of the German Army in the history of this war. Everything I had feared, and of which I had so often given warning, had here, in one place, become a reality."¹²⁶ Toronto rejoiced in the news. Headlines relayed the successes: "BRITISH SMASH FORWARD ON FIVE-MILE FRONT;" "ALLIES ADVANCE THREE MILES;" "CANADIANS PLAYED PART IN GREAT VICTORY." Finally, after months of waiting for the pendulum to swing back in favour of the Allies, Torontonians read about the Germans reaping the whirlwind.

The offensive slowed and halted on 11 August to allow supplies and artillery to be brought up. The lull lasted for eight days before the Allies, once again led by the Canadians, continued their advance. By 20 August, Canadians had liberated more than 67 square miles, including 27 villages, at a cost of 11,822 casualties. By the standards of

¹²⁶ General Ludendorff, qtd. in Nicholson, *Official History*, pp. 405-406.

trench warfare, it was an enormous victory.¹²⁷ The Canadian Corps was then transferred to the Arras sector, a mile West of Fampoux, and fought the Battle of the Scarpe from 26-30 August 1918: "In three days of the bitterest kind of fighting, over difficult, broken country beset with a maze of stoutly held trenches, the two Canadian divisions [2nd and 3rd] had advanced more than five miles on an ever-widening front..."¹²⁸

As the Canadian Corps ground steadily forward, the Canadian National Exhibition again hosted over a million visitors. One of the most well attended days was women's day. Among the displays was a reproduction of tent field hospitals with nurses tending the wounded as other women delivered their cargo in field ambulances. Women gave demonstrations using lathes, handling tractors, and manipulating industrial machinery. Press reports recognized something different and noble about the behaviour of these women. The report in the *News* was typical: "They [the women] seemed to typify the spirit of the new age, the age of strong, noble womanhood, the age of self-sacrifice and of service to the common cause of humanity. They did not seem like the same women of a year or so ago. They seemed inspired with a quiet, immovable resolve, as those who have a great mission to perform, and who, feeling the all-importance of that mission are determined to carry it through to the finish. To many a man in the audience it was a new phase of womanly character which might never have been seen had it not been for the war."¹²⁹

Despite an incredible downpour, women paraded in front of the grand stand.

¹²⁷ Nicholson, *Official History*, pp. 406-419.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 427-432.

¹²⁹ "Weaker Sex Opened Eyes of Mere Man," *News*, 29 August 1918, p. 7.

Thousands of women marched through sheets of rain before the assembled crowd. Organizers suggested postponing the parade in the hopes that the weather would pass, but the women would have none of it: "Our men stand far worse in the trenches so I guess we can do it too," said one mother whose three sons are all in France."¹³⁰ Several hundred nurses marched first, followed by Red Cross workers, and women with relatives at the front. In their wake came the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Daughters of England, Scotland and the Imperial Orders of the Daughters of the Empire, followed by women volunteers. Next marched a steady stream of munition "girls," commanding a roar of applause from the stands. A detachment of 50 women from an aeroplane factory pulled an aeroplane with them as they paraded. The passage of so many feet churned the field into mud, but each detachment of women waited as their colleagues filed on to the field. Finally, when all 8,000 were assembled, the women joined with the crowd in the stands in singing, "God Save the King."¹³¹

Exactly how different this women's day at the Exhibition was from previous ones at the turn-of-the-century can be outlined by referring to Keith Walden's *Becoming Modern In Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition in the Shaping of the Late Victorian Culture* (1997). Walden argues that as late as 1900 both men and women accepted that

¹³⁰ "Women Show A Fine Spirit in the Parade," *News*, 29 August 1918, p. 6.

¹³¹ "All Honour to Women Who Took Part in Pageant!" *News*, 29 August 1918, p. 8; "Woman Hold Great Parade Despite Deluge of Rain," *Globe*, 29 August 1918, p. 7; "Women Brave The Wettest Day," *Globe*, 29 August 1918, p. 1; "Women See It Thru In Spite of Rain At The Exhibition," *World*, 29 August 1918, p. 4; "Women Carrying On In Spite of Downpour," *Star*, 29 August 1918, p. 5; "Pluck of Women Saved Their Day," *Mail and Empire*, 29 August 1918, pp. 1, 5.

"...women's distinctive work involved pre-modern cottage skills."¹³² He suggests that most male visitors to the fair greeted the Ladies' Department with "almost complete indifference." Whatever the attitude of its male visitors, one thing was certain: "the building was a hive of middle-class maternal feminism...Organizers were willing to acknowledge the importance of women's social contributions, but not to threaten the cult of domesticity. According to the official program, traditional gender distinctions remained safely intact."¹³³

Total war fundamentally altered the public image of "modern" woman. The main exhibits did not portray women performing domestic duties. The war demanded that they move out into the public sphere. Female industrial workers, farm hands, and ambulance drivers literally marched hand in hand with women who marked their patriotism by having given their men to the war effort. Women in these new positions were not only accepted, they were cheered. The order of the procession of women changed from that used for the Empire Day parade of 1 July 1916. On that day, women who had given men to the Army marched first. In August 1918, however, these women marched behind nurses and Red Cross workers. The ranks of women workers in July 1916 were small, but had grown enormously over the ensuing two years. Clearly, the status of women workers had moved up the hierarchy in the eyes of women organizers, and that new hierarchy was presented to the crowds in the stands at the Exhibition. Reporters

¹³² Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern In Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition in the Shaping of the Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 178.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

recognized that there was a fundamental difference in the work performed by women in 1918. Women were praised for having met and triumphed over the demands of weather and disbelief. "Modern" woman was just as comfortable wielding a lathe or machining an artillery shell as she was caring for her family.

The importance of artillery shells was proving itself again and again at the front. Throughout September and October 1918 the Canadian Corps was involved in continued offensive operations on the Western Front. Names like the Drocourt-Queant Line, Canal du Nord, Bourlon Wood, the Marcoing Line, and Cambrai filled the pages of Canadian newspapers. Success after success was achieved by the Canadian Corps, but always at the price of high casualties. Between 22 August and 11 October, the Corps suffered the loss of 1,544 officers and 29,262 other ranks.¹³⁴ The successes created instability within Germany. As early as 29 September 1918, Ludendorff and supreme commander von Hindenburg declared to party leaders that they could not win the war. However, they would not permit unconditional surrender: something the Allies insisted upon. The war continued throughout October 1918 with the Allies pressing their advantage.

Toronto suffered enormous casualties as a result of the actions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force on the battlefields of Europe. Day after day, casualty lists appeared in the papers, usually accompanied by small pictures of each man, often filling entire newspaper pages. Throughout the last three weeks of August and into September, the daily casualty lists were so high that it was a cause for relief that "only 19 local men" were on the list for 3 September 1918. Since opening the Amiens offensive on 8 August

¹³⁴ Nicholson, *Official History*, pp. 432-460.

