

**GREAT WAR PROFITEERING, PATRIOTISM, AND THE  
DEMOCRATIC REVOLT IN ENGLISH CANADA, 1914 TO 1922**

**BY**

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## Abstract

In Canadian Great War historiography, the late-war and post-WWI revolt has remained a conspicuous subject for exploring regional and class conflict. This dissertation examines the revolt with a new analytical perspective centred on patriotism and profiteering.

The first section of this study constructs a cultural framework called Great War culture. Based on the limitations of the state, it became necessary to militarize socialization so that a major war effort could be undertaken. Through this process, Canada experienced a war-centric cultural shift, whereby social and political belonging became premised on patriotic identity. The term “profiteering” emerged as part of the war-centric lexicon to designate those who were disregarding patriotic sensibilities and selfishly exploiting the war for profit.

The second section of this dissertation examines three major interpretations of Great War profiteering between 1914 and 1918: war profiteering, food profiteering, and alien profiteering. It provides an understanding of each controversy through the perspective of federal politicians and state officials; leaders in the labour, farmers’, and veterans’ movements; and ordinary patriots in English Canada. It argues that Borden’s administration failed to curb patriotic outrage and disillusionment, setting the stage for explosive post-war militancy and unrest.

The final section examines how workers, farmers, and veterans drew upon the legitimacy of the Great War as a struggle for democracy to challenge the terms of post-war reconstruction. As this section explores, patriots undertook this revolt by using direct action involving violence and industrial militancy. They also used political action to challenge party politics, which some believed to be a root cause of the profiteering evil.

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# Acronyms

AAC – American Ammunition Company  
ANV – Army and Navy Veterans  
BCFL – British Columbia Federation of Labour  
CCA - Canadian Council of Agriculture  
CEF – Canadian Expeditionary Force  
CFB – Canada Food Board  
CLP – Canadian Labour Party  
CMA – Canadian Manufacturers’ Association  
CRA – Canadian Reconstruction Association  
FLP – Federated Labour Party  
GAC – Grand Army of Canada  
GAUV – Grand Army of United Veterans  
GGA – Grain Growers’ Association  
GWVA – Great War Veterans Association  
IAFC – International Arms and Fuse Company  
IDIA – Industrial Disputes Investigation Act  
IWW – Industrial Workers of the World  
IMB – Imperial Munitions Board  
MGGA – Manitoba Grain Growers’ Association  
NPL – Non-Partisan League  
PAC – Public Accounts Committee  
RNWMP - Royal North West Mounted Police  
SGGA – Saskatchewan Grain Growers’ Association  
SPC – Socialist Party of Canada  
TLC – Trades and Labour Congress of Canada  
UFA – United Farmers of Alberta  
UFM – United Farmers of Manitoba  
UVL – United Veterans’ League  
UFO – United Farmers of Ontario

VGL – Veterans’ Gratuities League

WPC – War Purchasing Commission

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## Introduction

“If it were possible to write a full and true account of the doing of the profiteers during the years of the Great War a tale would be unfolded sufficient to stagger humanity and to destroy in all save the most optimistic [sic] all belief in the perfectability of the race.”<sup>1</sup>

The statement above, written by Ernie Paige, Editor of the *British Columbia Veterans' Weekly* in 1920, reflected an epistemological crisis that occurred in the wake of one of the most terrible wars ever experienced. In the Great War of 1914 to 1918, modern science was applied to the battlefield so that death could be total: aeroplanes and zeppelins unleashed devastation from above; submarines and tunnel engineers from below; gas swept through trenches to burn humans from the inside-out; flamethrowers spewed fire to burn them from outside-in. By the end of the war, 51,748 members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) died fighting the Crown's enemies along with an additional 154,361 casualties. There were also the innumerable shell shocked victims whose bodies and minds could not cope with the horrors of modern warfare, as well as thousands of deaths and injuries suffered outside of combat.<sup>2</sup> Idealism played a prominent role in Canada's mobilization for war; it played an equally important role in healing the war's wounds. British subjects were told that wartime sacrifices were needed to protect British society's sacred values and traditions. Such a claim was believable because, for over half a century, the ideas of intellectuals like Herbert Spencer and John Fiske were used to convince

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in “The Trail of the War-Profiteer,” *The Manitoba Veteran*, 15 July 1920, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Desmond Morton and J. L. Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and the Great War 1914-1919* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Limited, 1989), 250.

the British public that they were at the top of humanity's evolutionary ladder.<sup>3</sup> As the British empire expanded, British intellectuals professed the optimistic view that their civilized values would lead to the extinction of warfare.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in 1914, H. G. Wells coined the war against Imperial Germany as "The War to End All Wars," because victory was interpreted as the means of securing the global hegemony of peaceful civilized societies.<sup>5</sup> Robert Borden, Canada's wartime prime minister, expressed this belief when he stated that: "the cause for which we are fighting is just, that it is the cause of democracy against a militarism which... will dominate the world, and throw back the work of civilisation for the next hundred years at least."<sup>6</sup> With such lofty idealism driving the war effort, how was a Great War veteran such as Paige supposed to reconcile evidence that high ranking officials, including Prime Minister Borden; the Minister of Militia, Sam Hughes; and the Chair of the Imperial Munitions Board (IMB), Joseph Flavelle were allowing the war effort to be exploited for profit and political gain while others suffered terrible hardships to defend democracy?

"War is a racket" reflected the retired United States General Smedley D. Butler in 1935.<sup>7</sup> For those who lived in Canada during the Great War, this became all too evident. The federal government opened its monetary floodgates, driving up Canada's national public debt from \$336 million to \$2.3 billion between 1914 and 1921. As this money flowed out of the public coffers, it

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<sup>3</sup> Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 82-103; Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1996); Angus McLaren, *Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in Canada, 1885-1945* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>4</sup> Hawkins, 106-107; Also see Robert Bannister, *Social Darwinism: Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979). Not all interpretations of social Darwinism propagated the evolutionary path towards industrial peace. For a discussion on Darwinian rationalizations for war during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Paul Crook, *Darwinism, War and History: The Debate over the Biology of War from the 'Origin of Species' to the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> H. G. Wells, *The War That Will End War* (London: Frank & Cecil Palmer, 1914).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Borden, "Empire Club of Canada and the Great War An Address by Rt. Hon. Sir Robert L. Borden, Prime Minister," *The Empire Club of Canada Addresses* (Toronto, Canada), 5 December 1914.

<sup>7</sup> Smedley D. Butler, *War Is a Racket* (New York: Round Table Press, 1935).

flowed into private pockets. Not only were manufacturers receiving hundreds of millions of dollars in war production, but those brokering the war contracts could earn hundreds of thousands of dollars through commissions.<sup>8</sup> There were also the enormous wartime profits of large food companies. Between 1913 and 1916, the William Davies Company saw its bacon exports increase 300 percent; its butter exports increase 320 percent; and egg exports increase 5,250 percent.<sup>9</sup> The same company was caught hoarding food to keep prices high for so long that thousands of pounds were spoiled.<sup>10</sup> The largest shareholder of this company was Joseph Flavelle, who, as noted above, was the Chair of the IMB. While Flavelle's fortune swelled and his service to the state was honoured with a knighthood, families with loved ones fighting overseas struggled to afford life's necessities, including the very food that Flavelle sold to reap his wartime fortune.<sup>11</sup>

With the realities of implacable human greed rising to the surface, the hypocrisy of a self-professed virtuous society became impossible to ignore. How could such optimism of "the race" be maintained when those who were supposed to be the best acted so selfishly, materialistically, and devilishly?<sup>12</sup> Even more disheartening was how profiteering contravened one of the Great War's primary objectives – to demonstrate the superiority of British democracy over German militarism and *Kultur*. If the war did not lead to an ideological triumph, how were wartime

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<sup>8</sup> Liberal Party of Canada, *Shell and Fuse Scandals: A Million Dollar Rake-off, Taken from the Government Records* (Ottawa: Central Liberal Information Office, 1916).

<sup>9</sup> Canada, *Report of Acting Commissioner W. F. O'Connor, K.C., re Cost of Living, Cold Storage in Canada* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917), 33-38.

<sup>10</sup> "The Great Canadian Hogtopus Dumps Its Chickens in the Sewer: Scandalous Waste of Food by the William Davies Company While the Food Controller Calls Upon Us to Save! Save!" *Saturday Night*, 30 March 1918, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1918*, 514; "Only Enough Eggs for Week in Stock," *Toronto World*, 2 February 1918, 1; For a study on wartime hardships among the families of soldiers, see Desmond Morton, *Fight or Pay: Soldiers' Families in the Great War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> As Jackson Lears comments, Spencer's views were reflective of an evolutionary and scientific optimism. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 20-24.

sacrifices to be sanctified? As overwhelming evidence of profiteering filled newspapers, pamphlets and speeches, public discontent intensified. By the end of the war, a wave of grassroots militancy and political activism swept through the Dominion and rocked Canada's social, political, and economic order to its core. Considering that profiteering also became a major issue in the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, it can also be stated that profiteering controversy in Canada was part of a crisis that reverberated throughout the modern industrial world. It brought into focus the contradictions of ideology and materiality, equality and privilege, sacrifice and selfishness, and egalitarianism and discrimination. What it revealed, perhaps above all else, was that behind the self-professed character of modern democratic societies as orderly, virtuous, and advanced, they remained, at their most basic level, a system of prey and predators. Indeed, Paige may be correct in stating that profiteering revealed imperfectability, but Paige's very words represent another dynamic – humanity's intolerance of excessive greed and immorality. Such opposition becomes a force that galvanizes outrage and can lead to the transformation of society. A historical analysis of Great War profiteering provides an opportunity to analyze this process and becomes a window in which we may view both the beauty and horror of modern society.

### **Profiteering in History**

The term “profiteer” has existed in the English lexicon at least since the late eighteenth century but remained largely dormant until the First World War.<sup>13</sup> Since its pronounced usage beginning in 1915, profiteering has remained a familiar term in the English language, but there has been minimal historical research to understand this subject. Even when there are explicit

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<sup>13</sup> “Profiteer (v.)” *Online Etymology Dictionary* (Douglas Harper), Accessed 13 February 2021: <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=profiteering>.

references, historians rarely list profiteering in the indices of their studies and even more rarely cite the discussions on profiteering by other historians. For these reasons, the historical scholarship on profiteering is disjointed and rife with conflicting views. For instance, R. T. Naylor shows how profiteering is used to counteract the adverse effects of international sanctions and stabilize political regimes through gun smuggling, drug trafficking, among other illicit black-market activities, leading Naylor to emphasize how profiteering can have a patriotic quality. In contrast, Jeffrey Keshen focuses on Canada during the Second World War to show how black marketeering was considered a form of profiteering and represented unpatriotic behaviour.<sup>14</sup> Although both studies examine profiteers operating in an illicit underground market, they reach contrary conclusions. Indeed, this study does not find black marketeering to be a prevalent controversy in Canada during the Great War, nor does it attribute profiteering to have a positive patriotic connotation. To address these discrepancies, it is necessary to first deconstruct the term and ask, “what is profiteering?”

French historian François Bouloc provides valuable insights regarding the subjectivity of profiteering. In *Les Profiteurs de Guerre*, which is notably the first and only major historical study of Great War profiteering, Bouloc explains how it is a culturally and historically determined identity.<sup>15</sup> This dissertation shares Bouloc’s deconstructive approach and embraces a broad definition. As this dissertation defines it, “profiteer,” in its most fundamental sense, exemplifies an individual who profits beyond the boundaries of moral acceptability, while “profiteering” denotes the act itself. Since conceptualizations of morality are inherently subjective and emotional, the moral boundaries of profit are constantly in flux and vary upon the

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<sup>14</sup> R. T. Naylor, *Patriots and Profiteers: Economic Warfare, Embargo Busting, and State-Sponsored Crime* (Toronto: M&S, 1999); Jeffrey Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada’s Second World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> François Bouloc, *Les Profiteurs de Guerre 1914-1918* (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 2008).

perspective in question. Combined with the slippage of language,<sup>16</sup> profiteering controversies become rife with competing interpretations. Interestingly, Bouloc challenges the ambiguity of profiteering by drawing upon tax data, company records, and government investigations to determine whether companies profited in good faith or committed fraud and evaded taxation. Bouloc draws upon this data to determine whether popular charges of profiteering were legitimate from a regulatory standpoint. However, Bouloc does not focus on how the *belief* in rampant profiteering shaped the emergence of grassroots movements during the war.

In Canadian historiography, historians have examined profiteering with great interest, but their analyses of profiteering are fragmented, especially in contrast to the extensive literature on other wartime controversies such as conscription<sup>17</sup> and internment.<sup>18</sup> It would be expected that the marginality of profiteering in Great War historiography reflects its insignificance, but on the contrary, historians point to profiteering as a cause of widespread disillusionment, militancy, and political activism. Where profiteering receives this recognition the most predominantly is in a

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<sup>16</sup> For an overview of the linguistic turn and its impact on social history see, Donald MacRaild and Avram Taylor, *Social Theory and Social History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> For historical scholarship on conscription in Canada, see Jack Granatstein and J. Mackay Hitsman, *Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1977); Jack Granatstein, "Conscription in the Great War," in *Canada and the First World War: Essays in Honour of Robert Craig Brown*, ed. David Mackenzie (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005): 62-75; *Conscription 1917*, ed. Carl Berger (Toronto: University Press, 1969); A. M. Willms, "Conscription 1917: A Brief for the Defence," *Canadian Historical Review* 37, no. 4 (1956): 338-351; Elizabeth Armstrong, *The Crisis of Quebec, 1914-1918* (New York: AMS Press, 1967).

<sup>18</sup> For historical scholarship on internment in Canada, see: Joseph Amedée Boudreau, "The Enemy Alien Problem in Canada, 1914-1921," PhD diss., (University of California, 1965); David J. Carter, *POW, behind Canadian Barbed Wire: Alien, Refugee and Prisoner of War Camps in Canada 1914-1946* (Elkwater: Eagle Butte Press, 1998); Bohdan Kordan, *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada During the Great War* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); Bohdan Kordan, *No Free Man: Canada, the Great War, and the Enemy Alien Experience* (McGill: Queen's University Press, 2016); Peter Melnycky, "The Internment of Ukrainians in Canada," in *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada during the Great War*, ed. Frances Swyripa and John Herd Thompson (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1985): 1-24; Lubomyr Luciuk, *In fear of the Barbed Wire Fence: Canada's First National Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914-1920* (Kingston: Kashtan Press, 1988); Orest Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada: the Formative Years, 1891-1924* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1991); Peter Melnycky, "Badly Treated in Every Way: The Internment of Ukrainians in Quebec During the First World War," in *The Ukrainian Experience in Quebec*, ed. Alexander Biega and Myroslaw Diakowsky (Toronto: Basilian Press, 1994).

body of literature this dissertation describes as the “revolt historiography.” Here, trends within historical scholarship offer clues as to why profiteering has remained on the analytical periphery. Because this dissertation aims to build upon the revolt historiography most directly, a brief overview will provide a sense of the scholarship’s insights and how this dissertation can contribute to it.

Since the mid-twentieth century, historians have framed the emergence of grassroots militancy, radicalism, and political activism during the late and post-war period as part of a “revolt.” In 1948, Paul Sharp explicitly used the notion of a revolt in his study, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada*.<sup>19</sup> Sharp’s thesis was that the growing influence and strength of the farmers’ movement was part of an agrarian challenge to address class grievances and western alienation. Profiteering was relevant because Sharp used it to explain heightened agrarian radicalism. The “agrarian revolt” narrative was expanded upon following Sharp’s study, but historians have primarily wrestled over its class and regional character. For instance, in 1950, W. L. Morton was studying the origins of the Social Credit movement in Alberta, and focused on how the Progressive party was part of the “farmers’ revolt,” and synonymously, the “progressive revolt” that grew out of western regional politics and western agrarianism. Donald Masters, who also published a study in 1950 as part of the same series on the Social Credit movement, focused on how the discontent of western workers was similarly influenced by western alienation and regional dynamics.<sup>20</sup> Nearly two decades later, the revolts of western farmers and workers were conjoined into a “western revolt” narrative reinforced by historians such as John Herd

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<sup>19</sup> Sharp builds upon Frederick J. Turner’s American Frontier thesis that the remote, harsh, and alienating conditions of the frontier were ideal for the cultivation of democratic radicalism. Paul Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada: A Survey Showing American Parallels* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948); Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1920).

<sup>20</sup> Both studies were part of a series funded by the Canadian Social Science Research Council and the Rockefeller Foundation. W.L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950); Donald Masters, *The Winnipeg General Strike* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).

Thompson,<sup>21</sup> David Bercuson, and Ross McCormack.<sup>22</sup> Ernest Forbes also used a regional and class lens to explore labour and agrarian militancy but focused on the East Coast.<sup>23</sup> Then, in the 1980s, this historical fixation on regionalism came under a concerted challenge. During a symposium on the Winnipeg General Strike in 1983, the attending historians presented arguments that labour radicalism during the Great War and post-war period was national, and even international, in character.<sup>24</sup> This group of Marxist labour historians continued to substantiate the national character of the labour revolt through both public history and academic literature throughout the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>25</sup> For the latter, these efforts culminated in the publication of *The Workers' Revolt in Canada 1917-1925*.<sup>26</sup> The nine contributing authors forged a comprehensive nationwide overview of “the workers’ revolt.” Leveraging the sheer weight of its evidence, the study seems to have signalled an end to the debate within labour historiography, although Ian McKay followed his contribution with another framework situating labour militancy and disillusionment as part of an organic crisis of liberal order.<sup>27</sup> McKay does not challenge the workers’ revolt narrative per se, but rather, he shifts the analytical focus to the

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<sup>21</sup> John Herd Thompson, *The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978).

<sup>22</sup> Andrew R. McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: the Western Canadian Radical Movement 1899-1919* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977). When David Bercuson re-published *Confrontation in Winnipeg*, he denied accusations of presenting an argument for “western exceptionalism.” However, he did re-affirm his conviction that western workers saw themselves as more radical and advanced than their eastern counterparts. As the conceptualization of a distinct “western revolt” solidified, Desmond Morton and Terry Copp integrated this framework into their public-oriented history of the Canadian labour movement. David Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg: Labour, Industrial Relations and the General Strike* (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 200; Desmond Morton and Terry Coop, *Working People: An Illustrated History of the Canadian Labour Movement* (Ottawa: Deneau & Greenberg, 1980);

<sup>23</sup> Ernest Forbes, *Maritime Rights: The Maritime Rights Movement, 1919-1927 A Study in Canadian Regionalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1979).

<sup>24</sup> See *Labour/Le Travail*, 13 (Spring, 1984) for papers presented at the symposium. Also see, Gregory Kealey, “1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt,” *Labour/Le Travail* 13, (Spring, 1984): 11-44. For Bercuson’s response, see Bercuson, “Chapter 13: A Longer View,” in *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 196-205.

<sup>25</sup> Craig Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1989).

<sup>26</sup> *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925*, ed. Craig Heron (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

<sup>27</sup> Ian McKay, *Reasoning Otherwise: leftists and the people’s enlightenment in Canada, 1890-1920* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2008), 426.



resistance of “the left,” particularly emphasizing the activism and intellectual thought of socialists.<sup>28</sup> In studies on the farmers’ movement, historians have maintained a regional and provincial approach but with an enhanced attentiveness to grassroots activism. Bradford Rennie and Kerry Badgley have published two very insightful studies on agrarian organization and radicalism in Alberta and Ontario, respectively.<sup>29</sup>

The revolt historiography has the utmost relevance for this dissertation because it provides many insights into the practice of profiteering during the Great War. There are many references to profiteering; there is an emphasis on profiteering’s centrality for inciting disillusionment and grassroots militancy; and there is a diverse range of profiteering controversies highlighted, including references to war contracts scandals, wartime profits, the provocation of maternal sensibilities, and the necessities of life. However, it can also be said that profiteering has not been considered a topic worthy of study in and of itself because it has always been peripheral to regionalism and class conflict.

Another area of historical scholarship that considers profiteering and builds upon the idea of a revolt – though not explicitly – is the historiography on the veterans’ movement. The history of Great War veterans’ activism is relatively understudied in comparison to the literature on farmers and workers.<sup>30</sup> Prominent veteran organizations, such as the Army and Navy Veterans

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<sup>28</sup> McKay, *Reasoning Otherwise*, 5-6; Ian McKay, “The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History,” *Canadian Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (December, 2000): 617-651; *Liberalism and Hegemony: Debating the Canadian Liberal Revolution*, ed. Jean-François Constant et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Kerry Badgley, *Ringed in the Common Love of Good: The United Farmers of Ontario, 1914-1926*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000); Rennie, Bradford James, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy: The United Farmers and Farm Women of Alberta, 1909-1921* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> Morton and Wright, *Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life, 1915-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); Nathan Smith, “Comrades and Citizens: Great War Veterans in Toronto, 1915-1919,” PhD diss., (University of Toronto 2012); Nathan Smith, “The Mercenary Demands of Bolsheviks?: Veteran Protests and Politics after the First World War” CHA Annual Meeting, University of Victoria, Victoria BC, 3 June 2013; Nathan Smith, “Fighting the Alien Problem in a British Country: Returned Soldiers and Anti-alien Activism in Wartime Canada, 1916-19,” in *Other Combatants, Other Fronts: Competing Histories of the First World War*, ed. James E. Kitchen et al. (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011); Jonathan Scotland,

(ANV), Grand Army of United Veterans (GAUV), among others, have not been the subject of any major historical examination; the broad array of more minor veterans' organizations is virtually invisible in the historiography; and the involvement of Great War veterans in national and provincial elections remains largely unexplored. Despite being a smaller body of literature, it offers many important insights that inform our understanding of both the revolt and profiteering. In addition to demonstrating how veterans were militant activists, it is evident that British Canadian veterans were outraged by their belief that "aliens" (a synonym for unnaturalized foreigners) earned high wages and operated profitable businesses without making major wartime sacrifices. The discrepancy of prosperity and sacrifice between British Canadian veterans and ethnic minorities substantiated accusations of profiteering. Smith does not analyze this controversy in conjunction with other forms of profiteering, but it is important to highlight this insight and recognize that profiteering was informed by ethnic prejudice.<sup>31</sup> By revealing how profiteering was more than the vertical antagonism towards big business, political corruption, and privilege, Smith inadvertently shows that profiteering is much more complicated than labour and agrarian historians have suggested.

It is evident in these historiographies that profiteering incited militancy and disillusionment, but it has yet to receive a substantial empirical analysis. However, this dissertation does not aim to simply describe profiteering. Rather, it approaches profiteering from a cultural perspective to challenge the way we understand the state and society, politics, and democratic movements.<sup>32</sup> Similar to how food historians examine food and consumerism as a

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"And the Men Returned: Canadian Veterans and the Aftermath of the Great War," PhD diss., (University of Western Ontario, 2016); Elizabeth Anne Lees, "Problems of Pacification: Veterans' Groups in Vancouver, 1919-1922," MA Thesis, (University of Simon Fraser University, 1983); Brian Macdowall, " 'A Flag that Knows No Colour Line': Aboriginal Veteranship in Canada, 1914-1939," PhD diss., (York University, 2018).

<sup>31</sup> Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 145, 147.

<sup>32</sup> For an analysis on the agrarian revolt as part of a mass democratic movement, see Badgley, 15, 92; Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976);

nexus through which people interact and negotiate their social, political, and economic interests,<sup>33</sup> the morality of profit, constructed within profiteering discourses, offers a unique perspective to view the world. This study proceeds with three major undertakings. First, it deconstructs the unique cultural climate of the Great War and uses profiteering to show how profiteering emerged as part of a broader war-centric cultural shift. Within this shift, a historically-specific current of patriotism flourished and became an immensely powerful ideological force. Building upon this cultural context, the second undertaking draws upon primary sources to tell the story of profiteering as it relates to war, food, and alien profiteering in English Canada. Both of these undertakings tie into this study's third objective – to analyze how workers, farmers, and veterans commonly drew upon their patriotism to construct profiteering and contest it. By illustrating how opposition to profiteering was central to the revolt, this dissertation will show how all three social groups and movements were participants in a common struggle that drew upon “Great War patriotism” to defend and reconstruct democracy.

### **Great War Profiteering and the Democratic Revolt**

This study seeks to contribute to the revolt historiography, but it can only do so by challenging it. The premise of this challenge is to replace the centrality of regionalism and

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Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>33</sup> For historical scholarship on Canadian food history and consumerism between the early to mid twentieth century, see Julie Guard, *Radical Housewives: Price Wars & Food Politics in Mid-Twentieth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019); Meg Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Joseph Tohill, “‘A Consumers’ War’: Price Control and Political Consumerism in the United States and Canada during World War II,” PhD diss., (York University, 2012); David Macleod, “Food Prices, Politics and Policy in the Progressive Era” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 8, no.3 (July 2009): 365-406; Ian Mosby, *Food Will Win the War: the Politics, Culture and Science of Food on Canada’s Home Front* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014); Donica Belisle, “Conservative Consumerism: Consumer Advocacy in *Woman’s Century* Magazine During and After World War I,” *Social History / Histoire Sociale* 47, no. 93 (May 2014): 112-138; Madeleine Kloske, “From Spenders to Savers: Thrift, Saving and Luxury in Canada During the First World War,” PhD diss., (University of Ottawa, 2017).

classism as the main analytical lens for examining the revolt. As argued here, the surging strength of class movements did not strictly reflect rising class and regional consciousness as emphasized in the narrative structures of the workers', agrarian, and western revolts. Class organizations were among the most prepared and capable grassroots organizations to channel popular discontent, but as this study argues, a primary cause behind the upsurge of new members and public support was how class organizations and class politics became vehicles to advance both class and patriotic interests, which during the Great War, were closely intertwined. In this way, this dissertation challenges the revolt historiography by asserting a new narrative called "the democratic revolt." Similar to how the western revolt is premised on western regionalism, and the agrarian and workers' revolt narratives are premised on classism, the democratic revolt is premised on the struggle of patriots to defeat the enemies of democracy and reconstruct democratic society. To contextualize the centrality of patriotism between 1914 and the early 1920s, this dissertation devises a framework called "Great War culture." The general components of this framework are summarized below, but it should be noted that a more extensive overview is provided in Chapter One, while Appendix A provides a visual outline.

Unpacking Great War culture can begin with the notion of "the Great War" itself. The Great War acquired its connotations as "Great" because of its widely accepted implications about the trajectory of human civilization. In the decades leading up to 1914, the British and German empires became enmeshed in intensifying geo-political tensions compounded by a cultural drift. After Britain declared war on Germany, prominent secular and religious figures professed that it was not simply a clash between militaries but a cataclysmic struggle between cultures, systems, ideas, and peoples. If Imperial Germany emerged victorious, then it was believed that their militaristic culture would dominate the world and invoke a dark age of barbarity fuelled by

endless wars. Based on this legitimization, leading public figures declared that the Great War required a victory that went further than pushing the German military back into Germany's sovereign borders. What was required was a "total victory," whereby the Allied forces could re-democratize German society and discredit the militaristic values of German *Kultur*. With the objective of achieving Imperial Germany's total capitulation, an immense war effort was needed. However, such a war effort required more than what governments could provide unless they successfully galvanized widespread public support. For this reason, it was necessary to *militarize socialization* – which is to say, to create a new cultural hegemony to cultivate the public's war spirit. With immense pressure to conform to a pro-war stance, the public could be depended upon for the costly sacrifices needed to fuel the war effort. Patriotism became the ideological vehicle to facilitate this new social conformity.

In Brock Millman's study on wartime patriotism and dissent during the Great War, he argues that "Canadian patriotisms were characterized by different world-views, inculcated by organizations with different views of what Canada meant. It should not surprise, therefore, that these produced different levels of engagement in the war and that communal cleavages began to become dangerous as the war impacted differently on communities that felt and participated differently."<sup>34</sup> While it is true that there were different patriotisms in Canada, this study proposes a new approach centered on the concept of "Great War patriotism" because it is useful for explaining the process of militarizing socialization and the emergence of profiteering rhetoric.

A conventional understanding of patriotism describes it as a devotion to one's country or nation. Within the Great War culture framework, patriotism's meaning becomes more explicit. It is still a form of devotion to one's country or nation, but Great War patriotism is demonstrated

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<sup>34</sup> Brock Millman, *Polarity Patriotism and Dissent in Great War Canada, 1914-1919* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 54.

by supporting the war effort. As this study asserts, there are four underlying principles that guided the war effort and are referred to as “patriotic sensibilities.” These patriotic sensibilities became the basis of evaluating patriotism. They include safeguarding public security through ways that were both real and imagined; performing public service; maximizing productivity; and adhering to expectations that the hardships and prosperity of the war would be balanced through an equality of sacrifice. It is important to recognize that evaluating patriotism according to these principles was subjective, so there is still room for competing currents of patriotism as alluded to by Millman. That said, Great War patriotism, as support for the war effort, maintained a distinct coherence because it was through these patriotic sensibilities that social and political belonging in Canada was negotiated. As the war effort gradually dominated public and private life, individuals, indeed, entire social communities, were pressured to conform to these patriotic sensibilities or face marginalization. It was through the emergence of Great War patriotism, as part of a broad war-centric cultural shift, that the government was able to wage a mass-scale war effort. Great War culture denotes this war-centric shift and contextualizes why profiteering rhetoric surfaced from the recesses of the English language during the war.

The term profiteering existed before 1914 and signified immoral profit-making, but during the Great War it found widespread popularity because its elasticity was infused with the emotions of the period. In the absence of any obvious historical connotations and ideological baggage, the profiteer was constructed as the antithesis of the patriot because of how the former transgressed patriotic sensibilities through profit-making. This dissertation focuses on three categories of profiteering: war profiteering, food profiteering, and alien profiteering.<sup>35</sup> As this

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<sup>35</sup> The research for this dissertation indicates the existence of a fourth major category not included in this study, “rent profiteering.” It can be said through preliminary research that rent profiteering became a popular controversy as rent prices escalated during the late and post-war period. Landlords were accused of charging unreasonable and

study finds, all three forms of profiteers transgressed the expectation that there would be an equality of wartime sacrifice. They also transgressed the expectation that contributions to the war effort should be done as public service rather than for personal gain. In addition to these commonalities, each category of profiteering exhibits unique characteristics in the ways they transgressed patriotic sensibilities. Profits from war industries were among the most contentious because their existence was directly dependent on the war. Moreover, patriots argued that war profits impeded the efficiency of the war effort and the prioritization of profit was leading to delays and faulty equipment, putting the safety of soldiers at risk. Food profits did not always have such an obvious connection to the war effort, but since food was an essential resource, commercial practices that exploited wartime food shortages, such as price-fixing and food hoarding, were fiercely condemned as wasteful. In addition, excessively high food prices exacerbated wartime hardships. Lastly, alien profiteers referred to the belief that ethnic minorities were exploiting the absence of competition on the home front to earn excessive business profits and high wages. This interpretation of profiteering was most prominent among British Canadians because many harbored racist, nativist, and xenophobic dispositions – much of which was justified by social Darwinism and discourses of British citizenship. Consequently, British Canadians drew upon the sacrifices of the British and British Canadian communities as the most substantial, leading them to form a heightened sense of unequal wartime sacrifices between ethnic communities.<sup>36</sup>

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exploitative prices. While an analysis on rent profiteering would complement this study in many ways, a similar discussion on the “necessities of life” is provided through the discussions on food profiteering.

<sup>36</sup> It is important to note that the use of these profiteering categories is designed for thematic organization. When analyzing primary sources, it is not uncommon to find the term “war profiteer” used as a general reference to wartime profiteering. In this study, war profiteering specifically denotes profiteering in war production. The same strict usage is applied to food and alien profiteering.

While this study focuses on profiteering, it needs to be emphasized that profiteers is only one of many war-centric designations that existed as part of the broader lexicon of patriotism that emerged within Great War culture. Other war-centric designations that denoted unpatriotic identity include “enemy aliens,” who were considered security risks; “slackers” and “loafers,” who neglected their duty of contributing to production; and “shirkers,” who neglected their duty to enlist despite eligibility. Hence, “profiteers” was more than a convenient term to discuss the morality of profit. It was also more than an extension of pre-war rhetoric related to the morality of profit, such as “living wages” and “living profits.”<sup>37</sup> Rather, profiteering rhetoric was a product of a patriotic consciousness that stemmed from the broader war-centric cultural shift.

The framework of Great War culture provides the scaffolding to contextualize profiteering’s emergence and its significance. Through Great War culture, opposition to profiteering can be recognized as being one of the most important controversies of the period because of how it encapsulated popular struggles and aspirations. To begin illustrating this point, it can be noted how profiteering channelled pre-war animosities but simultaneously transformed them. A case in point is the congruency between opposition to war and food profiteering and producerism.<sup>38</sup> The sentiments that underlined producerism were similar to those that justified opposition to profiteering, but there are also distinct differences. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the ideological current of producerism promoted contempt towards big

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<sup>37</sup> Michael Bliss, *A Living Profit: Studies in the Social History of Canadian Business, 1883-1911* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1974), 53. For a study on “a living wage” in the United States see, Lawrence G. Glickman, *A Living Wage: American Workers and the Making of Consumer Society* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997).

<sup>38</sup> Jeffrey Taylor, Bryan Palmer, and David Goutor are among the scholars who examine producerism exclusively. Jeffrey Taylor, “The Language of Agrarianism in Manitoba, 1890-1925,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 23 (Spring, 1989): 91-118; Bryan Palmer, “Reform Thought and the Producer Ideology,” in *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1914* (Montréal: McGill-University Press, 1979): 97-122; David Goutor, *Guarding the Gates, The Canadian Labour Movement and Immigration, 1872-1934* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007): 145-169.



business, combines, monopolies, financiers, party politicians, and other “exploitative” groups, because they were criticized as profiting from the real value produced by others, particularly farmers and workers whose labour created physical goods. In contrast to the value created by producers’ physical production, modern capitalists reaped massive fortunes through mystified and manipulative strategies, such as speculative gambling in land and stocks; exploiting the people through loans; and the expansion of markets to far and foreign lands.<sup>39</sup> As workers and farmers struggled to make ends meet, producerism became a robust ideology that influenced some of the most prominent agrarian and labour organizations of the period, including the Patrons of Industry and the Knights of Labour – both of which advocated for equality of rights, anti-monopolism, and cooperatives. The affinities between producerist rhetoric and anti-profiteering rhetoric are quite clear because both fostered hostility towards big business and used descriptive language such as “parasites,” “leeches,” and “maggots” to denote the moral transgressors.<sup>40</sup> There were also continuities among those making these denunciations because prominent social gospellers Salem Bland, William Irvine, and James Woodsworth were advocates of producerism and fierce opponents of profiteering.<sup>41</sup>

Although this study recognizes the continuities between producerism and opposition to profiteering, it would be inaccurate to interpret them as synonymous. This is because opposition

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<sup>39</sup> Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010); Lears, *No Place of Grace*; Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

<sup>40</sup> “270 Delegates Present When Trades Congress Opened,” *Toronto Star*, 25 September 1916, 1, 3; “Maggot Eating Heart of Canadian Life,” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 25 March 1915, 5.

<sup>41</sup> For historical scholarship on the social gospel movement in Canada, see Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-28* (University of Toronto Press 1971); *Canadian Churches and the First World War*, ed. Gordon L. Heath (McMaster Divinity College Press, Hamilton 2014); Richard Allen, “The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt,” *The West and the Nation: Essays In Honour of W. L. Morton*, ed. Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1976): 174-186; Kenneth McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics: A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth* (University of Toronto Press, 1959); Allen Mills, *Fool for Christ: the political thought of J.S. Woodsworth* (University of Toronto Press, 1991).

to profiteering was not premised on a producerist identity but rather upon a patriotic identity. Profiteers were explicitly condemned for being traitors who undermined the war effort. In this way, the implications and significance of their illicit activity were more than an unchecked evil of modern capitalist society – it was believed to be an active threat to a war effort that would determine the fate of countless lives and the fate of the civilized Christian world. It was in this context that opposition to profiteering became charged with the emotions of the period. And while the emotions of the past can never be truly captured in history, Great War culture assists in the historical contextualization of wartime emotions by connecting issues to the war effort. It also is imperative for illustrating why Great War profiteering was an exceptional conflict and has no exact parallel in history, including other profiteering controversies of the past and present. Great War profiteering must be understood in its own right.

The empirical scope of Great War profiteering extends from the first war contract scandals during late 1914 through to its continuing relevance as an electoral issue during the post-war provincial and federal elections of the early 1920s. During this period, profiteering undermined the war effort and provoked extremely hostile responses among patriots. It revealed to Canada's patriots that democracy was under threat by German militarists overseas and an exploitative, selfish, and immoral group residing within Canadian society. In this way, the Great War as a struggle for democracy continued after the armistice was signed on 11 November 1918. For patriots, whether workers, farmers, or veterans, the Great War for democracy continued through their revolt against the profiteers.

### **Approach and Methodology**

This study's approach was shaped by some unique challenges. Among one of the chief constraints was the difficulties posed by a fragmented and limited scholarship. With Bouloc's

*Les Profiteurs de Guerre* as the only major historical study on Great War profiteering, it is difficult to show how profiteering was an international controversy by connecting it to secondary literature. When possible, this study emphasizes how the international and domestic contexts were inseparable, such as how profiteering involved international flows of goods, capital, and people, as well as how patriots in Canada referred to the anti-profiteering measures of foreign governments. But in the absence of historical scholarship on Great War profiteering in other countries, these insights are limited, so the analytical focus of this dissertation is centered on the Dominion of Canada.

Contrary to the difficulties of piecing together the historical insights on profiteering in secondary literature, references to profiteering in primary sources reveals the opposite dilemma – an abundance of relevant information. This study casts its net widely enough to reflect upon profiteering’s underlying characteristics, but there are some important limitations. Provincial and local dynamics are included when most illustrative and relevant, but the empirical focus is concentrated at the national level. Another limitation is that Great War culture and profiteering will be primarily explored through the perspective of British Canadian patriotism. As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, archives and libraries were shuttered making it difficult to conduct research, so this led to a strategic decision to concentrate on English-language sources. The inclusion of French Canada is a major undertaking because, in addition to stark differences between the labour, farmers’, and veterans’ movements in English and French Canada, patriotism in French Canada was influenced by different cultural and social dynamics. Without the confidence that French Canada could be included holistically, this dissertation leaves French Canada beyond the analytical scope with a few minor exceptions. Hardline pacifists are also absent in this study because their opposition to the Great War’s legitimacy puts

their views and identity at odds with mainstream patriotism. Another social group that falls outside the scope of this study is middle-class reformers, mainly because they do not figure predominantly in the revolt historiography. This omission is not a reflection of irrelevance, however. As Tom Mitchell's study on the National Conference on Canadian Citizenship exemplifies, religious and middle-class representatives were active participants in the broader discussions on morality and profit.<sup>42</sup> The social gospel movement receives some direct consideration because leading public figures, including Woodsworth, Bland, and Irvine, were involved in the labour and agrarian movements. And although middle-class suffragists are not directly examined, women's suffrage receives some consideration because profiteers were almost always constructed as men, so hostility towards profiteering legitimized women's presence in politics and bolstered support for women's suffrage in the labour, farmers', and veterans' movements.

With these limitations in mind, this dissertation examines three major groups: first, governing officials, including politicians, civil servants, and military personnel; second, "ordinary" workers, farmers, and veterans; and lastly, the leaders and spokespersons of labour, farmer, and veteran organizations. An analysis of these three groups, which have figured most centrally in the revolt historiography, reveals a complex interplay of interests which were shaped by and influenced the progression of profiteering controversy. Following a brief assessment of some literature that outlines the expected roles of these groups, this section will review this study's sources.

