

**“Canada A People’s History: Ordeal By Fire”**

Ordeal By Fire

- When war is declared in \_\_\_\_\_, Canadians expect it to be a short and glorious crusade for civilization and the empire. Fathers and sons sign up, brothers, underage boys, older men. Each has his reasons: patriotism, adventure, money.
- Most recruits are single, unemployed and from the city. 70% of those who enlist are recent immigrants from \_\_\_\_\_, eager to defend their homeland from the enemy.
- Propaganda films give that enemy a ruthless face. They help to boost \_\_\_\_\_, but they also spread the fear of foreigners. In Canada, immigrants from enemy countries are forced to register and to report regularly to the authorities. And while 8000 immigrants are interned in labour camps across the country, new Canadian recruits are leaving for training camps in England.
- Food production is essential to the war effort. Canada is the Allies \_\_\_\_\_, but farmhands are scarce.
- French Canadians have been in Canada for generations. They feel little attachment to France and even less to England, rejecting the British imperialism of many English Canadians. To make matters worse, \_\_\_\_\_ is the language of the army. The military’s efforts to rouse support fail miserably in French Canada.
- And yet, despite the need for soldiers, Japanese Canadians face bigoted recruiting policies, and must fight to enlist. Black soldiers are limited to a \_\_\_\_\_ battalion. Natives also face many obstacles. Still one third of able-bodied Native men join the army all voluntarily.

Our Investment Of Blood

- The suffragists believe they possess the moral superiority that comes with their role of mother and homemaker. They want the \_\_\_\_\_ to protect themselves and their children, especially from the evils of liquor.
- Henri Bourassa, editor of the influential newspaper Le Devoir, is \_\_\_\_\_ to women's suffrage. He fears for the sanctity of the family.
- The war provides new ammunition to the prohibitionists. They claim that alcohol production uses up precious grain and that liquor \_\_\_\_\_ the soldiers and factory workers so essential to the war effort.
- Canada is a hard drinking country with only one dry province, Prince Edward Island. The tavern is often a refuge for working men, an escape from the brutal weather, poor accommodation, low wages, and harsh working conditions. But many men drink away their wages leaving their families in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Temperance groups have been spreading the word for decades by every possible means. For Nellie McClung, \_\_\_\_\_ is the worst enemy of women and children.
- In Ontario, prohibitionists organise parades and sign petitions. But the heart of the reform movement is in western Canada. So victory is especially sweet in the prairies in 1915 when the Saskatchewan government closes all bars and saloons, followed closely by Alberta and Manitoba. By 1916, women have also won the battle for the vote in the three prairie provinces. The other provinces follow suit, but \_\_\_\_\_ holds out on both fronts.
- In 1918 the Canadian government \_\_\_\_\_ the production of alcoholic beverages. It also grants the federal vote to women. But women in Quebec will have to wait another 25 years to get the provincial vote.

Go Out And Meet Death Bravely

- Most recruits are young, inexperienced, poorly trained, and badly \_\_\_\_\_. The daily misery of trench warfare will be their teacher.
- As part of the British Empire, Canada fights for the Allied forces: France, Russia, Great Britain and their colonies. By 1916, Italy, Romania, Greece, and Portugal have joined them. The Allied armies are pitted against the Central Powers anchored by \_\_\_\_\_ and Austria-Hungary.
- The major Canadian battles take place on the Western Front. In one day alone at Ypres, the First Canadian Division loses half of its men for a gain of a few hundred meters. The battles of Festubert and Givenchy in 1915 and Saint-Eloi and Mont Sorrel in 1916 establish Canada as a fighting force. The casualties are great and the gains are few. But no battles are as \_\_\_\_\_ as the Somme offensive.
- The Battle of the Somme begins on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1916. Heroic re-enactments are shown to those at home. In reality, outdated military tactics are no match for the new weapons of war. The men are often mowed down by \_\_\_\_\_ gun fire as they leave their own defences.
- Newfoundland's First Regiment is \_\_\_\_\_. In the first half hour of the first day of battle all but 68 of the 798 men are killed or injured.
- The German and Allied armies lose over one million men in the slaughter of the Somme, a staggering price to pay for a mere ten kilometers of territory. The Germans call this, "das blutbad", the \_\_\_\_\_.
- There are not enough new \_\_\_\_\_ to replace the wounded, the dead, the shell-shocked.
- To maintain discipline the British army executes its \_\_\_\_\_, so does the Canadian corps. Only the Australia corps refuses to do so.
- 22 Canadian soldiers are \_\_\_\_\_ for desertion during World War One.