1918, over 1,000 Toronto men became casualties by the beginning of September: 218 killed, 932 wounded, 34 gassed, 9 presumed dead, 15 missing 11 ill, 3 prisoners, and 1 repatriated.¹³⁵ The casualty total continued to grow at a phenomenal rate with daily totals hovering between 40 and 100 names.¹³⁶ Total casualties reached 2,127 by 17 September: an average of just over 51 men killed, wounded or missing each and every day.¹³⁷

Citizens were also facing another winter of coal shortages. In September, citizens learned that the coal they had ordered in the spring would not be sufficient to see them through winter. Even those who had paid for their orders in full by the end of April would be lucky to see more than a fraction of what they needed. Those who had not yet placed orders were desperate since coal dealers would not take new orders. The situation was serious, and plans to ration coal were discussed to ensure that everyone would have a minimum amount of heat.¹³⁸

Towards the end of September a few articles appeared about a new threat: Spanish influenza. This particularly virulent strain of influenza killed 20 million people worldwide within the year. Two million Canadians got sick, and 50,000 died. Ironically, it originated in the United States, not Spain. It received the name "Spanish Influenza" because Spain was the first country to publicize its existence. Researchers traced the first case to Fort Riley, Kansas in March 1918. New recruits were exposed to it there and

¹³⁵ "Only 19 Local Men in Today's Casualty List," *Star*, 4 September 1918, p. 3.

¹³⁶ "Toronto's Heavy Toll In the War," *World*, 11 September 1918, p. 5.

¹³⁷ "53 Toronto Names in Casualty Lists," *Star*, 18 September 1918, p. 3;
"Casualty Lists Still Heavy Are Still Heavy," *Mail and Empire*, 21 September 1918, p. 4.

¹³⁸ "Anxiously Glance At The Coal Bin," *World*, 9 September 1918, p. 5; "Only Cold Comfort For Coalless Folk," *Star*, 27 September 1918, p. 5.

carried it to France: front-line conditions ensured its spread.¹³⁹ Soldiers contracted the disease in the mud, squalor and cramped conditions of front line duty, and those wounded and sent home carried the disease to Canada. It killed in a matter of months roughly the same number of soldiers destroyed in over four years at the front.

The disease worked its way inland, and on 19 September the *World* reported that a few cases of Spanish influenza were discovered at an unnamed military camp in Ontario.¹⁴⁰ There was no cause for alarm, officials promised, as the patients had been quarantined. Nevertheless, the Board of Health warned those infected to remain in bed and consult a physician as soon as possible. The symptoms included "...sudden onset of chills, severe headache and pain in the back and limbs. The face becomes flushed and the fever runs from 99 degrees to 102 and occasionally from 103 to 104. The highest point is reached on the second day when there is a sudden drop and by the fourth day the patient is well. The disease is spread by germs carried in the nose and throat and the infection is usually passed from one person to another by direct contact, drinking, utensils, common towels, etc."¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ D. Ann Herring, "The 1918 Influenza Epidemic in the Central Canadian Subarctic," in Ann Herring and Leslie Chan, eds., *Strength In Diversity: A Reader in Physical Anthropology* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1994), pp. 367-369. Other discussions of the flu epidemic and its impact on Canada as a whole, in addition to its impact on several ethnic groups, can be seen in the following: E. Pettigrew, *The Silent Enemy: Canada and the Deadly Flu of 1918* (Saskatoon: Western Produced Prairie Books, 1983); H. MacDougall, "The Fatal Flu," *Horizon Canada*, Vol. 8, No. 8, 1985, pp. 2089-2095; D.A. Herring, "'There Were Young People and Old People and Babies Dying Every Week': The 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic at Norway House," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 1993, pp. 73-105; M. Lux, "Prairie Indians and the 1918 Influenza Epidemic," *Native Studies Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1992, pp. 23-33.

¹⁴⁰ The camp was most likely Niagara Camp.

¹⁴¹ "Spanish Influenza Makes Appearance," *World*, 19 September 1918, p. 2.

On the last day of September 1918, Toronto learned that it was not immune. In the last three days several hundred cases developed, but city officials elected not to take any special precautions besides the bulletins provided in the press.¹⁴² Provincial Medical Health Officer Lieut.-Col. J.W. McCulloch¹⁴³ declared it unlikely that special regulations would be required to stop the spread of the disease. He advised patients, "Go to bed and secure the services of a physician."¹⁴⁴ Civilians apparently had little to be concerned about as 200 of the 213 reported cases affected military personnel. The first local death, however, was a civilian. A small girl named simply as Robertson of 166 Inglewood Crescent died in Toronto General Hospital on 29 September. As a precaution, the child's Jesse Ketchum School was quarantined.¹⁴⁵

The flu situation deteriorated dramatically within days. At the beginning of October, doctors continued to downplay the severity of the outbreak, suggesting only that school nurses send home any children who showed symptoms.¹⁴⁶ Toronto Medical Officer of Health, Dr. C. J. Hastings,¹⁴⁷ refused to consider closing schools: the

¹⁴² "Spanish Flu Invades City," *Globe*, 30 September 1918, p. 8.

¹⁴³ McCulloch was born in Peterborough (no date). He trained as a physician, and practiced in Alliston, Ontario for years before being appointed Provincial Medical Officer in 1910. (Henry James Morgan, ed., *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 2nd edition (Toronto, William Briggs, 1912), p. 758.).

¹⁴⁴ "Spanish Flu Like Measles; Get a Doctor," *News*, 30 September 1918, p. 7.

¹⁴⁵ "Over 200 Cases of Flu and One Death Here," *Star*, 30 September 1918, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ "Walk More To Shun Spanish Influenza," *Star*, 1 October 1918, p. 2; "To Watch For Influenza in City Schools," *News*, 1 October 1918, p. 7; "Grippe Outbreak Alarms Citizens," *Mail and Empire*, 1 October 1918, p. 4.