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<sup>42</sup> Tom Mitchell, "'The Manufacture of Souls of Good Quality': Winnipeg's 1919 National Conference on Canadian Citizenship, English-Canadian Nationalism, and the New Order After the Great War," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 31, no 4 (Winter, 1996-97): 5-28.

The first social group analyzed in this dissertation is governing officials. They can be considered to have had central roles in the moral regulation of profit. Literature on Adam Smith, the renowned nineteenth-century moral philosopher, and political economist,<sup>43</sup> is relevant here because his work brings into focus the tension between state regulation and the morality of profit.<sup>44</sup> Salim Rashid, who examines the legacy of Smith's ideas in British governance, finds that despite many governing officials in Britain professing a commitment to a *laissez-faire* political economy, they were compelled to balance their free-market ideology with popular morality, especially during periods of crisis, such as the food scarcities during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Under immense public pressure, British *laissez-faire* advocates supported new regulations to halt food speculation, hoarding, and market manipulation.<sup>45</sup> As Rashid points out, the Roman maxim – *salus populi suprema lex*: that no law could be above the subsistence of the people – continued to stand the test of time.<sup>46</sup> During the Great War, governing officials in Canada faced this predicament of having to abandon familiar methods of *laissez-faire* governance to uphold patriotic sensibilities. But while this study considers the involvement of governing officials as a categorical group, it also recognizes them as heterogeneous. Some governing officials were accused of profiteering, held as being responsible for the profiteering of others, and conversely, opposed profiteering. Importantly, it was their

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<sup>43</sup> Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London: Printed for A. Millar, A. Kincaid, J. Bell, 1759). Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* vol. I-II, (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776). For analyses of Smith's work see Jeffrey T. Young, *Economics as a Moral Science: The Political Economy of Adam Smith* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1997); Salim Rashid, *The Myth of Adam Smith* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1998).

<sup>44</sup> Smith argued that the pursuit of wealth and status leads individuals to develop their industriousness, frugality, and other "lower/commercial virtues," ultimately benefiting the national economy and society more broadly. An important oversight in most accounts of his work was that he repudiated materialism as the path to fulfillment and condemned the courts of princes as "corrupted societies" because of their obsession with affluence. Young, *Economics as a Moral Science*, 47.

<sup>45</sup> Rashid, *The Myth of Adam Smith*, 115-131.

<sup>46</sup> Rashid, 124.

failure to respond to profiteering decisively, transparently, and effectively, that exacerbated its sensationalism and fuelled public disillusionment that helped incite the democratic revolt.

The second social group is ordinary workers, farmers, and veterans. As evident in the work of E. P. Thompson, ordinary people have important roles in negotiating the moral economy from below. For example, Thompson directly referred to Adam Smith's moral contemplations and the food scarcities in Britain during the eighteenth century but focuses on how ordinary Britons confronted these crises.<sup>47</sup> As governing officials failed to assist in meaningful ways, Thompson illustrated how crowds used informal traditions of boycotts, protests, intimidation, and violence to enforce the moral regulation of profit. In some scenarios, ordinary townsfolk rejected the "natural price" of food set by markets by confronting the merchants, bakers, and millers to demand lower prices. Anthony J. Coles, who builds on Thompson's work, found similar dynamics of crowds retaliating against food scarcities in West Cumberland between 1916 and 1917.<sup>48</sup> It is evident that working people and the poor were often very well-informed regarding markets and prices. Canada's highly literate public were also well informed about profiteering because public and private investigations provided detailed accounts of scandals and controversies summarized in daily newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets.<sup>49</sup> As governing officials failed to effectively respond to profiteering, many ordinary patriots became alienated and disillusioned. Drawing upon their traditions of resistance, ordinary patriots sought to negotiate the moral economy through their own means of spontaneous militancy, organized protests, collectivization, and political action. Their objectives varied between pressuring the

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<sup>47</sup> E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past & Present*, 50 (February, 1971): 76-136.

<sup>48</sup> Anthony James Coles, "Moral Economy of the Crowd: Twentieth-Century Food Riots," *Journal of British Studies* 18, no. 1, (Autumn, 1978): 157-176.

<sup>49</sup> According to the 1911 census data, the number of registered residents who could read and write over five years old was 88.9 percent. Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1913* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1914), 88.

incumbent administrators to address profiteering more effectively; replacing them with new leaders supportive of reforms espousing wartime ideals; and directly confronting the profiteers to intimidate them into compliance or enforce retribution.

In addition to the hostility exhibited towards big business and political elites for wartime profiteering, this dissertation also explores how ordinary patriots drew upon racism and ethnic discrimination to become antagonistic towards the wartime profits of “alien” wage-earners and small businesses. Since the nineteenth century, scientifically-backed notions of white racial superiority informed the worldviews of British Canadians. While a source of empowerment that legitimized imperialist expansion and the subjugation of “Others,”<sup>50</sup> beliefs in white racial superiority were also a source of insecurity towards the encroachment of “undesirables” who threatened whiteness and British normativity.<sup>51</sup> Nativism and the economic self-interest of British workers further intensified racial and ethnic conflict as they sought to prevent migratory labour from undercutting their living standards.<sup>52</sup> The normativity of racism and ethnic discrimination among British Canadians was a significant influence on the rhetorical construction of profiteers and patriotic sensibilities more broadly. British Canadians believed that ethnic minorities avoided severe hardships and reaped the benefits of wartime prosperity, leading

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<sup>50</sup> McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*; Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994); Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Kay Anderson, “The Idea of Chinatown: The Power of Place and Institutional Practice in the Making of a Racial Category,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77, No. 4 (December, 1987): 580-598.

<sup>51</sup> Kurt Korneski, “Britishness, Canadianness, Class, and Race: Winnipeg and the British World, 1880s-1910s,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 41, no. 2 (Spring, 2007): 170. For some studies on how whiteness and British normativity were protected through racial and ethnic violence, the prohibition of civil liberties, restrictive immigration policies, and discriminatory practices in education and law, see Patricia Roy, *A White Man’s Province: British Columbia Politicians and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989); John Lutz, “After the Fur Trade: The Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-1890,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 3, no. 1 (1992): 69-93; Constance Backhouse, *Colour Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

<sup>52</sup> Goutor, 4; Craig Heron, *Lunch-Bucket Lives: Remaking the Workers’ City* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2015), 394-395; Gillian Creese, “Exclusion or Solidarity? Vancouver Workers Confront the “Oriental Problem,” *BC Studies*, no. 80 (Winter 1988-89): 24-51.

to the assertion that there was an inequality of sacrifice among ethnic communities. To denote how some patriots cultivated an overt hostility towards “aliens,” “foreigners,” and people from different cultures, this study uses the term “xenophobic-patriotism.” The purpose of making this distinction is because opposition to alien profiteers often conflicted with the priorities of other patriots who prioritized opposition to profiteers in big business and party politics. Opposition to profiteering by big business and aliens was not mutually exclusive, but it is more manageable to analyze how patriots resisted profiteering along a vertical and horizontal axis. A more detailed discussion on xenophobic-patriotism will be made in Chapter Four.

The third major group analyzed in this dissertation includes leaders and organizations of the labour, agrarian, and veteran movements. Partly based on the availability of sources and scholarship, as well as pragmatic considerations, this study’s analysis focuses on the progressive and moderate-socialist “mainstream” of each movement – an approach used by David Goutor in his analysis of the Canadian labour movement.<sup>53</sup> For organized labour, this study examines the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (TLC), and to a much lesser extent, the British Columbian Federation of Labour (BCFL); for organized farmers, the Canadian Council of Agriculture (CCA), the provincial United Farmers and Grain Growers’ associations which existed in the prairie provinces and Ontario in 1914 (organizations on the West and East Coasts were formed between 1917 and 1920); and for organized veterans, the Great War Veterans’ Association (GWVA), and to a lesser extent the GAUV. Similar to this study’s approach to governing officials, it is important to recognize that the leadership of these organizations was heterogeneous and acted with competing strategies. And yet, these representatives of class and occupational interests shared an important similarity in that they legitimized patriotic

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<sup>53</sup> Goutor often employs the term “mainstream” in his analysis to denote the Canadian Labor Union of the 1870s, as well as the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada from the 1880s to the 1930s. Goutor, 4, 117.



disillusionment and channelled it into organized opposition. Mirroring David Swift's conclusions on patriotism and the British labour movement, the embrace of patriotism broadened the popular appeal of these three movements.<sup>54</sup> More specifically, this dissertation argues that opposition to profiteering legitimized their criticisms of *laissez-faire* capitalism, political corruption, and party politics, leading to the rising popularity of progressive and socialist reforms needed to address the underlying causes of the profiteering evil.<sup>55</sup>

While this dissertation examines class and occupational identity, it makes a concerted effort to consider how conventional social cleavages such as class were transcended through the broader identities. The revolt historiography provides important insights in this regard and finds that inter-class cooperation between workers and farmers during this period is not novel. For example, James Naylor states that during the 1921 federal election, the successful Labour candidate for London, Ontario, Arthur Mould, was reflective of "a people in revolt,"<sup>56</sup> while Ian McKay and Suzanne Morton criticize how the Farmer-Labour coalition on the East Coast failed to naturalize and radicalize the category of "the people," which would have solidified the rural-urban divide. Ernest Forbes reaches a similar conclusion.<sup>57</sup> The use of populism as the narrative framework for the revolt, such as framing it as "a populist revolt," is not used in this dissertation. As Kerry Badgley argues in her study on the United Farmers of Ontario (UFO), populism is too ambiguous of an analytical concept, while delineations of populism, such as David Laycock's

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<sup>54</sup> David Swift, *For Class and Country: The Patriotic Left and the First World War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017).

<sup>55</sup> It is possible to categorize the views of editorialists according to their progressive and socialist orientation. For instance, Pettipiece and Puttee could be categorized as moderate socialists, while Francq, Chipman, and Good, could be considered progressives. However, this dissertation finds that progressives and moderate socialists were considerably fluid in their views.

<sup>56</sup> Naylor, "Southern Ontario: Striking at the Ballot Box," in *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925*, ed. Craig Heron (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 170.

<sup>57</sup> McKay and Morton, "The Maritimes: Expanding the Circle of Resistance," in *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925*, ed. Craig Heron (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 62; Forbes, 51-53.

definitions of prairie populism, is too rigid.<sup>58</sup> This study's approach has been to focus on the rhetoric of the period, which has led to the creation of the Great War culture framework. Through this framework, we find that patriotic identity became a major node of social intersectionality and emerged as a pronounced form of social consciousness. It is important to recognize that patriotic identity did not replace class identity, but rather, workers, farmers, and veterans who embraced their patriotic identity in similar ways strengthened their social bonds and had a new ideological common ground to overcome their distinct class identities and interests.

In terms of sources, this dissertation uses a diverse range. When examining governing officials, this study uses the diary, memoirs, and archival fonds of Prime Minister Robert Borden. These sources contribute to an understanding of the federal government from "behind the scenes," while parliamentary debates provide information on the formal positions of parliamentarians towards profiteering. Party literature and electoral platforms provide further insights on the politicization of profiteering. Government reports, periodicals, and parliamentary investigations are also drawn upon. *The Canada Year Book* provides official statistics; the *Canada Food Bulletin* contains updates on wartime food regulations; and numerous government reports and state investigations are used, many of which were authorized by the federal government. *The Monetary Times* and *Industrial Canada* are also consulted because they include some economic commentary and notices of state regulations.

The primary sources used to analyze labour, farmer, and veteran organizations are concentrated primarily in newspapers and conference proceedings. For the labour movement, the editorialists that figure most centrally in this study are Richard Pettipiece of the *B.C.*

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<sup>58</sup> Badgley, 12-18, 61-62, 153; David Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910 to 1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

*Federationists* (Vancouver), Arthur Puttee of *The Voice* (Winnipeg), and Gustave Francq of the bi-lingual *Labor News* (Montréal). It should be noted there are some limitations in using these sources. After Puttee denounced general strike tactics he and *The Voice* were replaced by William Ivens and *The Western Labor News* in 1918 (notably also consulted in this study).<sup>59</sup> It should also be noted that the *Labor News* began publication in 1916. Unfortunately, there were no major labour newspapers consistently published in the Maritimes during this period of study. For the farmers' movement, the CCA's Farmers' National Platform provides insights into how organized farmers prioritized solutions to wartime concerns. Two agrarian newspapers that are examined include the *Farmers' Advocate* (London, Ontario), edited by William Charles Good, as well as *The Grain Growers' Guide* (Winnipeg), edited by George Chipman – the latter served as the unofficial organ of the CCA, but both Chipman and Good were prominent figures in the farmers' movement. William Irvine's *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, created in 1917, is also examined because Irvine and the Non-Partisan League are influential in the politicization of the United Farmers of Alberta. Irvine's book, *The Farmers' in Politics*, alongside Salem Bland's *The New Christianity*, are two works that highlight the profound reimagining of the Canadian political system during the democratic revolt. Within the veterans' movement, the GWVA was the largest organization at the national level, but it was not without its rivals, including the ANV, GAUV, among others. These latter organizations are excluded for the most part because secondary literature is virtually non-existent, but there are some references made in this dissertation, at the very least, to help direct future research. Thus, the GWVA will be the primary veterans' organization analyzed. To examine the GWVA, this study uses the resolutions of the GWVA's national conferences, as well as the Dominion GWVA's official organ, *The Veteran*,

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<sup>59</sup> McCormack, 146.

edited by Dave Loughnan. *The Manitoba Veteran*, edited by A. H. Coe, is also examined to help inform the involvement of veterans in the pivotal Winnipeg General Strike. Collectively, the opinions of these labour, agrarian, and veteran editorialists provide a window into viewing how they cultivated patriotic consciousness by opposing profiteering and utilized it to strengthen their respective movements.

Written sources by ordinary patriots are few and far between, so this study draws upon the methodology of “history from below” to examine how patriots responded to profiteering through direct action. Sometimes these acts could be executed as well-planned strategies, such as sweeping through workplaces to remove alien profiteers; or as impulsive reactions to controversy, such as the destruction of alien businesses after an altercation between individuals. Protests and strikes were among the other tactics of asserting the moral economy from below, as was the reliance upon the ballot. In addition to the sources listed for the labour, farmers, and veterans' movements, this study finds information on ordinary patriots through some generalized sources. John Hopkins's *The Canadian Annual Review* is very insightful as a source for state regulations, politics, elections and civil unrest. Hopkins draws upon a diverse range of government sources and newspapers from across the Dominion to publish his annual history of public affairs in Canada. Furthermore, a number of popular periodicals are analyzed, including *The Toronto World*, *The Toronto Daily Star*, *The Toronto Globe and Mail*, *The Manitoba Free Press*, *The Calgary Herald*, *Maclean's Magazine*, *Everywoman's World*, and *Saturday Night*.

## **Chapter Summaries**

This dissertation has three sections. The first section consists of one chapter that overviews Great War culture and explains why it is central to the subsequent analysis on profiteering. It explores the pre-war roots of the villainization of the Kaiser and German *Kultur*,

the legitimization of the Great War as a struggle for peace and democracy, the mobilization of Canadian society, and the roles of propaganda and censorship in facilitating the militarization of socialization. As it will be shown, these dynamics were part of an interconnected process that created a war-centric cultural shift, wherein Great War patriotism became central to social, political, and economic life in Canada.

The second section of this dissertation comprises three chapters that each examine a category of profiteering, namely war profiteering, food profiteering, and alien profiteering. The first collective argument of these chapters is that the inability of governing officials to assert a united front against controversial profit-making provoked its sensationalism, while seemingly disingenuous efforts to address it fuelled patriotic outrage and disillusionment. The second argument is that the mainstream labour, farmers', and veterans' organizations capitalized on this disillusionment by asserting their progressive and socialist policies as both effective and patriotic solutions for rampant profiteering. But the proposed reforms were more than the sums of their parts. Underscoring these progressive and socialist policies was the aspiration of transforming the Dominion's spirit and rejuvenating democratic society. A third argument is that ordinary patriots did not always act in ways that aligned with the strategies of these national movements. This is particularly visible in how some patriots disregarded the advice of their organizational leaders and prioritized opposition to alien profiteers rather than the profiteers among the rich and politically privileged.

The final section of this dissertation is divided into two chapters, each demonstrating how post-war opposition to profiteering was part of a broader democratic revolt. Chapter Five focuses on how workers and veterans confronted the post-war period's material hardships and ideological aspirations through direct action. Profiteering and patriotism was critical because it

legitimized these struggles – including both anti-alien riots and labour radicalism. Governing officials responded to the revolt through coercion but also recognized the urgent need for concessions. To this end, the Manitoba Norris government authorized the Alien Investigation Boards to address alien profiteering within the province and the federal government created the Board of Commerce to check food profiteering on a national level. As some pundits at the time suspected, these initiatives failed to provide meaningful change but arguably succeeded in disrupting the momentum of radical militancy. Still, their failures to provide tangible gains for patriots added weight to demands to replace the corrupted party politicians. Chapter Six shifts the focus from post-war direct action to political action. It shows how the failures of tripartite cooperation and federal reforms to appease class grievances and demands for progressive and socialist reforms left patriots with few alternatives to realize their ambitions of establishing a new democracy. Consequently, patriotic workers, farmers, and veterans channelled their opposition into decentralized grassroots-driven campaigns to elect candidates that were independent from the Liberal and Conservative parties. In this way, patriots could stay true to their principles by instigating change while not replicating the evils fostered by a centralized party machine, which, as argued by labour, farmer, and veteran leaders, was one of the root evils that led to wartime profiteering. This dissertation concludes by connecting the decline of Great War culture and profiteering during the early 1920s to the decline of the revolt itself.

## Chapter 1.

### “War That Will End All Wars” and Great War Culture

On 28 June 1914, Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo by the nineteen-year-old Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip. Ferdinand's death sent European rulers into a chaotic entanglement of intimidation, negotiation, and mobilization known as the July Crisis. This series of events escalated into a three front-war between two alliances: Serbia, Russia and France against Germany and Austria-Hungary. In August, the German army invaded Belgium and Luxembourg to circumvent the French-German border, prompting the British government to declare war on Germany. The vortex of war continued to pull more countries and empires into the conflict. By the time the armistice was signed on 11 November 1918, the initial belligerents were joined by Bulgaria, Romania, the Ottoman Empire, Italy, Greece, Japan, Brazil, Portugal, the United States, and numerous minor states, nations, and forces.

In 1897, Otto von Bismarck, the so-called “Iron Chancellor” of Imperial Germany, predicted that the short-term catalyst of the next large-scale European war would originate from the Balkans.<sup>1</sup> Needless to say, Bismarck's accuracy was not because he was a nineteenth-century Nostradamus. Bismarck rationalized that the Balkans was a likely site for conflict because there was a diverse range of nationalities trapped between and within the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian empires. Bismarck was also cognizant of how European empires and nations were heavily militarized and entangled in a web of

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<sup>1</sup> Bismarck's quote comes from Herr Ballin, who told Winston Churchill about his conversation with “old Bismarck” a year before he died. Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911-1918* (London: Odhams, 1938), 96.

diplomatic agreements that would allow a localized conflict to trigger a continental war. Although Bismarck can be credited for predicting the origins of the war, his foresight was not unique. Indeed, there was an entire sub-genre of fictional novels known as “future history” that prophesied Imperial Germany leading the world into a terrible war.<sup>2</sup> It was not coincidental that these fictional villainizations of Imperial Germany coincided with the villainization of Germany when the Great War began. Similar to how Bismarck rationalized his predictions based on *realpolitik*, the popularity of German-invasion novels in British society reflected an interpretive outlook of geo-political trends. War between the British and German empires was not inevitable but the fear of it played a role in perpetuating it into existence.

As this discussion highlights, the cultural and geo-political context of the pre-war period is directly relevant for understanding the Great War but its utility is not confined to understanding the war’s origins. Cultural and geo-political dynamics of the pre-war period reveal insights towards what historians from the French *Annales* school would describe as the British *mentalité*. This is an important component within an interlinked chain of dynamics that explains why profiteering rhetoric emerged from the recesses of the English language. When the Great War began, the British psyche had already become familiar with the idea that the German empire and its Prussian leaders sought global domination and espoused the militaristic values of German *Kultur*. Public figures in British society drew upon these preconceived beliefs and framed the war, not merely as a conflict between imperial hegemons, but as a struggle to defend democratic and peaceful societies. It was

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<sup>2</sup> George Chesney, *The Battle of Dorking* (Toronto: Copp and Clark Limited, 1871); William Le Queux, *The Invasion of 1910* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada limited, 1906); H. G. Wells, *The War in the Air: and particularly how Mr. Bert Smallways fared while it lasted* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada limited, 1908).



through these profound connotations that a massive mobilization was justified. But such a mobilization was beyond the capacity of the government to undertake without widespread public approval. Subsequently, socialization became militarized by asserting patriotic identity as the new common denominator for social and political belonging. Profiteering exemplifies how this process unfolded because it emerged as the antithesis of patriotic behaviour, particularly as it related to profit-making. This chapter will examine these interlinked dynamics and denote this war-centric cultural shift as “Great War culture.”

### **Insecurities of the British Mentality**

Before considering the transformative effects of the Great War on Canadian society, it is first necessary to consider why so many people accepted the connotations of the Great War as a cataclysmic struggle to defend democracy and peace. After all, Imperial Germany posed no immediate threat to Canadian sovereignty, and the German government did not declare war on the British Empire. On the contrary, the German government professed themselves to be engaged in a defensive war.<sup>3</sup> But contrary to Imperial Germany’s official proclamations, prominent public figures in Canada, including the Prime Minister Robert Borden, claimed that a victory for Imperial Germany would usher in a new dark age for the civilized world.<sup>4</sup> An analysis of the British mentality helps explain these disparate views and the Great War’s legitimization in British and Canadian society.

First, it is crucial to recognize the social and cultural synergies between the United Kingdom and Canada. People in the Dominion of Canada were not “Canadians” in the

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<sup>3</sup> John A. Moses, “The Mobilisation of the Intellectuals 1914-1915 and the Continuity of German Historical Consciousness,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 48, no. 3 (2002): 340-341.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Borden, “Empire Club of Canada and the Great War An Address by Rt. Hon. Sir Robert L. Borden, Prime Minister,” *The Empire Club of Canada Addresses* (Toronto, Canada), 5 December 1914.

modern sense that they identified with a distinct Canadian nationalist identity. Citizens in Canada were formally British subjects. Officially, the 1911 census indicates that out of Canada's 5.6 million registered residents, 89 percent were British subjects – 78 percent by Canadian birth and nearly 11 percent were born in the British Isles.<sup>5</sup> The 1911 census further provides a rough estimate of Canada's ethnic composition. The two largest groups were 54 percent of British origin and 28.5 percent French. For the latter, Québec was home to 77 percent of the French-Canadian population, Ontario ranked second at 10 percent, and New Brunswick third at 5 percent.<sup>6</sup> The census data provides, at the very least, a rough demographic picture wherein the registered residents were overwhelmingly British subjects; upwards to half of which were of British origin.<sup>7</sup>

As Kurt Korneski highlights, Canadian residents of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Celtic heritage widely embraced British subjecthood and British culture as part of their core identity. Some non-British residents also embraced British culture to improve the quality of their lives through assimilation. That said, the notion of Britishness was not part of a homogenous set of values throughout the British world. Canadian Britishness was distinct in its prevailing desire to build a “better Britain,” which is to say, to take the best of British society from the old world, and use colonization as an opportunity to mix in virtuous peoples from other parts of the world.<sup>8</sup> By the eve of the Great War, a distinct Canadian nationalism separate from British identity was still marginal in national political culture

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<sup>5</sup> Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1913* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1914), 72.

<sup>6</sup> British origin includes English, Irish, Scotch, and an “other” category that accounts for 0.35 percent. Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1922-23* (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1924), 159, 160-161.

<sup>7</sup> Bruce Curtis reminds us that given the political incentives that influence the statistical construction of populations, census data should not be considered objective truth. Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1875* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Korneski, 161-184.

and Canadian Britishness did not stray drastically far from the core values, principles, and systems that characterized Britishness more generally.<sup>9</sup>

Britishness can be considered a source of empowerment for those of British origin because it drew upon a Spencerian outlook to legitimize claims that British society was superior.<sup>10</sup> Other Western European peoples and societies shared similar sentiments regarding their own societies and races, but as emphasized by Modris Eksteins, the British were unique in how their Victorian and Edwardian worldviews drew upon history and traditions as evidence of superior advancement. In the belief that the British civilization was superior, the British empire could justify massive territorial expansion because it was interpreted as a way of bringing civilized ways to “undeveloped” lands and “lesser” races.<sup>11</sup> Achieving an empire so vast that “the sun never set” on it further reinforced this sense of superiority. With such pride, anxieties about stagnation and social unrest could be more easily overshadowed. Korneski highlights this when he discusses how the Empire’s security functioned as a cornerstone to the stability of Britishness itself.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Paul Fussell, who studies British culture during the Great War, noted that between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth-century these values, meanings, and abstractions of Britishness “seemed permanent and reliable.”<sup>13</sup> The sense of superiority was a pillar of the British mentality, but the pillar itself was fragile because it relied upon the stability and prosperity of an empire under constant threat in a rapidly changing world. The newly formed Imperial German state, which undertook rapid military expansion and professed

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<sup>9</sup> For further discussion on Canadian Britishness, see Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 62.

<sup>10</sup> Hawkins, 82-103; Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*; McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*.

<sup>11</sup> Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Toronto: Random House, 2012), 156-159, 264.

<sup>12</sup> Korneski, 174.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 21.

imperial ambitions, became the fixation of such insecurities harbored deep in the British psyche.

Imperial tensions and an antagonistic attitude towards Imperial Germany developed gradually after the unification of Imperial Germany in 1871. The British government initially favoured German unification for several reasons: Germany's formation made it more difficult for France and Russia to absorb central Europe; British commercial interests hoped that a unified Germany would increase the demand for British products; and there were cultural synergies between Germany and Britain, including Protestantism and the royal bloodlines.<sup>14</sup> What did not appeal to the British was the level of Prussian influence over state affairs. The new German state was a constitutional monarchy, but the influence of Kaiser Wilhelm I and the landed nobility of Prussian Junkers asserted an overbearing conservative and militaristic character.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout the 1870s, Anglo-German relations remained cordial, but this did not stop British writers from stoking anxieties that the balance of power was shifting. Iain White describes how British writers immediately drew upon Germany's military strength to inspire depictions of a German-led invasion of the British Isles.<sup>16</sup> This genre, known as "future history," had its beginnings in magazines and newspapers before the most popular stories transitioned into novellas. Among the first authors was a British general and politician, Sir George Chesney. His book, *The Battle of Dorking: A Reminiscences of a Volunteer* (1871), described how the German army invaded the British Isles. It became a

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<sup>14</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1980), 4-7.

<sup>15</sup> Roger Chickering, "Militarism and Radical Nationalism," in *Imperial Germany, 1871-1918*, ed. James Retallack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 197; John Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1917* (Toronto: The Canadian Annual Review Limited, 1918), 41.

<sup>16</sup> Iain Boyd White, "Anglo-German Conflict in Popular Fiction, 1870-1914," in *The First World War as a Clash of Cultures*, ed. Fred Bridgman (New York: Camden House, 2006), 53.

best-selling novel and was sold in Canada.<sup>17</sup> Spinoff stories followed, such as *The Second Armada* (1871),<sup>18</sup> *The Siege of London* (1871), *The Invasion of 1883* (1873) and *Fifty Years Hence* (1877). As Iain White remarks, these novels accentuated anxieties towards the German military, but authors like Chesney intended to bolster military spending more than vilify Germans.<sup>19</sup> For the time being, the German army was not a threat because the dominant British Royal Navy rendered an invasion impossible. British intelligence even characterized a potential war between their militaries as “a struggle between an elephant and a whale.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, while the idea of a German invasion was far-fetched in the 1870s, a seed was planted that the prosperity of Imperial Germany would undermine British security.

Before the turn of the century, British concerns towards Imperial Germany remained negligible, but developments continued to stoke anxieties, particularly Germany’s imperialist ambitions. There was some rising acceptance of imperialist policy under the leadership of Germany’s Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck,<sup>21</sup> but it was the ascension of 29-year-old Wilhelm II to the Prussian Throne that made British policymakers nervous. Wilhelm II – first cousin to King George V and grandson of Queen Victoria – was criticized by Bismarck as being excessively friendly to the British.<sup>22</sup> However, less optimistic for Anglo-German relations was that the young Emperor enthusiastically embraced Prussian militarism. He also harboured a passionate sense of divine right that

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<sup>17</sup> Kennedy, 27. George Chesney, *The Battle of Dorking* (Toronto: Copp and Clark Limited, 1871).

<sup>18</sup> Abraham Hayward, *The Second Armada: A Chapter of Future History being A Reply to The German Conquest of England in 1875, And Battle of Dorking* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1871).

<sup>19</sup> White, 53.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Holland, “The British Empire and the Great War, 1914-1918,” in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV: The Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 114.

<sup>21</sup> Kennedy, 168-169, 182-183.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

fuelled his desire to obtain greater influence over Germany's public affairs.<sup>23</sup> While Bismarck was Chancellor, Wilhelm II's political meddling was counterbalanced, but this came to an end when the Kaiser charged Bismarck for involvement in a Jewish and Jesuit conspiracy, forcing his resignation on 18 March 1890. With Bismarck out of the way, political power shifted in Wilhelm II's favour – as did Germany's national policy from the pragmatic outlook of maintaining the balance of power (*realpolitik*) to a more aggressive and expansionist outlook (*Weltpolitik*).

Wilhelm II imagined himself as the captain steering the nation towards glory,<sup>24</sup> but there were other important Prussian and German figures who similarly embraced *Weltpolitik*. Among them was Prince Bernhard von Bülow, Germany's Chancellor at the turn of the century.<sup>25</sup> There was also Alfred von Tirpitz, the Grand Admiral of the German navy. Tirpitz became a prominent figure in the British media because he was an aggressive advocate of expanding Imperial Germany's navy. As discussed by Paul Halpern, what was particularly antagonistic about Tirpitz was that he designed the composition of the navy to be effective for a war against Britain. Also unnerving for the British was that the trajectory of Germany's naval expansion under Tirpitz was estimated to outstrip the British Royal Navy's strength a quarter way into the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> The naval expansion did not bode well for Anglo-German relations because a more powerful German High Seas Fleet transformed the implausible and fictionalized invasion of the British Isles into a tangible

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<sup>23</sup> John Röhl, *Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1859-1941: A Concise Life*, trans. Sheila De Bellaigue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 41, 55; Chickering, 198.

<sup>24</sup> Röhl, 44-57.

<sup>25</sup> Chickering, 206-207; Bernhard von Bülow, *Imperial Germany*, trans. Marie A. Lewenz (Toronto: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1916), 10-11.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Halpern, *A Naval History of World War I* (London: UCL Press, 1994), 2-4.

threat. The British Royal Navy responded by escalating their own naval production, locking the two empires into a naval arms race that accentuated British insecurities.<sup>27</sup>

The British Government called upon Canada to share the financial burden of expanding the Royal Navy, and while Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier responded with a proposal to create a small Canadian navy in 1910, the plan was never implemented and the Liberals were defeated in the 1911 election. Their support for creating a Canadian navy played a meaningful role in their loss of support in French Canada.<sup>28</sup> With the Conservatives in power, Borden surprised his French Canadian supporters by taking up the Naval Question and attempted to pass the *Naval Aid Bill* in 1912 to fund the creation of three British Dreadnoughts. It too failed to come to fruition and died in the Senate. Although the Dominion struggled to provide a meaningful contribution to Imperial defence, the controversy highlights how the emerging threat of Imperial Germany directly influenced Canadian politics. It also reveals how some British subjects in Canada shared growing anxieties towards Imperial Germany's rising military power. By 1914, the British remained the world's leading naval power, but the Imperial German Fleet had risen to second place.<sup>29</sup>

As the German navy expanded under the Kaiser's reign, Germany's intervention in foreign affairs became increasingly bold. Kaiser Wilhelm II, Chancellor Bülow, and other

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<sup>27</sup> Strategically, the British naval policy was to maintain a navy at least twice the size of its nearest two rivals. Harry Elmer Barnes, *The Genesis of the World War: An Introduction to the Problem of War Guilt* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1926), 63.

<sup>28</sup> Patrice Dutil and David Mackenzie, *Canada 1911: The Decisive Election That Shaped the Country* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2011), 5, 188.

<sup>29</sup> Halpern's study on naval warfare during the First World War provides an estimate of the naval strength between the British Grand Fleet and the German High Seas Fleet in 1914. The Grand Fleet maintained a major advantage over the Imperial German Fleet with eight additional Dreadnoughts, one additional Battle cruiser and four Light cruisers. However, the Germans had over double the number of Destroyers, and an equal number of Pre-dreadnoughts. Halpern, 9.

pro-imperialists envisioned the German foothold in South Africa as their own empire's crown jewel.<sup>30</sup> However, this prompted the British to pre-emptively expand their own foothold in the region, blocking Germany's plans to solidify a united territorial block with the Dutch. When the Dutch Boer settlers repelled the British Uitlanders colonists during the Jameson Raid, Wilhelm II signed a telegram congratulating Transvaal's president Stephanus Kruger. The infamous "Kruger Telegram" shocked the British public because it exposed Germany's blatant desire to limit Britain's colonial expansion. Numerous articles in the German press also asserted that Germany was the natural ally of the Boers and welcomed a political and economic alliance.<sup>31</sup> When the colonial tensions between the Boers and the Uitlanders escalated into a war in 1899, relations between the German and British empires were further strained. In Germany, Anglophobia became rampant and led to the abuse of English visitors, prompting a backlash in the British press.

Similar to the naval arms race, the South African War reverberated in Canadian politics and social relations. After much political maneuvering, Canada authorized a small voluntary expeditionary force to fight overseas.<sup>32</sup> As Carman Miller notes, not everyone supported Canada's involvement. Among the opponents were some German Canadians who showed their support for Boers by raising the Boer flag in German neighbourhoods. They also raised funds to provide the Boers with financial aid. Such open support for enemies of the British Empire resulted in a fierce backlash in the loyalist press.<sup>33</sup> Again,

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<sup>30</sup> Chickering, 207; C. D. Penner, "Germany and the Transvaal before 1896" in *The Journal of Modern History* 12, no.1 (March, 1940): 31.

<sup>31</sup> Penner, 50-53, 57.

<sup>32</sup> Carman Miller, *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War 1899-1902* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).

<sup>33</sup> Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, 24. The German population in Canada constituted roughly 5.5 percent of registered residents in 1911, representing the third largest ethnic group after the British and French. Ontario was home to the largest demographic of Germans. Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1922-23* (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1924), 159; Heinz



geo-political tensions between Imperial Germany and Britain revealed how Canada was vulnerable to the strains of colonial conflicts, and furthermore, indicates another milestone in the deterioration of Anglo-German relations.

Another noteworthy incident that exacerbated British anxieties towards Germany was The Moroccan Crisis of 1905. In *Imperial Germany*, Bülow explained that he advised the Kaiser to visit Morocco to protect the German interests by safeguarding Moroccan independence against encroaching French influence.<sup>34</sup> As Kennedy argues, the significance of the Moroccan Crisis of 1905 “was not so much what the German government really intended as what others *believed it intended*; and Berlin’s conduct forced many observers to conclude that it was anxious to provoke a showdown.”<sup>35</sup>

In Canada, J. E. Atkinson, Managing Editor of the *Toronto Star*, published an article on the Moroccan Crisis that villainized the German political system and Kaiser Wilhelm II. In Atkinson’s words, the Kaiser was “a hare-brained boaster for a king, who harbors notions of divide right and overlordship of Europe.”<sup>36</sup> As for the German political system, he emphasized the qualitative differences between the constitutional monarchy in Germany and Britain, “The Kaiser is not a constitutional monarch in the same sense as King Edward. He has more extensive executive power and wider prerogative. His functions are large enough to obstruct if not thwart the popular will.” In connection with the ensuing Moroccan Crisis, Atkinson boldly claimed that if Germany were to go to war,

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Lehmann, *The German Canadians 1750-1937: Immigration, Settlement & Culture*, ed. and trans. Gerhard P. Bassler (St. John’s: Jespersen Press, 1986), 11-18, 163, 375 fn. 62, 104.

<sup>34</sup> Bülow, *Imperial Germany*, 77-83; Martin Thomas and Richard Toye, “The Rhetoric of the Moroccan Crises, 1905 and 1911,” in *Arguing about Empire: Imperial Rhetoric in Britain and France, 1882-1956* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 97-98; Barnes, 80-83.

<sup>35</sup> Kennedy, 277.

<sup>36</sup> “Kaiser Kept Busy as Advisor of All Europe,” *Toronto Star*, 24 July 1905, 1.

it would likely be the doing of the Kaiser who sought to distract the German people from pursuing democratic reforms.<sup>37</sup>

The villainization of the Kaiser as a war-monger was part of an increasingly sophisticated view which postulated “Two Germanies.” As Stuart Wallace explains, after the turn of the century, and amid rising geopolitical tensions, British intellectuals looked to the unique characteristics of the German political system to explain Germany’s aggressive behaviour. As proponents of this view argued, including James Bryce – who would later head the investigation into Germany’s wartime atrocities in Belgium – Germany’s ruling caste of militarists and Prussian Junkers marginalized the influence of more reasonable, peaceful, and respectable German intellectuals, therefore, allowing German militarism to thrive.<sup>38</sup> This view became very popular in the British world after the Great War began, but Atkinson’s commentary in the *Toronto Star* indicates that this view was spreading in the press prior to 1914.

When Wilhelm II attempted to counter-act these views through an interview with Colonel Edward Wortley in 1907, the article published in the *London Daily Telegraph* had the opposite effect because it was skewed to emphasize anti-British sentiments in Germany and the Kaiser’s imperialist ambitions.<sup>39</sup> Other German state officials and intellectuals rejected the “Two Germanies” theory and attempted to defend the necessity of Imperial Germany’s militarism. For instance, in *Imperial Germany*, Bülow described how a strong military had been essential for preserving the Prussian people against war-mongering

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<sup>37</sup> “Where the Kaiser Stands,” *Toronto Star*, 20 June 1905, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Stuart Wallace, *War and the Image of Germany: British Academics 1914-1918* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1988), 31.

<sup>39</sup> Christopher Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II: A Life in Power* (New York: Longman, 2000), 172-80; “The Interview of the Emperor Wilhelm II on October 28, 1908,” *London Daily Telegraph*, 28 October 1908.

neighbours, especially in the absence of natural barriers such as those of the British Isles. Bülow also claimed that militarism was not imposed from the top-down in Germany because it enjoyed widespread support among the German people.<sup>40</sup> There was some validity to this argument. Militarism was interpreted by some as an antidote to the so-called feminizing effects of industrial modernity; it solidified ethnic bonds through shared nationalist military history promoted by educational curricula, festivals, and holidays; and military leagues and associations were numerous and well supported.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, after the turn of the century, militarism's popularity among the masses became so prominent that radical nationalists challenged the orientation of Germany's militarism from being oriented around aristocratic Prussian heritage to the *Volk*. By 1914, radical-nationalism acquired major proponents, including the Pan-German League, right-wing political parties, and armament manufacturers Krupps and Mulliner. Some radical nationalists even criticized Tirpitz's naval expansion program as lacking ambition.<sup>42</sup> Militarism received further approval from professionals and academics, who, in German society, were closely involved in forming state policy. Prominent German intellectuals, including Max Weber, Heinrich von Treitschke, and Leopold von Ranke, constructed arguments emphasizing the importance of militarism in the Darwinian struggle of societies. After the turn of the century, Max Lenz and Erich Marcks, further imbued the legitimacy of militarism with religious connotations, professing that Germany's imperial and military expansion was part of God's plan for salvation, and Germany's superior moral energy destined them to become the greatest civilization.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Bülow, *Imperial Germany*, 129-143, 147-148.