- In 1916, Prime Minister Borden had increased Canada's military commitment to half a million men. All were to be \_\_\_\_\_, but as casualties mount and enrolment drops, this commitment will become the dominant political issue in Canada.

#### The Spoils Of War

- From the beginning of the war there had been complaints about the shoddy supplies given to Canadian soldiers. Their boats rotted in the mud, their uniforms disintegrated, their trenching shovels were utterly useless. Even more troubling was the Ross Rifle. Thousands of Canadian infantrymen found themselves frantically trying to free \_\_\_\_\_ mechanisms in the face of an attack. It is replaced by the British rifle the Lee Enfield.
- Colonel Sam Hughes, the Minister of Militia, was responsible for many of the munitions and equipment that ended up on the field. He championed the Ross Rifle. He was also responsible for giving his cronies \_\_\_\_\_. Sam Hughes is fired in 1916.
- Manpower shortages had opened the doors of the munitions factories to \_\_\_\_\_.
- At the front, the four divisions of the Canadian army are stockpiling an incredible amount of \_\_\_\_\_ for the greatest battle in their history, Vimy Ridge.

#### The Battle Of Vimy Ridge

- From the height of the plateau 150 kilometers from Paris, the Germans can see the entire region. The four \_\_\_\_\_ divisions are ordered to take the ridge. A surprise attack is almost impossible.
- The slaughter at the Somme is still on General Arthur Currie's mind. Strategies must be completely revamped. A model of Vimy Ridge is set up. The troops measure and time the planned advance and \_\_\_\_\_ are issued to all the soldiers for the first time.

- Vimy Ridge is covered with German trenches, shelters and tunnels protected by \_\_\_\_\_ wire and machine guns. But the Canadians build an elaborate system of caves and tunnels of their own. They set up a railway to transport a massive amount of explosives.
- A creeping barrage leads the attack destroying enemy barbed wire. The infantry marches behind doing the Vimy glide – a 100 yard advance every three minutes protected by a curtain of \_\_\_\_\_ fire.
- The Canadian troops take and hold Vimy Ridge. Canadian soldiers make greater advances and capture more arms and more \_\_\_\_\_ than any other Allied offensive since the start of the war.
- It is often said that the Battle of Vimy Ridge marks the true beginning of the Canadian nation. Vimy becomes a shared symbol for Canadians and a source of national identity and \_\_\_\_\_.

#### City Of Sorrow

- The people of Halifax are well acquainted with the war. Soldiers leave from their port, soldiers return wounded and worn. But on the morning of December 6<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, the war deals them a direct and deadly blow.
- The Norwegian freighter, Imo, is leaving the port carrying much needed supplies to the Belgium Relief Fund. The Mont-Blanc, a French vessel, is arriving from New York to join a Canadian convoy set to cross the Atlantic. In order to avoid another vessel, the two ships find themselves in the same lane. At 8:45 a.m. the Imo \_\_\_\_\_ the Mont-Blanc.
- Other curious onlookers come to see the accident and in schools, factories, and offices everyone watches from the windows. No one knows that the Mont-Blanc is carrying \_\_\_\_\_ tons of munitions and explosives.

- Over six square kilometers of Halifax are destroyed. The explosion kills 2000 people and another \_\_\_\_\_ are wounded. The next day the city is swept by a massive snowstorm slowing the critical relief efforts.
- Many of the wounded are blinded, their eyes torn by shards of flying \_\_\_\_\_. A large number of children are orphaned.
- The Halifax explosion is the most devastating disaster on Canadian soil and the biggest man-made explosion in history until \_\_\_\_\_.