¹⁴⁷ Hastings was born in York, Ontario, and practiced medicine in an around the Toronto area his whole life. A prominent local citizen, Hastings served as public vaccinator, senior physician of Grace Hospital, Toronto, and authored many papers and pamphlets on health matters. (Greene, ed., *Canadian Men and Women*, pp. 512-513.).

consequences were severe. Within a week, over 10,000 staff and students out of a total population of 66,000 pupils and 1,630 teachers were sick. Inevitably, severe cases ended up in hospital, resulting in over 600 new patients in civilian hospitals within a week, taking up all available beds. The problem was further compounded as doctors and nurses began to experience symptoms.¹⁴⁸ The crisis had a spiraling impact on the city. Almost 15 percent of the women in the local branch of the Bell Telephone Company were unable to work because they were sick or caring for family members. Citizens were asked to use the telephone only for emergencies.¹⁴⁹

Dire predictions were made about the plague's eventual cost. Officials believed it would affect "...more than half of our population in all probability."¹⁵⁰ Dr. C. J. Hastings, speaking through the press, informed citizens that they must "...face the stern fact that this city will have tens of thousands of cases of Spanish influenza before the disease can be stamped out here, and must understand that they, themselves, must be the chief agents in preventing the spread of the malady. 'The experience of the cities of Europe and America shows that 40 percent of the inhabitants have been affected by the epidemic, and there is no reason for Toronto's citizens to believe that the city will be the one exception in this respect.'¹⁵¹ Hospital resources were stretched beyond the breaking point, with each hospital turning away more patients than they were able to accept. By the end of the first week of October, 83 local residents were dead.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ "No New Deaths From Flu Are Reported," *Star*, 8 October 1918, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ "Many Telephone Operators Absent," *News*, 11 October 1918, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ "Spanish Influenza," *World*, 8 October 1918, p. 4.

¹⁵¹ "If You Have The Flu, Its Your Own Fault," *Star*, 10 October 1918, p. 2.

¹⁵² "More Cases; More Deaths," *Telegram*, 8 October 1918, p. 20.

Drastic measures were put in place. Hospitals were closed to visitors. Officials strongly suggested private funerals to avoid compounding tragedies. Conventions were banned. Arrangements were made to take over the old Mossop Hotel on Yonge Street to serve as a temporary hospital for 200 patients even as city workers searched for other temporary hospital locations. Appeals were made to private citizens with two nurses to release one to look after other patients. It was a violation of the Public Health Act to cough or sneeze in public places. Schools were closed. Dance halls were shut. Churches, theatres and picture halls were similarly affected. All civic automobiles were requisitioned by the Medical Officer of Health. The Young Men's Christian Association membership campaign was postponed. And still the death toll climbed.¹⁵³

A general call was placed for citizens willing to learn the basics of caring for the sick. Issued by order of Dr. Hastings, an emergency appeal was printed in the papers: "Voluntary Workers as Nurses' Aids required at once. Also Ward Maids, Orderlies, Cooks, Cleaners, etc., to help care for victims of Spanish Influenza. Apply to-day at Ontario Government Bureau re: place and wages."¹⁵⁴ Many local women's organizations responded. The International Order of the Daughters of the Empire, Women's Canadian Club, Graduate Nurses' Association, Women's Conservative Club, Women's Liberal Club and the Young Women's Christian Association all came forward immediately: 81 "Sisters

¹⁵³ "Local Hospitals Shut To Visitors," *Mail and Empire*, 7 October 1918, p. 4; "Dr. Hastings Forbids Conventions in City," *Star*, 11 October 1918, p. 2; "To Use Hotel Mossop For Flu Patients," *Star*, 12 October 1918, p. 3; "More Deaths Occur From Spanish Flu," *World*, 16 October 1918, p. 4; "To Close Theatres Because of Flu," *World*, 17 October 1918, p. 5; "Sunshine Aid to Combat Flu," *Globe*, 10 October 1918, p. 6; "Churches Were Closed," *Globe*, 14 October 1918, p. 4.

¹⁵⁴ "Emergency Appeal," *Globe*, 12 October 1918, p. 2.

of Service" registered the first morning. By the afternoon, volunteers had swelled beyond the expectations of medical health officers, requiring the requisitioning of a larger room. Volunteers immediately sat through the first of three lectures on caring for influenza victims. Even in a larger room, some volunteers had to listen from the hallway.¹⁵⁵

Even in the wake of all these special precautions, the death toll mounted. At the middle of October an average of 50 people died each day. More closures were ordered, including bowling alleys, pool rooms and places of public amusement. All public gatherings, luncheons and dinners were banned. Professional sporting events were canceled. The medical and nursing schools at the University of Toronto were shut down to allow students to serve the public. Even the circulation of public library books was stopped. Calls went out for donations of bedding, night clothing, and towels, along with volunteers willing to donate soups and other foods. Sundays passed in eerie silence since few churches called their congregations to worship. Over 1,300 died in October, contributing to the highest mortality totals of any month since records were kept.¹⁵⁶

Industrial Toronto struggled to cope. Every aspect of the economy suffered. Department stores scrambled to secure enough employees to run shops. Munitions plants

¹⁵⁵ "Epidemic Crisis Not Reached Yet," *World*, 14 October 1918, p. 6; "Epidemic Is Not Abating," *Globe*, 14 October 1918, p. 8; "Lectures Given To Volunteers," *Globe*, 16 October 1918, p. 4; "Women Volunteer To Fight Malady," *News*, 15 October 1918, p. 9.

¹⁵⁶ "Deaths From Flu Are On Increase," *World*, 18 October 1918, p. 4; "31 Deaths in Toronto Ascribed To Influenza," *Globe*, 17 October 1918, p. 6; "87 Deaths The Day's Total," *Globe*, 19 October 1918, p. 8; "Influenza Claims 35 More Victims," *Mail and Empire*, 19 October 1918, p. 4; "Thirteen Hundred Epidemic Victims," *News*, 26 October 1918, p. 1; "Flu Deaths Still Decrease," *Globe*, 1 November 1918, p. 10. The 1,300 who died in Toronto represented 26 percent of the total fatalities in Ontario from the epidemic which amounted to 5,000 dead. Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review*, p. 574.

tried to adapt to missing hundreds of workers each day.¹⁵⁷ The Bell Telephone Company was missing over one-quarter of its workforce. The situation was so desperate that Bell published advertisements in the papers appealing to consumers to use telephones only when urgent, and to show special consideration for those employees who were able to report for work.¹⁵⁸ Bank staffs were similarly hard hit, requiring those healthy enough to work to put in many overtime hours.¹⁵⁹

The "Sisters of Service" were put to work immediately. In one afternoon, 25 out of the total of 400 volunteer women worked at the Arlington Hotel to ready it to accept influenza patients. Hallways and rooms were disinfected, furniture was prepared for the influx of sick, and several hundred gauze masks were constructed to protect workers.¹⁶⁰ Other women took over church kitchens and the classes used to teach cooking in the schools to produce food.¹⁶¹

It was not until the end of October that the crest of the 1918 epidemic passed,¹⁶² and medical officers began to relax some of the precautions. Churches resumed regular services, and theatres opened. Provided that the plague continued to decline, schools would open on Monday, 5 November, and professional sports teams would again be

¹⁵⁷ "Holding Down The Epidemic," *Globe*, 22 October 1918, p. 9.