<sup>41</sup> Chickering, 199-201; Kennedy, 377.

<sup>42</sup> Kennedy, 286, 300, 371-372; Chickering, 208-214.

<sup>43</sup> Moses, 343-345.

When the Great War commenced in the Summer of 1914, Eksteins goes as far as to argue that popular support for militarism was so intense that the German government embraced a military response to the July Crisis because of public pressure.<sup>44</sup> Hew Strachan presents a more tempered claim stating that “popular enthusiasm played no part in causing the First World War,” but “without a popular willingness to go to war the world war could not have taken place.”<sup>45</sup> In sum, the proposition by British commentators that German militarism was imposed from a small cadre of political elites was a gross exaggeration. Still, the Two Germanies view became popular among British commentators because it offered simplicity as well as a justification to challenge the emerging German threat.

In contrast to Imperial Germany, militarism in Canada struggled to become a leading political doctrine. With three surrounding oceans and the United States’ demilitarization following the American Civil War, Canada’s national security did not require a large military, allowing policymakers to avoid the pitfalls of paralyzing economic growth with large military expenditures, such as that experienced in Italy.<sup>46</sup> In addition to the lack of urgency, militarism failed to thrive as a political doctrine because it was culturally and ethnically contentious. British imperialists were staunchest supporters of militaristic policies because they believed it would strengthen Canada’s position within the British Empire, counteract the alleged feminizing effects of industrialization and the

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<sup>44</sup> Eksteins, 78-85.

<sup>45</sup> Hew Strachan notes that Bulow and Bethmann Hollweg, the latter who served as the German Chancellor between 1909 and 1917, expressed the belief that “wars were caused not by princes and politicians, but by the action of the press on public opinion.” In his own comment, Strachan casts doubt on the validity of their claim. Hew Strachan, *The First World War*, vol. I, (Oxford: University Oxford Press, 2001), 103, 162.

<sup>46</sup> Ken Bell and Desmond Morton, *Royal Canadian Military Institute: 100 Years 1890-1990* (Toronto: Royal Canadian Military Institute, 1990), 15; Desmond Morton, *Ministers and Generals: Politics and the Canadian Militia, 1868-1904* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 13-15.

cultural contamination of non-Anglo immigrants.<sup>47</sup> However, the overt association of militarism to British imperialism and culture made it a controversial policy among non-British ethnic groups, particularly French Canadians. There was also the resistance of numerous pacifist groups, including the Mennonites, Hutterites, and Quakers, as well as “peace advocates,” which, as Thomas Socknat defines, does not refer to pacifism in the strict sense but rather with promoters of peace, non-violent principles, arbitration and anti-militarism.<sup>48</sup> Among those who promoted peace advocacy were progressives, radicals, feminists and social gospellers.<sup>49</sup> Taken together, this diverse range of opposition stifled the popularity of militarism in Canadian national politics, thus putting Canada’s political culture sharply at odds with Imperial Germany.

For advocates of the “moderate defence school,” the opposition to militarism in Canada had gone too far. Based on a theory of deterrence, it was argued that adequate military preparation preserved peace rather than endangered it. On 15 January 1914, Principal Hutton of Toronto University College, lamented how “the air is so full of a spirit of pacifism” it became difficult to prepare the country to defend against foreign aggression and that pacifism was “the disarming of peaceful nations and the strengthening of warlike Powers.”<sup>50</sup> David Carnegie, an ordnance advisor, reminisced how before the war military advocates were “sneered at, as alarmists and friends of

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<sup>47</sup> For an overview of militarism and imperialism in Canada, see Berger, *The Sense of Power*, 49-77; For an insightful primary source outlining the views of British Canadian militarists, see *The Canadian Defence League, organized May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1909* (Toronto: September 1913). For references to military cadet programs in Hamilton public schools, see Heron, *Lunch-Bucket Lives*, 384, 392.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas P. Socknat, *Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada 1900 to 1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto press, 1987), 11-19.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-42.

<sup>50</sup> John Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1914* (Toronto: The Canadian Annual Review Limited, 1918), 135.

armament manufacturers.”<sup>51</sup> It was a problem the Canadian Defence League knew all too well. A pamphlet published by the League in 1913 blamed their slow progress on “the general indifference on the part of the Canadian people.”<sup>52</sup> General William Otter attempted to warn the public that their indifference would be the source of future tragedy: “Further, I can tell you as an old campaigner, and as one who has for years been intimately connected with the Militia, that as we stand at present we are totally unprepared, not only in numbers but in *Materiel*.”<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the advocacy of the moderate defence school, a new series of Germanophobic literature circulated through the empire further provoking insecurities towards Imperial Germany. Among the most notable publications was by William Le Queux, an Anglo-French journalist and diplomat. His novel, *The Invasion of 1910* (1906), sold over one million copies and was published in Canada by Macmillan Company. A book review in *The Saturday Review* described it as having a “redundant and cheap” style but acknowledged that it “command[s] a wide audience [by] pandering to popular prejudice.” In addition to reinforcing the perception that Germany was Britain’s natural enemy, Le Queux sensationalized fears of Germans *within* the British Empire by describing an extensive network of German agents in Britain employed as waiters, clerks, bankers, and servants.<sup>54</sup> Another prominent alarmist was the famous author H. G. Wells. In his Anglo-German war novel entitled *The War in the Air* (1908), also sold in Canada,<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> David Carnegie, *The History of Munitions Supply in Canada, 1914-1918* (London: Longmans, Green and Co. 1925), 1-2.

<sup>52</sup> *The Canadian Defence League*, 4.

<sup>53</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 135.

<sup>54</sup> Queux, *The Invasion of 1910*; “The Invasion of 1910,” *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* 102, no. 2649 (August 4, 1906): 148; Rowland Thirlmere, *The Clash of Empires* (London: William Heinemann, 1907).

<sup>55</sup> Wells, *The War in the Air*.

Wells depicted Germany plunging the world into a modern war, leading to the destruction of major European capitals, the rise of Asian superpowers, the end of European colonial dominance, and the collapse of the global financial system. The underlying message of Well's story was that Imperial Germany would bring Western civilization into a new dark age – a portrayal that he reiterated as a state propagandist during the Great War.<sup>56</sup>

The intensifying anxieties towards the rising threat of Imperial Germany were expressed and imagined in fictional novels, but also led to dark contemplations. As Bülow highlighted in *Imperial Germany*, on 3 February 1905, the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, Arthur Lee, publicly stated that the British Royal Navy should attack the German fleet preemptively in the event of an impending war. Bülow also brought attention to the *London Daily Chronicle* and an unnamed British parliamentarian who expressed regret that the British navy had not followed the strategy of their forefathers by preemptively attacking the German navy to protect the balance of power.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, Korneski's understanding of Britishness reaffirms the inclination in British culture to justify strategies based on the projections of geopolitical trends.<sup>58</sup> When the British projected their empire's growth and prosperity, Britishness was empowering; when the projection was a decline, it fuelled insecurity and fear. It was through these tendencies that British subjects fixated on Imperial Germany as an empire led by an evil leader. It also laid the foundations for acceptance that a war between the British and German empires would be a "Great War" set to determine the fate of civilization.

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<sup>56</sup> Wells, *The War That Will End War*.

<sup>57</sup> Bülow, *Imperial Germany*, 34-36.

<sup>58</sup> In reference to Britishness, Korneski notes that "the geopolitical situation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries enabled them to legitimate their visions of the future by reference to it." Korneski, 164.

## A Modern War for Peace and Democracy

When Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, prominent public figures throughout the empire declared the war as a struggle to defend peace and democracy, effectively vindicating the Germanophobic sentiments that had been festering in the British world since the 1870s. In the panic and chaos of the July Crisis, it was difficult to decipher, with a semblance of objectivity, who was responsible. Indeed, the question of war guilt has remained a contentious topic in Great War historiography.<sup>59</sup> But one point that remains uncontested, from Harry Elmer Barnes's *The Genesis of the World War* (1926) to Margaret Macmillan's *Paris 1919* (2003), is that during and immediately after the war, Allied governments blamed the conflict on Imperial Germany and more specifically Kaiser Wilhelm II.<sup>60</sup> For British subjects, it was difficult to challenge this mainstream interpretation of events that implicated German war guilt. In addition to the disposition of the British mentality to view the Kaiser as a villain and Imperial Germany as a war-mongering empire, Britain's declaration of war was made with convincing legality based on the German army's violation of the territorial sovereignty of the lowland states, which Britain guaranteed to defend. Germanophobes were thus quick to gain the upper hand in public discourse, and patriotic fervour eclipsed details that could have led to a more balanced perspective. In this way, the context was favourable for constructing the mainstream narrative of the Great War as a righteous struggle to defend peace and democracy.

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<sup>59</sup> For an insightful overview of the July Crisis and the origins of the Great War, see Ruth Henig, *The Origins of the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989). Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>60</sup> Barnes, 44-45; Margaret Macmillan, *Paris 1919* (New York: Random House, 2003), 161.



Britain's official reason for declaring war on Germany was because of the latter's violation of Belgium and Luxembourg's territorial sovereignty, but the German army's advance is more controversial than often stated. The German Chief of General Staff, Alfred von Schlieffen, developed a plan to swiftly defeat France by circumventing the French-German border, but it would require the German army to move through Belgium. Before their advance, the German government alleged that France and Britain's military already entered Belgium and were thus the first to violate Belgian neutrality. With King Albert's rejection of the German government's request for military access, Schlieffen commenced the invasion and requested that the Belgians not resist.<sup>61</sup> Shortly after, Britain declared war on Germany. When H. G. Wells reflected on the legality of Britain's declaration of war, there was no mention of the British and French militaries positioning themselves in Belgium before the German invasion.<sup>62</sup>

Defending Belgium and Luxembourg provided a legal justification for Britain's entry into the war, but other geopolitical considerations would have likely necessitated Britain's involvement regardless. After the war, Winston Churchill, who acted in the capacity of the First Lord of the Admiralty at the outbreak of the war, alleged that "it was not Belgium one thought of, but France." The German fleet was poised to wreak havoc on the French coast, leading Churchill to believe that Britain had a moral obligation to intervene. In Canada, when parliamentarians discussed the war in August, Laurier expressed a similar contention by balking at the possibility that England would have remained idle while the German Emperor rushed France.<sup>63</sup> There was also a sense of

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<sup>61</sup> Professors of Germany, "To the Civilized World," *The North American Review* 210, no. 765 (August, 1919): 284-287.

<sup>62</sup> Wells, *The War That Will End War*, 7.

<sup>63</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 19 August 1914 (Wilfrid Laurier, Liberal), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 10.

obligation to intervene based on the Anglo-French Entente formed in 1904. The agreement was not legally binding, nor was it a formal alliance, but it represented an understanding that Britain would assist France in the event of a major war.<sup>64</sup> Of course, British intervention was not purely motivated by obligation and benevolence. As Churchill explained, the British government was keen on cutting Imperial Germany down to size to protect the British Empire's long-term security and interests.<sup>65</sup> Regardless of these ulterior motives, the invasion of Belgium and Luxembourg provided a declaration of war with legitimacy and thus empowered the war's political supporters.

Canada's official involvement in the Great War was also legally justified because the Dominion's colonial status meant that Canada was automatically at war with Germany following the declaration of war by the British government.<sup>66</sup> Patriots in Canada did not regard these obligations as a burden but rather as a welcomed opportunity to uphold their colonial and Christian duty. Support for the war was so widespread that the anti-imperialist sentiments that restrained Canada's participation in the naval arms race and the South African War were notably absent, although not forgotten. French Canadian parliamentarians came under scrutiny from their British Canadian counterparts who expected them to oppose Canada's involvement, but French Canadian parliamentarians voiced their approval and professed that Canada had a duty to support Britain.<sup>67</sup> As Laurier maintained, "We are British subjects, and to-day we are face to face with consequences which are involved in that proud fact. Long we have enjoyed the benefits of our British

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<sup>64</sup> A similar Entente was formed between the British and the Russians in 1907.

<sup>65</sup> Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911-1918*, 101-103.

<sup>66</sup> G. W. L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919: Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War*, (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 5.

<sup>67</sup> *Debates*, 19 August 1914 (David L'Espérance, Liberal), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 8.

citizenship; to-day it is our duty to accept its responsibilities and its sacrifices.”<sup>68</sup> Even Henri Bourassa, a leader of the French-Canadian *nationalistes*, and amongst the fiercest opponents of imperialism, initially endorsed the war as “the national duty of Canada.”<sup>69</sup> The Catholic Bishop MacDonald of Victoria similarly appealed to the public’s sense of duty and urged British and French Catholics alike to defend the Catholic states of Belgium, Luxembourg, and France from German control.<sup>70</sup>

Of course, embracing Canada’s duty would require a dreadful price but this hardly darkened patriotic proclamations. During the emergency Parliamentary session in August, Conservative MP Donald Sutherland warned that “The war may be a long and bitter one; the loss of life is sure to be enormous... [but] there is no sacrifice the occasion demands that the people of Canada are not prepared to make.”<sup>71</sup> Sutherland anticipated the hardships ahead, but his unhesitating endorsement of fighting the war reveals his conviction regarding its necessity. But how could parliamentarians such as Sutherland expect the public to enlist and risk their lives in a European war? Colonial obligation and duty were among the common themes used to galvanize public support, but there were modern ideological trends that explain why the fear of death seemed to be so easily disregarded.

Benedict Anderson is among the scholars who have contemplated the willingness of so many individuals to fight and die in the “great wars” of the twentieth century. As Anderson contended, few willingly wish to die for their nation, but the fear of death can be overcome by connecting it to the nation’s destiny and attributing the ultimate sacrifice with

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<sup>68</sup> *Debates*, 19 August 1914 (Wilfrid Laurier, Liberal), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 9.

<sup>69</sup> Henri Bourassa, *The Duty of Canada at the Present Hour* (Montréal: Devoir, 1915), 5.

<sup>70</sup> Mark G. McGowan, “‘We are all involved in the same issue’: Canada’s English-speaking Catholics and the Great War” in *Canadian Churches and the First World War*, 39; Simon Jolivet, “French-speaking Catholics in Quebec and the First World War,” in *Canadian Churches and the First World War*, 76-79.

<sup>71</sup> *Debates*, 19 August 1914 (Donald Sutherland, Conservative), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 5.

profound significance. The “idea of the ultimate sacrifice” is thus equated with “an idea of purity, through fatality.” In this way, death does not signify the end of an individual because language connects their memory to the living and awards their death a sacred place within the nationalist narrative of struggle and triumph. The legitimization of the Great War as a cataclysmic and righteous struggle was part of this modern trend.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, what imbued the “Great War” with exceptional allure was its framing as a pivotal moment in the history of civilization itself. This meta-narrative enriched the Great War with immense significance and ties into another modern trend discussed by Paul Fussell. As Fussell argued, the Great War signalled the beginning of “gross dichotomizing” which became established as a “persisting imaginative habit of modern times.” Within this trend, “one of the poles embodies so wicked a deficiency or flaw or perversion that its total submission is called for.” In the Great War, the British Empire represented the positive end of the moral spectrum, while the German Empire existed on the opposite end as the perversion of modern industrial society. The “high diction” that accompanied the onset of the Great War thus drew upon traditional and romanticized notions of war;<sup>73</sup> framed them within the dichotomized struggle between good and evil; and used it to cultivate an imagining of the war as a pivotal point in Britain’s “historical destiny,” as discussed by Anderson.<sup>74</sup> Taking these dynamics together, it becomes apparent that support for the war drew upon more than appeals to obligation and duty. Pre-war Germanophobia, vindicated by Germany’s military aggression, slipped into these modern narrative structures like a

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<sup>72</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 141-149.

<sup>73</sup> Fussell, 75-89.

<sup>74</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 149.

tight glove. Meanwhile, the embellishment of glory, honour, duty, Christian brotherhood, and other ideologies further muted anxieties towards sacrifice.

The trends of modernity provided the scaffolding of the Great War's narrative, but the rationalizations of the war's righteousness became the building material. There were many competing emphases that coloured the narrative of the Great War, but this study notes two ideological anchors used to justify a national war effort, namely the defence of peace and democracy. The social composition of society provides insights as to why peace and democracy were extremely conducive to building a national war effort.

Eksteins argues that after the eighteenth century, the expansion of Western Europe's middle class in the government, state, financial institutions, and military that middle-class bourgeois values become the most central in public and private life – so much so that by 1914, it was the hegemony of middle-class bourgeois values, including justice, dignity, civility, restraint, duty, honour, and liberalism, at stake in the war. As Eksteins surmises, the Great War was “the first middle-class war in history.”<sup>75</sup> But while bourgeois values may seem to exist in juxtaposition to an aristocratic orientation, it needs to be emphasized that the legitimization of the Great War did not appeal to all bourgeois values equally. With hostility towards elitism on the rise during the early twentieth century, the justification of sacrificing human life to defend society's hierarchical class structure was untenable. Since the war effort required the support of the two largest populations – the working class and farmers – the war needed to be justified according to egalitarian and Christian principles that more easily crossed social cleavages such as class. Thus, the Great War as a struggle for peace and democracy was an ideal foundation for wartime patriotism.

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<sup>75</sup> Eksteins, 159, 234-237.

As this study finds, the defence of peace and democracy was often explicitly invoked by leading public figures and implied through the defeat of German militarism and autocracy.

A potential counter-argument to the emphasis on the war's legitimization as a struggle for peace is that the enthusiastic, if not euphoric, public reception of the war revealed the popularity of an underlining militarism in Canada. However, it is contended here that this is not the case.<sup>76</sup> In Hew Strachan's assessment of public responses to war in European cities, he states that historians have exaggerated the enthusiasm of a minority and that "genuine enthusiasm was more frequent in towns and among white-collar workers." As Strachan argues, this miscalculation is because "historians can too easily fall victim to the testimony of their own kind."<sup>77</sup> A similar argument can be made regarding the alleged enthusiasm in Canadian cities. In 1918, John Hopkins described the reception of the war in Toronto as involving "impromptu parades, waiving [sic] flags, decorated automobiles, cheering crowds, patriotic speeches." Conversely, his account continues by describing how "people seemed to be burdened with a sense of the awful nature of the event; the crowds were there but, with exceptions such as the scene when Britain's War declaration was flashed on the Bulletin boards, the subject was taken very soberly and quietly."<sup>78</sup> This interpretation contravenes not only Moss's reference to a positive popular reaction but also Ian Miller, whose study on Torontonians and the Great War cites the first part of Hopkin's account but not the "absence of enthusiasm."<sup>79</sup> Robert Rutherford's analysis on the

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<sup>76</sup> As Mark Moss reaffirms, an enthusiastic response to the outbreak of the Great War is commonly described in Great War historiography. Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2001), 4, 140.

<sup>77</sup> Strachan, 142.

<sup>78</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 142-143.

<sup>79</sup> According to census data studied by Ian Miller, over 85 percent of Toronto's population was from the United Kingdom and 50 percent were English. Ian Miller, *Our Grief and our Glory: Torontonians and the Great War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 201.

“crowds of August” in Toronto further casts doubt that there was a major enthusiastic response. Rutherfordale refers to how the crowds were spontaneous, ritualistic and expressive rather than motivated by rational aims. After a short burst of energy, the crowd’s enthusiasm fizzled, and people settled down to digest the information.<sup>80</sup> This assessment coincides with Hopkins’ description, which this dissertation argues is convincing when we consider the marginality of militarism in Canada. Hence, the short-lived celebrations that followed the declarations of war were not reflections of a patriotic embrace of militarism, but a show of solidarity as the Dominion of Canada mobilized to defeat it.

Another major component in the Great War’s legitimization was how it drew upon the pre-war perceptions of Imperial Germany. The “Two Germanies” theory was seemingly vindicated and used to explain how such an advanced and modern civilization became so evil. Leading German figures, most of all Kaiser Wilhelm II, were accused of corrupting German society by infusing militarism into German *Kultur* and misleading good-intentioned Christians into war. During the emergency parliamentary session in August, for instance, Laurier blamed the Kaiser as responsible for the invasion of Belgium: “the German Emperor threw his legions against this landmark in the fulness [sic] of his lust of power, with the full expectation that the very weight of the army would crush every opposition and would secure their passage through Belgium.” But underneath the Kaiser’s actions, Laurier recognized that a more noble form of German society had been corrupted, ultimately placing Imperial Germany in juxtaposition to Britain and Canada’s free and peace-loving institutions.<sup>81</sup> Sutherland shared Laurier’s sentiments and professed how the

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<sup>80</sup> Robert Rutherfordale, “‘Canada’s August Festival’ Communitas, Liminality, and Social Memory,” *Canadian Historical Review* 77, no. 2 (June 1996): 221-249.

<sup>81</sup> *Debates*, 19 August 1914 (Wilfrid Laurier, Liberal), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 10-11.

Great War was the most righteous struggle in human history. He claimed that the nation fought “not for aggression, not for the maintenance of its own selfish interest, but in defence of principles the maintenance of which were vital to the civilization of the world.” Sutherland did not miss the opportunity to single out the Kaiser and accused him of misleading the German people. To add credibility to his claims, he cited F. V. Riethdorf, a German Canadian professor from Woodstock College, who emphasized Wilhelm II’s responsibility and distinguished the “peaceable, kind, amiable and sane German people” from the German “ruling classes, by their oligarchic, insane, military government.” In a dark prophetic tone, Riethdorf alleged that “Victory for the Germans arms would make William II the war lord of the world. He would rule Europe with an iron hand.” Although the Kaiser epitomized the evils within Imperial Germany, it was understood that it was the system he represented that presented the greatest danger. If Germany emerged victorious, Riethdorf warned, “the militarism of the future would be far worse than the militarism of the present, and there would be no end to war and bloodshed.”<sup>82</sup>

Even after the war’s carnage had been experienced, few challenged the belief that the Great War was a righteous struggle to defend peace and democracy. As later chapters illustrate, many patriots contested the terms of the war effort, but few contested the ideals of the war itself. For patriots in Canada, the Great War was a war for peace and democracy from beginning to end.

### **Total Victory and “The War of the Mind”**

From the outset of the Great War, public figures and political leaders professed the need for total victory. Among them was H. G. Wells. In August 1914, Wells published a

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<sup>82</sup> *Debates*, 19 August 1914 (Donald Sutherland, Conservative), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 4-5.



series of articles in prominent British newspapers that explicated the dangers of German militarism. These were later compiled into a manifesto entitled *The War that Will End War*. Wells contended that the Great War would determine the world's political order. If Britain emerged victorious, it would prove that the militaristic values embedded in German *Kultur* were inferior to British liberalism. But to achieve this, Britain needed total victory:

And it is a war that must be fought to such a finish that every man in each of the nations engaged understands what has happened. There can be no diplomatic settlement that will leave German Imperialism free to explain away its failures to its people and start new preparations. We have to go on until we are absolutely done for, or until the Germans as a people know that they are beaten, and are convinced that they have had enough of war.<sup>83</sup>

As Wells believed, it was not enough to push the German forces back into Germany. The victory had to be decisive enough that people around the world would be convinced that the systems and values that empowered the German warlords were inferior to those of British democratic society. Wells's awareness of the Great War's ideological dimensions led him to regard the conflict as the "War of the Mind." In this War of the Mind, the British people fought "not to destroy a nation, but a nest of evil ideas...until the mind of Germany is changed, there can be no safe peace on earth."<sup>84</sup> Many Canadian parliamentarians expressed the same outlook. For example, MP William Maclean made the following proclamation during the August emergency session:

[Germany has] been threatening since this war began to impose German "Kultur" and the German military system on us...the only honourable thing for Germany to do is to adopt parliamentary democratic government and abolish the autocratic system. There it is where the peace lies, and it is from that angle we should seek for a way to appeal to the great mass of the German people, and to tell them that permanent peace will only come when the parliamentary system prevails in Germany as it does in Great Britain and the

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<sup>83</sup> Wells, *The War that Will End War*, 8-9.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 90, 98.

United States. That is the duty of the hour; that is the duty of every public man.<sup>85</sup>

The parallels between the views of Maclean and Wells are not coincidental. Rather, they can be considered the mainstream understanding of how the objective of the Great War was premised on discrediting German militarism and *Kultur*.

As Wells stated in *The War that Will End War*, “The ultimate purpose of this war is propaganda, the destruction of certain beliefs, and the creation of others,” or as he put it more concisely, “our Business is to kill ideas.” Based on this contention, Wells endorsed the widespread distribution of books, newspaper articles, leaflets, and tracts in all languages, so that the world could become convinced that “this war must end war.”<sup>86</sup> The British government agreed with these sentiments, and in late August, Wells was recruited into a state-sponsored network of leading pundits coordinated by Charles Masterman, the head of the newly established British War Propaganda Bureau. Peter Buitenhuis describes this initial meeting as “the most important gathering of creative and academic writers ever assembled for an official purpose in the history of English letters.”<sup>87</sup> The Bureau’s operation was kept secret and operated out of Masterman’s existing office in Wellington House, which publicly operated as the headquarters for the National Insurance Commission.<sup>88</sup> The Bureau also recruited major publishing houses and used them to

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<sup>85</sup> *Debates*, 19 August 1914 (William Francis Maclean, Liberal), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 1, 34-35.

<sup>86</sup> Wells, *The War That Will End War*, 90, 94.

<sup>87</sup> Attending the meeting was “William Archer, Sir James M. Barrie, Arnold Bennet, A. C. Benson, R. H. Benson, Robert Bridges, Hall Caine, G. K. Chesterton, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, John Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy, Anthony Hope Hawkins, Maurice Hewlett, W. J. Locke, E. V. Lucas, J. W. Mackail, John Masfield, A. E. W. Mason, Gilbert Murray, Sir Henry Newbolt, Sir Gilbert Parker, Sir Owen Seaman, George Trevelyan, H. G. Wells, Israel Zangwill. Rudyard Kipling and Sir Arthur Quiller Couch offer services through telegraph.” Peter Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: British, American and Canadian Propaganda and Fiction, 1914-1933*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 14-15.

<sup>88</sup> Wallace, 171.

disseminate the publications of the secretly employed writers.<sup>89</sup> And so, it appeared as though anti-German propaganda was emerging organically from Britain's intellectual community, but actually, it was orchestrated state propaganda. By the end of the war, the British government replaced Wellington House with a more sophisticated bureaucracy that formally employed writers such as Wells. However, the importance of literary propaganda was replaced by a shift to photography and film.<sup>90</sup>

The flow of information that validated the righteousness of the Great War was immense. John Wallace, who studies the mobilization of academics for propaganda, states that by mid-1915, the Propaganda Bureau had overseen the circulation of over 2.5 million books, speeches, and pamphlets.<sup>91</sup> Gregory Moore also explores how some of this literature leveraged the credibility of modern science to discredit German *Kultur* and German intellectuals such as Friedrich Nietzsche.<sup>92</sup> Some of this propaganda made its way to Canada. The illustration below, for instance, was republished in the *Toronto Star* from the *London Graphic*. Drawing upon the so-called science of craniology,<sup>93</sup> the image compares a German and British skull alongside portraits of Von Hindenburg and Kipling. Arthur Keith M.D., who provided commentary accompanying the illustration, argued that the features of the German skull indicated that they were not seaworthy people and had no business constructing a navy, but a much more significant claim was that British

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<sup>89</sup> Buitenhuis, 16, 132.

<sup>90</sup> Buitenhuis, 135-138. Steven Ross, "Beyond the Screen: History, Class, and the Movies," in *The Hidden Foundation: Cinema and the Question of Class*, ed. David E. James and Rick Berg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996): 26-55.

<sup>91</sup> Wallace, 171.

<sup>92</sup> Gregory Moore, "Darwinism and National Identity, 1870-1914" In *The First World War As A Clash of Cultures*, ed. Fred Brigham (New York: Camden House, 2006), 167-172.

<sup>93</sup> For historical studies on craniology, see Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*; McLaren, *Our Own Master Race*; Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration a European Disorder, 1848-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

craniologists had distinguished the “modern” populations of Britons and Germans as being representative of two types of “physical manhood” and “opposite ideals of life.” The current war, Keith alleged, would determine which type would dominate the world. Hence, it was not just the volume of information that reinforced the Great War’s narrative but also the weight of scientific “facts.”



Religious leaders played no small role in propagating the belief that the Great War was a righteous struggle against German *Kultur*, requiring nothing less than total victory. As a central nation-building institution, churches have been historically a mechanism for

<sup>94</sup> “Britons’ Skulls and Germans’ Not Alike,” *Toronto Star*, 27 January 1916, 5.

legitimizing military conflicts and mobilizing popular support.<sup>95</sup> With the onset of the First World War, the English-speaking Catholic and Protestant clergy preached its necessity. Some were willing to frame the war as a holy crusade and referred to the doctrines of St. Ambrose and St. Augustine – an approach that German clergy presented for their side as well.<sup>96</sup> So effective were the English-speaking churches in propagating the necessity of the war that Michael Bliss claimed that the Methodists pulpits were “the best recruiting stations in the first year.”<sup>97</sup> The French-speaking Catholic clergy were also supportive despite anti-imperialist sentiments remaining strong.<sup>98</sup> Even peace advocates and liberal pacifists, such as Nellie McClung, formulated a positive interpretation of the war by contending that it was the pathway towards national regeneration.<sup>99</sup> Expectedly, the involvement of the church was not without its controversy. James Woodsworth and Salem Bland, two prominent social gospellers who would figure prominently in the democratic revolt, did not object to the war as the defence of peace and democracy but they were quick to criticize the church’s role as an instrument of propaganda.<sup>100</sup> Overall, there was a mix of opinions in Canada’s religious institutions – some supported the war and found ways to accommodate their pacifism; others remained strictly opposed, including the Mennonites, Hutterites, and Quakers. Regardless, there was enough pro-war

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<sup>95</sup> Gordon Heath, “The South African War as Prelude to the First World War,” in *Canadian Churches and the First World War*, 22.

<sup>96</sup> Socknat, 4; Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008), 180.

<sup>97</sup> Cited in Heath, “The South African War as Prelude to the First World War,” 24.

<sup>98</sup> Simon Jolivet, “French-speaking Catholics in Quebec and the First World War,” in *Canadian Churches and the First World War*, 76-79.

<sup>99</sup> Socknat, 43-51. Also see, Veronica Strong-Boag, “‘Ever a Crusader’: Nellie McClung, First-wave Feminist,” In *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women’s History*, Third Edition, ed. by Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman (Toronto, Oxford University Press 1997).

<sup>100</sup> Allen, *The Social Passion*, 34; Kenneth McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics: A Biography of J. S. Woodsworth* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), 67, 76-77.

sentiment among Protestant and Catholic clergy to imbue the war with religious overtones. For patriots who professed Christian beliefs, the clergy's blessing of the war had an essential role of unburdening their conscience. On the Western Front, where the darkest of deeds were committed, four hundred and seventy-seven clergy were deployed as military Chaplains to reassure soldiers of God's presence and blessing.<sup>101</sup>

Throughout the war, leaders – whether politicians, writers, scientists, or clergy – were mobilized to address any doubts of the war's righteousness; but in addition to propaganda, censorship played an equally important role in mobilizing support for the war. Jeffrey Keshen has written extensively on the subject and outlines how the Canadian government and military used censorship in conjunction with the British. As early as 2 August 1914, the British Royal Navy began cutting Germany's underwater cables that passed through the English Channel and connected to Spain, Portugal, and the United States. In alignment with Wells's notion of "the War of the Mind," the strategy was to literally cut the flow of information to neutral powers so that the German government could not contravene the claims of Allied governments.<sup>102</sup> Domestic censorship became another strategy. In 1912, the British established a formal Joint Standing Committee to advise the press on sensitive matters related to diplomacy and surveying, but the relationship was voluntary. Following the British retreat from Mons in 1914, the British government recognized that measures were needed to protect public morale. From that point forward, the British government developed an extensive bureaucracy to oversee the

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<sup>101</sup> Duff Crerar, *Padres in No Man's Land: Canadian Chaplains and the Great War* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 5.

<sup>102</sup> Another advantage was that cutting the cables provided opportunities for the British to intercept wireless communications, eventually leading to the infamous Zimmerman Telegram that contributed to the United States' entry into the war in 1917. Jeffrey Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship during Canada's Great War* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), 27; Deian Hopkin, "Domestic Censorship in the First World War" *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5, no. 4 (1970): 152-153.

distribution of information from the military to the press and oversee publications.

American scrutiny pressured the British government to liberalize the flow of information, but it remained highly restrictive. As Jeffrey Keshen notes, civilian reporters abided by so many guidelines that they considered themselves employed by the military.<sup>103</sup>

In conjunction with British regulations, Canada also formed a centralized bureaucracy for censorship. Initially, press reports from the frontlines flowed from the British Press Office, but once the CEF fought at Neuve Chapelle in March 1915, the Dominion government succeeded in pressuring the British Colonial Office to appoint a Canadian press official, William Maxwell Aitken.<sup>104</sup> As Keshen describes, war-related information and displays were highly deceptive: soldiers portrayed in battle were actually training in non-threatening conditions; large-scale offensives that ended in the slaughter of Allied troops were downplayed by an emphasis on bravery and heroism; sympathetic portrayals of the German army were prohibited. As the war progressed, the Cabinet passed orders-in-council expanding the bureaucracy and scope of censorship. A list of regulations exemplifies the restrictiveness of the wartime administration: the Chief Press Censors office was established in 1915 to monitor public discourse and prohibit criticism of military policy that could cause disaffection “assisting or encouraging the enemy, or preventing, embarrassing or hindering the successful prosecution of the war”; telephone operators monitored documents and landline communications; a ban was invoked on literature slandering national service, Great Britain, or the war more generally; motion

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<sup>103</sup> Hopkin, 154; Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship during Canada's Great War*, 27-29.

<sup>104</sup> As detailed by Keshen, Aitken was a successful Canadian businessman who earned a fortune through the sale of industrial books. He then moved to London and bought a controlling stake in Rolls-Royce Company, a share of *London Daily Express*, and won a seat in the British Parliament. Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship during Canada's Great War*, 30-31.

pictures were screened for content that could cause unrest; enemy-language publications required approval; and soldiers' correspondences were screened and doctored.<sup>105</sup> Although the Canadian public could have a difficult time appreciating the horrors of the Great War, Ian Miller argues that the public had enough access to information to recognize its exceptional brutality. Indeed, contrary to the fears of weakening public morale, German atrocities and brutality reinforced the public's resolve to win.<sup>106</sup>

As part of propaganda and censorship efforts, sensationalizing German atrocities and romanticizing the Allied war effort became a core strategy to reinforce the war's legitimacy as the conflict dragged on. The first major German atrocity was the so-called "Rape of Belgium." As early as September 1914, articles appeared in Canadian newspapers accounting for the German army's heinous and unchristian practices. One article, printed on the front page of the *Toronto Star*, stated that German soldiers apprehended civilians to "beat their brains out with the butt ends of their rifles." Women, children, and the elderly were said to have been among the victims.<sup>107</sup> An official British investigation headed by Viscount James Bryce, a renowned British scholar and former ambassador to the United States, published a report investigating evidence of the alleged war crimes.<sup>108</sup> In the report's introduction, Bryce professed the investigation's impartiality by claiming that they rejected witnesses with questionable credibility and those accepted were scrutinized to the utmost detail with translators and lawyers. The diaries of German soldiers were also used to corroborate the evidence.<sup>109</sup> The 60-page report validated

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>106</sup> Miller, *Our Grief and our Glory*, 48, 56.

<sup>107</sup> "Atrocities of the Germans in Belgium," *Toronto Star*, 11 September 1914, 1.

<sup>108</sup> Buitenhuis, 28; Stuart Wallace, *War and the Image of Germany: British Academics 1914-1918* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1988), 174.

<sup>109</sup> James Bryce, *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages* (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1915), 4-5.



German atrocities and included testimonials of how civilians were slaughtered, mutilated and imprisoned; German shellfire was also alleged to have intentionally targeted the Red Cross, universities and historic buildings.<sup>110</sup> In Canada, excerpts from the Bryce Report were disseminated in newspapers until the full report was released in the Fall of 1915.<sup>111</sup> Keshen exemplifies the outrage felt in Canada by citing S. D. Chown, Canada's Methodist Superintendent, who stated that "even Christ...would not stand limp hands if a ruthless soldier should attempt to outrage His holy mother as the women of Belgium were violated."<sup>112</sup> The German government and German intellectuals attempted to discredit the allegations, but political and intellectual impartiality became impossible with so much propaganda and censorship.<sup>113</sup> Even the Protestant clergy and theologians found themselves divided by their national allegiances and claimed the other side as responsible for tearing apart Christian civilization.<sup>114</sup>

As the war continued, so did the German atrocities. Another shocking incident involved the inhumane treatment of a Canadian soldier. During the Spring of 1915, in the outer boundaries of Ypres, a story based on "eye witnesses" circulated in the press and claimed that German soldiers crucified a young Canadian officer in retaliation for Canadian resistance.<sup>115</sup> Paul Maroney, who studies recruitment in Canada during the war, states that the story of the crucified Canadian soldier was a boon to recruitment and portrayed on recruitment posters. In addition to the profound religious connotations, the

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<sup>110</sup> Bryce, 10-11, 16, 32, 58.

<sup>111</sup> Paul Maroney, "'The Great Adventure': The Context and Ideology of Recruiting in Ontario, 1914-17," *Canadian Historical Review* 77, No. 1 (March 1996), footnote, 116. As cited by Maroney, see Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, 108; and Thompson, *Harvests of War*, 36.

<sup>112</sup> Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship during Canada's Great War*, 22-23.

<sup>113</sup> Buitenhuis, 27. For a proclamation by German intellectuals rebuking the allegations, see Professors of Germany, "To the Civilized World," *The North American Review* 210, no. 765 (August, 1919): 284-287.

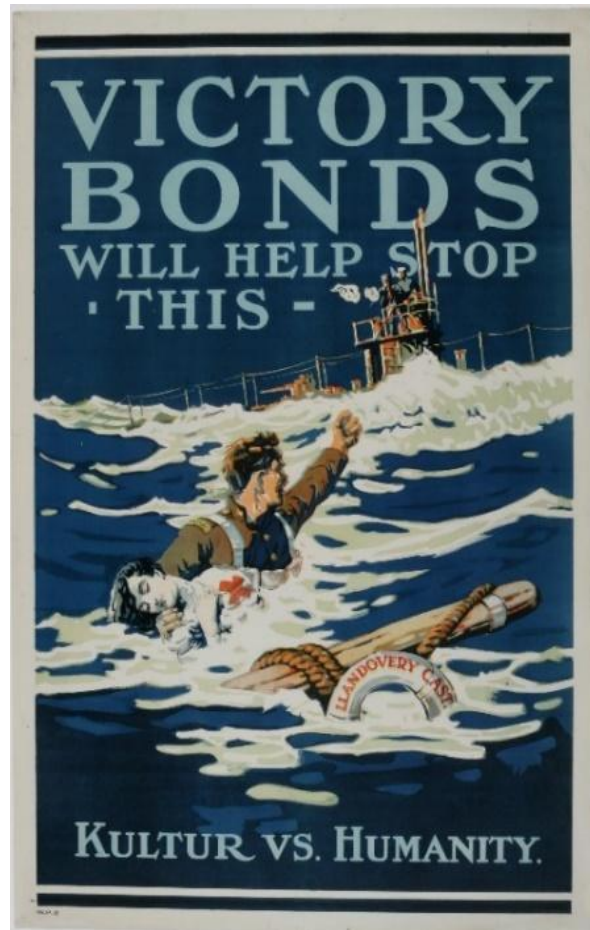
<sup>114</sup> Moses, 347-351; Wallace, 32-34.

