

- What was the war's impact on the home front?

Canada's Minister of Militia

Sam Hughes was also in charge of Canada's armament industry. He created the Shell Committee to oversee the manufacture of artillery shells. Canada provided a large portion of Britain's shells. Hughes, however, was a poor administrator and the Ministry of Militia soon became bogged down in inefficiency and war profiteering. While he insisted on using Canadian manufacturers, troops were often supplied with equipment that was inappropriate or of poor quality. By mid-1915, contracts worth about \$170 million had been signed with wealthy businessmen, but only \$5.5 million in shells had actually been made. Some of the shells were of such poor quality that they exploded before being fired, killing the gun crews. In one case, soldiers were equipped with boots that fell apart in the rain due to soles made of pressed cardboard. Troops came to hate the Canadian-made Ross rifle because it jammed, so they picked up British-made Lee-Enfield rifles from dead soldiers when possible. Hughes was dismissed from his post in 1916, but not before being knighted by King George V.

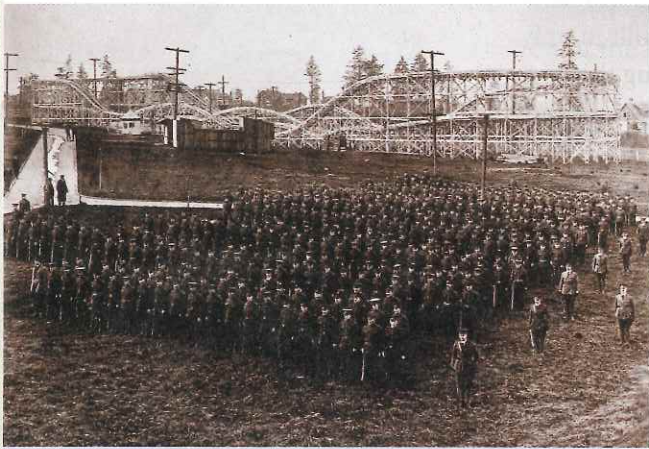


FIGURE 2-10 The 29th Battalion (Vancouver), CEF, in training in Hastings Park, Vancouver, late 1914

Using Evidence How are these men preparing for war?

- What effect did the War Measures Act have on the legal rights of Canadians?

The War Measures Act

To meet the demands of war, Prime Minister Borden introduced the **War Measures Act** in 1914. The Act gave the government the authority to do everything necessary “for the security, defence, peace, order, and welfare of Canada.” For the first time, the federal government could intervene directly in the economy to control transportation, manufacturing, trade, and agricultural production. The government also had the power to limit the freedom of Canadians. It could censor mail. It suspended *habeas corpus*, which meant that police could detain people without laying charges. Anyone suspected of being an “**enemy alien**” or a threat to the government could be imprisoned, or **deported**, or both. Recent immigrants from Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire were treated particularly harshly under this Act. Approximately 100 000 of them had to carry special identity cards and report regularly to registration officers. More than 8500 people were held in isolation in **internment camps**. These policies fostered nationalism and prejudice in Canada, and led to attacks on German-owned clubs and businesses.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Examine the quotation on page 32. What does this document say about the attitude of people in Canada toward Britain at this time? How does the quotation on page 33 demonstrate a growing feeling of Canadian identity among Canadian troops?
2. What prevented women and other groups from participating in the war?
3. Why did the government feel the need to control the economy, transportation, and trade after war was declared? Was this a genuine need? Explain.
4. List the civil liberties suspended by the War Measures Act.
5. Explain why there was such enthusiasm for the war when it began.

The War on Land

Germany's **Schlieffen Plan**, developed years before the First World War began, was a bold strategy for a two-front war. Germany believed it could fend off Russia in the east while it defeated France in the west with a lightning-speed massive attack. The timetable left little room for error. German armies needed to drive through Belgium and swing south to capture Paris within a few weeks. Once this was accomplished, Germany could turn its attention to Russia. The Schlieffen Plan made two critical assumptions:

- It would take Russia time to mobilize its huge army. But Russia's forces were already on the move when Germany declared war.