¹⁵⁸ "Advertisement," *World*, 19 October 1918, p. 5. See also, "Phone Girls Hit Hard," *Star*, 19 October 1918, p. 2.

¹⁵⁹ "Bank Staffs Hit By Influenza Epidemic," *Star*, 12 October 1918, p. 17.

¹⁶⁰ "Hundreds of Masks Made For Patients," *Star*, 18 October 1918, p. 17.

¹⁶¹ "I.O.D.E. Start In Sick Relief," *Globe*, 21 October 1918, p. 8.

¹⁶² Another wave of sickness and death swept through the whole of North America in March 1919. See E. Pettigrew, *The Silent Enemy: Canada and the Deadly Flu of 1918* (Saskatoon: Western Produced Prairie Books, 1983).

allowed to play. For the first time in over a month, hospitals reported vacant beds.¹⁶³

While the number of dead is alarming, the impact of the epidemic can best be measured using the number of people who were sick but did not die. The experience of American cities suggested that the number of people who died represented around 0.5 percent of those actually infected. The best case scenario was 0.25 percent dying, with some cities reporting death rates as high as 1.0 percent of the total infected.¹⁶⁴ Using these numbers as a guide, the 1,300 dead suggests that approximately 260,000 Torontonians were incapacitated for four or five days during the month of October. It is easy to imagine the incredible impact on a city the size of Toronto. More than half the population was sick at some point during the month.

The influenza epidemic compounded an already desperate coal shortage. The ranks of miners, train employees, coal yard operators, delivery personnel, shipping clerks, and desk clerks were decimated by the epidemic, resulting in thousands of lost working days. Officials estimated the loss from the flu to be about "...50,000 tons daily, or from 250,000 to 300,000 tons weekly. This loss would supply at least 25,000 families a week with anthracite for the winter."¹⁶⁵ The long, cold winter ahead promised to be one of the most trying in recent memory.

¹⁶³ "Lift Ban on Theatres Monday, Says M.O.H.," *Star*, 28 October 1918, p. 1; "Hospital Reports To-Day On Epidemic," *Star*, 30 October 1918, p. 2; "Death Rate Drops, Flu on Decline," *World*, 30 October 1918, p. 4; "Schools Open Next Monday," *Globe*, 29 October 1918, p. 8; "City Death Rate Falls Rapidly," *Globe*, 30 October 1918, p. 9; "Spanish Malady on the Wane," *Mail and Empire*, 28 October 1918, p. 4; "Epidemic Crest Is Passed; Theatres Reopen Monday Next," *Telegram*, 28 October 1918, p. 13.

¹⁶⁴ "Can Keep Down The Mortality," *Globe*, 11 October 1918, p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ "Influenza Stopping The Output of Coal," *World*, 18 October 1918, p. 4.

The casualty toll from the front did not lessen because citizens at home were coping with the deadly flu. Day after day, as the Canadian Expeditionary Force continued its advance on the Western Front, accounts of casualties filtered back to Toronto. By the end of October 1918, Toronto men had suffered just over 4,000 casualties since the Amiens offensive opened: 783 dead, 94 missing, 8 presumed dead, 2,766 wounded, 245 gassed, 77 ill, 20 prisoners, and 10 repatriated.¹⁶⁶ Casualty lists left no doubt about the human toll of war. The faces of young, uniformed men staring into a camera filled entire newspaper pages, picture after picture accompanied lists of killed and wounded. Citizens absorbed the lists even as they worried about finding enough fuel to see them through winter.

It was women who formed the bulk of the reserve labour force used to combat the epidemic. Toronto's economy was booming, unemployment was virtually non-existent, and those workers already employed, both men and women, had to continue in that capacity to produce the war material so desperately needed at the front. Patriotic workers, mothers, daughters, students, and sisters stepped into the breach. Hundreds volunteered for the taxing and dangerous labour of attending to the sick. As at every other critical point in the war, when confronted with a crisis, the city mobilized its entire resources to cope.

The influenza epidemic, the coal shortage, and the casualties from the front, continued to draw citizens together. Faced with a common foe, a common dilemma, and a common grief, citizens accepted limitations on their everyday lives that would have

¹⁶⁶ "35 Toronto Names in Casualty List," *Star*, 2 November 1918, p. 2.

been inconceivable without total war. Business owners closed their doors without question, nurses accepted reassignment without protest, customers greeted poor service with a smile, and employers managed with fewer employees. The limits of human endurance were pushed to the breaking point, but the city endured, hoping against hope that the war was almost over.

Dr. Hastings elected not to reopen the schools until the morning of 11 November. His decision was made easy, however, not for medical but for conservation reasons. In addition to the continued risk from influenza, Hastings felt that critical coal resources could be saved.¹⁶⁷ As a result, the Board of Education was able to donate 3,000 tons of coal to be dispersed among the most desperate. The situation was so critical that the City Council allotted \$3,000 pay workers to cut down dead trees for fuel. Churches were directed to meet to find ways to conserve coal. By amalgamating congregations throughout the winter, by using oil burners, and by keeping heat at minimum levels, officials felt that a significant amount of fuel could be saved.¹⁶⁸

Although they did not know it at the time, citizens would be relieved from the awful task of scanning papers for casualties in less than two weeks. The Canadian Corps continued to participate in offensive operations until the very end of the war on 11 November 1918. In the last week of fighting, there were no major engagements, but the Corps advanced at least two miles on all but two days, crossing into Belgium on 7 November. Their final objective was the city of Mons, the same city from which the

¹⁶⁷ "Toronto Schools Not Open Monday," *Mail and Empire*, 2 November 1918, p. 4.

¹⁶⁸ "Use Dead Trees of City As Fuel," *Globe*, 5 November 1918, p. 6.

small British Expeditionary Force had been driven in the early days of fighting in August 1914. The Canadians marched into the city on the morning of 11 November 1918, just hours before the Armistice took effect. The last two days of fighting cost the Canadians 18 officers and 262 men of other ranks, with one death and 15 casualties on 11 November.¹⁶⁹ During that final week and a half of war, Toronto suffered another 163 casualties for a total of 4,165 since 8 August 1918: an average of 43 Toronto homes were told each day that a loved one had been killed or wounded.¹⁷⁰

The end to all this striving, this grieving, and this anxiety, came in the middle of the night on 11 November 1918. At 2:30 a.m., wire services flashed the news of war's end through cables stretching across the Atlantic Ocean. In response, church bells pealed, factory whistles wailed, and Extras were printed. Firetrucks drove through the streets sounding their sirens. Awakened from sleep, tens of thousands of Torontonians headed downtown. Many traveled in nightclothes and slippers: propriety demanded only that a winter coat be thrown overtop. Hanging off streetcars, or piling on the runners of cars, people flooded downtown. Groaning under the weight, cars carried their screaming and singing cargo to the celebration. Yonge Street was packed with revelers. The crowds were so thick that dozens of people walked over roofs to get to the party. Coal scuttles, tin cans, and garbage lids were grabbed: anything to add to the din. Bonfires were set to ward off the predawn chill. Cheering, patriotic songs, and skirling bagpipes filled the air. Fireworks lit up the night sky. Conversation was impossible: and unnecessary. A 24

¹⁶⁹ Nicholson, *Official History*, pp. 475-482.