<sup>115</sup> Fussell, 117.

crucified soldier also appealed to Victorian masculinity because it urged men to enlist as brave and strong heroes willing to defend a more pure and noble society.<sup>116</sup> Appeals to Christian and Victorian values persisted throughout the war. In June 1918, a Victory Bond poster depicted another atrocity – the sinking of the Canadian hospital ship, the *Llandoverly Castle*, which resulted in the death of over 230 passengers. The poster’s caption, “Kultur versus Humanity,” annotates the confrontation as one between unchristian and Christian forces. In the background, the war-machine society of “German Kultur” is represented by the U-Boat, whose crew disregards any notion of honour and manhood by continuing to fire upon the survivors of the sunken ship. In the foreground, a soldier holds the lifeless body of a nurse in one arm, while raising the other defiantly towards the Germans. Interestingly, the soldier, who is notably half-submerged in turbulent waters, is the only object in the image justified with the margins. The soldier’s upright posture, combined with the simplicity of his defiant act, appeals to the stabilizing and virtuous notions of strength and bravery needed to defeat the German war machine.

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<sup>116</sup> Maroney, 94-96.



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The legitimization of the Great War was framed within a dichotomized narrative of good versus evil with little to no room for dissension. It was a profound war in many ways, especially its emphasis on the need to defeat the ideas of German *Kultur*. In what Wells described as “The War of the Mind,” a major war effort was needed to ensure “total victory.” Propaganda and censorship in both British and Canadian societies became instrumental in fostering complacency and galvanizing wartime patriotism. In effect, these dynamics contributed to the militarization of socialization so that pressure to contribute to the war effort became nearly inescapable.

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<sup>117</sup> Canada and the First World War, Objects and Photos: Materials for the War Effort, “Kultur vs. Humanity” Canadian War Museum, 19850475-034.

## The War Effort and Great War Culture

The ideological connotations of the Great War were important for defining the war's objective to achieve total victory, but the expansiveness and intensity of the war effort was a gradual process. After hopes for victory by Christmas in 1914 proved illusionary, Allied commanders remained unwilling to accept the war's degradation into a prolonged war of attrition. Still hopeful that a breakthrough in the enemy lines could rout the Germans on the Western Front, Allied commanders undertook a series of major offensives. To their dismay, the desolate landscape of no-man's land combined with Germany's defences proved insurmountable for even the most well-planned attacks.<sup>118</sup> This was a costly lesson for hundreds of thousands of Allied soldiers and their loved ones at home. Among the most tragic losses of life was the Battle of the Somme in 1916 resulting in 623,907 Allied casualties – 24,029 Canadian soldiers were among them.<sup>119</sup> As the Allied war machines churned through people, money, and ammunition, the tolls of the war effort became ever more demanding. The only recourse to compete with the German war machine and keep the hope of victory alive was to increase the scale of mobilization. But while the Canadian government could draw upon its unprecedented emergency powers authorized under the *War Measures Act* (1914) to intervene in the private sector and civil society,<sup>120</sup> the effectiveness of the war effort depended on popular support. Ideology thus had a more significant role than merely defining the significance of the war as a struggle against German *Kultur* and German militarism. Ideology became

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<sup>118</sup> For a discussion on the predictions of whether the war would be short or long, see Strachan, 1005-1014; Morton and Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon*, 2-15.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>120</sup> For the Prime Minister's discussion on the authorization of the *War Measures Act*, see *Debates*, 19 August 1914 (Robert Borden, Conservative), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 20.

integral to maintaining the war effort itself. It was central for persuading the population to voluntarily contribute all they had to offer. Patriotism became the ideological vehicle to facilitate the militarization of socialization as it became the new denominator for social and political belonging in Canada.

Building upon Benedict Anderson's conceptualization of the nation-state as an "imagined political community," this dissertation posits that Canada also existed as an "imagined *patriotic* community" – at least for the duration of the war effort and post-war reconstruction. This assertion does not claim that a new abstract idea somehow supplanted conventional nationalism or notions of citizenship, but rather that the imagined patriotic community was part of social intersectionality overlapping on the individual and collective levels. Similar to the conceptualization of nationalism, which offers individuals a way to be part of a collectivity larger than what is achievable in their personal lives, the war effort became part of a collective struggle that, in many ways, existed in a similar abstract form. Just as people are bound together through national identity, the war effort bound individuals together as "patriots" and "allies," or separated them as "traitors" and "enemies." Hence, in the context of the Great War, being a patriot was to be part of the war effort, which as an international effort, transcended nationalist identity. That said, patriotism intersected with nationalism in important ways. For example, British Canadians were quick to assume other British Canadians were patriots. However, cultivating patriotism was also distinct from nationalism because its underlying principles were centered on the war effort (and will be discussed below). The intention of theorizing Canada as an imagined *patriotic* community is part of a larger framework this dissertation calls "Great War culture," which functions as an analytical tool to assist our

understanding of patriotism during the Great War.<sup>121</sup> Within the Great War culture framework, there are four underlying principles used to guide the war effort. These are referred to as “patriotic sensibilities” because they were more than merely ensuring an optimal war effort – they became intrinsic to the cultivation of patriotic consciousness by offering a means of evaluating patriotism.

The first patriotic sensibility is the prioritization of security. It was imperative to ensure that patriots, whether as soldiers or civilians, were protected against enemies both real and imagined. For instance, there were cases of German sabotage in Canada and fears of Bolshevik revolutionaries planning to overthrow capitalism. The danger they posed to Canada’s security was greatly exaggerated but it still significantly provoked the insecurities of patriots.<sup>122</sup> In this way, the feelings of safety should be understood as quintessentially the same as actual safety, for the possibility of danger influenced the terms of belonging in Canada – just as the threat posed by Imperial Germany to humanity was imagined and used to legitimize real-world conflict. There were also explicit concerns regarding the security of Canada’s economic system, such as preventing speculation and the exportation of gold, maintaining national credit, and ensuring the flow of commodities and capital.<sup>123</sup> Without the security and stability of the socioeconomic system, the Dominion of Canada could not provide meaningful contributions to the Allied war effort.

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<sup>121</sup> For an illustration of the Great War culture framework, see *Appendix A*.

<sup>122</sup> Daniel Francis, *Seeing Reds: The Red Scare of 1918-1919, Canada’s First War on Terror* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010); Joseph Amedée Boudreau, “The Enemy Alien Problem in Canada, 1914-1921,” PhD diss., (University of California, 1965); Kordan, *No Free Man*; Millman, *Polarity Patriotism and Dissent in Great War Canada, 1914-1919*; Donald Avery, *‘Dangerous Foreigners’: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada 1896-1932* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979); Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada’s Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995).

<sup>123</sup> *Debates*, 19 August 1914 (David L’Espérance, Conservative), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 7.

The second patriotic sensibility is the ideal of selfless public service. As John English notes, in the years before the Great War, public figures such as Robert Borden diagnosed Canada as having a “political sickness,” wherein governing officials continued long-standing practices of acting with self-interest. Borden considered this a sickness because it effectively corrupted and weakened public institutions. Identified as the “ideology of service,” this progressive outlook promoted by individuals such as Borden, and expounded upon by state actors such as Adam Shortt, advocated a science of social life to supplant the outdated practices of exploiting public office for personal gain. Upon the outbreak of the Great War, Borden reinforced his commitment to the ideology of service by professing that the war would not be exploited to serve narrow political and economic interests. This would ensure the war effort’s efficiency and moral purity.<sup>124</sup>

The third patriotic sensibility was the maximization of national efficiency. Even before it became clear that the war would develop into a war of attrition, Lloyd George, who in 1914 was the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, professed that victory would require “silver bullets,” implying that the funding for the war effort would be paramount for its success. As acknowledged by the editor of *The Manitoba Veteran*, C. V. Combe, the notion of “silver bullets” became “one of the most trumpeted war-time slogans,”<sup>125</sup> and, consequently, it was asserted as a central guideline for the war effort. Leaders

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<sup>124</sup> John English, *The Decline of Politics: The Conservatives and the Party System, 1901-20* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 70. Also see Doug Owsram, *The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State, 1900-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986); John Hodgetts et al., *The Biography of an Institution: The Civil Service Commission of Canada 1908-1967* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972); Jeffery Simpson, *Spoils of Power: The Politics of Patronage* (Toronto: W. Collins & Sons Canada, 1988); Gordon Stewart, *The Origins of Canadian Politics: A Comparative Approach* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1986); Reginald Whitaker, “Between Patronage and Bureaucracy: Democratic Politics in Transition,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 22, no. 2 (Summer 1987): 55-71.

<sup>125</sup> Canada, *Two Years of War As Viewed From Ottawa*, Toronto Reference Library (Ottawa: The Civilian, 1916), 43; “War Profits Should Pay War Debts,” *The Manitoba Veteran*, 1 July 1920, 4.

throughout the British Empire echoed Lloyd George's sentiments. The Australian Labour leader Andrew Fisher, for instance, declared that the Dominion of Australia would stand behind Britain to its "last man and last shilling."<sup>126</sup> In Canada, Finance Minister Thomas White shared this ideal.<sup>127</sup> Indeed, major advancements were made to the efficiency of industrial production, expensive goods were substituted for cheaper alternatives, and waste and extravagance were minimized.<sup>128</sup> Notably, these acts acquired connotations as patriotic contributions. By optimizing the economy from the industrial level to the level of household consumption, the entire economic might of the Dominion could be mobilized against the enemies of peace and democracy. As Canada's Finance Minister Henry Drayton reminisced in 1920, "it was absolutely imperative that there should be no check in production, no questions raised which might hinder that production or the war effort."<sup>129</sup>

The fourth and final patriotic sensibility was the expectation that there would be an equality of wartime sacrifice. This belief stemmed from the egalitarian overtones that underlined the Great War as a struggle for the common good and humanity. It further built upon notions of citizenship, duty, and honour. The propagation of this belief was evident in the early days of the war. David L'Espérance, who spoke during the emergency parliamentary session in August 1914, provides one of the most concise interpretations of the equality of sacrifice as an integral part of Great War patriotism:

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<sup>126</sup> "Fisher, Andrew," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, ed. Peter Dennis et al. (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>127</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1917*, 294.

<sup>128</sup> For the optimization of industrial output, see Craig Heron, *Working In Steel: The Early Years in Canada, 1883-1935* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988). For food rationalization, see Madeleine Kloske, "From Spenders to Savers: Thrift, Saving and Luxury in Canada During the First World War," PhD diss., (University of Ottawa, 2017). For some primary source references to "silver bullets" rhetoric, see "Silver Bullets from Canada," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 5 January 1916, 5; "The Waste of Liquor," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 8 November 1916, 5.

<sup>129</sup> *Debates*, 18 May 1920 (Henry Drayton, Conservative), 13th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 3, 2476.



An enlightened patriotism commands that each one should do his duty and undergo willingly his share of sacrifices. Canada will never be able to pay off its debt of gratitude towards those who are leaving to fight abroad in defence of the common country. Glory and honours should go first to those who are the first in the fray. But it is incumbent on those who remain and who will profit by the self-sacrifice of the others, to help in other ways; by contributing to the fund organized for the relief of the wounded, widows and orphans; by tendering help to the families temporarily deprived of their bread-winner; by preventing in every way possible criminal speculation in foodstuffs and staples. Those wretches who avail themselves of these troublous [sic] times to grow rich through speculating on the misery of the people, should be considered as enemies of their country and dealt with accordingly.<sup>130</sup>

In a proclamation that conveyed considerable specificity, L'Espérance made it clear that a core principle of patriotism was a fair distribution of wartime hardships and prosperity.

This patriotic sensibility was particularly relevant to profiteering controversy. For example, following the implementation of conscription in 1917, Finance Minister Thomas White implemented harsher taxation measures in direct response to public pressure for a more significant “equality of sacrifice.”<sup>131</sup> The leniency of White’s taxation measures provoked criticism by the Opposition, leading one parliamentarian, Michael Clark, to claim that “The war cannot be continued upon the principle of death in the trenches, debt for posterity and millions for the profiteers. That is not a fair arrangement of sacrifice.”<sup>132</sup>

Policymakers had a firm understanding of the principle behind the equality of sacrifice but their own understanding could be distant from the intense emotional conceptualization among those struggling to make ends meet and fighting on the frontlines. Dave Loughnan, a Great War veteran who was brutally injured during the

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<sup>130</sup> *Debates*, 19 August 1914 (David L'Espérance, Conservative), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 7.

<sup>131</sup> Thomas White, *The Story of Canada's War Finance*, (Montreal: 1921), 53.

<sup>132</sup> *Debates*, 17 August 1917 (Michael Clark, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 5, 4641.

Second Battle of Ypres and later became the editor of *The Veteran*,<sup>133</sup> provides a much more passionate description of the equality of sacrifice. He also highlights how this principle remained an urgent concern even after the armistice was signed and hoped that it would guide Canada's transition to peace:

And what of the division of sacrifice? Is it not that which is causing the present social unrest? Have not our men returned to find profiteering rampant throughout the country? Is there not an unmerciful spirit of greed lurking everywhere? Has deception, lust, hypocrisy, selfishness and intrigue been banished from the homeland? Have the silent sufferers – the widows and fatherless children – been aided and comforted by those who made millions out of the war? Have the financial burdens been proportionately distributed between rich and poor alike? Has there been an equality of sacrifice? Varied indeed have been the results of the great war. To some it brought undreamed-of wealth, honour, love, position and prospects. To others it spelled death and disaster, sorrow, suffering and untold difficulties. On the one side loss, on the other gain. It is this inequality – the flaunting of prosperity in the face of undeserved poverty – which is burning itself into the hearts of men, but out of the chaos of grief and suffering a new era is dawning. The fellow-service of war-time is being demanded in peace-time. The lesson of self-sacrifice, forever emblazoned above the horrors of war, must become a living factor in the lives of all men. There must be no drones in the community; the responsibility of wealth must be accepted, and the common principles of Christianity applied.<sup>134</sup>

As Loughnan conveyed with intense emotion and clarity, maintaining an equality of sacrifice was intrinsic to the war effort and a core patriotic principle. From the highest public offices to ordinary people, the equality of sacrifice was not a distant and vague abstraction but a notion grounded in the visible disparity of wartime suffering and wartime prosperity.

Taken together, these four patriotic sensibilities became guidelines for the war effort and patriotism. Individuals and groups found wanting or in conflict were subjected to intense social pressures of criticism, ostracization, intimidation and violence. And

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<sup>133</sup> Morton and Wright, *Winning the Second Battle*, 79; "The Retiring Editor of the Veteran," *The Veteran*, October 1921, 7.

<sup>134</sup> "Shall We Forget?" *The Veteran*, August 1919, 14.

while patriots were willing to do their duty and exert pressure to invoke social conformity, there was a general expectation that governing officials would use their powers to ensure widespread compliance. As these discussions about patriotic sensibilities became more commonplace in public and private circles, a distinct patriotic lexicon emerged to designate those who were non-compliant with patriotic sensibilities. And since belonging and unbelonging are mutually constructive, it can be noted that the identification of “traitors” and “enemies” simultaneously defined those who were “patriots” and “allies.” In effect, the language of patriotism defined the center and periphery of Canada’s patriotic community. Bohdan Kordan alludes to this abstraction in his reference to how the subjecthood of “enemy aliens” relegated persons born in enemy countries to “the periphery of society.” However, without reference to the broader cultural trends of the war or associating enemy aliens to similar war-centric designations, Kordan’s insights fall short of a more comprehensive view that accounts for the war in its entirety.<sup>135</sup> As this dissertation notes, the designation of “enemy aliens” was one of many war-centric designations. Others included slackers, loafers, shirkers, and profiteers. These designations can be understood as bound together through an underlying patriotic consciousness intertwined with the Great War and used to negotiate belonging in Canada.

From the outset of the Great War, persons of German and Austro-Hungarian origin in Canada became viewed as a risk to national security, mainly through fears of sabotage, intelligence gathering, or the escape of reservists to their homeland to enlist in the enemy military. The designation of “enemy aliens” became a way to denote these individuals of enemy origin as security risks. Senior governing officials, such as Justice J. B. Archambault and Robert

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<sup>135</sup> Kordan, *No Free Man*, 5-7.

Borden, professed the need to respect and protect Germans and Austro-Hungarians but they simultaneously legitimized their enemy status by using the “enemy alien” designation. Moreover, they also supported anti-enemy alien measures of registration, surveillance, and internment. In the face of regulatory leniency, patriotic crowds imposed their own measures of justice through violence and intimidation, especially as the Red Scare intensified xenophobia during the late and post-war period.<sup>136</sup> People of German and Austro-Hungarian origin sought to combat the rapid deterioration of their social status and political rights by asserting their patriotism through enlistment, donations to war charities, and signing formal declarations of loyalty known as the “Undertaking.”<sup>137</sup> However, their actions and words could not reverse the socially and legally grounded campaigns of ethnic marginalization that found coherence as the “enemy alien problem.” It would only be until the early 1920s that hatred towards those of enemy origin eased, albeit animosity persisted informally and through public policies.

In addition to enemy aliens, two interchangeable war-centric designations of “slackers” and “loafers” were used to condemn those failing to contribute to the war effort through some form of productive capacity; “shirkers” was similar but specifically referred to those failing to enlist despite eligibility. There are no major historical studies on these three wartime identities, but the Great War historiography provides some insights. During the first half of the war, there was minimal coercion used against slackers, loafers, and shirkers, so to compensate for the absence of state coercion, the militarization of socialization played an important role. For example, sports and recreational organizations came under public ridicule as unproductive

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<sup>136</sup> Francis, *Seeing Reds*; Millman, *Polarity Patriotism and Dissent in Great War Canada, 1914-1919*; Avery, ‘*Dangerous Foreigners*’; Avery, *Reluctant Host*; Smith, “Fighting the Alien Problem in a British Country.”

<sup>137</sup> Kordan, *No Free Man*, 26-27, 36.

behaviour, and as a result, some voluntarily ceased their activities for the duration of the war.<sup>138</sup>

Another example is how women pinned chicken feathers on the lapels of men who were of military age. Their intention was to publicly humiliate them as cowards for not enlisting, effectively identifying them as “shirkers.” As Ian Miller describes it, the practice worked in some cases because men were unaccustomed to being publicly shamed by women, so in desperation to escape this traumatization, they chose to enlist.<sup>139</sup> Such was the power of socialization. In other cases, employers took an even more aggressive approach by firing their male employees of military age so they were bound to enlist by shame and financial necessity.

As the labour pool and enlistment rates lessened during the second half of the war, opposition to slackers, loafer, and shirkers intensified. Those regarded as “unproductive” became targets of intensifying harassment and social ostracization.<sup>140</sup> Under public pressure and pressure from the war effort, governing officials became inclined towards adopting more coercive action. As an illustration, the temperance movement seized upon patriotic sensibilities to continue their moral crusade. They condemned the consumption and production of alcohol as a wasteful use of resources that supported immoral extravagance. The prohibitionists combined the pragmatic benefits of emptying bars of its slackers and loafers and re-orienting production towards the necessities of war to bolster their moral arguments against alcohol consumption. By 1918, prohibition had swept through the provinces alongside federal regulations restricting imports and production.<sup>141</sup> However, the federal government implemented more direct measures to address

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<sup>138</sup> John Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1916* (Toronto: The Canadian Annual Review Limited, 1918), 306. David Bourdon, “Sportsmen’s Patriotic Response to the First World War: The Calgary Experience,” in *Proceedings 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Symposium on the History of Sport and Physical Education University of Toronto August 26-29, 1982* (Toronto: School of Physical and Health Education, University of Toronto, 1982), 392-398.

<sup>139</sup> Miller, *Our Grief and our Glory*, 114.

<sup>140</sup> Maroney, “‘The Great Adventure’; Miller, *Our Grief and Our Glory*.

<sup>141</sup> Craig Heron, *Booze: A Distilled History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003), 179-180.

the slacker and shirker problems. In 1916, national registration of Canada's "manpower" was undertaken: men between the ages of 16 and 65 were expected to complete a questionnaire to determine their work and military service eligibility.<sup>142</sup> Following national registration, Borden introduced *The Military Service Act* in May 1917. The intended outcome was to recruit 100,000 conscripts,<sup>143</sup> or, to put it another way, 100,000 shirkers. After conscription, the Cabinet turned its attention to the slacker/loafer problem. On 2 April 1918, Borden authorized order-in-council PC 815, which became known as the "Anti-Loafing Law." Under this regulation, it became a criminal offence for those eligible for military service to be engaged in non-essential work.<sup>144</sup> Transgressions could result in a \$100 fine or six months in jail.<sup>145</sup> As concisely described in the title of a *Toronto World* article, "Idleness in Canada Made a Crime."<sup>146</sup> The conventionally inoffensive exercise of working in non-essential industries, or being "idle," became not just contemptible behaviour, but traitorous and criminal.

Although this overview of war-centric designations is brief, it demonstrates that profiteers was one of many unique war-centric designations. Where profiteering distinguishes itself is how it brought attention to the ways in which profit hindered the war effort. As the chapters that follow highlight, patriots found profiteers transgressing all four patriotic sensibilities: national security was sabotaged by prioritizing profits over the quality of military equipment; public and military officials abused their public service to earn profits and political advantages; the production for profit undermined national efficiency; and most of all,

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<sup>142</sup> In total, 1,549,360 registration cards were received and revealed a potential pool of recruits amounting to 286,976. Granatstein and Hitsman, *Broken Promises*, 46.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-64.

<sup>144</sup> Canada, Order in Council 1918-815, "Regulations to prevent idleness and to render available the entire man power of Canada etc – Premier," RG2, Privy Council Office, Series A-1-a, vol. 1193, 324004.

<sup>145</sup> Exemptions were obtainable if proven to be disabled, sick, or a bona fide student. Labour strikes in essential industries were also grounds for exemption. Judy Fudge, Eric Tucker, *Labour before the law*, 97; "Canada's New Anti-Loafer Law," *Canadian Food Bulletin*, 13 April 1918, 1.

<sup>146</sup> "Idleness in Canada Is Made a Crime," *Toronto World*, 6 April 1918, 1.

profiteering violated the semblance of an equality of sacrifice. Such blatant disregard for the principles underlying the war effort signalled to patriots the disparities between the high diction of the Great War as the altruistic defence of peace and democracy and the realities of a socioeconomic system that permitted selfishness private gain to thrive at the expense of the selfless and noble. It can be said that while wartime propaganda and idealism sought to remove controversial dynamics of socioeconomic inequality from view, the notion of profiteering brought them back in. The designation of “profiteer,” being devoid of historical and ideological connotations, was ideal for this purpose. Like a blank canvas, the identity of profiteers was coloured with the outrage and grief specific to the Great War. The picture it revealed was one of the deficiencies and failures of Canadian society at its most critical juncture. In contrast to the ideals of a benevolent and advanced society was the reality of its primitive and predatory behaviour. To defeat profiteering, patriots would have to overcome the contradictions of their society – a process that required deep self-reflection, spiritual renewal, and a transformation of the economic and political systems.

## **Conclusion**

As the overview of the Great War culture framework suggests, this dissertation’s analysis of Great War profiteering does not proceed as a means in and of itself. The deconstruction of Great War profiteering provides an opportunity to examine some of society’s most fundamental processes, particularly during a period of crisis and war. It brings into focus the rapid transformation of social and political belonging; the cultivation of patriotic consciousness; the militarization of socialization; and the principles that guided a war effort aimed at securing total victory over the enemies of peace and democracy. In conjunction with other war-centric designations, “profiteer” was employed

as an identity to highlight how the Great War's overarching narrative was being contravened by the greed of individuals who seemingly disregarded the Great War's moral connotations. These transgressions were extraordinary because the morality of the war was intrinsic to its essence. After all, the objective of the war was to discredit the morally inferior systems and values associated with Imperial Germany and German *Kultur*. A crucial dilemma that arose, however, was evidence that Canadian society had a nest of its own evils that threatened to invalidate the righteousness of the war. There were many ways these realizations occurred, but this dissertation focuses on profiteering, and the ways in which it revealed the contradictions between the morality of profit and wartime moralism. It illustrates that "patriots" employed the term "profiteer" as a reflection of their patriotic consciousness and their desire to address the ways in which profit undermined the war effort. As governing officials failed to address profiteering and the contradictions that it epitomized, patriots revolted against the enemies of democracy.



## Chapter 2.

# “You can’t get blood from a stone”: War Profiteers, Party Politics, and Capital

One month into the Great War, the British army faced critical munitions shortages.<sup>1</sup> The Canadian Minister of Militia, Sam Hughes, informed Lord Kitchener, the British Secretary of State of War, that Canada’s industrial sector could be mobilized to help address the shortage. Upon receiving war orders from Lord Kitchener, Hughes found it difficult to persuade Canadian manufacturers to take up shell production because the financial risks of a sudden armistice and the technical difficulties of production made it unattractive. The shell shortage persisted into early 1915, but as the war dragged on, the profitability of war production became more reliable, leading to an unprecedented boom. By the end of the war, industrial exports had risen 648 percent between 1915 and 1918;<sup>2</sup> war industries in Canada supplied one-quarter of the British army’s artillery munitions;<sup>3</sup> and over sixty-five million shells and twenty-nine million artillery fuses were produced. The flows of capital involving war contracts were also remarkable because the value of munitions and war material exported from Canada totalled a staggering one billion.<sup>4</sup>

David Carnegie, a Canadian ordnance officer who assisted in managing war production, wrote a history of the munitions industry and described its development as an incredible feat. Other war-related sectors, including vehicle and weapons manufacturing, the steel industry,

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<sup>1</sup> Carnegie, x. For an overview of shell shortages during the early war period, see Strachan, 993-1005, 1049-1113.

<sup>2</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review*, 1918, 536.

<sup>3</sup> R. T. Naylor, “The Canadian State, the Accumulation of Capital and the Great War,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1981), 36.

<sup>4</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review*, 1918, 542-544; John Hopkins, *Canada At War, 1914-1918* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1919), 209.

mining, forestry, resource processing, and chemical/explosive production, were similarly celebrated for their heroic progress and scientific innovations.<sup>5</sup> However, in contrast to Carnegie's exuberant and celebratory overtones was a darker side to war production. At the Beloeil Canadian Explosives factory on 6 July 1915, a spark flew from a jammed and overheated cutting machine into a pile of cordite. The flammable material ignited and killed nearly a dozen workers while severely injuring many others. An article from *The Toronto Globe and Mail* did not ignore the brutality of the accident and described how the cordite burned the victims so badly they were "almost unrecognizable."<sup>6</sup> Even worse was the infamous Halifax Explosion on 6 December 1917. When the armament-laden *Mont Blanc* crashed into the *Imo*, it unleashed the most powerful human-made explosion until the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima. Nearly eighteen hundred people were killed.<sup>7</sup> Disasters such as these reminded the public of war production's deadly nature, but even without these incidents, romanticizing war production was incongruent with Great War culture. As H. G. Wells argued in *The War That Will End War*, the corrupting influence of German arms manufacturers and their alliance with the Prussian military caste led to the militarization of Imperial Germany and the marginalization of peaceful Germans. Indeed, Wells suggested that arms manufacturing played no small part instigating the war.<sup>8</sup> To defeat Imperial Germany, armament production became a necessary evil but it remained highly controversial.

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<sup>5</sup> Carnegie's book was recognized by the *Canadian Historical Review* as an unofficial government record, thus tying into Jonathan Vance's description of state-led efforts to reconstruct wartime experiences as a national triumph. V. E. Henderson, "The History of Munitions Supply in Canada, 1914-18, by David Carnegie," *Canadian Historical Review*, 6, no. 2 (June 1925): 170-171; Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997). For a similar interpretation of the war effort as a national triumph, see Hopkins, *Canada At War, 1914-1918*.

<sup>6</sup> "Explosion Kills Six and Injuries Eight," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 7 July 1915, 2; "Explosion at Beloeil Increases Death Toll," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 8 July 1915, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Michelle Hébert Boyd, *Enriched by Catastrophe: Social Work and Social Conflict after the Halifax Explosion* (Black Point: Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 63.

<sup>8</sup> Wells, *The War That Will End War*, 37-41.

The growth of the war industries was legitimized by utilitarian considerations, but the profits from war production faced intense criticism as a form of war profiteering. The earliest reference to profiteering in Canada found in this study was made by Richard Pettipiece on 12 June 1915. In an editorial appearing in the *B.C. Federationist*, Pettipiece used the designation of profiteers to describe greedy British employers refusing to share their wartime wealth with their workforce despite their wages being eroded by rapidly rising inflation. As Pettipiece argued, the employers disregarded the equality of wartime sacrifice and thought only of themselves.<sup>9</sup> The designation of war manufacturers as profiteers became exponentially popular and can be considered part of the mainstream patriotic lexicon by mid-1916. It can also be understood as a reflection of patriotic consciousness that stemmed from the broader war-centric cultural shift.

With these empirical and theoretical insights in mind, this chapter proceeds chronologically between 1914 and 1918 and explores how war profiteering became entangled in numerous controversies, including the unethical distribution of war contracts, excessively large commissions for brokers, obscene profits for shareholders and capitalists, and a disregard for the safety of soldiers and the interests of war workers. Pundits in the labour and farmers movements were harsh in their condemnations of the federal government's regulation of the war industries. They expected decisive action against the "war profiteers," ranging from the imposition of severe taxes to fines and prison sentences. On the more extreme end, some labour and agrarian leaders called for war profiteers to be executed as traitors. Borden's administration generally downplayed the significance of war profiteering, but consequently, their lack of decisiveness, unity, and transparency exacerbated war profiteering's sensationalism and intensified patriotic outrage. It also added credibility to the claims of labour and farmer pundits that the roots of the

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<sup>9</sup> "War and Strike," *B.C. Federationist*, 12 June 1915, 2.

war profiteering evil were embedded in party politics and capitalism. With Borden's administration struggling to curb rising patriotic outrage, the stage was being set for the democratic revolt.

### **Opening the Monetary Floodgates**

When the British military began suffering a shell shortage in the early Autumn of 1914, Lord Kitchener attempted to head off the crisis by requesting Sam Hughes purchase military supplies in the United States.<sup>10</sup> At the time, there was little reason to think of Canada's industrial sector as a source of supplying armaments. Canadian manufacturers struggled to compete with more efficient war production in England and lacked political support to overcome the competitive disadvantages. On the eve of the war, the only production of artillery munitions in Canada was a single government-owned plant in Québec, the Dominion Arsenal, which had an output of 340 shells per week. In addition, Sir Charles Ross established a rifle factory in Québec City to avoid a repetition of weapon shortages experienced during the South African War.<sup>11</sup> Despite the fact that Canada's armament sector was composed of only two small factories, Hughes requested that Kitchener place additional war orders in Canada. Borden describes Hughes's request as impulsive,<sup>12</sup> but his eagerness can be explained by his imperialist and nationalist agenda to enhance Canada's prestige within the British Empire.<sup>13</sup> The moment was undoubtedly favourable for Hughes to make the request because Lord Kitchener was

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<sup>10</sup> Carnegie, xx.

<sup>11</sup> Gerald W. L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919* (Ottawa: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 11; Carnegie, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Carnegie, xx.

<sup>13</sup> For Hughes's role in promoting Canada's involvement in the South African War see, Carman Miller, *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War 1899-1902* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993); For studies on imperialism and nationalism in Canada, see Berger, *The Sense of Power*; Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*; James Wood, *Militia Myths: Ideas of the Canadian Citizen Soldier, 1896-1921* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010).

overwhelmed by his responsibilities and under pressure to maintain good relations. To Hughes's delight Kitchener agreed, and in October, the Militia Department received orders for 200,000 empty artillery shells and 100,000 cartridge cases. These were rudimentary supplies, but from that point forward other Allied governments followed suit by ordering an assortment of materiel, ranging from sophisticated military supplies to raw materials and chemicals.<sup>14</sup> Canada was now in the war business.

Having led his superiors to expect great things, Hughes was under immense pressure to fulfill his promises. Not only did Hughes have to cultivate war production for Allied governments, but the CEF was completely unprepared for a large-scale war. Canada's permanent Force was a mere 3,110 personnel, who primarily occupied the fortresses on Canada's coastal regions; the navy consisted of two outdated cruisers; and the bulk of the Canadian military, 74,213 strong, were partially equipped and trained militia.<sup>15</sup> The first important resource needed to jumpstart military production was money, but it came easy.

The first installment of war funds was authorized under *The War Appropriations Act*, providing fifty million for upcoming military expenses – a sum equivalent to roughly 15 percent of the total national debt.<sup>16</sup> Payment of the war expenses came from a range of sources, including special excise duties, a short-term loan of \$5 million from the Bank of Montréal, treasury bills, a loan floated in London, a grant from the British government, and newly printed Dominion notes.<sup>17</sup> With the government budget and economy flush with capital, the federal government was ready to assist the industrial sector transition into war production.

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<sup>14</sup> Carnegie, 16-17, 43, 66.

<sup>15</sup> Nicholson, 13; Granatstein and Hitsman, *Broken Promises*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1914* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1915), 535.

<sup>17</sup> Bernard Ostle, "War Finance in Canada," MA Thesis, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1946), 91; Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1919*, (Ottawa: Thomas Mulvey, 1920), 711.

The next step was providing corporations with government contracts for the procurement of supplies. This responsibility rested among a few public officials, especially Hughes who had much discretion over allocating contracts. Hughes also depended on his subordinate, the Director of Contracts, Colonel H. W. Brown.<sup>18</sup> To hold the Department accountable, the Cabinet could scrutinize their purchases when they authorized them via order-in-council, but responsibility for thorough scrutiny was the prerogative of the Auditor General John Fraser. If Fraser's Department suspected foul play, he could recommend further investigation to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) or advise the Cabinet to authorize a Royal Commission.<sup>19</sup> Expectedly, Fraser's office was immediately overwhelmed by the influx of correspondence related to the war. Every week they had to oversee 30,000 letters of correspondence related to purchases.<sup>20</sup> With a sluggish system of checks and balances and massive war chest at his disposal, Hughes set out to equip both the British military and the CEF.

### **War Brokers and the Game of Politics**

In the first two months of the war, Hughes organized a system of quasi-state interventionism, wherein the boundaries dividing public and private actors, as well as public and private interests, were blurred. Hughes empowered a sprawling network of agents to solicit, negotiate, and distribute war contracts. For Hughes, brokering was a respectable and legitimate profession.<sup>21</sup> In exchange for a commission, brokers utilized their extensive social and commercial networks to connect supply to demand, while their skills as adept negotiators added

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<sup>18</sup> Canada, *Two Years of War As Viewed From Ottawa*, (Ottawa: The Civilian, 1916), 33.

<sup>19</sup> Fraser was an experienced Auditor General by 1915. He held the position since 1905 after being appointed by the Governor-General under Laurier's government. Generally, the Auditor General was not regarded as a partisan position so it could function as a reliable safeguard against graft. *Ibid.*, 47-48.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 35, 48.

<sup>21</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Shell Contracts, Minutes of Evidence*, vol. 2, 1235, 1576.

further value. There was an alternative to brokering. Hughes could have opted for a system of open tendering used by the British government. In this system, any manufacturer could submit a bid for a contract, allowing the government to award it to the lowest bidder. Open tendering was attractive because it was a more transparent process that distributed contracts based on merit, but Hughes favoured the employment of brokers believing that it was the expedient option.

Hughes employed brokers in a two-pronged strategy. First, he created the Shell Committee in September 1914 to operate as an exchange between the British Government and manufacturers. Officially, the Shell Committee operated under the jurisdiction of the British War Office, but Hughes authorized its activities.<sup>22</sup> Overseeing day-to-day operations were five prominent businessmen from Ontario and Québec, and additional personnel from the Militia Department.<sup>23</sup> Significantly, Hughes saw no conflict of interest in the Shell Committee's executive members awarding themselves contracts. From Hughes's perspective, it was efficiency at its finest, but it would later provoke intense controversy.

While promising on paper, the Shell Committee struggled to encourage war production. The extent of Canada's industrial capacity for prospective munitions production was unknown; factories had to be inspected before receiving contracts;<sup>24</sup> and most challenging of all was convincing manufacturers to undertake the work. Regarding the latter, the Shell Committee supplied the drawings, specifications, and gauges needed to produce standardized products,<sup>25</sup> but

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<sup>22</sup> Carnegie, 6.

<sup>23</sup> The members of the Shell Committee included Alexander Bertram, of John Bertram and Sons Co., Dundas Ontario; Mr. Winslow of Canadian Ingersoll Rand Co., Sherbrooke Québec; Alex Goldie, of Goldie and McCullough Co., Galt Ontario; George W. Watts, of General Electric Co., Toronto; E. Carnegie, of Electric Steel and Metals Co., Welland, Ontario. Personnel from the Militia Department included J. W. Harksome, Small Arms Committee, Huntingdon Québec; Col. T. Benson, Master General of the Ordnance, Ottawa; Lieut.-Colonel Lafferty, Superintendent, Dominion Arsenal, Québec; and Lieut.-Colonel Greville Harston, Chief Inspector of Arms and Ammunition, Québec, and Colonel David Carnegie as Ordnance Advisor. Carnegie, 3-8, 16.

<sup>24</sup> Carnegie, 10-14, 16; Canada, *Royal Commission on Shell Contracts, Minutes of Evidence*, vol. 2, 800.

<sup>25</sup> Carnegie, 13.

business owners feared the risk of retooling their factories only to have the war abruptly end. One measure to address this persisting reluctance was to fix contract prices so manufacturers could predict their profit margins more accurately,<sup>26</sup> but even with this accommodation – later criticized as excessively favourable – the transition into war production was slow and gradual.

The second prong of Hughes's strategy was the appointment of purchasing agents to broker contracts for the Canadian and British governments. Unlike the Shell Committee, these agents did not adhere to an organizational structure. They carried the authority of the Canadian Militia Department but casually reported to Hughes or the Shell Committee executive. Like the Shell Committee members, the line dividing public and private interests was blurred because purchasing agents used their formal authority to close their own private contracts and earn commissions. The most notorious figure within this purchasing agent network was Hughes's friend John Wesley Allison, a professional broker and speculator who operated out of a New York office.<sup>27</sup> Sometime in mid-August, Hughes asked Allison to report on the prices of American firms. After being impressed by Allison's effectiveness during this initial task, Hughes decided to regularly employ Allison as one of the Militia Department's purchasing agents.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Carnegie, 88, 92.

<sup>27</sup> During the 1880s, Allison met Hughes in Washington after both mutually opposed the construction of a dam on the St. Lawrence River and forged a friendship that lasted decades. *Debates*, 24 March 1915 (Sam Hughes, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 2, 1454; *Royal Commission on Shell Contracts, Minutes of Evidence*, vol. 2, 1043-1046, 1633.

<sup>28</sup> *Royal Commission on Shell Contracts, Minutes of Evidence*, vol. 2, 1045.