- Britain would remain neutral. The plan relied on the fact that in the past, Britain had not become involved in disputes between countries in Europe. But, as part of the Triple Entente, Britain had promised to defend France if it was attacked. Also, all the Great Powers had promised not to attack Belgium, so Britain felt compelled to enter the war when Germany did just that.

The Reality of the Schlieffen Plan

The Schlieffen Plan almost worked. By August 1914, German troops were only 50 kilometres from Paris. But German leaders had made some changes that weakened the original plan. They pulled troops from the west to reinforce their defences in the east. The soldiers were exhausted by the pace of their attack through Belgium and into France. The Allies were able to rally and stop Germany's advance at the Battle of the Marne in September 1914, making a quick German victory impossible. Instead, the German army dug a defensive line of trenches along the river Somme and into Belgium. To

counter this, British and French troops dug their own system of trenches to face them. Eventually a vast network of trenches stretched from the English Channel to the Swiss border. Between the trenches of the two enemies lay **no man's land**, a terrible wasteland of corpses, barbed wire, and mud. By Christmas 1914, armies protected by trenches that ran through northern France and Belgium on the **Western Front** were locked in a stalemate. With millions of soldiers on each side, neither Britain and France nor the Germans were able to advance, and no one was prepared to retreat.

profiteering making a profit by raising prices on needed goods or producing poor quality materials

War Measures Act an Act that gives the federal government emergency powers during wartime, including the right to detain people without laying charges

habeas corpus the right of a detained person to be brought before a judge or other official to decide whether the detention is lawful

enemy alien a national living in a country that is at war with his/her homeland

deport to send a person back to his/her country of origin

internment camp a government-run camp where people who are considered a threat are detained

Schlieffen Plan Germany's plan to stage a two-front war with Russia in the east and France in the west

no man's land the area between the trenches of two opposing forces

Western Front the area of fighting in western Europe during the First World War, characterized by trench warfare and inconclusive battles with heavy casualties on both sides

KEY TERMS

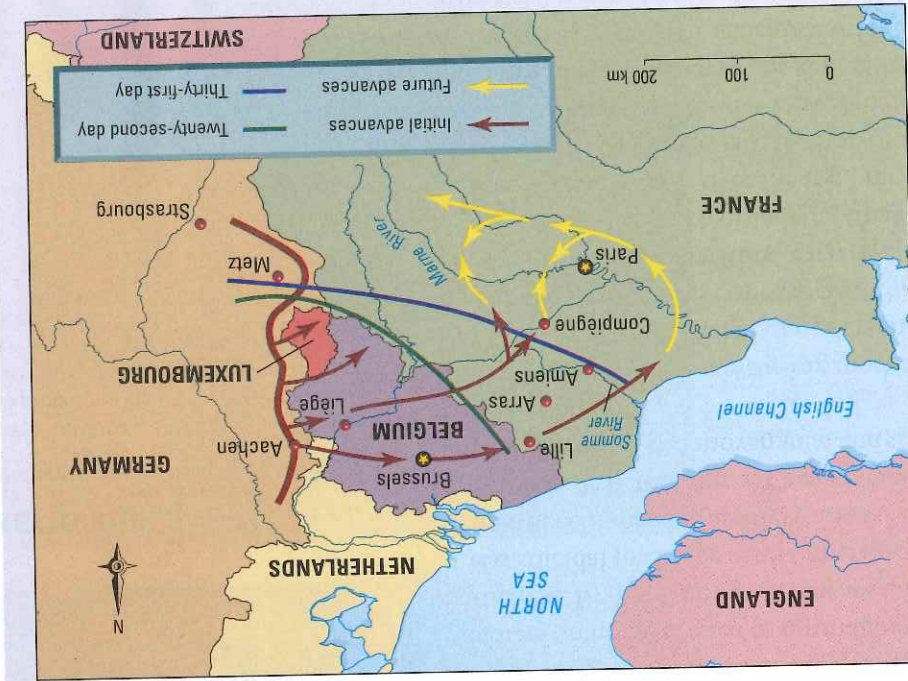


FIGURE 2-11 The Schlieffen Plan