¹⁷⁰ "14 Toronto Names in Casualty List," *Star*, 12 November 1918, p. 14.

hour victory party, 1,567 days in the making, had begun.

Among the first on the scene was a group of women finishing the night shift at a munitions factory. These capped and overalled "munitionettes" paraded up Bay Street, singing as thousands filtered on to Yonge Street. Impromptu bands played patriotic favourites like "Rule Britannia," and "It's a Long Way to Tipperary." Soldiers hoisted young women waving flags onto their shoulders. One woman, newly arrived to the scene, was picked up and raised on the shoulders of a group of khaki clad soldiers. She protested at first, but in her excitement grabbed a Union Jack, and sang with the crowd.¹⁷¹

At dawn, headlines screamed: "VICTORY!" and "Kaiser a Fugitive: Germany Vanquished and in Throes of Revolution: SO ENDS WORLD WAR." "Victory Day" had finally arrived. The workday opened, but Torontonians paid it little heed. Office staffs, munitions workers, bank clerks, telegraph operators, virtually everyone missed work to join in the euphoric celebration: "Work on the most momentous day in the history of the world was unthinkable." Even pickpockets took the day off. Hungry for something to eat, but unwilling to miss the party, crowds descended like locusts on downtown restaurants. Joyous owners reported that not since the arrival of temperance had they sold so many bottles of two percent beer.

At noon, before thousands, Mayor Tommy Church read the official proclamation from the steps of City Hall. "The citizens of Toronto may well be proud," he declared, "of the noble, glorious, and inspiring record it has made in this war. The memory of its war service will never fade." In the afternoon, 200,000 people watched a Victory parade.

¹⁷¹ "Munionettes Joined in Big Joy Parade," *Star*, 11 November 1918, p. 14.

Proudly wearing their khaki uniforms, young soldiers, wounded earlier in the war, "were cheered to the echo." Marching four abreast, the procession of veterans extended for a quarter of a mile. Behind them in a fleet of automobiles followed the many young soldiers who had not recovered fully from wounds and could not march. Overhead, a fleet of "aeroplanes" wove around church steeples, delighting onlookers as planes "bombed" them with pamphlets, filling the sky with tiny sheets of white paper beseeching people to buy Victory Bonds. The parade began at the base of University Avenue. Spectators crowded 20 deep along the entire route to catch a glimpse of the heroes. Others stood on the South African monument or waved out of Osgoode Hall's windows. A tank, parked at the corner of Queen Street and University Avenue, provided another vantage point. The procession swung West on Queen to Simcoe, then East on King. Passing St. James's Cathedral, the men marched North on Jarvis, before turning West again along Carlton and College to Queen's Park.

The Park was the scene for an enormous service of thanksgiving. One hundred thousand citizens gathered to mark the occasion, filling to capacity the ten acres surrounding the Parliament Buildings. Speeches were given by local dignitaries, but few could hear their words over the vast throng. It did not matter: everyone heard the singing. Citizens were there as a part of the community, to pay homage to the thousands of men who had served. Everyone heard the thousands of voices joined in song: "Onward Christian Soldiers," "Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past," "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow," and "God Save the King!" The service ended with a moment of silence for those who had lost their lives in the great struggle. Gradually, the crowd dispersed,

heading back to the downtown core to absorb the joy of victory. The party continued well into the night.¹⁷²

¹⁷² "Toronto Hails Peace in Delirium of Joy," *Star*, 12 November 1918, p. 5; "Fleet of Aeroplanes Take Part in Parade," *Star*, 12 November 1918, p. 14; "No Sleep For City When News Arrived That War Was Over," *News*, 11 November 1918, pp. 1, 2; "Wonderful Service of Thanksgiving in Queen's Park Here," *News*, 11 November 1918, p. 2; "Victory Parade Easily Shattered All City Records," *News*, 11 November 1918, p. 7; "Day of Rejoicing Was the Greatest in Local History," *News*, 12 November 1918, p. 3; "Toronto Outdoes Itself in Celebrating Victory," *World*, 12 November 1918, p. 4; "Shrill Siren Sounds Sweet," *Globe*, 12 November 1918, p. 10; "Women Show Way At Dawn," *Globe*, 12 November 1918, p. 10; "How Toronto Got The News; Telegram Spread It First," *Telegram*, 11 November 1918, p. 6; "City Started to Celebrate As Soon As The News Spread," *Telegram*, 11 November 1918, p. 13; "City Celebrated In Orgy Of Joy," *Mail and Empire*, 12 November 1918, pp. 1, 4.

Conclusion

There is a wealth of information available for those looking for a window into the world of wartime Canada. Newspapers, as this thesis has demonstrated for Toronto, record not just opinions, editorials and otherwise, but the behaviour, the actions, and the values of citizens from all walks of life. When supplemented and checked through the use of archival sources, newspapers permit the creation of a vivid, accurate portrait of a city and its citizens, permitting the historian to describe what the people believed and how they behaved. The link between knowledge and action answers why Torontonians behaved in the way that they did.

The behaviour of Torontonians in August 1914 was shaped by their interaction with the international community in the years leading up to war. They knew that the century of peace since Napoleon's defeat in 1815 was contingent upon the supremacy of the British Navy; the naval crisis of 1909 taught them that the Empire was in danger. Reports on the Agadir crisis of 1911 reinforced this interpretation, highlighting the importance of alliances and the likelihood of future conflict between Britain and Germany. The First Balkan War taught them about "modern" warfare: it was short and bloody.

In its wake, Torontonians read Liberal and Conservative editorials which debated the future of Canadian defence. These writers disagreed on the specific form that Canada's contribution to Empire defence should take, not its necessity. This dialogue highlighted Canada's link with Britain. The Second Balkan War again demonstrated that war was still a short, sharp undertaking. Opinion leaders were horrified that the victorious Christian nations from the First Balkan War would so suddenly turn on one

another, and condemned the "...savagery of the Christians in fighting over the spoils."¹

Foreign correspondents recounted battles of terrible ferocity, prompting residents to take a reserved attitude to the Balkans. The region seemed determined to destroy itself. The Empire would be better off remaining as removed as possible.