HON. COL. J. WESLEY ALLISON. 29

As part of his employment, Hughes appointed Allison as an Honorary Colonel of the Militia Department and permitted him to use these credentials for his private business.<sup>30</sup> Hughes even provided Allison letters of recommendation to the Allied ambassadors.<sup>31</sup> When the Minister of Militia was later questioned by the Liberal Opposition and a Royal Commission regarding whether he permitted Allison to earn profit, Hughes claimed that he expected Allison to forgo monetary compensation in contracts involving the Canadian and British governments. On many occasions Hughes defended Allison as selfless, even once professing that he had a “soul of honour”<sup>32</sup> and “would never dream of making, or taking, one cent out of anything for the Canadian Government, or the British Government.”<sup>33</sup> As this chapter later explores, the Royal Commission confirmed that Allison earned a fortune from brokering British war contracts.<sup>34</sup> After Allison’s profits were exposed, he claimed that Hughes was unaware of his profit-taking.<sup>35</sup> It is possible that Hughes was ignorant of the situation given his preoccupation with managing

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<sup>29</sup> “Two Alleged Profiteers,” *The Globe and Mail Toronto*, 30 March 1916, 9.

<sup>30</sup> *Royal Commission on Shell Contracts, Minutes of Evidence*, vol. 2, 1058.

<sup>31</sup> Borden to Perley, 23 October 1914, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47032.

<sup>32</sup> *Debates*, 24 March 1915 (Sam Hughes, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 2, 1453-1455; Hughes to Borden, 20 November 1914, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47045-47046.

<sup>33</sup> Hughes to Borden, 20 November 1914, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47045-47046.

<sup>34</sup> *Royal Commission on Shell Contracts, Minutes of Evidence*, vol. 2, 957-958, 1050, 1065.

<sup>35</sup> *Royal Commission on Shell Contracts, Minutes of Evidence*, vol. 2, 1058.

the war effort,<sup>36</sup> but given his experience as an administrator it was likely to have been, at the very least, willful ignorance.

One prominent figure that clearly lacked control over Allison's activities was Prime Minister Borden. As early as October 1914, Ministers were advising Borden that the Militia Department was rife with inefficiency, graft, and patronage, leading to the acquisition of useless equipment at prices higher than market averages. They also warned him that rumours circulated of government officials meddling in war contracts in the hope of squeezing out a profit of their own.<sup>37</sup> The Prime Minister struggled to discern the truth of this activity but gradually he gained information that allowed him to appreciate the scandalous potential of Hughes's Department. The Russian government provided some of the earliest concrete evidence of this nefarious activity. As they informed Borden, the Russian government caught Allison pretending to be a Russian purchasing agent to two British firms. It was a bold and devious plan whereby one of Allison's associates was stationed in St. Petersburg to relay telegrams to firms vouching for Allison's legitimacy. Before the Russians pulled the plug on Allison and exposed him in the British press, they asked Borden if a contract Allison procured for their government was credible. Luckily for Allison, the deal went through, and the Russians decided not to retaliate.<sup>38</sup> Correspondence such as this worried Borden because he knew that Hughes's network of agents had the makings of a catastrophic scandal. To Borden's frustration, Hughes "very casually"

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<sup>36</sup> For instance, when Allison was brokering deals in Europe, Hughes was organizing new military bases and fending off the integration of the CEF into the British Army. Ronald Haycock, *Sam Hughes: The Public Career of a Controversial Canadian 1885-1916* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), 258-259.

<sup>37</sup> Clara Thomas Archives [CTA], *Robert Borden's Diary*, 16 October 1914. *Ibid.*, 19 October 1914. *Ibid.*, 21 October 1914.

<sup>38</sup> Charles Allison to Mr. G. C. Wilkins, [No date] *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47073-47075; Perley to Borden, 4 January 1915, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47080; Borden to Perley, 5 January 1915, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47083; Harcourt to Borden, 27 January 1915, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47096.; Perley to Lord Kitchener, 29 January 1915, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47097. Hughes to Lord Kitchener, 30 December 1914, *Borden Papers*, C-4324, 47080

dismissed his concerns and re-asserted Allison's legitimacy to Allied governments and firms.<sup>39</sup>

Sir George Perley, Canada's High Commissioner in Britain, remarked that it became an "extraordinary and unconstitutional situation."<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the situation took its toll on Borden's health. As he noted in his diary, Allison became a source of mental and physical strain.<sup>41</sup>

A Special Section of the British War Office was also tracking Allison and his associates because they were found competing *against* the official purchasing agents of Allied governments. The British Censor intercepted cables between Allison and his contacts in New York and Europe, then presented their intelligence to Borden via a memorandum entitled, "The Allison Syndicate." As the report described, Allison and his associates created a sprawling network that stretched across Canada, the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Russia, and possibly other areas of the world. At the center of this ring were another four or five Canadians, who, like Allison, held honorary military appointments and were authorized to wear Canadian military uniforms. The memorandum showed that between 7 November 1914 and 15 January 1915, Allison's ventures included deals for Springfield rifles, cartridges, aeroplanes, horses, life preservers, ammunition, gun cotton, nickel, blankets, socks, and foodstuffs. The memorandum speculated that given the volume of the Allison Syndicate's purchases, they likely had the financial backing of "strong moneyed American firms" potentially attempting to corner markets. The report concluded that it was imperative someone contact Allison and find out his "game."<sup>42</sup> When Borden managed to do so in February 1915, Allison had already returned to New York in

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<sup>39</sup> Borden notes in his diary how Hughes was taking the scandals "very casually" and "does not seem to realize the situation." CTA, *Robert Borden's Diary*, 8 April 1915; Spring Rice to Governor General, 1 November 1914, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47034; Spring Rice to Governor General, 2 November 1914, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47035; Borden to Perley, 7 November 1914, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47035; Perley to Mr. Lewis Harcourt, 11 November 1914, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47038.

<sup>40</sup> Perley to Borden, 4 January 1915, *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47080. Hughes to Lord Kitchener, 30 December 1914, *Borden Papers*, C-4324, 47080; Perley to Borden, 2 January 1915, *Borden Papers*, C-4324, 47077.

<sup>41</sup> CTA, *Robert Borden's Diary*, 21 October 1914; *Ibid.*, 20 March 1915.

<sup>42</sup> The War Office to Borden, 2 February 1915 *Borden Papers*, C-4325, 47099-47106.

search of new opportunities.<sup>43</sup> Borden had closed in on Allison's trail, but so too had Borden's political opponents sitting across the floor. As the British intelligence report noted, there was a broad array of interests conspiring against Allison, including British diplomats, powerful corporations, and German spies.<sup>44</sup> In an attempt to discredit him, Allison's competitors began feeding the Liberal party information, who could in turn use Allison's controversial practices and association to Hughes to discredit the Conservative party.<sup>45</sup>

It is important to emphasize that the war contract scandal controversy emerged within the context of fierce political rivalry between the federal-level Liberal and Conservative parties. At the outset of the war, Laurier made a public pledge to refrain from antagonizing the Conservatives with the expectation that the Conservatives would not exploit the war effort for partisan interests. However, there were no binding clauses to hold either party accountable; Borden did not make a formal agreement to consult the Opposition before introducing legislative bills and issuing orders-in-council; and Borden did not invite Laurier to form a joint non-partisan Cabinet similar to the British government.<sup>46</sup> The two parties remained separate and highly antagonistic. Some Conservatives, such as Robert Rogers, even rebuked the truce and prepared for a wartime election.<sup>47</sup> But rather than concede to the pressures for an election within both the Conservative and Liberal parties, Borden attempted to abide by the political truce and postponed the election due to in the Fall of 1914. Following the heavy losses sustained at Ypres during the

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<sup>43</sup> CTA, *Robert Borden's Diary*, 24 February 1915.

<sup>44</sup> See files in Library and Archives of Canada [LAC], *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4325.

<sup>45</sup> *Debates*, 11 February 1915 (William Pugsley, Liberal), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 1, 91.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs*, ed. Henry Borden, vol. 1, (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1969), 214.

<sup>47</sup> There were precedents of wartime elections in the British Empire, so it should be noted the desire for a wartime election was not outlandish. Both Canada and Great Britain held elections during the South African War, and Australia held an election in September 1914. "A Discussion of the Considerations touching the Summoning of a New Parliament," [No date] *Borden Papers*, C-4310, 31883.

Spring of 1915, Borden deferred the election once more.<sup>48</sup> Borden and Laurier entered talks to establish new terms of cooperation but by the end of 1915, they had still failed to reach an agreement. This made an election in early 1916 very likely,<sup>49</sup> that was, until the Parliament building was consumed by a massive fire in February, leading Borden to extend the life of the parliamentary session for another year. By the time the federal election was held in December 1917, Canada had been at war for forty months.

The key insight of these dynamics is that the Conservatives and Liberals were under the constant pressure of an imminent election,<sup>50</sup> ultimately encouraging them to retain a highly antagonistic relationship despite the need to minimize partisan rivalries. The Liberals were at a disadvantage at the outset of the war, prompting them to pursue leads that could tip public opinion back in their favour. Among the best examples that highlights the Liberal's desperation to use war contract scandals for a political edge is based on a testimony by Charles Rogers. In April 1915, Frank Carvell and George Kyte, two high-ranking Liberals in the federal party, bribed a clerk employed by one of Allison's associates to steal documents from his employer's office. The clerk, Charles Rogers, was interested in obtaining a military appointment, so Carvell and Kyte promised to appoint him to a Montréal battalion with the rank of Captain.

Unfortunately for Rogers, he was caught in his theft red-handed while attempting to flee down the stairwell with the stolen papers stuffed under his coat. After being apprehended by another

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<sup>48</sup> At Ypres, Canadian troops came under heavy attack by artillery, poisonous gas, and brutal hand-to-hand combat, resulting in 208 officers and 5,828 other ranks either killed or wounded. These casualties were equivalent to 80 percent of the entire fighting force that participated in the South African War. Miller, *Painting the Map Red*, xi; Morton and Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon*, 62; Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, 49-92; CTA, *Robert Borden's Diary*, 16 May 1915.

<sup>49</sup> Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs*, vol. 1, 240-246.

<sup>50</sup> "The Election," *Toronto World*, 16 April 1915, 6; "No Doubt of an Election," *Toronto World*, 3 May 1915, 1; "General Election in June Now Impossible," 14 May 1915, 1; "General Election Rumours Revived," *Toronto World*, 3 June 1915, 3; "How the Truce was Kept – and Broken," *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, November 1915, 31; "Signs of a Dominion Election," *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, May 1917, 158.

employee, Rogers confessed to his crime at a New York Courthouse.<sup>51</sup> Such a plot demonstrates how invested the Liberals were in exploiting war contracts to discredit the Conservatives. The plot was exceptional, however. With access to Parliament, the Liberals could demand official investigations to produce potentially damaging information. Considering that the Auditor General informed Borden that millions worth of purchases lacked proper documentation or authorization, the Liberal strategy held great promise.<sup>52</sup> Allison provided the Liberals with one person of interest, but by mid-1915, the Liberals had leads on many controversial brokers and contracts to potentially tarnish the Conservative party's public standing.

The first significant war contract scandal began before the Liberals were catching onto Allison's activities. In late 1914 after Sir George Perley cabled a message from England complaining that the Canadian military boots were rapidly deteriorating under the arduous conditions of Salisbury Plain.<sup>53</sup> Initially, the Militia Department launched an investigation but its findings were so limited that the Liberals demanded Borden authorize another investigation through Parliament. As Laurier emphasized, the problem was severe because it risked the safety and effectiveness of the troops.<sup>54</sup> The so-called "Boot Commission" was a special parliamentary committee with powers to subpoena persons, papers, and records and to report findings directly back to Parliament. The members were divided between Conservative and Liberal representatives,<sup>55</sup> and its conclusions reflected the stark partisan divide of its commissioners. Two reports were presented on 10 April 1915: a majority report signed by the Conservative

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<sup>51</sup> "State of New York, City and Court of New York, Charles B. Rogers" Borden Papers, C-4326, 47393; "Papers Stolen in Shell Case It is Alleged," *The Republican Journal*, 9 June 1916, 2.

<sup>52</sup> "No Vouchers for Millions Given to Contractors," 13 March 1915, *Toronto Star*, 5.

<sup>53</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 242.

<sup>54</sup> *Debates*, 8 February 1915 (Wilfrid Laurier, Liberal), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 1, 18.

<sup>55</sup> The Conservative representatives as W. S. Middlebro (Chair), Sir James Aikins, F. B. McCurdy, and J. H. Rainville; the Liberal representatives were E. M. Macdonald, R. Lemieux, E. W. Nesbitt. *Debates*, 12 April 1915 (W. S. Middlebro, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 3, 2373.

representatives; and a minority report signed by the Liberals.<sup>56</sup> The minority report criticized the Conservatives for not replacing the boot design since the South African War, as well as reprimanded them for improper inspections, negligence, and for purchasing more boots after complaints had been made by regimental boards and manufacturers.<sup>57</sup> The Conservatives' majority report firmly opposed the Liberals' interpretation, arguing that Canadian military officials approved the Canadian design with minor modifications before the war,<sup>58</sup> and that the real reason why the boots suddenly seemed inadequate was because of the exceptional wet conditions. As Hughes emphasized in the House, troops were still using the boots on the Western Front, and there were no further complaints after cobblers made alterations.<sup>59</sup>

The two reports on the Boot Commission demonstrate how the procurement of military supplies became engulfed in partisan rivalry as early as 1914. Both reports found that the manufacturers were not responsible – a position the manufacturers promoted early on<sup>60</sup> – and further concluded that their profit-taking was modest.<sup>61</sup> There was one contentious case of profit-making by Charles E. Slater, the Gauthier & Company's former president. Slater was criticized because he received a commission based on an arrangement with the company, but since Slater's commissions could not be linked to a higher cost for the Militia Department, the investigation ruled it inconsequential.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, the Liberals construed the scandal to exemplify the Conservatives' inept administration of the war effort.<sup>63</sup> The Conservatives were cognizant of this

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<sup>56</sup> John Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1915* (Toronto: The Canadian Annual Review Limited, 1918), 242-243.

<sup>57</sup> *Debates*, 12 April 1915 (Charles Murphy, Liberal), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 3, 2405.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, (Robert Borden, Conservative), 2453.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, (Sam Hughes, Conservative), 2456.

<sup>60</sup> "More About Those Army Shoes," *The Shoe and Leather Journal*, January 1915, 32.

<sup>61</sup> *Debates*, 12 April 1915 (William Middlebro, Conservative), 2384; *Ibid.*, (Charles Murphy, Liberal), 2376. *Ibid.*, (Joseph Rainville, Conservative) 2413; *Ibid.*, (Fleming McCurdy, Conservative), 2429.

<sup>62</sup> *Debates*, 12 April 1915 (Charles Murphy, Liberal), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 3, 2376. *Ibid.*, (Joseph Rainville, Conservative) 2413; *Ibid.*, (Fleming McCurdy, Conservative), 2429.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, (William Middlebro, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 3, 2383.

opportunism and denounced the Liberals for their disingenuous concerns and accused them of manufacturing the entire boot controversy to gain a political edge.<sup>64</sup> Tensions came to a head when the House voted on a motion to approve the minority report, specifically its claims that the investigation failed to swear in witnesses and excluded non-departmental officials.<sup>65</sup> After the House rejected the motion, Borden recollected the events in his diary, writing, “Debate all day on majority and minority reports of Boot Com... Grit attack ineffective.”<sup>66</sup> As far as Borden was concerned, the Conservatives emerged victorious in the political skirmish, but editorialists in the labour and agrarian press held a different opinion.

The editor of *The Grain Growers' Guide*, George Chipman, and the editor of *The Voice*, Arthur Puttee, interpreted the boot scandal and its political fallout as the consequence of selfishness among party politicians and manufacturers more generally. Chipman denounced the scandal as a “nauseating spectacle of mud-slinging politics” and argued that “neither party is animated by any honest desire to improve conditions, and neither party has made any honest effort to curb the rapacity of the privileged interests...it should be brought to an end.”<sup>67</sup> Puttee agreed and added that “Politics is primarily a battle for party success. Real issues enter the field as the instruments by which the politicians keep or obtain power, being always subsidiary in the political mind to the job and the office.”<sup>68</sup> As Puttee and Chipman reminded their readers, while Canadian troops were fighting overseas, the Government divided itself over selfish political interests. In accordance with the ideology of public service, Puttee and Chipman expected

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<sup>64</sup> *Debates*, 12 April 1915 (Sam Hughes, Conservative) 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 3, 2459.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, (William Middlebro, Conservative), 2381.

<sup>66</sup> CTA, *Robert Borden's Diary*, 12 April 1915.

<sup>67</sup> “Punish Makers of Rotten Shoes,” *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 31 March 1915, 13; “Only One Party,” *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 7 April 1915, 5.

<sup>68</sup> “The Spoils of Office,” *The Voice*, 26 February 1915, 1.



politicians to rise above their selfish partisan interests.<sup>69</sup> But to their dismay, the boot scandal was the first of many war contract scandals that would become engulfed in partisan rivalry.

In February and March 1915, evidence of other scandalous activity surfaced, prompting new investigations. Fraser and Colonel Brown had been working through receipts and found numerous discrepancies between prevailing market prices and the prices paid by the Militia Department.<sup>70</sup> As evidence and rumours of illicit profits mounted, Borden decided to authorize early investigations under PAC to commence at the beginning of March.<sup>71</sup> On 15 April 1915, following a series of PAC reports, Borden found himself addressing three Conservatives for their controversial involvement in war contracts.

Among those reprimanded by Borden was Arthur De Witt Foster, the Conservative MP for King's County, Nova Scotia. Foster's first mistake was accepting the responsibilities of being a purchasing agent while holding public office; a second was purchasing horses in his constituency. Colonel Neill, who appointed Foster, was also reprimanded for his poor judgment. However, what really put Foster in the hot seat was that he did not retain vouchers for \$73,000 worth of expenses, and moreover, 60 out of the 428 purchased horses were inadequate for service. The evidence suggested that Foster was catering to his constituents by overpaying for horses, profiting from the transactions, then destroying the evidence.<sup>72</sup>

The second Conservative scrutinized by Borden was William F. Garland, the MP for Carleton, Ontario. Interestingly, Garland demanded the PAC investigation hoping that it would undo the defamation by Colonel Brown. The controversy originated after Garland introduced

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<sup>69</sup> "Jottings from Billboard," *The Voice*, 7 May 1915, 1; "Patriotism and Production," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 10 March 1915, 6; "Punish Makers of Rotten Shoes," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 31 March 1915, 13; "Political Purity," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 31 March 1915, 5.

<sup>70</sup> "Auditor Kicks; No Vouchers for \$4,000,000 Spent," *Toronto Star*, 27 February 1915, 7.

<sup>71</sup> *Debates*, 15 April 1915 (Robert Borden, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 3, 2602-2603.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, (Robert Borden, Conservative), 2606-2609.

Earnest Powell, an agent for a Chicago drug company, to the Militia Department. After the introduction, Powell sold the Department medical supplies, but Colonel Brown was appalled to find Powell earning a profit of 5 cents per dressing instead of 5 percent. Other items sold by Powell averaged 40 to 60 percent higher than wholesale prices. Realizing the price discrepancies, Brown halted payments and demanded a refund,<sup>73</sup> but upon closer scrutiny, Brown discovered that Powell was an employee for Garland's pharmaceutical store in Ottawa.<sup>74</sup> The subsequent PAC investigation traced the source of the irregularities to W. J. Shaver, a representative for an American pharmaceutical company Bauer & Black, who had believed that the Militia Department would only purchase supplies through a Canadian company.<sup>75</sup> Since Shaver knew Garland from the pharmaceutical industry, he convinced Garland to let him borrow Powell to sell the supplies on his behalf. For facilitating the transaction, Powell received a \$9,000 commission. For the time being, the PAC investigation could not prove Garland shared in the spoils.<sup>76</sup>

The third Conservative under scrutiny was General Hughes. Hughes's long-time friends, Philip and Matthew Ellis, secured a deal for their company, P. W. Ellis Co. of Toronto, to procure binoculars for the Militia Department. Fraser and the PAC's examination of the contract found that the company charged an excessive price by market standards and that the binoculars were of inferior quality. As the investigation revealed, the cause of the high price was the involvement of an excessive number of intermediaries, including manufacturers, brokers, and financiers, who each charged a commission or fee. The procurement of the binoculars

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<sup>73</sup> "Auditor Kicks; No Vouchers for \$4,000,000 Spent," *Toronto Star*, 27 February 1915, 7.

<sup>74</sup> *Debates*, 12 March 1915 (William Foster Garland, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 2, 947.

<sup>75</sup> Both the Liberal and Conservative parties stood by General Jones as an honourable man, meaning that they suspected Shaver's explanation was a lie to reduce culpability.

<sup>76</sup> *Debates*, 15 April 1915 (Robert Borden, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 3, 2605.

exemplified the inefficiency of Hughes's operations and how the prioritization of private interests was putting the health and safety of soldiers at risk.<sup>77</sup>

Following Borden's overview of the PAC investigations, the Prime Minister pursued three strategies to redeem his administration's credibility. First, he addressed the individual failures of politicians and state officials. In a forgiving tone, Borden portrayed Foster as an inexperienced businessman who genuinely wanted to help the war effort and his constituency. Borden similarly excused Powell as an ignorant employee following his employer's instructions. As for Hughes and the Militia Department, Borden emphasized that their mistakes were attributable to being understaffed, working long hours, and requiring a re-organization of the department.<sup>78</sup> But while offering some degree of vindication, Borden ultimately reprimanded Foster and Garland. Foster resigned his seat shortly after Borden's speech, while Garland clung to his seat until Powell confessed to giving Garland the \$9,000 commission later in June.<sup>79</sup> In addition to addressing the individual failures of Foster and Garland, Borden blamed human fallibility to overshadow Conservative corruption: "There are men who, even in time of war, will seek to make undue profits out of their business relations with the Government, even when all the people of the country are straining every effort and are inspired with the most patriotic desire to assist, and sacrifice their own interests for that purpose." In line with this sentiment, Borden condemned the public who sold Foster spavined and old horses.<sup>80</sup> Hence, the evil exhibited in the scandals was not rooted in the Conservative party, but rather, human nature.

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<sup>77</sup> *Debates*, 15 April 1915 (Robert Borden, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 3, 2605. Borden had been explicitly warned about this deal as early as 19 January 1915 when he noted it in his diary. CTA, *Robert Borden's Diary*, 19 January 1915.

<sup>78</sup> John English argues that Borden felt obliged to stand by Hughes because Hughes had done the same for Borden between 1910 and 1911. English, 101. *Debates*, 15 April 1915 (Robert Borden, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 3, 2611.

<sup>79</sup> "Clerk Says Garland Got Most of Profits," *Toronto Star*, 26 June 1915, 10; "Garland Admits He Got Sum of \$6,300," *Toronto Star*, 28 June 1915, 14.

<sup>80</sup> *Debates*, 15 April 1915 (Robert Borden, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 3, 2610-2614.

Borden was happy to learn that members of his party approved his speech,<sup>81</sup> but to gain public approval his administration would have to take more decisive action. This led to the second prong of Borden's strategy: institutional reform. Following the recommendations by the PAC investigations, the Cabinet authorized a new organization for purchases, inspection, and auditing called the War Purchasing Commission (WPC).<sup>82</sup> From 8 May 1915 onward, the funds authorized under the *War Appropriations Act* would be managed by the WPC. Its mandate would later be expanded to include all general departmental purchases.<sup>83</sup> Shortly after taking up his position as Chair of the WPC, Albert E. Kemp, a minister without portfolio,<sup>84</sup> issued a statement to the press indicating that the WPC would not adhere to patronage lists and would instead award contracts to the lowest tenders. Although later in the year, Kemp was criticized in *The Toronto Globe and Mail* for awarding contracts to multiple low bidders rather than the lowest bidder, the WPC avoided sensational episodes involving graft and patronage for the remainder of the war.<sup>85</sup>

In further pursuit of reforming departmental purchasing, Borden supported the dismantling of Hughes's Shell Committee. The Shell Committee had attracted considerable criticism from the Liberals, who alleged that its executive exploited their positions by awarding themselves large munitions contracts at excessively high and fixed prices. Liberal MP William Pugsley argued that the Shell Committee's avoidance of open competition cost the British and

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<sup>81</sup> CTA, *Robert Borden's Diary*, 15 April 1915.

<sup>82</sup> Borden was a staunch advocate against patronage and graft. In 1907, Borden's Halifax Platform included explicit promises to remove patronage from state practice and promote government transparency. Once elected, however, he lacked broader political support to pursue these ambitions. When Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie attempted to combat patronage without broad political support, he ended up politically isolated. "The Loosening Planks," *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, March 1917, 107; Simpson, 127-131; Stewart, 71.

<sup>83</sup> John Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1918* (Toronto: The Canadian Annual Review Limited, 1919), 449-450.

<sup>84</sup> Accompanying Kemp as WPC executives were George Gait, the MP for Winnipeg, and Hormisdas Laport, the ex-Mayor of Montréal.

<sup>85</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 266-267.

Canadian taxpayers as much as \$80 million.<sup>86</sup> Carvell also criticized the Shell Committee for enriching the owners of “mushroom companies” – i.e., opportunistically formed companies so the owners could secure war contracts without the means of production. As Carvell later reflected in 1916, “While the brave men stood with only their rifles to reply to German terrorism; groups of shell profiteering interests safe at home were wading in the fat of war contracting.”<sup>87</sup> The Liberals pushed to investigate the entirety of the Shell Committee’s operations, but Borden rejected this demand on the grounds that it would obstruct the war effort, and moreover, that the British Ministry of Munitions were already conducting their own inquiry to overhaul the administration of the war effort.<sup>88</sup> The British Ministry of Munitions’ investigators who assessed the Shell Committee, W. L. Hitchens, R. H. Brand, and D. A. Thomas, agreed that it should be reconstituted on the basis of awarding contracts through open competition, thereby bringing its operation in alignment with the British government’s own purchasing protocol, as well as that of the WPC.<sup>89</sup> The change received widespread public support and was even endorsed by the Canadian Manufacturers’ Association (CMA) because some manufacturers had grown frustrated with Hughes’s quasi-interventionist system.<sup>90</sup> For example, Thomas Russell of Russell Motor Car Co. condemned Hughes’s system during an interview with the PAC. Initially, Russell succeeded in securing government business after approaching Hughes with one of the Minister’s

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<sup>86</sup> *Debates*, 14 March 1916 (William Pugsley, Liberal), 12th Parl. 6th sess., vol. 2, 1358; *Ibid.*, (Frank Carvell, Liberal), 1342, 1715-1720.

<sup>87</sup> *Debates*, 9 March 1916 (Frank Carvell, Liberal), 12th parliament 6th session, vol. 2, 1564. Also see, “Mr. Thomas, the Shell Committee and the Government,” *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, November 1915, 28-29.

<sup>88</sup> *Debates*, 7 March 1916 (Robert Borden, Conservative), 12th Parl. 6th session, vol. 2, 1520-1522; *Debates*, 9 March 1916 (Richard Bennett, Conservative), 12th Parl. 6th sess., vol. 2, 1588; Donald Vince, “The Acting Overseas Sub-Militia Council and the Resignation of Sir Sam Hughes” *Canadian Historical Review* 31, no. 1 (March 1950): 6-8.

<sup>89</sup> Carnegie, xxii; Peter Rider, “The Imperial Munitions Board and its Relationship to Government, Business and Labour, 1914-1920,” PhD diss., (University of Toronto, 1974), 27; Michael Bliss, *A Canadian Millionaire: The Life and Business Times of Sir Joseph Flavelle, Bart, 1858-1939* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada 1978), 255-256.

<sup>90</sup> “The Front Page,” *Saturday Night*, 10 July 1915, 1; Patronage List Should Go,” *Industrial Canada*, May 1915, 43; “High Explosives Needed for the Patronage Evil,” *Industrial Canada*, February 1916, 1058; “Resolutions Passed by the Convention,” *Industrial Canada*, July 1917, 417.

childhood friends, J. H. McQuarrie, however, after Russell expressed his frustration to the PAC regarding Hughes's unrealistic deadlines and failure to provide product specifications, Hughes felt insulted and obstructed Russell from obtaining further contracts.<sup>91</sup>

On 30 November 1915, critics of the Shell Committee could celebrate because it was replaced by a new organization, the IMB. Unlike the Shell Committee, the IMB was established unambiguously under the British Ministry of Munitions' jurisdiction. Appointed to Chair was Joseph Wesley Flavelle, the President of the National Trust of Toronto, President of the largest meatpacking firm The William Davies Company, and Director of the Bank of Commerce.<sup>92</sup> The Militia Department had no command over the IMB's operation and Flavelle was directly accountable to the British government – thereby shutting out any further attempts by the Militia Department to use its patronage list, which the Liberals humorously dubbed “the Good Boys.”<sup>93</sup> The IMB distributed contracts on the basis of open competition, and it became an indictable offence for brokers to solicit payment after securing a contract from the Board.<sup>94</sup>

Hughes became another casualty of the restructuring. In November 1916, frustrations towards Hughes among governing officials in the British and Canadian governments reached its limit. For a myriad of reasons, including Hughes's tenacious defence of Allison, the Cabinet dismissed him. Borden reminisced that he would have dismissed Hughes sooner, but he feared a political backlash from Hughes's supporters.<sup>95</sup> With widespread opposition to the war contract scandals, Hughes's political support crumbled, thus paving the way for his removal.

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<sup>91</sup> Kyle Pritchard, “Russell Government, Labour, and Business Progressivism in a Canadian War Industry, 1899-1920” (M.A. Thesis, University of Guelph, 2017), 51-61.

<sup>92</sup> Carnegie, 258.

<sup>93</sup> “War Contract Scandals: As Investigated by the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons” (Ottawa, Central Information Office of the Canadian Liberal Party, May 1915), 14.

<sup>94</sup> Rider, 97.

<sup>95</sup> Robert Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs*, ed. Henry Borden, vol. 2, (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1969), 571; CTA, *Robert Borden's Diary*, 2 March 1916, 3 March 1916, 13 March 1916, 14 March 1916, 28 March 1916, 10 July 1916.

Borden's third strategy in response to the PAC investigations was to launch additional investigations into war contracts. Heading the new investigation was Charles Davidson, the former Chief Justice of Québec. Its work began in June 1915 and would continue for two years.<sup>96</sup> Additional investigations to probe the most conspicuous rumours, specifically those involving Allison and the Shell Committee, were undertaken by Royal Commissions.<sup>97</sup> As the Davidson Commission reports began to trickle into Parliament, Chipman, Puttee, and William Good, Editor of *The Farmers' Advocate*, were hopeful that the investigations' findings would lead to swift justice against the offenders.<sup>98</sup> For instance, Chipman believed that Borden was a patriot, and upon discerning the facts, the Prime Minister would use his wartime powers against the war profiteers.<sup>99</sup> To their dismay, the Davidson Commission exonerated the accused and offered only mild condemnations. Worse yet, the Royal Commissions investigating the Shell Committee, Allison, and other nefarious war brokers, provided evidence that substantiated suspicions of large scale graft, but again, patriots were left without retribution.

On 20 July 1916, the Meredith-Duff Royal Commission, which investigated rumours spread by Allison's competitors, submitted its report revealing the inner workings of the Shell Committee and the Militia Department's purchasing agents. Two contracts stood out in the investigations: one for the American-based International Arms and Fuse Company (IAFC) and

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<sup>96</sup> *Report of the Royal Commissioner Concerning Purchase of Submarines* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917); *Report of the Royal Commissioner on Purchase of Surgical Field Dressings and Other Surgical Supplies* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917); *Report of the Royal Commissioner Concerning Purchase of Horses in Nova Scotia For First Canadian Contingent* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917); *Report of the Royal Commissioner Concerning Military Cloth* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917).

<sup>97</sup> Canada, *Report of the Royal Commissioner Concerning Shell Contracts: Report* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1916); Canada, *Report of the Royal Commissioner Concerning Purchase of War Supplies and Sale of Small Arms Ammunition* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917).

<sup>98</sup> "Jottings From Billboard," *The Voice*, 7 April 1916, 1; "Punish the Grafters," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 21 April 1915, 6; "National Efficiency," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 2 February 1916, 167; "The war graft investigation," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 7 July 1915, 6.

<sup>99</sup> "Graft in War Supplies," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 7 April 1915, 5.

another for the American Ammunition Company (AAC). The investigation traced the origin of the contracts to Hughes. The Minister of Militia was determined to “smash the prices” of highly demanded artillery shell time-fuses, so he requested Allison organize a privately-owned manufacturing company to compete with the only time-fuse manufacturer, the IAFC. The intended effect was to increase supply, lower prices, and ultimately save the British War Office millions. Following Hughes’s instructions, Allison got in touch with Benjamin Yoakum, an American railroad tycoonist. Significantly, Allison had a partnership with Yoakum to split any commissions earned from war contracts. Out of all the potential interests in Canada and the United States to compete against the IAFC, it is not coincidental that Allison chose Yoakum.

After being informed of the potential contract, Yoakum contacted E. W. Bassick and E. B. Cadwell, two other ambitious entrepreneurs with limited experience manufacturing fuses. On 10 June 1915, the three budding war manufacturers incorporated the AAC to carry out their venture. After they hired technical experts, devised plans for a loading plant, and passed an inspection by Bertram and Carnegie, the AAC executives received a contract by the Shell Committee for 2,500,000 fuses. Several peculiarities added to the debacle. For instance, the Shell Committee paid the AAC the same price for their time-fuses that Hughes sought to “smash,” and the Militia Department placed an unnecessary order for non-time fuses. The most significant revelation was that a mere nine days after the AAC was incorporated, it received the time-fuse contract and a cash advance of \$1,000,000. This payment was interpreted by the AAC executives as a commission, and based on Allison’s partnership with Yoakum, Allison received half of Yoakum’s share – an astounding sum of \$220,000.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Allison informed Yoakum how to divide his share through a series of telegrams. Three of Allison’s business associates received \$90,000, while Allison’s daughter-in-law, Mabel G. Edwards, received \$105,000. Allison stated that Edwards was raised in his household as his daughter since she was two years old. For eight to ten years, she had managed household affairs and acted as Allison’s secretary. After falling ill in January and February, Allison wanted



After reviewing the evidence and hearing the arguments presented by the legal counsels, Duff and Meredith concluded that all the companies involved in the shell contracts were legitimate despite evidence showing that the IAFC and the AAC were formed just before receiving their contracts. The Commissioners could have deemed the companies as lacking a “foundation,” and therefore mushroom companies, but since men of significant socioeconomic status backed the companies, they were deemed legitimate. This decision is a revealing moment for how the designation of war profiteers intersected with pre-existing social identities. As an affluent white Anglo-American male with elitist affiliations,<sup>101</sup> Yoakum’s socioeconomic status influenced how those of similar standing favorably interpreted his actions as patriotic. Carvell, who participated in the interrogations and notably one of the fiercest critics of the war contract scandals in Parliament, also expressed his approval of the AAC executives. In addition to vindicating the companies’ legitimacy, Duff and Meredith did not interpret their profits as illegal. They were skeptical of how the executives divided the cash advance as a commission, but similar to the conclusions of the Boot Commission, it was deemed a private matter.<sup>102</sup> The Commission could have also condemned the AAC for failing to meet the stipulated delivery times but instead Duff and Meredith accepted the company’s claims that the delays were caused by external factors, namely sub-contractors failing firing tests and labour disputes, rather than attribute their failure to the company’s hasty formation. Because the AAC missed their delivery deadline, the IMB re-negotiated the contract at the lower market prices of 1916. Duff and

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to compensate Edwards for her work. Conversely, when the Commission questioned Edwards about the money, she stated that it was for the family. Canada, *Royal Commission on Shell Contracts, Minutes of Evidence*, vol. 2, 811-814, 1147, 1349-1350.

<sup>101</sup> Yoakum’s late brother Charles Henderson Yoakum had been a United States Congressman. Office of the House Historian, “Yoakum, Charles Henderson,” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-Present*, accessed on 18 July 2020, <https://bioguideretro.congress.gov/Home/MemberDetails?memIndex=Y000018>.

<sup>102</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Shell Contracts, Minutes of Evidence*, vol. 2, 1532.

Meredith celebrated the new terms of the contract as a win for public interests, but such an optimistic outlook blatantly ignored the repercussions of shell shortages.

In terms of individual accountability, Duff and Meredith exonerated everyone except Allison. The Shell Committee officials, Bertram and Carnegie, were cleared of any wrongdoing and attributed their errors to being overburdened. The investigation could not prove Hughes accepted remuneration, nor was he proven to have pressured Carnegie to use Allison's associates. And all businessmen involved were deemed honest and reliable. In contrast, Allison became the scapegoat and was reprimanded for hiding his entitlement to Yoakum's commission from Hughes and the Shell Committee.<sup>103</sup> Allison pleaded ignorance and claimed that he only became aware from a press report.<sup>104</sup> His legal representative, George Henderson, further defended Allison's payment by arguing that it was reasonable given Allison's service.<sup>105</sup> Considering that Allison was acting as a purchasing agent for the Militia Department and executed his task by coordinating with other state bodies, Henderson's defense was quite provocative because Allison's contribution could be interpreted as public service. Of course, Allison's service, which only involved contacting a single manufacturer, could hardly be considered worth the compensation he received. By comparison, a private fighting on the Western Front would have to work for 547.9 years (without accounting for inflation) to earn the sum equivalent to Allison's commission. In the end, Duff and Meredith condemned Allison but they did not advise legal action against him, nor did they demand he return the money. After

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<sup>103</sup> Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Shell Contracts* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1916), 27.

<sup>104</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Shell Contracts, Minutes of Evidence*, vol. 2, 1078-1079.

<sup>105</sup> "Dipped Hand Into Till to Tune of \$220,000," *The Globe Toronto*, 10 June 1916, 3.

some convincing, Hughes revoked Allison's honorary rank of Colonel,<sup>106</sup> but given that "foxy Allison"<sup>107</sup> already made a fortune, the punishment was inconsequential.

The Conservatives attempted to downplay the sensationalism of the war contract scandals, even denouncing the Liberals for igniting popular discontent,<sup>108</sup> but with political rivalries between the Conservatives and Liberals in full swing, there was no stopping the Liberal machine from exploiting the controversy for political gain. Liberal periodicals and pamphlets led to a saturation of news coverage, ranging from concise summaries to detailed overviews of investigation proceedings.<sup>109</sup> There were many angles that the Liberals played, but underlining their anti-profiteering rhetoric was the idea that the Conservative party was wholly responsible and that the election of the Liberals would restore a virtuous administration. For example, *The Grit*, which was a Liberal periodical published in Ontario during the lead up to the 1917 federal election, was filled with anti-profiteering and anti-Conservative messaging. As shown in the illustration below, Lady Canada, a refashioned Lady Britannia representing British justice and moral purity, orders a profiteer to drop bags of war and food profits. In contrast, the profiteer is depicted as a white male capitalist standing defiantly in his dollar-bill print suit. His bloated gut and pointed ears convey his character of excess, privilege, and devilishness. The political message of the image lies in the etchings of Lady Canada's sword, which reads "Laurier Government." In a straightforward way, the image insinuated that the Liberal party was the weapon against the profiteers.

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<sup>106</sup> Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs*, vol. 2, 567.

<sup>107</sup> "'Foxy Allison' the Toll Taker Taking Toll," *Liberal Canadian Monthly*, August 1916, 151.

<sup>108</sup> *Debates*, 2 March 1916 (Sam Hughes, Conservative), 12th Parl. 6th sess., vol. 2, 1342-1343; *Debates*, 27 March 1918 (George Foster, Unionist), 13th Parl. 1st sess., vol. 1, 213.

<sup>109</sup> For some of the Liberal party's pamphlets, see Liberal Party of Canada, *War Scandals of the Borden Government as Told in the House of Commons and Sworn to Before the Public Accounts and other Committee* (Ottawa: Central Liberal Information Office, 1917); Liberal Party of Canada, *Shell and Fuse Scandals: a Million Dollar Rake-off, taken from the Government Records* (Ottawa: Central Liberal Information Office, 1916).



