

History Lecture #15 Enthusiasm For War

Wednesday, November 9, 2016 2:30 PM

Life in 1914

- Majority of Canadians still lived in rural areas
- Industrialization was happening but not by much
- Different ethnicities – but country remained overwhelmingly British
- Duty, responsibility, character were all important values in life
- Not that much different from mid 1800's
- Richer

Declaration of War

- Colonial office a hive of activity
- German troops marched into Belgium
 - For British this was a call to action as they were afraid of German power over the continent
- British discussed how to respond – ultimatum
 - Britain decided to take a stand
- Civil servants had to go to post office, transmit telegrams, sent the world to war

Background

- **What started the war?**
- Triple Entente – Russia, France, Britain
- Triple Alliance – Italy, Austria-Hungary, Germany
- The Balkans – Bulgaria (with Alliance) and Serbia (with Entente)
 - All alliances were responsible to each other; including protection during the war – caused the war to have such huge continental and international impact
- Industrial and trade competition → competing for money
- Arms race
- Goal of imperialism → mark of power
- Nationalism → strong relation to your own country, members of a nation
- Balkans wanted to be free of Austrian-Hungarian monarchs
 - June 1914 → assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo **TRIGGER TO WWI**
 - War served their purposes better than peace ** different than our present day view that war is worst possible option**
 - Austrian- Hungarians actively seek war (peace won't do anything)
 - Sent ultimatum that forces Serbs to say no
 - Allows Austrians to declare war on Serbia
 - Alliance web took form and war affected all of Europe
- Thought war was going to be short – over by Christmas lasting a few months
 - Need to put government and countries in their place

Canada's Position

- Canada didn't have legal ability to decide to go to war or not
 - Britain was at war, therefore we were at war
- Reasons for standing by Britain are more emotional than legal
 - ***Empire was a family where Britain was the parent, and the colonies were the children**
- Nationalism and imperialism can co-exist quite easily
 - Can feel Canadian but also tied to Britain
- Prince Arthur; The Duke of Connaught – Governor-General of Canada
 - Loved meeting Canadians; wasn't there to see that Canada was at war
- Borden (Prime Minister) and Laurier (Opposition Leader)
 - Weren't in Ottawa either
- William Lyon Mackenzie King (International Liberal Party Office) → only one there to receive news that Canada was at war

Why was war appealing?

- Masculinity
- National pride
- Moral element – Germany represents evil and needs to be stopped

- Belief that British was the epitome of human achievement – need to defend it

The First Contingent – Military

- Canadian Air Force, 1914 – not that big or good
- Canadian Navy, 1914 – two submarines to defend west coast
- Non-Permanent Active Militia (army), 1914 – 40 000 men, superbly trained
- Sir Sam Hughes – Minister of Militia and Defence
 - Wanted military to excite people; romanticise it
- Valcartier, Quebec → military training camp in Canada
 - Largest military camp in the country
 - Final review: 20 September 1914
- Harry Little (1888-1914) → over-excitement of going to war???? Assumption was that everyone should be excited
 - First Canadian soldier to die in WWI