This information governed the actions of Torontonians in the summer of 1914. The growing trouble in the Balkans was just another in a series of crises which the diplomats, no doubt, would solve. Citizens had learned to trust Sir Edward Grey on the basis of his performance in preceding years. This man, after all, had been heralded in headlines as a saviour of international peace for his efforts at stopping the Second Balkan War: "Declares Grey, Averted Crash; All Praise Him."² If the new crisis escalated, however, Torontonians understood that they would accompany Britain to war.

The conflict which began on 4 August 1914 would eventually change the way Torontonians viewed war. However, they went to war on the basis of lessons learned from the pre-war years. They expected the struggle to be short and victorious. This expectation determined their behaviour at the start of what was then considered "a great adventure." Citizens gathered around the newspaper offices by the thousand to read the latest headlines posted in the windows. Newsboys did a brisk trade in extras. Impromptu parades worked their way through the streets. Young men flocked to the recruiting depot. The city was enthusiastic about its upcoming part in the great struggle.

This grand undertaking, however, was not without its poignant moments.

¹ "Notes and Comments," (ed.), *Globe*, 9 July 1913, p. 4.

² "Declares Grey, Averted Crash; All Praise Him," *News*, 31 May 1913, p. 1.

Citizens were not so wrapped up in the enthusiasm for war that they did not recognize the potential for grief. Dailies described heart wrenching scenes at train stations which revealed that citizens understood that men would die. Even as they passed good luck charms and trinkets to the hands of outstretched soldier loved ones, citizens stored up images to sustain them in the months and years ahead. The trains departed to patriotic music and cheering. After a final wave, a last glance, loved ones turned and began to make their way silently and solemnly to homes that felt empty.

Determined to "do their bit," citizens dedicated themselves to organizing the war effort. Considered a "privilege" to serve, efforts at home and at the front were voluntary. There was no need to manipulate or to create patriotic enthusiasm for the war. The challenge was to try to channel the already existing spirit into useful directions. Women organized a campaign to raise money for a hospital ship. Young men tried their best to qualify for overseas service. Civic leaders started the Toronto and York Patriotic Fund to see to the needs of the families of departed soldiers.

The image of the enemy at this early stage centred on the figure of the German Kaiser. It was he, the papers reported, who had led a toast, "To the Day." The Kaiser, his advisers and generals, had been planning an attack for years. The German people were innocent dupes of an autocratic leadership. The struggle, then, was as much for the German people as against the Kaiser.

Information from the front changed the behaviour of Torontonians. In April 1915, papers carried the news from the battle of Second Ypres. "Canadians Won Great Glory" vied with other headlines which spoke of the cost: "Canadian Casualties Nearly 6,000."

The resulting glory and grief celebrated and mourned by the local people changed the conflict into "a great crusade." Tens of thousands gathered for the funeral of one of the city's fallen, Captain Robert Clifton Darling. As his funeral cortege marched up Yonge Street to Mount Pleasant Cemetery, citizens participated in collectively mourning for the local men killed or wounded in action.

In the coming days, they had the chance to read the letters written by soldiers who had survived the attack. Papers carried dozens of these private letters, launching them into the public domain. Residents read of the terrible conditions and the grizzly cost of modern machine guns, artillery and poison gas. They could imagine the experience which made men write of the horror of being "raked...with machine gun and rifle fire," and seeing comrades "dropping before [they] got properly started."³ They could visualize the scene depicted by another soldier who reported that "the dead are piled in heaps and the groans of the wounded and dying will never leave me."⁴ This information did not undercut support for war. It reinforced the commitment. Efforts at home were increased, patriotic donations rose, and more men volunteered to take the place of the dead and wounded.

The enlistment experience mirrored the city's war effort. Citizens rushed to enlist in the opening days, desperately seeking a place in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Only the most qualified were chosen, resulting in relatively few Canadian born in the First Contingent. As the Second and Third Contingent were mobilized, the focus

³ "Only Twenty-Six Men of 4th Battalion Escaped Inferno," *Star*, 19 May 1915, p. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*

remained on the privilege of serving; one in three volunteers were rejected. As the demands of the war grew and more men were needed, enlistment gave way to active recruiting. Military officers created a climate in which men would continue to come forward, relying on the participation of the community to prompt volunteers to come forward. Enlistment boomed.

The war was no longer against the German Kaiser and his generals. Horrified citizens read about atrocities committed by the German Army in France and Belgium. The sinking of the *Lusitania*, the use of poison gas, and the submarine campaign made citizens alter their image of the enemy. Editorialists related the outrage felt by Torontonians that Berliners could take to the streets to celebrate acts of international piracy and terror. The language used to refer to the enemy changed. The "noble" enemy went down with the victims of the *Lusitania*. Words like "diabolical," "fiendish," and "barbarous" took its place. Torontonians were no longer fighting exclusively against militarism and tyranny abroad. They were fighting for their way of life.

As the fighting continued, the papers carried reports which provided a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the nature and duration of trench warfare. They understood that attritional warfare would only gradually wear down German defences, and that the war would continue for years. Against the backdrop of increased casualties, citizens dedicated themselves to continuing the war effort. They would consider none of the early peace proposals, rejecting the late 1916 and early 1917 peace proposals by Germany and United States President Woodrow Wilson. This was not the decision of an uninformed, disengaged populace, but of one committed to a purposeful war.

Throughout these months and years of fighting, community leaders continued to work together to enroll the men necessary to maintain the force in the trenches. Daily reports related, in detail, the progress of local recruiting. The process of ensuring that the city provided its share of recruits struck a chord with residents, prompting hundreds of thousands of citizens to take part in patriotic rallies to promote enlistment. Riverdale Park was the scene of one such rally. Two hundred thousand arrived to show their support for recruiting. Over 500 volunteered in that one night. A year later, prominent local citizens were authorized to raise local battalions. Men were drawn by the promise of camaraderie and the chance to serve with friends: thousands volunteered. Recruiters moved physically into the private lives of potential recruits, confronting prospective soldiers in their homes and on the streets. There were limits, however, to the number of men that could be secured locally.

Recruiting gradually exhausted the supply of willing volunteers, and Torontonians, organizations, and leading citizens appealed to Prime Minister Borden to impose conscription. The dedication of the local population is even more remarkable when placed alongside the total number of men who volunteered. Out of a total of 87,300 eligible young men, more than 45,000 were in khaki and at least another 22,500 had volunteered but were rejected on medical grounds: approximately three out of every four local men had offered to serve by 1918. And still the community demanded greater participation.