It is impossible to quantify how much profiteering shaped electoral outcomes. However, Chipman, Good, and Francq (the editor of Montréal's bi-lingual *Labour News*), attributed the Conservatives' deteriorating popularity across all levels of government to profiteering controversy.<sup>111</sup> From coast to coast, the Liberals swept into power during every wartime provincial election with the exception of Prince Edward Island, where the Conservatives' majority was reduced.<sup>112</sup> A provincial by-election in Peel County exemplifies how war

<sup>110</sup> "Traitor!" *The Grit*, 3 December 1917, 5.

<sup>111</sup> "No Title," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 7 March 1917, 6. "Patriotism vs Plunder," *Labor World*, 15 April 1916, 3; "The People are Awakening," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 16 March 1916, 445.

<sup>112</sup> The Conservative stranglehold in New Brunswick ended in February 1917. During the previous election in 1912, the Conservatives had won with 46 seats to 2, but in 1917, the Liberals won with a six seat lead. In Nova Scotia, the Liberals retained their dominant position during the June 1916 election with 30 seats to 13 Conservatives. In Prince Edward Island, the Conservatives held off a significantly reduced majority of 4 seats. In Québec, the Liberal Government won its third consecutive victory with a larger majority. The Roblin scandal devastated the Conservatives in Manitoba during the August 1915 election, which ended with 39 Liberals, 5 Conservatives and 2 Independents – a steep fall from the Conservatives' former 28 seats. The Liberals in Saskatchewan and Alberta clung to power during the Summer of 1917, while the Conservative Government in British Columbia fell swiftly to the Liberals despite no prior presence. "Provincial General Elections Since 1911," *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, March 1917, 124-125.

profiteering could have a direct bearing on electoral outcomes. After the Conservative MPP, James Fallis, was found profiting from the sale of his constituency's horses to the government, he surrendered his profits to the local battalion, then initiated a by-election in February 1916. Fallis portrayed his transgression as a misunderstanding, whereby his private business as a horse dealer muddled his responsibilities as a purchasing agent. Fallis was confident his supporters would forgive him, but his expectations were misplaced. The Liberal candidate, W. J. Lowe, defeated Fallis, and the Liberal press heralded the results as a direct blow to profiteering.<sup>113</sup> Typically, parties used by-elections to gauge the public's mood before general elections, so the Liberals' successful overthrow of Peel County confirmed that the sensationalism of profiteering could turn the political tide in the Liberals' favour.<sup>114</sup> But while the Liberals were in a position to reap the immediate benefits of the public backlash against the Conservatives, the public's yearning for justice and disillusionment towards party politics was steadily gaining momentum.

### **Demanding Retribution and the Evils of Party Politics**

What started as a controversy concerning the purchase of boots had broadened out into the entire management of the Militia Department. As Chipman wrote, "The revelations of 1915 session are now looked upon as the pettiest kind of petty larceny. Charges now must be up in the millions before they cause a ripple."<sup>115</sup> Chipman was hopeful that Borden would use his wartime powers under the *War Measures Act* against the war profiteers.<sup>116</sup> The Prime Minister even

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<sup>113</sup> "Bystander Writes About Army Horses," *Brampton Conservator*, 16 December 1915, 1; "War Profiteering at Bar of Public Opinion in Peel," *Toronto Star*, 22 February 1916, 10; "Much interest shown in Peel Nominations," *Toronto World*, 18 February 1916, 5; "Fallis Beaten by 305 Majority Liberals Win Peel By-election," *Toronto World*, 25 February 1916, 1; "The Peel Election," *Toronto World*, 25 February 1916, 6.

<sup>114</sup> When the Liberals were defeated in the Drummond-Arthabaska by-election in 1910 (a seat that Laurier himself once held), it foreshadowed their falling popularity in French Canada, mainly because of the Liberal party's naval policy. Dutil and Mackenzie, *Canada 1911*, 63-64.

<sup>115</sup> "War Patriotism and Graft," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 21 June 1916, 7. Also see Borden's attempt to downplay the scale of the graft, "Commission Here to Buy For the Allies," *Toronto Star*, 15 April 1915, 15.

<sup>116</sup> "Graft in War Supplies," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 7 April 1915, 5.

played into these expectations by stating that “the doors of the penitentiary are yawning.”<sup>117</sup> And yet while there were many investigations, there had been no meaningful charges laid against any profiteers. Chipman, Puttee, and Pettipiece believed that the public only received expensive and fruitless investigations. Frederick Paul, the editor of *Saturday Night*, who had no affiliation to the labour or farmers’ movements, agreed with these sentiments.<sup>118</sup> The investigations succeeded in providing an abundance of information, but the exonerations were unpopular. Indeed, public frustration became so acute that Borden privately admitted in his diary that people in Canada were disregarding the conclusions of state investigators and drawing their own.<sup>119</sup> Puttee and Chipman offered the same assessment in their editorials.<sup>120</sup>

Among the labour and agrarian newspapers, there was a clear thirst for vengeance against the war profiteers but the implied punishment was sometimes ambiguous. Chipman called for “an intervention of an iron hand”<sup>121</sup> and added that “no punishment would be too severe for them.”<sup>122</sup> William Charles Good, a strong advocate of the social gospel, argued that those implicated in the war contract scandals “should be incarcerated and may pay the full penalty of their crime against national efficiency.”<sup>123</sup> Good also echoed Chipman’s sentiments by endorsing “severe punishment [to] bring the situation under control.”<sup>124</sup> Labour leaders thought along similar lines. Puttee presented his own stern assessment that rendered the absence of

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<sup>117</sup> “Commission Here to Buy For the Allies,” *Toronto Star*, 15 April 1915, 15.

<sup>118</sup> “Jottings From Billboard,” *The Voice*, 19 May 1916, 1; “No Title,” *B.C. Federationist*, 28 January 1916, 2; “No Title,” *B.C. Federationist*, 14 January 1916, 2; “Jottings From Billboard,” *The Voice*, 5 February 1915, 1; “Front Page” *Saturday Night*, 29 July 1916, 1.

<sup>119</sup> CTA, *Robert Borden’s Diary*, 23 August 1916.

<sup>120</sup> “Jottings From Billboard,” *The Voice*, 9 June 1916, 1; “Prosecute the War Grafters,” *The Grain Growers Guide*, 22 December 1915, 5.

<sup>121</sup> “Punish the Grafters,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 21 April 1915, 6.

<sup>122</sup> “Canadian Shell Grafters,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 24 November 1915, 5.

<sup>123</sup> “National Efficiency,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 2 February 1916, 167.

<sup>124</sup> “Traitorous Conduct,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 15 July 1915, 1126.

imprisonment disturbing.<sup>125</sup> During a TLC conference, William Williams, the fraternal delegate from the British Trades Congress, endorsed the demand that the profiteers should be thrown in jail, thereby highlighting how such sentiments existed across international borders.<sup>126</sup>

In addition to the commentary within the editorials, the labour and agrarian newspapers used cartoons to promote their demands for justice. Three days before Christmas in 1915, *The Guide* included an illustration by their cartoonist Arch Dale. As depicted in the image below, the left frame contains an imprisoned war contract grafter breaking stones into gravel, while in the right frame, a soldier stands on guard in the trenches. The caption reads, “The soldier has been ‘doing his bit’ for nearly seventeen months. None of the Canadian war contract grafters have begun to ‘do their bit’ yet.” As the illustration suggests, the inequalities of sacrifice and traitorous conduct of the war grafters needed to be resolved through jail sentences. A similar illustration depicting a profiteer imprisoned in an internment camp was published in the *B.C. Federationist* (and will be discussed in Chapter Five).<sup>127</sup> Based on these discussions, it is evident that many patriots demanded the traitorous profiteers to face prison sentences as a bare minimum.

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<sup>125</sup> “Jottings From Billboard,” *The Voice*, 7 April 1916, 1.

<sup>126</sup> “War Profiteers Should be Jailed,” *The Globe Toronto*, 22 September 1916, 6.

<sup>127</sup> As noted in Chapter 5, a similar image was published in the *B.C. Federationist*. “For the Period of the War,” *B.C. Federationist*, 14 June 1918, 1.



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Imprisonment was a popular form of retribution demanded by labour and agrarian leaders, but there was a darker side to the demands for justice that found resonance within the grim context of the Great War. Throughout the war, there were 361 military executions and 2,719 commuted death sentences in the British army, and 25 executions and 197 commuted death sentences in the CEF.<sup>129</sup> These extreme punishments were justified because they dissuaded soldiers from desertion and mutiny. For some patriots, it was fitting that obscene forms of exploiting the war should warrant similar repercussions since it too constituted traitorous behaviour and impacted morale. Pettipiece, Puttee, and Paul were among those who argued that wartime profiteering undermined the legitimacy of the war effort and deterred patriots from enlisting.<sup>130</sup> In this way, extreme cases of exploiting the war effort for profit warranted capital punishment. Both Puttee and Chipman were among those who endorsed executions and cited the

<sup>128</sup> It should be noted that this image was published only 3 days before Christmas. For grieving and suffering families, it would have been a profoundly somber holiday. "When Both 'Do Their Bit'," *The Grain Growers Guide*, 22 December 1915, 6.

<sup>129</sup> Teresa Iacobelli, *Death or Deliverance: Canadian Courts Martial in the Great War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), 4.

<sup>130</sup> "Time for Plain Speaking," *The Voice*, 17 August 1917, 1, 7; "Campaign Opened with Big Meeting at Labour Temple," *B.C. Federationist*, 9 November 1917, 3, 7; "How to Get Recruits," *The Voice*, 20 July 1917, 1; "Jottings From Billboard," *The Voice*, 16 July 1915, 1; "Conscription, Employment and War Profits," *Saturday Night*, 13 January 1917, 1; "Conscription, Employment and War Profits," *Saturday Night*, 13 January 1917, 1.



legitimacy of shooting traitors under the *Defence of the Realm Act*.<sup>131</sup> Chipman entertained the idea of execution as early as the Boot Scandal. As he put it, the exploitation of war contracts to earn money was “a crime best punished with a few feet of twist rope or a firing squad.”<sup>132</sup> For Puttee, those involved in the Million-Dollar Rake-off – the respectable businessmen praised by the Meredith-Duff Commission – deserved to be shot.<sup>133</sup> The prospect of executing profiteers persisted throughout the war and even extended into the immediate post-war period.<sup>134</sup> Expectedly, the endorsement of such an extreme punishment was too far for Borden. His soft-handed approach to war profiteering is exemplified by his worries that even his public denunciation of Conservative grafters Foster and Garland was too severe.<sup>135</sup> However, by failing to make examples of war profiteers, at least through imprisonment, Borden missed an opportunity to restore confidence in the justice system and his Government. Borden’s loss became the labour and agrarian movements’ gain because spokespersons such as Puttee and Chipman capitalized on patriotic outrage by endorsing demands for extreme retribution, thus aligning themselves with prevailing feelings of dissent.

The Liberals may have presented themselves as sympathetic to the perspective of outraged patriots and their desires for justice, but Chipman, Good, Puttee, Pettipiece, and Francq, challenged the Liberals’ interpretation of war profiteering as being specifically caused by Conservative corruption. Although labour and farmer leaders spoke from different class

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<sup>131</sup> “Patriot and Traitors,” *The Voice*, 9 April 1915, 5; “Graft in War Supplies,” *The Grain Growers Guide*, 7 April 1915, 5; “Made-in-Canada Campaign,” *The Grain Growers Guide*, 6 January 1915, 9; “Enemies At Home,” *The Grain Growers Guide*, 23 December 1914, 1; “Punish Makers of Rotten Shoes,” *The Grain Growers Guide*, 31 March 1915, 13; “Punish the Grafters,” *The Grain Growers Guide*, 21 April 1915, 6; “Nova Scotia’s Horse Graft,” *The Grain Growers Guide*, 1 September 1915, 5; “Prosecute the War Grafters,” *The Grain Growers Guide*, 22 December 1915, 5.

<sup>132</sup> “Made-in-Canada Campaign,” *The Grain Growers Guide*, 6 January 1915, 9.

<sup>133</sup> Jottings From Billboard,” *The Voice*, 31 March 1916, 1.

<sup>134</sup> “Profiteers are Criminals who must be Punished,” *Labor World*, 23 March 1918, 3; “Profiteers to Their Knees,” *The New Democracy*, 12 June 1919, 2.

<sup>135</sup> CTA, *Robert Borden’s Diary*, 14 April 1915; *Ibid.*, 15 April 1915.

perspectives, they argued that war profiteering was reflective of the immoral and self-interested culture that dominated both political parties. War profiteering, and other forms of profiteering, provided these critics a way of re-conceptualizing the urgency needed to radically reform politics and the state apparatus. As they argued, the silver lining of the scandals and the absence of justice was that it could wake up the calloused public to the “game of politics”<sup>136</sup> so that they would no longer offer their blind political allegiances. Building upon this hope, labour and agrarian leaders called upon the people of Canada to rebel by casting their votes based on a candidate’s individual merit, as well as their resolve to withstand the party whip. In this way, the Liberal and Conservative party machines would weaken and elected officials would be able to truly represent the interests of their constituents without obstruction. And as the party machines fall into disarray, the spirit of Canadian politics could be rejuvenated and democracy could thrive.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> The game of politics was a critique of petty partisan strategies to gain an electoral advantage. Some examples include a Liberal pamphlet that condemned the formation of the Union party in 1917 as a disingenuous strategy of “playing the game of politics”; Bishop Farthing of Montréal publicly denounced “the cursed game of politics” during the 1917 federal election; John Hopkins also used the term to condemn the 1917 federal election stating, “...there was played at Ottawa a game of politics and patriotism so inter-mixed, so cleverly manipulated, so resourceful and varied in weapon and method as to have no precedent in Canadian history.” Liberal Party of Canada, *War Scandals of the Borden Government as Told in the House of Commons and Sworn to Before the Public Accounts and other Committee* (Ottawa: Central Liberal Information Office, 1917), 32; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1917*, 415, 578.

<sup>137</sup> This summary is based on an abundance of articles published in labour and farmer periodicals throughout the war that criticized the systemic corruption of party politics: “The Power of Public Opinion,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 3 February 1915, 5; “No title,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 10 March 1915, 6; “Only One Party,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 7 April 1915, 5; “Political Corruption Proven,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 25 November 1914, 6; “Publicity of Campaign Funds,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 23 June 1915, 5; “Parliament has Prorogued,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 24 May 1916, 5; “The Farmers’ Platform,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 13 December 1916, 5; “Politicians and Profiteers,” *Grain Growers’ Guide*, 10 October 1917, 5; “Editorial,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 15 March 1917, 442; “Cast off the Fetters of Party Politics,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 29 April 1915, 572; “Campaign Literature,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 13 May 1915, 797; “Forget Politics During the War,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 3 June 1915, 914; “The People are Awakening,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 16 March 1916, 445; “Jottings From Billboard,” *The Voice*, 16 July 1915, 1; “Partyism Gets Hard Knocks,” *The Voice*, 18 May 1917, 1; “The Spoils of Office,” *The Voice*, 26 February 1915, 1; [No Title], *B.C. Federationist*, 20 July 1917, 2; [No Title], *B.C. Federationist*, 28 January 1916, 2; “Campaign Opened With Big Meeting At Labour Temple,” *B.C. Federationist*, 9 November 1917, 3,7; “Patriotism vs Plunder,” *Labor World*, 22 April 1916, 3; “Re-Organization of the Labour Party,” *Labor World*, 17 June 1916, 3.

While labour and agrarian leaders conveyed this grand vision of displacing the party machines, they also promoted specific reforms to help bring about this transformation. Both the TLC and the CAA supported the removal of patronage from the civil service and instituting formal examinations for all positions.<sup>138</sup> There were also a range of important democratic reforms. As labour and agrarian pundits similarly argued, powerful corporations funded the Liberal and Conservative electoral campaigns, which not only provided them with the unfair financial advantages, but upon victory the corporate sponsors expected favorable legislation, thereby compromising the integrity of the elected representatives. To address this source of corruption, the CCA passed resolutions in favour of publicizing all political campaign fund contributions both before and after elections.<sup>139</sup> The TLC also passed resolutions calling for the abolition of election deposits, which were more difficult to raise for independent candidates, and moreover, it would reduce desperation for money.<sup>140</sup> The TLC also endorsed making the federal election day a holiday and that polling hours be held between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. as to ensure employers could not prevent their workers from voting.<sup>141</sup>

Another democratic reform supported by the TLC and the CCA was women's suffrage.<sup>142</sup> As suffragists argued, the inclusion of women would purify the morality of politics.<sup>143</sup> What

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<sup>138</sup> Department of Labour, *The Labour Gazette 1915* (Ottawa: J. De L. Taché, 1915), 466-467; *The Farmers' Platform* (Winnipeg: The Grain Growers' Guide, 1917), 5.

<sup>139</sup> *The Farmers' Platform* (Winnipeg: The Grain Growers' Guide, 1917), 5; "Publicity of Campaign Funds," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 23 June 1915, 5.

<sup>140</sup> Canada, "Report of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada," in *Labour Gazette*, October 1918, vol. 18 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1918), 834.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 834, 847.

<sup>142</sup> As Carol Bacchi notes, the TLC's support was premised on the contention that it would allow women to win equal wages with men, which was needed to prevent women from undercutting male breadwinning wages and employment. Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred?*, 118; *The Farmers' Platform* (Winnipeg: The Grain Growers' Guide, 1917), 5.

<sup>143</sup> Joan Sangster, "Mobilizing Women for War," in *Canada and the First World War*; Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred?*; Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work and Welfare in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Veronica Strong-Boag, *The Last Suffragist Standing: the life and times of Laura Marshall Jamieson* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2018); Veronica Strong-Boag, *The Parliament of Women: the National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976);

opposition to profiteering introduced was a new basis to legitimize these demands. In an article published in the popular periodical *Every Women's World*,<sup>144</sup> Frank Egerton outlined this rationale, stating that both Liberal and Conservative parties were to blame for the corruption evident in the war contract scandals; that elector indifference allowed graft to become analogous with politics; and that corporations had taken over the parties through the funding of their election campaigns. Women's suffrage, Egerton alleged, could act as "an effective antidote to the existing poisonous condition of political corruption." Based on the belief that women were not as easily corrupted by materialism and had a better moral compass, women's suffrage would positively reshape Canadian political culture and political power.<sup>145</sup> William Irvine echoed these beliefs in *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, demonstrating how the intersectionality of patriotic identity and gender assisted in the legitimization of women's suffrage as a remedy to the profiteering evil.<sup>146</sup>

Another major democratic reform supported by organized labour and farmers was Direct Legislation. The idea of Direct Legislation developed in the United States at the turn of the century, but found prominent advocates in Canada, such as Fred J. Dixon, a social reformer who wrote for *The Voice* and was the MPP for the Manitoba Labour Party. Direct Legislation entailed three mechanisms to undermine the self-interest and corruption rooted in party politics: "the initiative" would allow the electorate to directly introduce legislation into Parliament after a successful petition campaign at the local level; "the referendum" would allow the electorate to

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Manon Tremblay and Linda Trimble, *Women and Electoral Politics in Canada* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>144</sup> *Every Woman's World* had an impressive monthly circulation of 123,436 in 1917. Arnold W. Thomas, *The Canadian Almanac and Miscellaneous Directory for the Year 1914* (Toronto: The Copp, Clark Company Limited, 1913), 297.

<sup>145</sup> "A Canadian Women's Political Platform," *Every Women's World*, November 1916, 13; Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred?*, 33.

<sup>146</sup> "The Non-Partisan Movement: The Non-Partisan Woman," *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, 15 March 1918, 7.

introduce legislation or re-vote on legislation; and lastly, “the recall,” would allow voters to replace their representative through a by-election.<sup>147</sup> Direct Legislation sought to directly empower the electorate and ensure the democratic process was not overly reliant on potentially corruptible representatives. By 1915, the United Farmers and the Grain Growers Associations (GGA) endorsed Direct Legislation, then in 1918, it was added to the CCA’s National Farmers’ Platform.<sup>148</sup> Labour leaders such as Puttee,<sup>149</sup> and prominent social gospellers involved in both labour and agrarian movements, such as Bland,<sup>150</sup> Irvine,<sup>151</sup> and Woodsworth, also endorsed Direct Legislation to combat the evils of party politics.<sup>152</sup>

Throughout the war, labour and agrarian organizations used the corruption exposed in the war contracts scandals to legitimize their fight for a purer democratic society and to cultivate support for specific political reforms. This position competed with Liberal rhetoric attempting to leverage the profiteering controversy for their own political gain by blaming the Conservative party specifically. Undoubtedly, the Liberal press was influential and expansive, but the distance of the labour and agrarian editorialists from the incumbent administrators was empowering. As this section highlights, some labour and agrarian editorialists did not hesitate to sympathize with patriotic outrage and demand the most severe forms of retribution against war profiteers. Similarly, labour and agrarian leaders appealed to disillusioned patriots and sought to explain to them that the Liberals and Conservatives were part of the same deeply-rooted evil that led to profiteering. As Canada’s political leaders appeared untrustworthy and corrupt, the arguments

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<sup>147</sup> Penner, 26-27. Also see “Direct Legislation,” *Grain Growers Guide*, 24 March 1915, 7.

<sup>148</sup> Hopkins, *Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 684-685, 707; The Canadian Council of Agriculture, *The Farmers’ Platform: A New National Policy for Canada* (Winnipeg: The Canadian Council of Agriculture, 1918), 8.

<sup>149</sup> “Jottings from Billboard,” *The Voice* 19 February 1915, 1.

<sup>150</sup> Richard Allen, “Introduction” in *The New Christianity* by Salem Bland (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), xviii.

<sup>151</sup> William Irvine, *The Farmers in Politics* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1920).

<sup>152</sup> Norman Penner, *From Power to Politics: Social Democracy in Canada 1900-Present* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1992), 26-30; Allen, *The Social Passion*, 203-204.

for the systemic transformation of the government, state, and democratic system became more convincing.

### **War Production and War Profiteers**

While the controversy surrounding the distribution of war contracts declined by mid-1916, concerns about the morality of war profits began to intensify alongside mounting evidence of material excess. The belief that war manufacturers were disregarding patriotic interests and making extravagant profits came in sharp contrast to the immense suffering that the war effort required. The seeming indifference of Borden's administration towards patriotic sensibilities provoked outrage among patriots who expected better from governing officials. As this section illustrates, patriotic opposition to the regulatory framework of war production and excessive war profits crossed class boundaries, deepened the feelings of injustice, and further strengthened patriotic appeals for the rejuvenation of democratic society.

Patriotic concerns about the moral regulation of war production first emerged as a significant political issue after revelations that the German military obtained Canadian-mined nickel. Ontario accounted for approximately 80 percent of the global nickel supply – a key resource in producing hardened and chromed steel. Once mined, the raw nickel was sent to the United States for refinement. Even before the war, rising geopolitical tensions between Britain and Germany fuelled public concern that Canada was indirectly helping the German military expand because German arms manufacturers were among the largest purchasers of American refined nickel. Given these pre-existing concerns, it could have been expected that the British or Canadian government would have ensured American-German trading partnerships were terminated at the beginning of the war, but in late-1914, Canadian newspapers reported that the

Germans successfully obtained Canadian-mined nickel from an American refinery.<sup>153</sup> H. V. Nelles, who studied the controversy, noted that a public backlash ensued demanding more extensive regulation of nickel. Another popular demand was to create national refineries in Canada so that refined nickel could be sold with government oversight.<sup>154</sup>

During the early twentieth century, most of Canada's governing officials opposed public ownership,<sup>155</sup> but there were enough precedents of nationalization in the railroad and utility sectors to make the proposal seem reasonable to non-socialists.<sup>156</sup> The controversy was seemingly resolved when the British Government met with the nickel companies in Canada and established new protocols to vet buyers of Canadian-mined nickel.<sup>157</sup> But then in 1916, newspapers indicated that a German submarine called the *Deutschland* transported hundreds of tons of Canadian-mined nickel in August and November.<sup>158</sup>

With state regulations failing to prevent a recurrence, pundits dug deeper into the roots of the nickel industry. Among the scrutinizers was Frederick Paul, who claimed that the "Nickel Trust" was among the conglomerates corrupting Canadian society. By funding both parties' electoral campaigns, the Nickel Trust ensured regulatory favouritism, such as the availability of

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<sup>153</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 319-321; "The Nickel Question," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 9 August 1916, 5.

<sup>154</sup> H. V. Nelles, *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines & Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 349-350.

<sup>155</sup> For discussions on *laissez-faire* capitalism in Canada during the early twentieth century, see Leo Panitch, *The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977); Owram, 29-49.

<sup>156</sup> There were some government-owned railway lines in Central Canada and the Maritimes; in 1909, the Saskatchewan government purchased the Bell Telephone Company to control long-distance services; and a year later, the Ontario government commenced the operations of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission, which oversaw the distribution of power to municipalities. Jamie Benidickson, "The Board of Railway Commissioners: Regulation, Policy and Legal Process at the Turn-of-the-Century" *McGill Law Journal*, 36 (1990-1991): 1223-1281; "The Farmers' Platform" in *The Siege of Ottawa* (Winnipeg: Grain Growers' Guide, 1910), 5; Nelles, 303-305, 367-8.

<sup>157</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 319-321; CTA, *Robert Borden's Diary*, 25 December 1914, *Ibid.*, 23 October 1914.

<sup>158</sup> "How Germans Got Our Nickel," *Saturday Night*, 28 April 1917, 2; "German Freighter Damage," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 22 November 1916, 34. Legislative Assembly of Ontario, *Report of the Royal Ontario Nickel Commission* (Toronto: A. T. Wilgress, 1917), 4.

Crown land at rock bottom prices.<sup>159</sup> Paul further criticized the nickel companies for paying large dividends during the war and offered paltry returns to the public treasury through mineral land and war taxes.<sup>160</sup> Similar to the labour and agrarian pundits analyzed in this study, Paul ridiculed the Liberals and Conservatives for bringing the nickel question into their game of politics. As portrayed in the illustration below, the Liberals and Conservatives' political quarrels allowed the Kaiser to steal Canadian nickel from across the US-Canada border, meanwhile, a small man representing public interests is knocked over in the commotion.<sup>161</sup> As Paul explained, the political mud-slinging was putting the lives of patriots at risk and undermining the war effort.<sup>162</sup>



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While the Liberals and Conservatives fought each other over the nickel question during provincial by-elections in Ontario,<sup>164</sup> a Royal Commission was launched to draw more informed

<sup>159</sup> "Giving Away Our Nickel," *Saturday Night*, 3 March 1917, 1.

<sup>160</sup> "The Front Page," *Saturday Night*, 5 August 1916, 1.

<sup>161</sup> "Nobody Home," *Saturday Night*, 9 December 1916, 1.

<sup>162</sup> "The Front Page," *Saturday Night*, 15 July 1916, 1.

<sup>163</sup> "Nobody Home," *Saturday Night*, 9 December 1916, 1.

<sup>164</sup> Nelles, 356.



conclusions.<sup>165</sup> In early 1917, the Commission published a nearly one thousand page report concluding that, contrary to the claims of the nickel companies, nickel refinement in Ontario could be profitable and competitive with American refineries. However, the report did not recommend nationalizing the nickel industry because it would cost approximately \$100 million (a sum equivalent to the total paid-up stock of all Canada's chartered banks). The Cabinet agreed that it would support the nickel companies to construct and manage the refineries.<sup>166</sup> But this also meant that nickel flows would continue to rely primarily upon private interests. Similar conclusions were reached regarding the refinement of copper and zinc, which were also essential resources for military production.<sup>167</sup>

Another dynamic of the war industries' regulation that antagonized patriots was that Flavelle blatantly favoured corporate interests and marginalized the interests of workers. Similar to Hughes and the Shell Committee, Flavelle's involvement could be a decisive factor in determining a company's success. Flavelle evaluated companies and business leaders on their character, including loyalty, service, and diligence.<sup>168</sup> Also guiding Flavelle's favouritism was his assessment of a company's industrial significance for the post-war economy. Mineral refining, for instance, was looked upon favourably, leading Flavelle to petition his British superiors to patronize Canadian refineries.<sup>169</sup> In contrast, manufacturers that produced rudimentary military supplies, such as the manufacturing of artillery shell discs, were allowed to

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<sup>165</sup> The Chair of the Commission was George Thomas Holloway, the Vice-President of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy of London, England. Joining him was Willet Green Miller, the Ontario Provincial Geologist; McGregor Young, a City of Toronto Counsel; and Thomas William Gibson, the Deputy Minister of Mines. *Report of the Royal Ontario Nickel Commission*, xix.

<sup>166</sup> The Ontario legislature passed a law in 1918 requiring that minerals extracted from Ontario's Crown land had to be refined within the province. W.O. Main "International Nickel" in *Canadian Business History*, ed. David S. Macmillan (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972); *Report of the Royal Ontario Nickel Commission*, xxv-xxvii.

<sup>167</sup> Carnegie, 59-61;

<sup>168</sup> For a detailed analysis on Flavelle and the management of the IMB, see Rider, 432.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 421-422.

become insolvent despite their pleas for IMB assistance.<sup>170</sup> Flavelle also shared the regional bias that prevailed under Hughes's administration. As John Thompson highlighted, the IMB awarded a mere one percent of the total value of munitions contracts to western manufacturers and four percent to the Maritimes. Québec and Ontario split the lion's share with sixty percent going to the latter.<sup>171</sup>

In contrast to the IMB's favouritism towards certain corporate and regional interests, Flavelle was unreceptive to the demands of organized labour. The TLC leadership expressed their desire to agree to the prioritization of the war effort, leading them to make a commitment at the beginning of the war to avoid wartime strikes so that war production would not be disrupted. In exchange, TLC executives, including President James Watters, expected the Cabinet to consult them on any war-related matters that concerned working-class interests.<sup>172</sup> To the dismay of the TLC executive, and organized labour more generally, Borden's administration ignored this expectation until 1918. Thus, when the IMB was formed, there were no institutionalized checks and balances to ensure Flavelle would be receptive to the demands of organized labour.

Among the TLC's demands was that Flavelle insert a fair wage clause in war production contracts to standardize pay and hours, as well as establish tripartite Fair Wage Boards to negotiate grievances.<sup>173</sup> The request was hardly radical because fair wage clauses had been standard in public works since 1900. Moreover, the Shell Committee and the British Ministry of Munitions used the fair wage clauses in their contracts, and the IMB's Labour Department, headed by Mark Irish, approved the clauses' inclusion. But despite the broad support for fair

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<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 423.

<sup>171</sup> Thompson, *Harvests of War*, 51-55; Siemiatycki, "Munitions and Labour Militancy," 133.

<sup>172</sup> Siemiatycki, "Munitions and Labour Militancy," 135.

<sup>173</sup> Approximately 250,000 to 300,000 workers were engaged in IMB-funded war production by 1918. Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review*, 1918, 408.

wage clauses, Flavelle denied the request on the pretense that the IMB could not interfere with employment contracts – a hypocritical claim because, as Myer Siemiatycki points out, Flavelle revoked a war contract from a manufacturer in Medicine Hat after the company failed to meet adequate labour standards. Siemiatycki speculates that the company’s small size and remoteness made them vulnerable to punishment, while big business could proceed with relative impunity.<sup>174</sup>

With pressure to adhere to the no-strike pledge, patriotic workers were in a difficult position because some working conditions in large factories were outright terrible. Laura Hughes, the niece of Sam Hughes, went undercover to investigate war factories and found shocking conditions of exhaustive shifts and hazardous environments. Following her investigation, she submitted a report to the Labour Department and became a prominent advocate for labour rights. To bolster her demands for better conditions, Laura Hughes brought the sacrifices of the working class into focus and contrasted them to the massive profits earned by war manufacturers.<sup>175</sup>

Responding to these terrible conditions, Pettipiece wondered, “What would Canadian soldiers think if the khaki they wore was being made by a girl verging on slavery in Canada?”<sup>176</sup> Since the IMB operated outside Canadian jurisdiction, and the British government regarded Flavelle as indispensable, no one was willing to coerce him into compliance.<sup>177</sup> Flavelle also disregarded the demands of the TLC to enforce equal rates of pay between male and female labour despite the endorsement of the British government and the active role of the IMB Labour Department in

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<sup>174</sup> Siemiatycki, “Munitions and Labour Militancy: The 1916 Hamilton Machinists’ Strike,” *Labour/Le Travail* vol. 3 (1978): 144.

<sup>175</sup> “The Work of Women Discussed by Miss Hughes,” *B.C. Federationist*, 11 February 1916, 4; “The Women’s Parliament of Canada: Question of the Month: Shall There Be Conscription?” *Everywoman’s World*, February 1917, 7, 25; Bacchi, *Liberation Deferred?*, 122-123; Sangster, 170.

<sup>176</sup> “Canadian Soldiers Clothing is Sweated,” *B.C. Federationist*, 31 December 1915, 1.

<sup>177</sup> D. J. Bercuson, “Organized Labour and the Imperial Munitions Board,” *Relations Industrielles / Industrial Relations* 28, No. 3 (1973), 611.

drawing female labour into war production.<sup>178</sup> As Sangster notes, “equal work for equal pay was never even a remote possibility in the [Canadian] government’s labour strategy.”<sup>179</sup> With Flavelle and the IMB blatantly prioritizing the interests of capitalists over workers, the TLC Executive unsuccessfully demanded Flavelle’s resignation in 1917.<sup>180</sup> The alienation of organized labour from policymaking, the state’s tolerance of poor working conditions in war factories, and the prioritization of capital’s interests all provoked outrage among working-class patriots. Considering that manual labourers constituted 55 percent of wartime recruits, it was apparent to many workers that the administration was disregarding the equality of sacrifice on a class basis.<sup>181</sup>

Further adding to the debacle of unequal wartime sacrifices was that the real wages of working-class households were struggled to keep up with wartime inflation. This is discussed in Chapter Three, but the point to be made here is that while workers saw their dinner plates become smaller and less appetizing over time, they were simultaneously opening their newspapers to read how war manufacturers were rolling in the profits. By early 1915, there were over 150 establishments producing munitions, producing an aggregate shell output of 4.1 million shells. By 1918, the number of establishments in military production increased to 38,344 and had an aggregate output worth \$3.5 billion.<sup>182</sup> John Hopkins noted in *The Canadian Annual Review* that the war contracts in Canada must have been very profitable because in the United States they

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<sup>178</sup> “Organized Labour Throughout Dominion Demand Immediate State Control of Foodstuffs,” *Labor World*, 26 May 1917, 3.

<sup>179</sup> Sangster, 176-177; Carnegie 251-256. For the state’s regulation of female labour in war industries during the Second World War see, Jennifer Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl: Employability, Domesticity, and the Gendering of Canada’s Welfare State, 1939-1947* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

<sup>180</sup> Canada, Department of Labour, “Report of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada,” *The Labour Gazette*, October 1917, vol. 17, (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917), 843.

<sup>181</sup> Granatstein and Hitsman, *Broken Promises*, 97.

<sup>182</sup> Carnegie, xii, xix, xx, 5, 250.

yielded profits between 25 and 50 percent in 1915.<sup>183</sup> Labour and agrarian newspapers brought attention to these windfalls and placed the spotlight on specific companies to highlight the ongoing injustice. The *Labor World*, for example, cited the Steel Company of Canada's profits as soaring by more than 800 percent between 1914 and 1916, prompting Francq to comment, "And the manufacturers want us to believe they are making sacrifices in this war... Anybody would like to sacrifice at that price. Would you not?"<sup>184</sup> Meanwhile, the Steel Company of Canada refused to improve wages and working conditions, leading machinists in Hamilton to undertake a long and bitter strike that ended in defeat after the IMB refused to assist them.<sup>185</sup>

Evidence of immense war profits made a mockery of patriotic sacrifice, prompting labour and agrarian leaders to highlight the hypocritical patriotism of war manufacturers. It is common to find special adjectives used to denote the patriotism of war manufacturers and other big financial interests, such as "profit patriotism," "punk patriotism," and "capitalist patriotism."<sup>186</sup> The labour and agrarian editors also used specific profit margins and managerial tactics to highlight the inconsistencies of capitalists and their patriotism: William Good argued that 50 percent profit was "not compatible with the spirit of patriotism"<sup>187</sup>; Chipman and Watters condemned manufacturers and the Shell Committee for using the guise of patriotism to charge three to four times higher than a reasonable price on war materiel;<sup>188</sup> and Pettipiece argued that the patriotism of the "B.C. Lumber Interests" was shallow because they blocked Japanese

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<sup>183</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 242.

<sup>184</sup> "War Profits!!" *Labor World*, 31 March 1917, 3.

<sup>185</sup> Siemiatycki, "The Great War, the State, and Working-Class Canada," 148-150.

<sup>186</sup> "The Work of Women Discussed by Miss Hughes," *B.C. Federationist*, 11 February 1916, 4; "Business is Business as Usual," *B.C. Federationist*, 12 March 1915, 1; "Punk Patriotism," *The Farmer's Advocate*, 25 January 1917, 122.

<sup>187</sup> "War Profits," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 2 December 1915, 1880.

<sup>188</sup> "Canadian Shell Grafters," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 24 November 1915, 5; "War and private Enterprise," *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, 12 September 1918, 5.

workers from enlisting so they could continue to provide cheap labour.<sup>189</sup> In the *Labor World*, Francq had a dedicated space to highlight these contradictions entitled “Patriotism versus Plunder.” He cited various ways the war was being exploited for profit, provided updates on investigations, demanded government action, and discussed wartime morality more generally. He even included some poetry:

Cannon to the right of them	Thieves to the front of them
Cannon to the left of them	Thieves to the rear of them
Oh, how they thundered!	God! how they plundered! <sup>190</sup>

Manufacturers balked at the charges of profiteering. The President of the CMA, S. R. Parsons, defended the profits of munitions contracts as a result of efficiency and volume, and while acknowledging that short-term profits were abnormally high, he believed they were necessary to offset post-war losses.<sup>191</sup> War manufacturers also attempted to divert attention away from their war profits. As Kyle Pritchard highlights, Thomas Russell undertook concerted efforts to glorify his company’s “progressive” integration of female labour.<sup>192</sup> Meanwhile, Parsons drew attention to the profits of farmers, which he claimed were equally abnormal.<sup>193</sup>

There were two areas of policy that labour and agrarian leaders focused on to address the excess of wartime profits: taxation and nationalization. Before 1914, Canada did not have a federal income tax or a corporate profits tax, but Liberal MPs had supported a wartime income tax since the beginning of the war, so its introduction could not be considered radical.<sup>194</sup> White

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<sup>189</sup> “The Patriotism of B.C. Lumber Interests,” *B.C. Federationist*, 30 June 1916, 1.

<sup>190</sup> “Patriotism versus Plunder,” *The Labor World*, 15 April 1916, 3.

<sup>191</sup> “Fair Treatment for Munition Manufacturers,” *Industrial Canada*, December 1916, 925; “Legislation,” *Industrial Canada*, July 1917, 432.

<sup>192</sup> Pritchard, 19.

<sup>193</sup> “War-Time Business and Profits,” *Industrial Canada*, February 1918, 1466-1469; “Our Relations with Labor and Agriculture,” *Industrial Canada* July 1918, 154.