Men could no longer keep their reasons for not enlisting private. Military officials and citizens alike demanded that men be able to publicly defend their choice to remain at

home. Accordingly, the city welcomed Borden's May 1917 declaration that compulsory military service would become law. The December 1917 election was a de facto plebiscite on conscription. Citizens voted overwhelmingly for Unionist candidates, who polled more than 90 percent of the vote. The voters behaved in this way knowing that the fighting would continue for months, and probably years. They knew the costs and consequences of further participation. They had experienced the war's demands for coal, food and soldiers. They had attended somber ceremonies at train stations when soldiers departed for overseas. They had seen the human wreckage of war in the form of thousands of wounded, crutch carrying veterans. They had read graphic accounts of front line life and death in the papers. And yet, they voted to continue the struggle, ushering in a new phase: "total war."

Torontonians grimly faced another year of war in January 1918. Headlines relayed the desperate situation at the front, and editorialists announced the inevitability of a German assault in the spring. Even as the Allies struggled to regain lost territory, the consensus which had dominated the response to the war began to show its first cracks. Outraged that the Borden government had canceled exemptions, farmers marched on Ottawa, and Torontonians showed sympathy. Workers fought for wage increases to keep pace with inflation. Veterans targeted enemy aliens for harsh treatment, upset that non-British Canadians had not been made to play a greater role in the war effort. At no point, however, was the necessity of continuing the war questioned. Farmers, workers, and veterans all supported the war. Their actions in the spring and summer of 1918 were designed to secure a more efficient war effort, not to halt its prosecution. As the

Canadian Corps fought to victory between August and November 1918, the city struggled with the deadly influenza virus, but citizens worked together to meet this challenge, just as they had met others over the previous four years.

"Total war" ended -- overnight -- after four and a half years of sacrifice: lives, limbs, health, time, money, and youth. Years of tension were suddenly released in the largest party Toronto had ever known. Headlines captured the spirit of the day: "Toronto Hails Peace in Delirium of Joy," "No Sleep For City When News Arrived That War Was Over," "Victory Parade Easily Shattered All City Records," "Day of Rejoicing Was the Greatest in Local History," "Toronto Outdoes Itself in Celebrating Victory," and "City Celebrated In Orgy Of Joy." The enormous tasks of the future were placed to one side. Entire nations had ceased to exist; new ones would have to be created. Armies had to return home; soldiers had to be reintegrated into civilian life. Citizens had to acclimatize themselves to something not experienced since the end of the Napoleonic Wars: the Post-war world. Enormous tasks lay ahead, not the least of which was imposing order and meaning on the experience of the Great War. The future would develop different memories of the conflict. Soldiers, civilians, men, women, young and old, would all remember things differently. But in the early morning of 11 November 1918, Torontonians joined together in marking a remarkable achievement: victory.

The war effort had been a collective, community enterprise. From the first days when citizens gathered downtown by the thousand around the newspaper offices to hear the latest news from the front, they drew strength from one another. This communal effort saw the city through recruiting campaigns, patriotic drives, casualty lists, and the

influenza epidemic. The community took precedence over the individual. The city supplied recruits for the front, money for Victory Loans, and support for the Empire. The pride and integrity associated with belonging to something larger than oneself helped sustain citizens confronted daily with the demands of the war.

There were, however, vital efforts made by distinct groups within the community. One of the most powerful groups was the local Great War Veterans' Association. A visible and numerous part of the community, veterans publicly and adamantly supported measures to increase the effectiveness of the war effort. They had been to the front, seen its horrors, and remained ardent supporters of continued participation. An integral part of every local patriotic rally after they first began to return to the city in the summer of 1915, veterans demanded greater sacrifices on the part of those at home. They would not tolerate anything which they considered a threat to the war effort, or to the sacrifices they had made on its behalf. They exerted enormous influence, and demanded ever greater sacrifice.

Women's experience with the war effort also reveals a stunning record of achievement. Women responded to the declaration of war by giving their sons, husbands, and brothers to the war effort. Their activities were reported in the pages of the dailies, but particularly critical to understanding their experience with war is the women's page of each paper. These pages reported women's efforts in nurturing and caring for the Empire's soldiers. The papers also noted when women moved out of the private sphere and worked tirelessly in a variety of areas. Women supplied a reserve force of labour to allow local men to enlist. They worked long hours in munitions factories. They paraded

in support of recruiting. They raised funds to care for the families of departed soldiers, and to supply the nation with the economic resources to win the war. When their efforts seemed at their peak, they found another reserve of strength to serve the city as voluntary nurses during the 1918 influenza epidemic.

Wartime Toronto: glory and grief. When the first troops left for the front in August 1914, prospects had ricocheted between glory and the potential for grief. Poignant scenes of leave-taking at the train stations spoke of concern for men who might not return. Throughout the war, citizens were proud of the accomplishments of the Canadian Corps, but were sobered by the cost. In November 1918, they exulted in hard-won victory. Torontonians took to the streets to mark the glory of victory while grieving collectively for those lost in the struggle.

Archival sources serve as a check on the portrait drawn by the papers. Although they contain nothing like the wealth of information recorded daily in the papers, they are an essential component of this dissertation. Personal correspondence allows entry into the personal world outlined by the press. They tell personal stories of enlistment, of the desperate attempts by men like H. Anson Green to enlist for overseas service, undergoing surgery in the hopes of qualifying. They relate the feelings of parents taking leave of sons, and the enormous pressure the community placed on its young men to put themselves forward. Archival sources also demonstrate that the civic leaders were not writing privately in a manner inconsistent with their public pronouncements. They were

not, as some historians have argued,⁵ part of a massive conspiracy to manipulate the public into supporting a war they knew was wrong. They believed in what they were doing, and expressed private hopes and fears similar to those offered in the papers. There was no difference in the public and private discourse.

This dissertation has drawn approaches from different areas of historical inquiry to reflect on this information about wartime Toronto. National, political, women's, labour, military, social, and cultural studies all inform its analysis. The resulting portrait demonstrates the utility of pulling together different strands of historical research. While national historians have been concerned with the relationship between French and English Canadians, Toronto's experience reveals little sensitivity to national cultural differences. Torontonians were dedicated to supporting Britain, the Empire, and winning the war.

This dissertation also challenges accounts of Canadian involvement in the war. Historian Jeffrey Keshen's *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War* argues that the war effort was underpinned by ignorance and carefully manipulated information. This dissertation demonstrates that Toronto's war effort was sustained by information and dedication. They understood the development of Allied and German strategy. Accounts of front line life, ubiquitous casualty lists, exhausting victory and patriotic fund drives, coal shortages, and the loss of loved ones reinforced the dedication of Torontonians to winning the war. Throughout four and a half years of conflict, the response of citizens was both informed and committed. They knew the details of the

⁵ See for example, Jeffrey Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996).

campaigns fought on the Western Front and elsewhere. They understood the costs in men's lives. They read and talked about peace initiatives and continued to support a policy of total victory.

Postwar literature, and the history of the memory of the war, have been dominated by the grief associated with the war. People have gradually forgotten that both grief and glory were integral parts of the experience of the war. This dissertation reintroduces both elements, creating a foundation to comment on the memory of the war. Jonathan Vance's *Death So Noble* has argued that Canadians *created* a "myth" of the war which gave them a "...legacy, not of despair, aimlessness, and futility, but of promise, certainty, and goodness."⁶ This dissertation argues that there was no need for Canadians to create a myth. They were simply remembering their experience, memorializing glory and grief. They already believed, based on their experience, that the war had been purposeful and necessary. They did not need to take refuge in myths; they took comfort in their shared memory of sacrifice. Historians have assumed that the futility of the war was replaced with an artificial, constructed memory of glory and purpose. The opposite occurred. The experience of shared sacrifice and duty well done was supplanted by a memory of futility.

Paul Fussell's *Great War and Modern Memory* presents the disillusionment as a product of the ignorance of people living at home about the costs of war. It was not until the late 1920s, he argues, that citizens learned the true nature of the fighting and the scale of the sacrifice; the sudden release of information in soldiers' memoirs accounted for the

⁶ Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), p. 266.

horror and outrage of people everywhere to the scale of the slaughter.

This dissertation offers a different interpretation. It maintains that the postwar disillusionment grew despite an informed and dedicated population, not one kept in ignorance. In light of the evidence presented here, it is not possible to maintain that citizens did not understand the nature of the fighting or the scale of the sacrifice. The memoir literature published in the 1920s unquestionably caused a stir, but not for the reasons commonly ascribed to it. Given that people already knew the nature of the fighting, and the scale of the sacrifice, they must have been popular for another reason. The most likely conclusion is that the postwar literature served as a catalyst to focus the disillusionment which had been growing out of the failure of the postwar world to realize the higher goals for which the war had been waged. People were disillusioned with the peace, not the war.

The sources consulted allow an exploration of the city at war. There were certainly important divisions of class, gender and ethnicity, but the war proved to be a remarkably unifying force. Irish public opinion leaders were ardent supporters of a full roll for the Irish Catholic population. Irish Catholics volunteered in numbers as high as did British-Protestants. Working class men, union leaders, and unskilled labourers all demonstrated their faith in the war effort by volunteering, sacrificing and caring for the families left behind. Society women directed an increasingly organized women's war effort with the support of most middle- and working-class women.

In 1918, people believed in what they had accomplished. The sources consulted in this dissertation allow a researcher to follow the shift in attitudes in wartime Toronto.

During the time of the conflict, the very idea of war changed, leaving behind the possibility of a "great adventure." What citizens *knew* about the international community affected their *behaviour*. Their ideas and assumptions about war were constantly challenged and updated on the basis of new information. It is inadequate to refer simply to the "war years" as a block. August 1914 was thousands of casualties away from November 1918. The city and its people, however, had been consistent in their dedication to the war. They believed in its necessity, supported its prosecution, sacrificed in its name, and celebrated their achievement when victory finally arrived. They had endured.

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APPENDIX A: ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF TORONTO, 1911-1921

Ethnic Origins	Total 1911 Census ¹	Percentage of 1911 Population	Total 1921 Census ²	Percentage of 1921 Population
English	181,315	48.1	260,860	50.0
Irish	81,804	21.7	97,361	18.7
Scotch	60,042	15.9	83,620	16.0
Other (British)	2,012	0.01	3,389	0.01
TOTAL (UK)	325,173	85.71	445,230	85.3
Austro-Hungarian	553	0.1	Not Listed	
Belgian	46	0.01	215	0.04
Belgarian and Romanian	104	0.03	256	0.05
Chinese	1,099	0.3	2,390	0.5
Dutch	1,639	0.4	3,961	0.8
Finnish	648	0.2	735	0.1
French	4,880	1.3	8,350	1.6
German	9,775	2.6	4,689	1.9
Greek	529	0.1	812	0.2
Hindu	6	0.002	Not Listed	
Indian (Native)	52	0.01	183	0.04
Italian	4,617	1.2	8,217	1.6
Japanese	12	0.003	42	0.008
Jewish	18,237	5.0	34,619	7.0
Negro	472	0.1	1,236	0.2
Polish	700	0.2	2,380	0.5
Russian	693	0.2	1,332	0.3
Swiss	324	0.09	583	0.1
Turkish	527	0.1	Not Listed	

¹ *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911*, Vol. II, p. 372.

² *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. I, p. 542.

APPENDIX B: RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION OF TORONTO, 1911-1921

Religions (with more than 500 adherents)	Total 1911 Census ³	Percentage of 1911 Population	Total 1921 Census ⁴	Percentage of 1921 Population
Anglican	120,405	31.9	173,522	33.2
Presbyterian	75,735	20.1	113,151	21.7
Methodist	73,281	20.0	84,895	16.3
Roman Catholic	46,368	12.3	64,773	12.4
Baptist	20,681	5.5	26,228	5.0
Jewish	18,143	4.8	34,377	6.6
Congregationalist	3,744	1.0	2,736	0.5
Lutheran	2,709	0.7	1,640	0.3
Salvation Army	2,583	0.7	2,977	0.6
Greek Church	1,384	0.4	3,632	0.7
Christian Science	902	0.2	2,192	0.4
Protestant	838	0.2	796	0.2
Christians	824	0.2	456	0.1
Mormon	583	0.2	489	0.1
Disciple	757	0.2	498	0.1

³ *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911*, Vol. II, p. 158.

⁴ *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. I, p. 756.

APPENDIX C: BATTALIONS RAISED IN TORONTO

Name of Unit	Organizing Person/Militia Unit	Month Announced
First Contingent	Composite	August 1914
Second Contingent	Composite	October 1914
Third Contingent	Composite	January 1915
58th Battalion	Composite	May 1915
74th	Composite	June 1915
75th	Composite	June 1915
76th	Composite	June 1915
81st	Composite	July 1915
83rd	Composite	July 1915
84th	Composite	July 1915
92nd	48th Highlanders	July 1915
95th	Queen's Own Rifles	November 1915
123rd	Royal Grenadiers	December 1915
124th (Pals)	9th Mississauga Horse/Governor General's Body Guard	December 1915
134th	48th Highlanders	January 1916
166th	Queen's Own Rifles	January 1916
169th	109th Regiment	January 1916
170th	9th Mississauga Horse	January 1916
180th (Sportsmen's)	Crown Attorney R.H. Greer	January 1916
201st (Light Infantry)	E.W. Hagerty, High School Principal	February 1916
204th (Beavers)	W.H. Price, MPP	March 1916
208th (Irish)	Herb Lennox, MPP	March 1916
216th (Bantam)	Lieut.-Col. F.L. Burton	March 1916
255th	Queen's Own Rifles	November 1916