<sup>194</sup> *Debates*, 20 August 1914, (Michael Clark, Liberal), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 41. David Tough’s dissertation portrays the federal income tax as a “break with the past,” however, this emphasis can be misleading because income tax was used by other Allied governments, including the United Kingdom and the United States. Moreover, provincial and municipal governments in Canada already used the income tax within their respective jurisdiction. It

had strong reservations about implementing a federal income tax for numerous reasons. He worried about infringing upon municipal and provincial sources of income, that it would be too expensive to administer, and that excessive taxation would stunt the growth of Canadian industries.<sup>195</sup> By 1916, however, provincial and municipal budgets were stable, and the excesses of overheating financial markets became obvious.<sup>196</sup> In November 1915, *The Monetary Times* noted the rise in stock market speculation, but perhaps most revealing for White was that the first federal war loan of \$50 million was oversubscribed in a mere eight hours.<sup>197</sup> Another sign of excess prosperity, at least according to Good, was the increasing number of expensive automobiles in cities and the bustling activity of high-end restaurants.<sup>198</sup> As the depressive economic conditions of the early war period subsided, White found fewer excuses to withhold measures for income and profits taxes, especially as the federal budget soared from war debt.

In February 1916, White introduced the *Business Profits War Tax Act*.<sup>199</sup> It imposed a 25 percent tax on profits above 7 percent on capital employed for all incorporated companies in Canada, with a slightly higher bracket for profits in excess of 10 percent on capital employed for individuals, firms, partnerships and associations.<sup>200</sup> In either case, if the capital employed was

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is more accurate to describe a federal income tax proposal as “catching up from the past.” David Tough, “The Rhetoric of Dominion Income Taxation and the Modern Political Imaginary in Canada, 1910 – 1945” PhD diss., (Carleton University, 2013), 150.

<sup>195</sup> *Debates*, 11 February 1915, (William White, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 1, 81-86; White, *The Story of Canada's War Finance*, (Montreal: 1921), 52-55.

<sup>196</sup> “Are we to have Federal Income Tax?” *The Monetary Times*, 22 October 1915, 5-6; “Ontario Taxes,” *The Monetary Times*, 10 March 1916, 12.

<sup>197</sup> “War Stock Gambling,” *The Monetary Times*, 5 November 1915, 9; “Canada's War Loan Oversubscribed in 8 Hours,” *The Monetary Times*, 26 November 1915, 5.

<sup>198</sup> Motor vehicle registration increased from 69,598 in 1914 to 341,316 in 1919. Desmond Morton and Glen Wright, *Winning the Second Battle*, 118; “Luxury,” *The Farmers' Advocate*, 26 July 1917, 1193; “Cutting Out the Luxuries,” *The Farmers' Advocate*, 25 January 1917, 121.

<sup>199</sup> The only adjustments to the tariffs were a higher duty on apples to help preserve the British Columbia fruit growing industry and small increases on oils, petroleum and lubricating oils. *Debates*, 15 February 1916, (Thomas White, Conservative), 12th Parl. 6th sess., vol. 1, 811-812.

<sup>200</sup> The tax specifically targeted profits by deducting the capital used to produce profits, including assets and financial instruments like stocks and bonds. The formula allows analysts to identify the efficiency of profitability.

below \$50,000, the company could claim exemption, but businesses with at least 20 percent profits derived from war orders would be taxed regardless of their capitalization. Another feature was that the tax would be applied retroactively to the beginning of the war. As White estimated, the tax would yield approximately \$30 million between August 1914 and August 1917.<sup>201</sup>

The reception of White's Business Profits War Tax was not as celebratory as he may have expected. On 12 February, Borden noted in his diary how "White's budget quite radical in its retrospective taxation of war profits. He expected Council to balk but instead they urged him to go farther."<sup>202</sup> Indeed, White came under heavy criticism from across the political spectrum. The Liberals argued that the tax allowed profiteers to keep the bulk of their profits while legitimizing the remaining excess.<sup>203</sup> In a *Toronto World* editorial, Maclean agreed with this view by stating that White's taxes allowed profiteers to get away "scot free."<sup>204</sup> The farmer and labour press joined the choir of criticism regarding the tax's leniency. They drew upon specific companies to show the extent of the tax's limitations and emphasized the continued excess of corporate war profits. For example, Chipman pointed out that the Montréal Ammunition Company declared a 100 percent dividend on its stock, while Francq showed equal dividend increases for numerous mining companies.<sup>205</sup> In one case, a munitions manufacturer voluntarily returned \$758,248 from his shell contract profits because the payout was excessive.<sup>206</sup> Chipman emphasized that voluntarism was no basis to return war profits to the public treasury because honesty among manufacturers was a rarity. The Montréal Ammunition Company, for instance,

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<sup>201</sup> *Debates*, 15 February 1916, (Thomas White, Conservative), 12th Parl. 6th sess., vol. 1, 812-813; White, *The Story of Canada's War Finance*, 32-34.

<sup>202</sup> CTA, *Robert Borden's Diary*, 12 February 1916.

<sup>203</sup> "Taxing War Profits," *Toronto Star*, 28 November 1916, 6.

<sup>204</sup> "Our New War Taxes," *Toronto World*, 17 February 1916, 6.

<sup>205</sup> "The Path of Duty," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 16 August 1916, 6; "Scandalous War Profits," *Labor World*, 10 February 1917, 3.

<sup>206</sup> "War Profits Returned," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 9 August 1916, 5.



only donated \$5,000 to the Patriotic Fund during a charity drive,<sup>207</sup> while twelve of the largest war manufacturers in Montréal donated an average of \$7,000.<sup>208</sup> The only solution, Chipman contended, was to “tax war profits without mercy.”<sup>209</sup>

Comparing TLC and CCA resolutions, it appears that the farmers were more united and explicit in their support for taxation as a solution to war profiteering. The CCA’s National Political Platform in 1916 included numerous demands for taxation: a heavy graduated inheritance tax on large estates, taxation on natural resources and unimproved land values, a graduated income tax on corporate profits over 10 percent, and a sharply graduated tax on incomes over \$4,000.<sup>210</sup> The platform carried with it the authority of the executives from the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), the Saskatchewan Grain Growers’ Association (SGGA), the Manitoba Grain Growers Association (MGGA), the UFO, and *The Grain Growers Guide*.<sup>211</sup> Farmers tended to agree with White that the income tax would not yield much, especially compared to the land taxes supported by organized labour and farmers.<sup>212</sup> However, the farmers still supported income tax because its principle of enforcing an equality of sacrifice was necessary for maintaining a legitimate war effort.

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<sup>207</sup> “No title,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 21 March 1917, 6; “Save our Soldiers,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 17 January 1917, 5-6.

<sup>208</sup> “No title,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 21 March 1917, 6.

<sup>209</sup> “War Profits Returned,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 9 August 1916, 5.

<sup>210</sup> *The Farmers’ Platform* (Winnipeg: The Grain Growers’ Guide, 1917), 4; “A National Political Platform,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 13 December 1916, 7.

<sup>211</sup> *The Farmers’ Platform* (Winnipeg: The Grain Growers’ Guide, 1917), 1.

<sup>212</sup> *The Grain Growers’ Guide* estimated that a two percent tax on unimproved land values would yield \$150 million a year. Such a yield would have been even greater than tariff revenue, which generated \$84.6 million between November 1913 and 1914. Organized labour supported land taxes and even went as far as demanding that the state appropriate all land held for speculative purposes and be given to farmers to increase production. “No title,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 13 January 1915, 6; Canada, “Report of Proceedings of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada,” in *Labour Gazette*, October 1918 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1918), 848.

In contrast, the TLC demanded that the government investigate war profits, but they did not endorse income or corporate taxes explicitly.<sup>213</sup> As evident in the labour press, there were disagreements regarding the most appropriate form of taxation. Some segments of organized labour wanted taxes to focus on speculation, while others proposed variants of a graduated income and profits tax.<sup>214</sup> At this point, taxation was becoming increasingly partisan, which the TLC executive wanted to avoid in fear of fragmenting their membership. However, it is also likely that the TLC did not take a firm stance on war taxation because it endorsed state ownership of all munitions factories beginning in 1916. This rendered the taxation of war profits redundant.<sup>215</sup> Labour socialists were among the most eager advocates of nationalization, but support gained traction as a patriotic cause. As Wells argued, the profit incentive should be taken out of war production as part of broader efforts for global demilitarization:

All the plant for the making of war material throughout the world must be taken over by the Government of the State in which it exists ; every gun factory, every rifle factory, every dockyard for the building of warships... Then, and then only, will it become possible to arrange for the gradual dismantling of this industry which is destroying humanity, and the reduction of the armed forces of the world to reasonable dimensions.<sup>216</sup>

To put it simply, the profit-incentive of war production was inherently evil and should be stopped. Such a view strongly resonated with an article written by Pettipiece, who echoed Wells's sentiments by arguing that munition manufacturers helped instigate the war by pushing aggressive foreign policies needed to create demand.<sup>217</sup> To Pettipiece, munitions manufacturers

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<sup>213</sup> Canada, "Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada," *The Labour Gazette*, October 1916, vol. 16, (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1916), 1680; Canada, "Report of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada," *The Labour Gazette*, October 1915, vol. 16 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1916), 466.

<sup>214</sup> "Foolish Taxation," *Labor World*, 15 July 1916, 3; "No title," *B.C. Federationist*, 25 February 1916, 2;

<sup>215</sup> Canada, Department of Labour, "Report of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada," *The Labour Gazette*, October 1916, vol. 16 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1916), 1670-1671.

<sup>216</sup> Wells, *The War That Will End War*, 41.

<sup>217</sup> "War and Strikes," *B.C. Federationist*, 11 June 1915, 2; Wells, *The War That Will End War*, 37-38.

were nothing less than “a cancer gnawing at the vitas of humanity, and requiring the application of the surgical knife.”<sup>218</sup> Francq and Good shared this disgust for war profits and characterized it as “blood money.”<sup>219</sup> Thus, support for the nationalization of war industries did not require one to be a professed socialist but simply a patriot and an opponent of militarism.

The farmers’ movement had supported nationalization for over a decade, but until 1917, their proposals were centred on infrastructure and utilities – most of all the railways.<sup>220</sup> Although the 1916 Farmers’ Platform did not endorse nationalizing the war industries, in 1917, Chipman and Good expressed support in their respective periodicals.<sup>221</sup> To legitimize their proposal, they framed the profits of the war industries as a source of evil and selfishness. Furthermore, they noted wide scale nationalization in the United Kingdom, which encompassed hundreds of state-controlled factories, expansive regulations for permits, and strict limitations on profits.<sup>222</sup> The framework of national factories in Britain was regarded as a success because, as reports indicated, they optimized production levels, saved the public treasury millions of pounds, and boosted public morale by prohibiting the exploitation of the war.<sup>223</sup> As Chipman reflected in early January 1917, “If the human life is of greater value than dollars and cents the government of Canada can save the lives of many of our soldiers by increasing the output of munitions thru [sic] private factories under government control and thru government factories and government

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<sup>218</sup> “Part Played by Ammunition Factors,” *B.C. Federationist*, 9 July 1915, 1.

<sup>219</sup> “A Crying Injustice,” *Labor World*, 10 March 1917, 3; “Editorial,” *The Farmers’ Advocate* 3 June 1920, 1049.

<sup>220</sup> *The Farmers’ Platform* (Winnipeg: The Grain Growers’ Guide, 1917), 41-48; “Railway Nationalization,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 17 May 1916, 5; “What Does it Mean?” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 5 July 1916, 5.

<sup>221</sup> “Save our Soldiers,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 17 January 1917, 5-6; “Government Munition Factories,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 24 January 1917, 5; “Controlling War Profits,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 26 August 1915, 1343; *The Farmers’ Platform* (Winnipeg: The Grain Growers’ Guide, 1917), 41-49.

<sup>222</sup> “Controlling War Profits,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 26 August 1915, 1343.

<sup>223</sup> Great Britain, Ministry of Munitions, *History of the Ministry of Munitions: General Organisation of Munitions Supply, Part I Administrative Policy and Organisation*, vol. II (London: H.M.S.O., 1921), 39-40.

operation.”<sup>224</sup> The vision of an expansive interventionist state that operated in the public interest was no longer a dream but a reality seemingly within grasp.

To an extent, the IMB endorsed state-owned factories in Canada, but only when the private sector was unwilling to accept the financial risks of undertaking work needed for the war effort. For instance, in February 1916, Flavelle addressed the persisting time-fuse shortage by funding the creation of the first national factory, the British Munitions Ltd located in Montréal. This was markedly different from Hughes’s approach to solve the time-fuse shortage through self-interested brokers, but importantly, the authorization of a national factory was premised on overcoming the time-fuse shortage rather than addressing the immorality of private profit. As another example, scrap steel from shell forgings was piling up throughout the Dominion because recycling it was not worth the cost. The IMB responded by establishing steel recycling plants, and while unprofitable, they helped maximize resources for the war effort by transforming the scrap into usable material. The development and production of aeroplanes was also undertaken through state ownership. The IMB established the Aviation Department, purchased a small privately-owned Toronto aeroplane manufacturer, then expanded the factory until it produced four to five planes per day. Again, the IMB relied upon state ownership because the post-war profitability of aeroplane production was too uncertain and high-risk to attract a sufficient amount of private capital.<sup>225</sup> To many patriots, these measures of nationalization did not go far enough and should have been used to prevent war profits based on principle. In recognition of the broadening popularity of nationalizing war production, Puttee proclaimed that “The day of public ownership is only dawning.”<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> “Save our Soldiers,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 17 January 1917, 5-6.

<sup>225</sup> Carnegie, 142-184; “Government Munion Factories,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 24 January 1917, 5.

<sup>226</sup> “Public Ownership,” *The Voice*, 9 January 1917, 1.

## Conscripting War Profits

When Borden announced his intention to implement conscription on 18 May 1917, it was a watershed moment for war profiteering controversy.<sup>227</sup> From the outset, conscription and profiteering were closely linked. Pettipiece, Laura Hughes, Chipman, and Bland, similarly believed that the selfishness and unscrupulous greed exhibited in profiteering undermined the public's enthusiasm to enlist and made conscription necessary.<sup>228</sup> The purpose of this argument was not to undermine support for conscription, which many believed was needed to keep the CEF at full strength in the coming years,<sup>229</sup> but rather for pressuring governing officials like Borden to ensure the conscription of men was accompanied with a "conscription of wealth."

Similar to profiteering, the conscription of wealth was clearest in principle. Francq provided one of the more straightforward explanations, "the popular idea behind the term is that dollars should not be held more sacred than men."<sup>230</sup> What this meant in terms of policy, however, was much more ambiguous. For Liberal MP Edward Nesbitt, the ambiguity became immensely frustrating, leading him to complain, "I have asked many people what they mean by 'conscription of wealth,' but nine of out ten, in fact, ten out of ten, cannot tell me what they mean."<sup>231</sup> As demands for the conscription of wealth became increasingly popular, the ambiguity gave way to rumours that the federal government would confiscate personal deposits in chartered banks, triggering a panic that led to widespread account withdrawals. White responded by

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<sup>227</sup> Granatstein and Hitsman, *Broken Promises*, 64.

<sup>228</sup> [No title], *B.C. Federationist*, 20 July 1917, 1; "How to Get Recruits," *The Voice*, 20 July 1917, 1; "A Square Deal All Round," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 29 August 1917, 5; "The Work of Women Discussed by Miss Hughes," *B.C. Federationist*, 11 February 1916, 4.

<sup>229</sup> A. M. Willms, "Conscription 1917: A Brief for the Defence," *Canadian Historical Review* 37, no. 4 (1956): 338-351.

<sup>230</sup> "Conscription of Wealth," *Labor World*, 28 July 1917, 4; Other references to the ambiguity of "the conscription of wealth" can be found in "The Conscription of Wealth," *B.C. Federationist*, 21 September 1917, 6.

<sup>231</sup> *Debates*, 22 June 1917 (Edward Nesbitt, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 3, 2597-2598; *Debates*, 5 July 1917 (Duncan Ross, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 3, 3045.

reassuring the public that he had no intention of confiscating savings. On the contrary, White stressed that the government's policy was "to promote and foster national savings."<sup>232</sup> For patriots expecting White to implement stringent war taxes, his comment was hardly reassuring that he intended to take the conscription of wealth seriously.

Following Borden's failure to lure Laurier into a national government supportive of the *Military Service Act*, the Cabinet decided to hold the long-overdue federal election. To buttress the Conservatives' plummeting popularity and to balance the budget, White amended the *Business War Profits Tax* in May 1917 to be more severe.<sup>233</sup> White also introduced *The Income War Tax Bill* in July.<sup>234</sup> Since White drafted the legislation one year earlier but hesitated to introduce it in anticipation of low yields, the Liberals made a convincing argument that White was being an opportunist who only introduced the bill to win electoral support prior to the election. The Liberals also ridiculed the leniency of the income tax by calling it "The Millionaires' Relief Act."<sup>235</sup>

In the lead-up to the 1917 federal election, the Laurier Liberals (that is to say, the Liberals who remained under Laurier's leadership and refused to join the pro-conscriptionist Union party) aggressively promoted the belief that war profiteering was an outcome of Borden's corrupt administration. On 5 November 1917, Laurier released his electoral manifesto denouncing Borden's administration as "the friends of the profiteers," stating that Borden's

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<sup>232</sup> White, *The Story of Canada's War Finance*, 52.

<sup>233</sup> *Debates*, 15 May 1917 (Thomas White, Conservative), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 1, 1451.

<sup>234</sup> White's *Income War Tax Bill* proposed the following graduated system of taxation on annual incomes: 4 percent on incomes above \$2,000 for unmarried men without dependents, while those with dependents were taxed 4 percent above \$3,000; an additional tax of 2 percent on incomes between \$6,000 and \$10,000; 5 percent between \$10,000 and \$20,000; 8 percent on \$20,000 and \$30,000; 10 percent between \$30,000 and \$50,000; 15 percent above \$50,000 and \$100,000; 25 percent above \$100,000. The bill also provided for a tax of 4 percent on incomes above \$3,000 for corporations and joint stock companies. Canada, *House of Commons Journal*, 25 July 1917, 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 53, 507.

<sup>235</sup> *Debates*, 3 August 1917 (Alexander Maclean, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 4, 4125; *Debates*, 17 August 1917 (Duncan Ross, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 5, 4654.

government “deliberately encouraged profiteering for the benefit of its partisan followers.” In addition to taxing *all* exorbitant profits, Laurier stated that he would not hesitate to immediately nationalize war production and have the factories produce at cost, thus putting an end to the war profiteering once and for all.<sup>236</sup> In contrast, the Unionists’ platform for war industry regulations was shrouded in ambiguity. As stated in the manifesto, the party supported “the general development of all the varied resources of Canada and their conservation and utilization to the best advantage of the people with the co-operation and assistance of the State in every reasonable way for that purpose.”<sup>237</sup> The Unionists did not employ the term “profiteering,” nor did they commit themselves to any specific program involving nationalization. Nevertheless, their pledge to address the profits and regulation of war industries was ambiguous enough that they were open to the possibility of nationalization and harsher war taxes.

When the votes were tallied, the Unionists emerged with a majority government. Subsequent chapters will examine the election in more detail but relevant to the discussion here is that the Unionists greatly benefitted from their political alliance with organized farmers and soldiers – part of that success was the expectation that the Unionists would take the conscription of wealth more seriously after the election. But as opponents of the Unionists had warned, there would be no major shift in federal policy. Nationalization remained confined to areas of high risk and low profitability, and adjustments to the fiscal regime were minor. Among the tax adjustments was a war surtax charged in addition to the Business Profits War Tax in April 1918. However, direct taxation yields remained unimpressive even with alterations.<sup>238</sup> As Naylor

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<sup>236</sup> Robert Borden, “Formation and Personnel of Union Government,” in *Manifestos 1916-17* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1918), 7-9.

<sup>237</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1917*, 588.

<sup>238</sup> *Debates*, 30 April 1918 (Alexander Maclean, Union), 13th Parl. 1st sess., vol. 2, 1261.

highlights, the tariff continued to account for the bulk of federal revenues, which totalled 73 percent by the end of the war.<sup>239</sup>

The Unionists may have gained some credibility from raising war taxes, but these inroads were undermined by the public's increasing awareness of tax loopholes. One nefarious tax evasion scheme was "watering" company stock, whereby the company would issue new shares without a proportional increase in the company's real asset value, effectively manipulating the basis of the company's capitalization and its corresponding tax bracket.<sup>240</sup> It was one of the mystical practices used by modern corporations that perplexed those who only understood value in relation to its physical worth.<sup>241</sup> Opposition to watering stock was widely promoted in the labour and farmers' movements and would remain so during the post-war period.<sup>242</sup>

A second loophole was the manipulation of accounting practices. In 1917, a Royal Commission investigated the William Davies Company for charges of food profiteering. The investigation gained widespread publicity because the founder and largest shareholder of the company was Flavelle. The investigation discovered that the company abused the deductibles allotted for capital losses by claiming the future depreciated value of a newly purchased building in Toronto. Needless to say, no one can predict the future value of a building and doing so in a tax assessment was unconventional even by early-twentieth-century standards. The exposure of

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<sup>239</sup> Naylor, "The Canadian State, the Accumulation of Capital and the Great War," 31.

<sup>240</sup> "Watered Stock and Profiteering," *B.C. Federationist*, 12 July 1918, 7.

<sup>241</sup> Lears, *Rebirth of the Nation*, 54-55.

<sup>242</sup> The Canadian Council of Agriculture, *The Farmers' Platform: A New National Policy for Canada* (Winnipeg: The Canadian Council of Agriculture, 1918), 6; "Corporation Tax Increased," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 2 May 1917, 5; "Mr. Parsons Reply," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, April 10 1918, 5; "More Profits Uncovered," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 2 July 1919, 7; "The Stock-Watering Evil," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 28 May 1920, 6; "Watered Stock and Profiteering," *B.C. Federationist*, 12 July 1918, 7; "Land Values and Watered Stock," *Labor World*, 3 January 1920, 4; "The Tax on Millionaires," *Labor World*, 5 February 1921, 3; "Current Comment by D. W. B.," *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, 26 October 1917, 12.



the Davies Company's tax evasion further validated suspicions that the corporate elite used manipulative accounting practices.<sup>243</sup>

A third controversy surrounding the evasion of taxation involved Government war bonds. In addition to providing an annual interest payment between 5 percent and 5.25 percent, the profits of war bonds were exempt from taxation. White's decision to exempt the loans stemmed from the advice of "New York interests," who recognized that bonds at higher rates could be obtained from other governments. Since White was determined to pay for the war primarily through debt, he wanted to make the bonds competitive, especially from a domestic standpoint, so he gave the war bonds tax exemption status. Contrary to the anticipated difficulties of finding war bond subscribers, the bonds were a resounding success. The first war bond in 1915 raised double its requested amount for a total of \$100 million; the second in 1916 also raised double at \$200 million; and the third raised an extra \$100 million for a total of \$250 million. As White recollected in *The Story of Canada's War Finance*, it demonstrated to the world that the Great War allowed Canada to prove itself not only as a formidable military foe, but also a financial power.<sup>244</sup> Of course, such celebratory overtones came in sharp contrast to the patriotic outrage towards the inequality of sacrifice, which the war bonds exacerbated. For low-income families who already endured immense wartime hardships, their budgets did not have the capacity to take advantage of interest-wielding war bonds. As Naylor estimates, approximately 80 percent of the tax-exempt war loans were subscribed by "big business organizations or rich individuals."<sup>245</sup> Low-income families, and even children, could purchase cheap war stamps, but these were more significant as acts of patriotism than as a means to improve one's financial position. The

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<sup>243</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on the William Davies Co., Ltd. and Matthews-Blackwell, Ltd. Report* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917), 12.

<sup>244</sup> White, *The Story of Canada's War Finance*, 26-28.

<sup>245</sup> Naylor, "The Canadian State, the Accumulation of Capital and the Great War," 40.

oversubscription of the tax-exempt war bonds indicated how they were highly sought after because they protected the wealth being accumulated during the war. During the TLC convention in 1918, labour delegates resolved to have the exemption status removed.<sup>246</sup> Meanwhile, in the press, editors fiercely criticized the war bonds' tax exemption: Pettipiece argued the tax exemption status let wartime profiteers earn a "second profit";<sup>247</sup> Francq stated it allowed profiteers to evade their share of wartime sacrifice;<sup>248</sup> and Irvine declared it "nothing short of a crime."<sup>249</sup> In Irvine's *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, an illustration depicted how the people were being shaken out of their money, while the profiteer held all the tax-exempt bonds. As the labour and agrarian pundits argued, the conditions of the war bonds exemplified how the party politicians protected the interests of the privileged few.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Canada, "Report of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada," in *Labour Gazette*, October 1918, vol. 18 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1918), 846-847.

<sup>247</sup> "How the Rich Grow Richer," *B.C. Federationist*, 4 July 1919, 8.

<sup>248</sup> "The Income Tax, A Boon for the Rich," *Labor World*, 10 August 1918, 4.

<sup>249</sup> "Tax Exemption Crime," *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, 27 September 1918, 5.

<sup>250</sup> "The Income Tax, A Boon for the Rich," *Labor World*, 10 August 1918, 4; "The Income Tax Law Boon For Rich," *B.C. Federationist*, 23 August 1918, 5; "The Bonds Should Be Taxable," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 18 September 1918, 6; "Taxing War Bond Income," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, July 23, 1919, 6; "Patriotic and Profitable," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 12 November 1919, 5.



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By the end of the war, Canada's political and economic elite were confronted with an infuriated labour and farmers' movements and disillusioned public. Pettipiece captured a moment exemplifying this pent-up outrage in the *B.C. Federationist*. In October 1918, Frank Carvell was giving a speech to a crowd in Vancouver. Carvell had been one of Borden's harshest critics for unchecked war profiteering, and notably, he was one of the two Liberals who allegedly bribed Charles Rogers to steal documents needed to incriminate Allison and Hughes. In 1917, Carvell crossed the floor and joined Borden's Union party, and while doing so, secured himself a position in the Cabinet. As Carvell delivered his speech to the Vancouver audience, he was continually interrupted by calls for the conscription of wealth. By this point, it had been almost half a year after Finance Minister Maclean introduced "harsher" tax adjustments, thus indicating the lingering disaffection. Carvell succumbed to the unruliness and entered a heated exchange

<sup>251</sup> "The Wrong Party in the 'Sieve'," *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, 27 September 1918, 9.

with a woman. Sounding more like White than his former self, Carvell explained that harsher taxes would deter business and lower tax yields. The woman responded with some wisdom of her own: “you can’t get blood out of a stone.”<sup>252</sup> As she and other hecklers understood, the war effort had taken everything from hardworking patriots, so the only ones left with anything to give were the profiteers. If the government wanted money, they needed to take it from those who deserved to lose it. After all, it was British and Canadian political leaders that convinced the public that the war was to be won with “silver bullets.”

## Conclusion

The Great War was supposed to be a righteous struggle to defend democracy and peace from the evils of militarism and German *Kultur*, but in that process, it became increasingly evident that there were deeply rooted evils within Canadian society as well. As patriots carried out their duties and suffered unspeakable hardships, evidence constantly surfaced revealing how party politicians and big business exploited the war effort for private gain. Initially, patriots were alarmed by the acquisition of cheap military boots and German access to Canadian-mined nickel, but by the end of the war, the entire business of war contract distribution and war production had been engulfed by controversy: governing officials and their political benefactors were exposed for pillaging the public coffers in ways that disregarded all patriotic sensibilities; specific scandals, such as the Million-Dollar Rake Off and Germany’s continued access to Canadian-nickel, revealed administrative indifference; and lenient taxes and favourable regulations ensured public dollars would flow into the pockets of the privileged few.

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<sup>252</sup> “Cabinet Members Have a Lively Time,” *B.C. Federationist*, 18 October 1918, 5.

While Liberals and Conservatives maneuvered around these issues as part of their “game of politics,” labour and farmer pundits drew upon patriotic outrage towards war profiteering to galvanize support for a radical departure from the status quo. Taxation, production for profit, the democratic system, and state regulatory bodies were all in need of drastic reform. While the war continued, patriots were bound by duty to maintain stability and order at home, but their patience grew thin by the end of the war. As Chapters Five and Six explore, the indifference of governing officials to address patriotic concerns became fuel for a democratic revolt involving both direct action and political action. War profiteering served as a critical focal point to rationalize the wartime injustices that underlined this militancy, but importantly, profiteering had other dimensions that further contributed to the legitimacy of the revolt. As the next chapter discusses, food profiteering was equally provocative and played no small role in galvanizing patriotic opposition to party politics and big business.

## Chapter 3.

### “The Seeds of Revolution”: Big Business and the Food Profiteers

It is difficult to understate the importance of food considering that humanity cannot survive without it, and yet, the significance of food acquired even more profound connotations during the Great War. If a food shortage befell the Allied armies, then soldiers and civilians within the path of the German war machine were put at great risk. In addition to the real destruction that would follow a German breakthrough, there was the imagined danger that Imperial Germany's triumph would deal a fatal blow to the peace-loving democratic world. To ensure the food economy was efficiently mobilized, patriots increased production, conserved food, supplemented consumption, and endured food shortages. Patriots were willing to uphold their duty, but their sacrifices also became a source of outrage. The High Cost of Living Commissioner, William Francis O'Connor, charged Canada's largest meat-packing company, the William Davies Company, with “food profiteering.” Adding to the sensationalism of this debacle was that the largest shareholder of the Davies' company was the Chair of the IMB, Joseph Flavelle. Based on O'Connor's report, an article in *Saturday Night* claimed that Flavelle earned \$1,685,345 from dividends between 1915 and 1917.<sup>1</sup> Flavelle became one of the focal points of the food profiteering controversy and legitimized suspicions that big business in food processing and distribution were shamelessly exploiting the war for profit.

Following a pattern similar to the war profiteering controversy, the Liberals depicted food profiteering as a direct consequence of the Conservative administration's ineptitude and

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<sup>1</sup> Rider, 345.

immorality, while the Conservatives dismissed food profiteering rhetoric as political sensationalism. However, while the Liberals were eager to exploit food profiteering for political gain, they also warned Borden that his administration's continued indifference could have dire consequences for the stability of the Dominion. Liberal MP Rodolphe Lemieux was among those who urged Borden to take more decisive action and reign in the food profiteers:

You will remember that the French Revolution started at the bakeries in Paris. There were in those days some Flavelles who kept the corn which came from the fields of France and who allowed that corn to come in only in small quantities and by night into Paris in order to maintain high prices... If you read the recent history of the Russian revolution, you will find that it started at the bakeries of Petrograd and Moscow. The millionaires and profiteers of this war in Canada are also, I make bold to say, sowing the seeds of revolution.<sup>2</sup>

Lemieux further cautioned that the public would not easily forget the injustices of rampant food profiteering, nor could parliamentarians expect them to remain passive if such intolerable transgressions persisted.

Believing that the unchecked practice of food profiteering revealed the government's indifference towards patriotic sensibilities, labour and agrarian leaders drew upon prevailing disillusionment and outrage to highlight the urgency of transforming democratic society through progressive and socialist reforms. As short-term solutions, they demanded minimizing or removing the profit incentive from food production through public ownership and regulatory controls. In the long-term, they promoted democratic reforms needed for eliminating or purifying party politics and for renewing Canada's democratic and Christian spirit. By appropriating the wartime profits of big business and undermining the corruption of party politics, the labour and agrarian pundits believed Canada could transcend the selfishness, greed, and corruption evident in wartime profiteering.

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<sup>2</sup> *Debates*, 15 August 1917 (Rodolphe Lemieux, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 5, 4559.

## Food Prices and the High Cost of Living Between 1900 and 1916

Between 1900 and 1914, rising food prices and food price volatility made access to food and the notion of a fair profit a leading public concern. Records of food prices cannot be considered fully reliable, but official statistics gathered by the Labour Department reveal the general turbulence.<sup>3</sup> Between 1900 and 1910, the price of staple foods rose by an average of one-third. An annual increase of three percent is not particularly exceptional, but this macro trend overshadows the fluctuations in specific food groups. For example, the same statistics indicate that the average prices of grains jumped nearly 20 percent between 1910 and 1912, then decreased by 20 percent in 1913; the prices for animals and meats remained flat between 1910 and 1913, then jumped 12.5 percent by 1914. There was also the rapid rise of general wholesale food prices between 1905 and 1907, which experienced an increase of over 12 percent.<sup>4</sup>

Rising food prices and price volatility placed immense pressure on both rural and urban low-income households. For farmers in Ontario, rural depopulation was pushing labour costs higher and stretching profit margins thin.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, farmers in the prairies embraced cash grain farming, which meant that rural households became more reliant on purchasing food, and thus, more vulnerable to food price fluctuations. To exemplify this vulnerability, John Thompson noted that during the summer of 1914, some agricultural households teetered on the edge of starvation.<sup>6</sup> Working-class families were also vulnerable to food price swings because the family economy became increasingly reliant on wages. Regulatory restrictions on boarding, raising

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<sup>3</sup> J.C. Herbert Emery and Clint Levitt, "Cost of living, real wages and real incomes in thirteen Canadian cities, 1900-1950," in *Canadian Journal of Economics* 35, no. 1 (February, 2002), 118.

<sup>4</sup> Canada, *The Canada Year Book*, 1916-17, (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917), 501.

<sup>5</sup> W. R. Young, "Conscription, Rural Depopulation, and the Farmers of Ontario, 1917-19," *Canadian Historical Review* 53, no. 3 (September 1972), 293.

<sup>6</sup> John Thompson notes in *Harvest of War* that an average prairie farmer would plant 55 percent of their land as wheat and 30 percent to oats needed to feed the horses to plow the wheat. Barley, flax and hay grasses constituted a tiny portion of the total acreage. Thompson, *Harvests of War*, 60.



livestock in urban areas, and the employment of women and children, combined with shrinking green spaces to grow vegetables, meant the family economy lost flexibility to make ends meet.<sup>7</sup> With greater dependency on wages, these urban low-income households struggled to cope with rising food prices. According to Bettina Liverant, a typical household would have to commit half their budget to purchase food, while rent absorbed another quarter.<sup>8</sup> With such minimal disposable income, sharp rises in food prices required a larger portion of the budget, cutting into other expenses, such as fuel, clothing, transportation, and medical care. Compounding the material pressures of rising food prices for both rural and urban households was the degradation of accepting charity. Based on Victorian norms, the acceptance of charity was widely perceived as an indication of individual failure, weak character, and low respectability.<sup>9</sup> Hence, rising prices and volatility placed material and psychological stress on households struggling to survive.

As the rise of modern financiers and capitalists coincided with the rising volatility of food prices, consumers became suspicious that market speculators, big corporations, and commercial “middlemen” were the source of the problem. Part of this suspicion was rooted in the belief that the prices received by farmers for selling food were decreasing or stagnant while the prices paid by consumers were rising. This left consumers to speculate that the big interests in food processing and distribution benefitted from these rising prices, primarily through illicit practices

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<sup>7</sup> Bettina Bradbury, “Pigs, Cows, and Boarders: Non Wage Forms of Survival among Montreal Families, 1861-1891,” *Labour/Le Travail* 14 (Fall 1984): 9-46. Also see Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996); John Bullen, “Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 18 (Fall 1986), 173.

<sup>8</sup> Bettina Liverant, “The Promise of a More Abundant Life: Consumer Society and the Rise of the Managerial State,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 19, no. 1 (May, 2008), 231.

<sup>9</sup> For a historical overview of charity and moral reform in English Canada, see Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). For a localized study see, James Pitsula, “The Emergence of Social Work in Toronto” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 35-42.

such as price-fixing, hoarding, deceptive packaging, and the dilution of quality. Workers and farmers were likely receptive to the villainization of big business because of their ideological disposition. As producers of physical goods, farmers and workers interpreted themselves as creators of “real value,” which, in turn, became the basis for their resentment of how modern corporations earned fortunes through mysterious equity management practices like watering stock and futures trading.<sup>10</sup> This “producerist” mentality made the public receptive to suspicions raised about the wealthy and privileged elite even before the Great War began.

Hostility towards business was not based purely on feeling. As state investigations during the 1880s revealed, there was some validity to charges of misconduct among the big interests. Investigations exposed price-fixing schemes among wholesale combines, sugar refiners, and cotton manufacturers.<sup>11</sup> The federal government responded by passing anti-combines legislation, but it proved ineffective after amendments made it nearly impossible to launch criminal charges. There was even an attempt by Liberal MP Henri Bourassa to ban stock speculation in 1902. However, legislators blocked it from reaching the statute books believing that it would be ineffective.<sup>12</sup> Hostility towards big business became especially intense when hundreds of firms amalgamated to form even larger and more intimidating corporate entities during the merger movement between 1909 and 1912. Many of these businesses were in food processing and distribution, including sugar refiners, meat packers, canning, milling, baking, and cold storage operators. Mackenzie King, the Minister of Labour, responded to public demands for safeguards

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<sup>10</sup> Jeffery Taylor, “The Language of Agrarianism in Manitoba, 1890-1925,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 23 (Spring, 1989): 91-118; Bryan Palmer, “Reform Thought and the Producer Ideology,” in *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1914* (Montreal: McGill-University Press, 1979): 97-122; Goutor, 145-169; Brown and Cook, *Canada 1896-1921*, 91-93; Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 54-55; Michael Bliss, *A Living Profit*, 24-26.

<sup>11</sup> Bliss, *A Living Profit*, 34-54; Carmen Baggaley, “Tariffs, Combines and Politics: The Beginning of Canadian Competition Policy, 1888-1900,” in *Historical Perspectives on Canadian Competition Policy*, ed. Shyam Khemani and William Stanbury (Halifax: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1991): 1-52

<sup>12</sup> Bliss, *A Living Profit*, 24-26.

against the new cadre of corporate juggernauts by introducing new anti-combines legislation in 1910. Similar to the preceding legislation, it was difficult for criminal charges to stick.<sup>13</sup>

Despite intensifying public hostility towards big business, the federal government retained its general strategy of non-intervention and focused most of its efforts on gathering and standardizing information. This was part of the *laissez-faire* governing dogma, which validated the government's attempt to encourage behaviour through education rather than through direct intervention in the private sector.<sup>14</sup> To this end, the Labour Department began collecting and standardizing price statistics for all cities with populations of 10,000 or more.<sup>15</sup> It was a significant milestone for institutionalizing consumer interests because it reflected the recognition that the value of wages must be understood relative to its purchasing power. Bettina Liverant, studying the Labour Department's price data, stated that in 1910 the Labour Department undertook a major investigation into wholesale prices and launched an additional project to establish a historical benchmark of prices between 1890 and 1899. This formulation of data did not establish a consensus regarding the causes behind the cost of living and food prices remained a contentious topic.<sup>16</sup> Robert Coats, Chief Statistician of the Labour Department, indicated the seriousness of rising public animosity. In the introduction to his report on wholesale prices, he included an excerpt from the *Bradstreet's Journal* stating that "When the history of 1910 comes to be written, not the least memorable of its happenings to be chronicled will probably be the great agitation, partaking of the proportions of a national revolt against the high prices of

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<sup>13</sup> Bliss, *A Living Profit*, 12, 33-34.

<sup>14</sup> Mark Cox, "The Transformation of Regulation: Private Property and the Problem of Government Control in Canada, 1919-1939," PhD diss., (York University, 1992), 5-7.

<sup>15</sup> J.C. Herbert Emery and Clint Levitt, "Cost of Living, Real Wages and Real Incomes in Thirteen Canadian Cities, 1900-1950," in *Canadian Journal of Economics* 35, no. 1 (February, 2002), 118.

<sup>16</sup> Liverant, 239-242.

food.”<sup>17</sup> A national revolt did not materialize in 1910. However, fears of a revolt did not subside either. Food prices remained volatile in the years leading up to the Great War. Indeed, the depressive conditions in 1913 compounded financial hardships for low-income households, leading to food protests in Canada and other countries experiencing similar conditions.<sup>18</sup>

It is important to note that some workers and farmers did not wait for state intervention as passive bystanders. In addition to protests, workers and farmers were willing to experiment in ways that challenged the power of big business, including consumer boycotts and co-operatives. Regarding the latter, there is some informative literature. Historians Bradford Rennie and Ian Macpherson are among those who illustrate that the creation of co-operatives was a radical challenge to the status quo of for-profit commerce. By removing the profit-incentive through the redistribution of profits to its members, co-operatives could infuse commercial activity with a Christian and/or socialist ethos.<sup>19</sup> As highlighted by Macpherson, agrarian organizations pioneered the first major co-operatives before the turn of the century, but they proved unstable until the early 1900s. When food prices began to rise between 1904 and 1907, there was a boom in co-operative retail stores in large cities and towns, even enticing the participation of trade unionists.<sup>20</sup> For example, Liverant notes how rising food prices inspired the Railway Brotherhood to establish their own butcher shop and a grocery store in Toronto.<sup>21</sup> But the boom in co-operative expansion was not without its obstacles: public awareness of co-operatives was a difficult hurdle to overcome; federal legislators obstructed the legal authorization of federal-level co-operatives until 1972; and powerful distribution and food processing conglomerates, such as

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<sup>17</sup> Canada, Department of Labour, *Wholesale Prices in Canada 1890-1909, Special Report by R. H. Coats* (Ottawa: Department of Labour, 1910), vi, 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> Canada, *Board of Inquiry into Cost of Living*, vol. 1, (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1915), 5-7.

<sup>19</sup> Rennie, 8, 140.

<sup>20</sup> MacPherson, *Each for All*, 9-23.

<sup>21</sup> Liverant, 234.

the Wholesalers Guild and the Retail Merchants' Association, restricted the development of co-operatives through corporate boycotts.<sup>22</sup> The expansion and diversification of the co-operative movement indicates how hostility towards big business inspired workers and farmers to reinvent commerce in a way they believed was morally superior and materially beneficial.

During the Great War, as food prices rose at an unprecedented speed, patriots drew upon their pre-war suspicions and accused the big business of food distribution and processing as the primary culprits. But it is important to recognize that while there was a continuity between the pre-war and wartime periods, opposition to big business was transformed by Great War culture. By drawing upon patriotic sensibilities, the moral transgressions of exploiting food markets for profit could be confronted with greater urgency and significance.

According to the Labour Department's commodity index, food prices jumped 8.5 percent between 1914 and 1915. The rise in prices was alarming because the highest annual increase for the same basket of goods before the war was 5.5 percent between 1911 and 1912.<sup>23</sup> With rising food prices already a contentious subject, patriots expected that Borden's administration would respond swiftly to the rising prices and minimize wartime material hardships. Initially, Borden seemed willing to oblige. On 24 August 1914, the Prime Minister issued a statement to the press declaring that the federal government would utilize its wartime powers to investigate and address causes of undue price increases, oppressive combinations, and illicit commercial practices. Such strong language left little ambiguity regarding the government's commitment to protecting the interests of those whom Borden claimed to defend – namely, “the labouring and artisan classes

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<sup>22</sup> MacPherson, *Each for All*, 47-48.

<sup>23</sup> The following commodities were included in the standardized basket of goods: grains and fodder; animals and meats; dairy products; fish; other foods; textiles; hides, leather, boots; metals and implements; fuel and lighting; building material; house furnishings; drugs and chemicals; and miscellaneous (Furs, liquors/tobaccos, Sundries). Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1916-17* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917), 501.

and generally those possess of small-fixed incomes.”<sup>24</sup> And yet, to their dismay, Borden and other Cabinet members were reluctant to do more than authorize investigations and educate the public. Wartime fiscal policy was also widely criticized for accelerating the rise of food prices and placing a disproportionate burden on those sacrificing the most. As Liberal, labour, and agrarian pundits would criticize, they were ineffective measures against food profiteering.

During the emergency parliamentary session in August 1914, Thomas White, the Finance Minister, unveiled his plan for new sources of federal revenue to meet wartime expenditures. He introduced special duties on specific commodities, including coffee, sugar, spirits, and tobacco. What appealed to White about this taxation scheme was that new financial burdens would be imposed on the basis of consumption. In White’s words, “In paying [the special duties] each citizen will feel that the amount he pays is a direct contribution to the defence of Canada and the Empire.” Hence, White did not advocate for dividing the war’s financial burden according to class or other socioeconomic inequalities – similar to his justification for using national debt to pay for the war.

Despite criticism from Liberal, labour and farmer pundits for placing an inequitable burden on the poor through consumption taxes,<sup>25</sup> White’s 1915 budget included additional consumption taxes and increased tariffs. The new excise taxes targeted some luxurious goods, such as perfumes, wines, and champagnes, and common services and necessities, such as cable and telegraph dispatches, railway and steamboat tickets, stamps, and proprietary and patent medicines. Financial institutions were also taxed. Banks had to pay a one percent tax on their note circulation, and incorporated trust and loan companies were taxed one percent on their

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<sup>24</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4229, file 15106.

<sup>25</sup> “Jottings from Billboard,” *The Voice*, 21 August 1914, 1; “No title,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 19 August 1914, 6; *Debates*, 21 August 1914, (Frank Carvell, Liberal), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 71.

insurance premiums.<sup>26</sup> This assortment of taxes were brought under *The War Revenue Act* and were estimated by White to yield between \$8 to \$10 million annually. The centrepiece of White's 1915 budget, however, was the tariff increases of 7.5 percent on all imports, with a slightly lower rate of 5 percent on British imports.<sup>27</sup>

The farmers' movement sternly opposed White's wartime fiscal policies. Major western farmer organizations, including the MGGA, the SGGA, and the UFA, passed resolutions during their 1915 conventions to reduce or remove tariffs. As Chipman stated in *The Guide*, the war taxes were a "calamity" because the costs of higher tariff rates would be passed onto consumers, while big business would retain their profit margins.<sup>28</sup> In addition to exacerbating the inequalities of wartime sacrifice, Chipman argued that the tariff increases were nonsensical for pragmatic reasons because maritime trade was already depressed by naval warfare, so the higher tariff rates would further deter trade and lower, rather than increase, customs revenue.<sup>29</sup> From Chipman's perspective, the tariff increases and consumption taxes were evidence of White's corporate favouritism. As Chipman explained, White's decision to raise tariffs was undertaken because it served the "big interests," who needed high tariffs to maintain their competitive advantages over foreign competition.<sup>30</sup>

The cartoonist for *The Grain Growers' Guide*, Arch Dale, took to his pen to visualize the frustration among organized farmers. In the illustration below, White is shown on his high horse, reflecting his sense of privilege. He peers down at the public treasury, represented by a pool of

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<sup>26</sup> *Debates*, 24 February 1915, (Alexander Maclean, Liberal), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 1, 362.

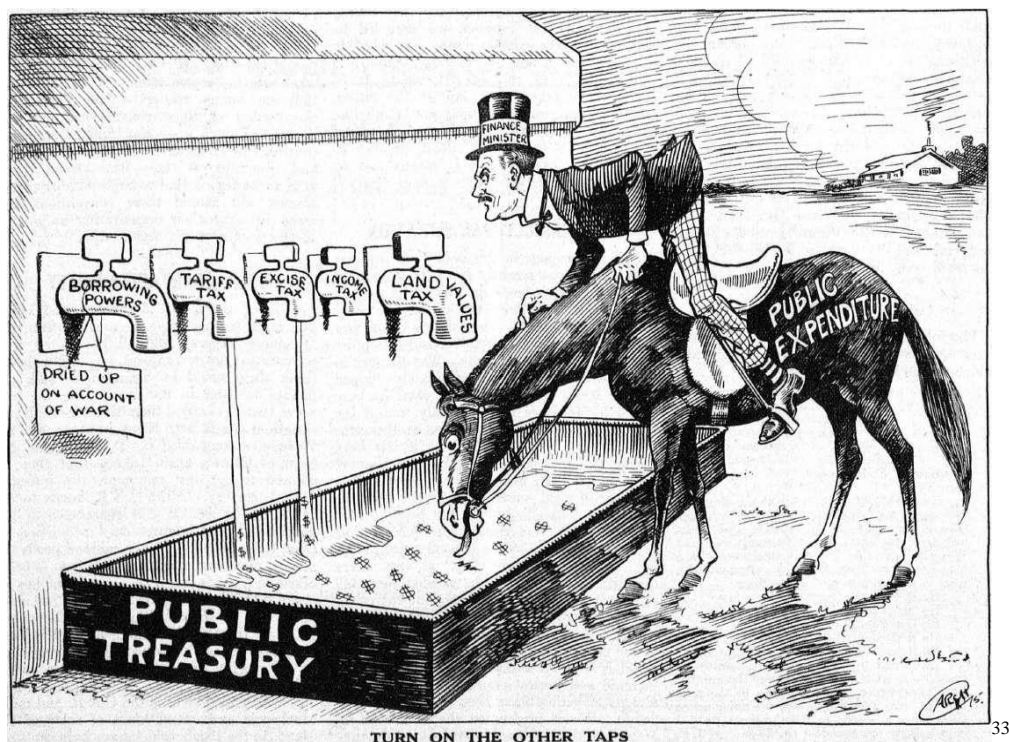
<sup>27</sup> *Debates*, 11 February 1915, (William White, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 1, 81-86.

<sup>28</sup> "War Taxes," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 23 December 1914, 5; "Raising War Revenues," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 20 January 1915, 21; "Public Opinion and Taxation," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 3 February 1915, 6; "The Budget," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 17 February 1915, 5; "Who Gets the Money?" *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 19 May 1915, 6; "War Taxes Have Failed" *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 16 June 1915, 5.

<sup>29</sup> "The Budget," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 17 February 1915, 5; "Raising War Revenues," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 20 January 1915, 21.

<sup>30</sup> "Public Opinion and Taxation," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 3 February 1915, 6.

funds, and wonders why his steed, “public expenditure”, cannot quench its thirst. A row of faucets hangs over the pool representing different sources of revenue. Only the two smallest faucets open, representing the tariff and excise taxes, while the two largest, representing land value taxes, are unopened. As Chipman estimated in another article, a two percent tax on unimproved land values could yield up to \$150 million a year, while the tariff revenue yielded less than \$85 million annually and served to exacerbate socioeconomic inequalities. The faucet representing the income tax also remains unopened, and although Chipman expected the income tax to yield the lowest revenue, its principle of taking excess wealth from the rich justified its use.<sup>31</sup> The position of the CCA was in complete alignment with Chipman and Dale’s assessment.<sup>32</sup>



TURN ON THE OTHER TAPS

<sup>31</sup> “No title,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 13 January 1915, 6.

<sup>32</sup> “The Burden on Labour” in *The Farmers’ Platform* (Winnipeg: The Grain Growers’ Guide, 1917), 11.

<sup>33</sup> “Turn on the Other Taps,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 13 January 1915 6.



The labour press joined the choir of criticism towards White's wartime fiscal regime. In *The Voice*, Puttee argued that the new taxes on financial institutions were so insignificant that the targeted businesses were likely rejoicing at the Government's leniency.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, it was hardworking people who continued to endure the brunt of White's taxation schemes. He agreed with Chipman that tariffs on food were detrimental to the people's interests, especially industrial working-class families. Puttee added to Chipman's assertion that White's policy for higher tariffs resulted from his favouritism towards big business. As Puttee rationalized the tariff increases, employers knew that wage reductions would instigate strikes, so they depended on higher tariffs to force workers to buy domestically produced goods at elevated prices. In this way, employers would secure greater market control and improve their financial position without aggravating labour directly. Workers had slightly improved their living standards over the preceding decade, but Puttee feared that the recent advancement in prices, compounded by the new tariff increases, were going to wipe out these meagre gains.<sup>35</sup>

Besides a resolution to combat inflation by restricting the right to issue new currency to the Dominion government rather than the banks, the TLC did not advocate for specific fiscal policies in 1914 and 1915.<sup>36</sup> However, the labour press urged the necessity of guarding against commercial interests eager to exploit wartime conditions. In *The Voice*, Puttee cited examples of this illicit behaviour. In one case, he described how liquor dealers purchased massive stockpiles to sell at a profit once the special war taxes came into effect. Since the duties were imposed retroactively, their profit-making scheme was foiled, but nevertheless, Puttee believed that the

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<sup>34</sup> "Jottings from Billboard," *The Voice*, 12 February 1915, 1.

<sup>35</sup> "The New Tariff," *The Voice*, 19 February 1915, 1.

<sup>36</sup> Canada, Department of Labour, "Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, Proceedings of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention, Held in Ottawa, September Seventeenth to Twenty-First," *The Labour Gazette*, Vol. XVI, (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917), 457-459.

dealers' unscrupulous greed deserved punishment by publishing their names in the press so they could be ostracized and banned from all patriotic processions.<sup>37</sup> Also noteworthy was that some municipal governments were passing regulations to protect consumers,<sup>38</sup> but with such indifference to food speculation at the federal level, coupled with White's ineffective war taxes, Puttee declared that "The workers will pay the price of war in blood and money."<sup>39</sup>

Some parliamentarians shared Puttee's concerns. Michael Clark, the Liberal MP for Red Deer, identified a group of investors who purchased large quantities of sugar before the beginning of the war, and since White's higher duties on sugar increased the selling price, the investors could sell it for a hefty profit. Clark asked whether the Government believed this speculative gain from the war was morally justifiable,<sup>40</sup> but George Foster, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, dismissed Clark's concerns entirely. Foster acknowledged that he was aware some wholesalers were hoarding beans and selling them at five or six times their purchase price, but state intervention would cause more harm than good.<sup>41</sup> Conservative MP, William Cockshutt, shared Clark's concerns about food prices and advised regulatory control on food exports, the prices of staple food products, and food speculation. Regarding the latter, Cockshutt believed millers were cornering the world's wheat supply to raise prices so they could continue paying record dividends.<sup>42</sup> Citing similar regulations in Australia, Cockshutt argued that the government could control wheat and wheat prices to curb speculation and encourage cultivation through guaranteed prices. But while convinced that these regulations were a winning formula for the

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<sup>37</sup> "No Title," *The Voice*, 28 August 1915, 6.

<sup>38</sup> For example, Puttee applauded authorities in Winnipeg for reprimanding a baker for artificially increasing the weight of his bread. The city also standardized bread sizes to prevent consumer deception. An Honest Bread By-law," *The Voice*, 5 November 1915, 4; "Bread," *The Voice*, 23 July 1915, 1.

<sup>39</sup> "The War Tax," *The Voice*, 4 September 1914, 6.

<sup>40</sup> *Debates*, 20 August 1914, (Michael Clark, Liberal), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 41.

<sup>41</sup> *Debates*, 20 August 1914, (George Foster, Conservative), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 42-43.

<sup>42</sup> *Debates*, 1 March 1915, (William Cockshutt, Conservative), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 1, 526-534.

war effort, Cockshutt accurately anticipated that the House would reject his proposal. Some rural representatives held the opposite contention and claimed that fixing prices would limit farmers' profits and deter expansion.<sup>43</sup> To conclude the debate, Borden reiterated that extensive state regulation would cause financial instability, although he vowed to be mindful of combines.<sup>44</sup>

In February 1916, White's fiscal strategy of minimal state intervention was further legitimized by the Board of Inquiry into the Cost of Living. The Board's investigation into the cost of living began in December 1913 in response to rising food prices. After conducting an extensive study, the Commissioners submitted two lengthy reports comprising over two thousand pages. Both agreed that the primary remedy for lowering the cost of living was to increase food production; however, as Liverant emphasizes in her analysis of the reports, the two volumes reflected the competing views and approaches of the commissioners.<sup>45</sup>

The first volume, submitted by Chair John McDougald and two additional commissioners, emphasized the significance of changing consumption patterns on rising living costs and cited consumer extravagance, waste, increasing living standards, and lack of thrift as responsible for driving up the cost of living. For instance, they criticized households for buying food in smaller packages rather than bulk, spending money on expensive name-brand foodstuffs, and subscribing to delivery services.<sup>46</sup> The second volume submitted by Robert Coats analyzed market forces on a global level to "prevent the forest from being seen because of the trees."<sup>47</sup> Less metaphorically, Coats argued that new economic conditions caused changes in consumption, not the other way around.<sup>48</sup> While the first report legitimized the policies and

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<sup>43</sup> *Debates*, 1 March 1915, (James Hughes, Liberal), 12th Parl. 5th sess., vol. 1, 543.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, (Robert Borden, Conservative), 552-554.

<sup>45</sup> Liverant, 243-244, 246; Canada, *Board of Inquiry into Cost of Living: Report of the Board*, vol. 1-2 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1915).

<sup>46</sup> *Board of Inquiry into Cost of Living*, vol. 1, 11-20.

<sup>47</sup> *Board of Inquiry into Cost of Living*, vol. 2, 4.

<sup>48</sup> *Board of Inquiry into Cost of Living*, vol. 2, 4-5, 1069.

perspective of White, Coats' report gave more credibility to the necessity of social security and state regulation to protect consumers from forces beyond their control, such as the increasing gold supply devaluing currencies. But despite their different approaches, both reports had an area of significant common ground – that big business in food distribution and processing were not found driving up food prices. Coats stated that the concentration of wheat production in the Prairies increased their reliance on food from Eastern Canada, while general food consumption became increasingly supplied by foreign imports. As the distance of these commodity flows expanded, distribution companies were required to increase their scale, but this directed capital into food infrastructure and distribution rather than food production. Coats claimed that this put upward pressure on domestic food prices but ultimately it was moot since cold storage operators only held up to 5 percent of the food supply. Indeed, both reports offer praise to the large cold storage operators for lowering prices. First through the preservation of perishable foods, and secondly, by minimizing the duplication of services. In the end, the Board of Inquiry dismissed the public's animosity towards combines, trusts and big business.<sup>49</sup>

For Borden's administration, the Board of Inquiry legitimized their strategy of refraining from market interference because rising living costs was attributable to an unfavourable balance of supply and demand. Combined with McDougald's emphasis on the negative impact of consumer habits, the Minister of Agriculture, Martin Burrell, felt more than justified in implementing the "Patriotism and Production" campaign to induce farmers to increase production and consume less. According to the Agricultural Department's characterization, the campaign represented a shift from "business as usual" to "more than usual."<sup>50</sup> The initiative encompassed a propaganda campaign to educate farmers. Among the Department of

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<sup>49</sup> *Board of Inquiry into Cost of Living*, vol 2, 1059-1068; *Board of Inquiry into Cost of Living*, vol. 1, 24-31.

<sup>50</sup> Canada, *Production and Thrift: Agricultural War Book* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1916), 2.

Agriculture's educational efforts was the publication of a collection of pamphlets entitled "Production and Thrift: Agricultural War Book" summarizing different methods of producing, saving, and consuming food.<sup>51</sup> The patriotism and production campaign resonated with patriotic sensibilities, but it could also aggravate them. William Good was insulted by the initiative because he believed farmers were already the hardest workers; meanwhile he contended that the government did nothing to address the extravagance of city dwellers, nor the war profiteers.<sup>52</sup> An article by Rose Henderson in *The Labor World* highlights similar feelings of irritation. As Henderson argued, White's emphasis on the need to practice thrift was similar to the class ignorance and privilege often exhibited by middle-class visiting women who offered the working poor oversimplified remedies to life's ills. The real source of extravagance, Henderson alleged, was to address profiteering, "The profiteer vulture like [sic], dop their foot steps from the cradle to the grave, so it behooves them to be abreast of the times in matters of economy."<sup>53</sup>

It is important to note that the non-interventionist approach of Borden's administration had some non-partisan supporters – although not all of them would remain supportive as evidence of food profiteering emerged alongside skyrocketing food prices later in the war. Among these supporters was Frederick Paul.<sup>54</sup> Paul's position on the causes of rising living costs closely aligned with the conclusions of the Cost of Living reports, which emphasized supply and demand and the enlargement of the gold supply.<sup>55</sup> As late as September 1917, Paul remained

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<sup>51</sup> *The Agricultural War Book* includes detailed discussions on various issues such as pests, seeds, grains, milling, drainage and fertilizer, an overview of production levels and commodity flows, and strategies on conservation and thrift such as lists of cheaper food alternatives and nutrition values.

<sup>52</sup> "Where another 'War Book' Might Do Good," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 22 June 1916, 1065.

<sup>53</sup> "The High Cost of Living," *Labor World*, 28 October 1916, 3.

<sup>54</sup> During the 1917 federal election, Paul endorsed the pro-conscriptionist Unionist party. Similar to agrarian and veteran organizations, he excused his direct political endorsement on the basis of the Unionists' "non-partisan" identity. "Saturday Night Offered \$100,000 by Big Interests," *Saturday Night*, 22 December 1917, 22; "Will Canadians 'Take the Count?'" *Saturday Night*, 15 December 1917, 1.

<sup>55</sup> "The Front Page," *Saturday Night*, 16 December 1916, 1; "High Prices and Cooperation vs. Middlemen," *Saturday Night*, 30 September 1916, 1; "The Front Page," *Saturday Night*, 11 November 1916, 1: "The Front Page,"

skeptical towards proposals to regulate food and contested the validity of mirroring British regulations in Canada given the different demographic and economic conditions.<sup>56</sup> Thomas B. Costain, Editor of *Maclean's Magazine*, also published articles opposing interventionism. One such article, written by an American journalist Judson C. Welliver, cited the failures of German food control efforts. At the beginning of the war, the German government empowered local authorities to fix maximum prices for foodstuffs. However, food prices varied across different municipalities, leading to localized supply gluts and shortages. In 1915, the German government attempted to overcome these discrepancies by fixing the national supply of foodstuffs, but the large bureaucracy was ineffective, and the underground market prevailed. Herr van Batocki, head of the German Food Bureau, admitted to the system's failures at the end of 1916, thereby leading Welliver to contend there was no need to repeat these costly mistakes in Canada.<sup>57</sup>

Pundits in the financial and industrial press also publicly expressed their opposition to food market regulations. The editor of *The Monetary Times*, Fred Field, applauded the conclusions of the Cost of Living investigation.<sup>58</sup> And G. M. Murray, Editor of the CMA's organ, *Industrial Canada*, believed that both farmers and manufacturers would benefit from minimal state intervention.<sup>59</sup>

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*Saturday Night*, 11 November 1916, 1. In Robert Coat's *Report on the Cost of Living* published in 1915, he states that the annual production of gold had risen from an output of \$113 million in 1890 to \$470 million in 1912, effectively doubling the world's supply of gold in twenty years. *Board of Inquiry into Cost of Living*, vol. 2, 751.

<sup>56</sup> "A Food Control Absurdity," *Saturday Night*, 22 September 1917, 1; "Mr Hanna on the Problem of Price-fixing," *Saturday Night*, 6 October 1917, 1.

<sup>57</sup> "Food-Price Control: A Comparison of German and British Methods," *Maclean's Magazine*, June 1917, 47-48.

<sup>58</sup> "War and the Cost of Living," *The Monetary Times*, 1 October 1915, 5; "Cost of Living Report," *Monetary Times*, 10 March 1916, 10.

<sup>59</sup> "Should War Profits be Taxed?" *Industrial Canada*, January 1916, 951; "Fair Treatment for Munition Manufacturers," *Industrial Canada*, December 1916, 925; "Our Relations with Labour and Agriculture," *Industrial Canada*, July 1918, 150; "The Grain Growers and the Manufacturers," *Industrial Canada*, February 1916, 1056; "The New War Taxes," *Industrial Canada*, March 1916, 1165; Murray even published one of Henry Wood's speeches promoting the social gospel. "The Cure for the High Cost of Living," *Industrial Canada*, December 1916, 924; "The Common Ground of Right," *Industrial Canada*, July 1917, 399; As profiteering controversy became more heated throughout the war, so did the financial media's accusations that farmers were the real profiteers. "Farmers

Support for regulating food prices and curbing food speculation began to broaden during the second half of 1916 when food prices accelerated at an unprecedented speed. The average price for a weekly family budget between January and August in 1916 rose 3.5 percent, but then from August to December, there was another increase of 11.6 percent.<sup>60</sup> An editorial in *The Toronto Star* proclaimed that the greatest victims of the price increases were women and children and noted that the newspaper office received a flood of letters requesting that the editors pressure the government into action.<sup>61</sup> *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, keen on tarnishing Borden's administration, described the broad range of groups passing resolutions in favour of food price control, including Boards of Trade and Councils, the Union of Canadian Municipalities, the National Council of Women, the Trades and Labour Congress, the Dominion Retailers Association, among others. Some of these organizations believed that persisting government inaction seemed so irrational that policymakers lacked accurate data, so delegations travelled to Ottawa to present policymakers with locally gathered information showing the steep price increases.<sup>62</sup> For Borden's administration, they saw themselves caught between a rock and a hard place because they did not want to depart from the recommendations of the Cost of Living reports and traditional governing dogma, but simultaneously, public pressure demanded action.

In response to mounting public pressure, T. W. Crothers, the Minister of Labour, created the office of the High Cost of Living Commissioner in November to have a permanent authority investigating the cost of living. Appointed to the position was William Francis O'Connor. Like Borden, O'Connor was a Conservative and lawyer from Nova Scotia, and although Borden was

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and Profiteers," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 20 February 1918, 6; "Farmers not profiteers," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 19 February 1919, 5.

<sup>60</sup> Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1916-17* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917), 503.

<sup>61</sup> "Voice of the People: The High Prices of Food," *Toronto Star*, 2 October 1916, 6; "The High Cost of Living," *Toronto Star*, 2 October 1916, 6.

<sup>62</sup> "High Cost of Living," *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, December 1916, 63.

20 years his senior, the two had a close working relationship.<sup>63</sup> O'Connor was undoubtedly a trusted Tory because he drafted some of the most important legislation during the war, including *The War Measures Act*, *The War-time Elections Act*; and *The Board of Commerce Act*. Moreover, the Labour Department had already utilized O'Connor's services in cost of living investigations.<sup>64</sup> In addition to this new position, Crothers also used the government's emergency wartime powers to issue an order-in-council empowering municipalities to investigate excessive prices. Under the new regulations, if the municipalities discovered illicit price-fixing, food hoarding or other nefarious schemes, they were expected to inform the newly created office of the High Cost of Living Commissioner to launch another investigation. If the subsequent investigation reaffirmed the offence, the Commissioner could report to the Provincial Attorney-General, who in turn could decide to prosecute and impose a fine up to \$5,000, a two-year prison sentence, or both.<sup>65</sup>

The new machinery to investigate the cost of living and prosecute offenders came under fire by the Opposition and pundits in the labour and agrarian press. The Liberals criticized the process as an intentionally "clumsy, and complicated" process to appease public demands while protecting the financial interests of some Conservatives, who were notably heads of powerful combines.<sup>66</sup> Good and Chipman were similarly critical of the new machinery and cautioned their readers that it would likely be ineffective for challenging the powerful monopolies in food

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<sup>63</sup> In 1906, O'Connor ran as a Conservative in Nova Scotia's provincial election but lost. Several entries in Borden's diary note their luncheons, meetings and general communication during the war. CTA, *Borden's Diary*, 11 February 1916; *Ibid.*, 17 Sept 1916; *Ibid.*, 18 July 1917.

<sup>64</sup> Blake R. Brown, "O'Connor, William Francis," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 16, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2015—, accessed July 5, 2020, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/o\\_connor\\_william\\_francis\\_16E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/o_connor_william_francis_16E.html).

<sup>65</sup> "High Cost of Living," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 15 November 1916, 31.

<sup>66</sup> For example, one member of the Conservative party, Francis Ramsay Lalor, MP for Haldimand, Ontario, was the head of a Canner's Combine. "High Cost of Living," *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, December 1916, 63.



distribution and processing.<sup>67</sup> Gustave Francq echoed these sentiments and cited G. W. Perkins, the Chair of the American Market Commission, who denounced the Canadian initiative as “the greatest bluff ever presented” with its sole purpose of calming the public.<sup>68</sup>

Despite prevailing skepticism, municipal officials and local Trades and Labour Councils began organizing their local communities to discuss the utilization of the new municipal powers.<sup>69</sup> However, it was not long before the weaknesses of the cost of living initiative began to surface. After three months, the TLC executive contacted the Labour Department and found there had been no convictions. Sugar refining companies and wholesalers in British Columbia faced charges, but their legal defences prevailed. Pettipiece blamed the lack of prosecutions on the machinery’s procedures, which, as anticipated, were too convoluted to be effective. For prosecutions to succeed, they required the support of provincial governments, which were not always sympathetic. For instance, when O’Connor suggested prosecuting the British Columbia Sugar Refinery, the province delayed the proceedings to such an extent that it seemed intentional. Pettipiece and Francq also suspected municipal councils of harbouring sympathies for big business, and since there was no formal obligation to submit reports to the Labour Department, the municipal councils could ignore the regulations. For municipal authorities willing to tackle illicit food profits, they faced an uphill battle from the lack of resources needed to gather evidence, forcing many to rely on community support.<sup>70</sup> The Montréal Trades and Labour Council was so frustrated with the initiative that they sent a message to the Dominion

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<sup>67</sup> “Sound Sense on Food Question,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 23 November 1916, 1918; “Cost of Living Probe” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 29 November 1916, 5.

<sup>68</sup> “The Key To Salvation,” *Labor World*, 9 December 1916, 3. “When the Minister Woke up,” *Labor World*, 3 March 1917, 3; “People Realize Trickery,” *Labor World*, 13 January 1917, 3.

<sup>69</sup> “Food Prices Aviate While the Dollar Submerges,” *B.C. Federationist*, 17 November 1916, 1; “High Cost of Living,” *Labor World*, 18 November 1916, 3.

<sup>70</sup> “No Convictions Since Order in Council Passed,” *B.C. Federationist*, 3 March 1917, 4; “Another Broken Promise,” *Labor World*, 17 June 1916, 3; “Prosecution of Sugar Refinery to be Pressed,” *B.C. Federationist*, 9 March 1917, 1.

Government demanding the order-in-council be replaced with effective legislation immediately. In anticipation of the request's rejection, labour delegates began discussing mass demonstrations and a one-day general strike to protest government inaction.<sup>71</sup> The strike did not materialize, but tensions remained explosive.

### **The Rise of the Bacon King**

In addition to the municipal-led investigations, O'Connor conducted his own investigations on canning, milling, coal, and a wide range of food products.<sup>72</sup> His most infamous investigation was on the cold storage industry. As stated in the introduction of his report submitted in early July 1917, O'Connor launched the investigation in response to popular suspicions that large cold storage companies operated an illicit trust creating artificial food shortages.<sup>73</sup> When Borden and other Cabinet ministers read O'Connor's report, they suspected it would cause a public uproar, so they decided to discuss the report privately before releasing it to the public. As Peter Rider highlights, before Crothers was notified to keep the report confidential, he gave a copy to his friend James Muir, Editor of the *Ottawa Journal*, who in turn, provided copies to his peers. From 13 July 1917 onwards, O'Connor's report circulated across the Dominion and became one of the most controversial developments of the war.<sup>74</sup> Hopkins commented on the report's significance in *Canadian Annual Review*, reminiscing that "The effect of this document upon public opinion was instant. It collected and concentrated all the

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<sup>71</sup> "Government Must Act," *Labor World*, 19 May 1917, 4.

<sup>72</sup> "Living Costs Investigation," *The Monetary Times*, 10 August 1917, 9-10.

<sup>73</sup> *Report of Acting Commissioner W. F. O'Connor*, 3.

<sup>74</sup> Rider, 337-338.

varying waves of feeling as to prices and costs upon one outstanding firm and brought its head under fire in a very real sense.”<sup>75</sup>

In his report, O’Connor described how four meat-packing companies possessed so much market control that they were effectively an oligopoly, in turn enabling them to earn abnormally high profits through massive turnover. According to the report, “bacon”<sup>76</sup> exports increased over 300 percent between 1913 and 1916. One anonymous company controlled half of these exports and had its sales rise from \$4.3 million to \$28.1 million during the same period. Butter exports also increased almost 320 percent, and eggs increased an astounding 5,250 percent. Almost half of the butter and eggs sold in 1916 were by ten of the largest companies, constituting what O’Connor explicitly considered to be “big business.”<sup>77</sup> O’Connor stated that these companies were not responsible for rising food prices, but their food profits and practices led him to conclude that, “Individual instances of profiteering occurred during the year 1916...I would consider it my duty to recommend that the facts be laid before the proper Attorney General for his consideration as to their criminality.”<sup>78</sup> Hence, the High Cost of Living Commissioner validated the suspicions of food profiteering based on their abnormally high profits. The names of the companies were kept anonymous, but those knowledgeable of the industry were quick to determine that the largest of the food profiteers was The William Davies Company. Using the information provided in O’Connor’s report, Chipman and other editorialists deduced that The Davies Company made a gross profit of \$5,000,000 on bacon alone.<sup>79</sup> Accentuating the intensity

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<sup>75</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1917*, 447.

<sup>76</sup> *The Canadian Food Bulletin* used the term “bacon” to include the entire hog when dressed and split into sides. “Why Bacon is Demanded,” *Canadian Food Bulletin*, 17 November 1917, 13.

<sup>77</sup> *Report of Acting Commissioner W. F. O’Connor*, 33-38.

<sup>78</sup> *Report of Acting Commissioner W. F. O’Connor*, 62.

<sup>79</sup> “Profits of Food Sharks,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 18 July 1917, 5. Using an inflation calculator based on Statistics Canada’s Monthly Consumer Price Indexes, \$5 million in 1916 would be the equivalent of \$104.7 million in 2020. *Bank of Canada*, “Inflation Calculator” Accessed 7 July 2020, <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>.

of the patriotic backlash was the fact that the president, majority shareholder, and the largest beneficiary of The Davies Company was Joseph Flavelle.

Flavelle first acquired a reputation as a successful wholesaler and banker during the late 1890s and early 1900s in Toronto. He was also an activist, supporter for the Conservative party, and philanthropist who attempted to shape his public image as a righteous man with strong Methodist convictions.<sup>80</sup> Flavelle's sense of moral superiority was very intense. For example, in a private correspondence he described Hughes as "a degenerate without moral sense and to some extent without moral responsibility."<sup>81</sup> Contrary to his image as a righteous man, Flavelle's ties to the big interests led him to acquire a reputation as an elitist, even acquiring the derogatory name of "the bacon king."<sup>82</sup> On top of this pre-existing animosity before the war, Flavelle's single-handed obstruction of including Fair Wage Clauses in war contracts led workers to become resentful.<sup>83</sup> But there were a series of other dynamics that accentuated the controversy of Flavelle's profiteering scandal, particularly those that brought his hypocrisy into focus. Among those dynamics was Flavelle's wartime speeches. In one address to the Canadian Club on 4 December 1916, Flavelle instructed the public to stop scolding the Government for profiteering and reflect upon what they could do for the war effort.<sup>84</sup> Two days later, Flavelle gave another speech to munitions manufacturers in Toronto, where he famously stated, "What have we to do with profits in this war, I would like to send profits to the hell where they belong." This statement, which editorialists condensed into "to hell with profits," became one of the most recognizable quotes of the Great War because of how it would epitomize Flavelle's

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<sup>80</sup> For an extensive biography on Flavelle, see Michael Bliss, *A Canadian Millionaire: The Life and Business Times of Sir Joseph Flavelle, Bart., 1858-1939* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978); For Flavelle's political activism see, Dutil and Mackenzie, *Canada 1911*, 98-99;

<sup>81</sup> Rider, 327.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 334-335.

<sup>83</sup> Bercuson, "Organized Labour and the Imperial Munitions Board," 610.

<sup>84</sup> "Reports on the High Cost of Living: Bacon," *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, September 1917, 23.

extraordinary hypocrisy. Flavelle also accepted a baronetcy from King George V for his administrative service during the war and professed to have been humbled by the soldiers' wartime sacrifices.<sup>85</sup> Based on Flavelle's notoriety and unpopular actions, the "Bacon King" was a prime target to channel patriotic outrage.

As Borden feared, O'Connor's report became an overnight sensation, and those who long suspected excessive profits among the big cold storage operators rejoiced in their vindication. As Puttee stated, "And, Lo, The Truth Comes Out!"<sup>86</sup> Many pundits praised O'Connor's exceptional willingness to expose the big interests. This led O'Connor to acquire a reputation as a sort of people's hero. Based on his exceptional stand, rumours began circulating that the big interests were going to remove him to ensure O'Connor did not cause any more trouble. Editorialists responded to this speculation by referring to him as "That Man O'Connor," which was a handle for the longer phrase of "Get That Man O'Connor."<sup>87</sup> Organized labour voiced their support for O'Connor, not only in the labour press, but the Canadian Federation of Labour went as far as endorsing O'Connor's employment as the High Cost of Living Commissioner as the first resolution during their 1917 annual convention.<sup>88</sup> It was hoped that by raising O'Connor's public status the big interests would not dare remove him and that he could continue to expose the food profiteers.

Flavelle did not remain a passive by-stander in the face of widespread defamation. In a letter to Borden, Flavelle professed his company's honourable conduct and claimed that the

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<sup>85</sup> "Reports on the High Cost of Living: Bacon," *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, September 1917, 23; Michael Bliss, "Flavelle, Sir Joseph Wesley," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 16, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2011–, accessed 6 April 2019, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/flavelle\\_joseph\\_wesley\\_16E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/flavelle_joseph_wesley_16E.html).

<sup>86</sup> "And, Lo, The Truth Comes Out!" *The Voice*, 20 July 1917, 1.

<sup>87</sup> "Get that Man O'Connor," *Saturday Night*, 20 April 1918, 1; "Some Profiteers, These U.S. Packers," *Saturday Night*, 20 July 1918, 2; "That Man O'Connor On Murdock's Trail," *Toronto Star*, 21 November 1921, 3; "That Man O'Connor," *Maclean's Magazine*, September 1919, 4.

<sup>88</sup> "Ninth Annual Convention of the Canadian Federation of Labour," *Labour Gazette*, October 1917, 861.

statements given to the press by the Department of Labour were "...grotesquely untruthful both in the mass and in the detail. The evidence a curious admixture of ignorance and malice." As Flavelle explained, The Davies Company offered the Imperial Government goods on an at-cost basis at the beginning of the war, but British policy required goods to be purchased competitively on the open market. Flavelle also reaffirmed the company's commitment to fair practices, emphasizing how any advantages were obtained through competitive means.<sup>89</sup> Flavelle took these arguments directly to the public by purchasing multi-page advertisements in newspapers across the country. As an example, a three-page advertisement in *The Monetary Times* explained how O'Connor misrepresented his business through clerical errors. Moreover, the company's financial officers missed a section on the form outlining the company's overhead costs, thus making the company's profits appear excessive. After dismissing the validity of all damaging claims, the advertisement demanded an official investigation.<sup>90</sup> Of course, the irony was that O'Connor was the official investigator.

The Cabinet was eager to accommodate Flavelle with another investigation and set the record straight. On 23 July, an order-in-council authorized a Royal Commission to re-examine the profits and practices of the two largest packing companies implicated for profiteering in O'Connor's report, namely the William Davies Company and Matthews-Blackwell Ltd.<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, O'Connor was not appointed as an investigator despite his popularity, and equally surprising was that George Henderson, who, as discussed in Chapter Two, was Allison's attorney, was appointed as the Chair. Without any accounting experience, Henderson aroused

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<sup>89</sup> Flavelle to Borden, 13 July 1917, *Borden Papers*, C-4323, 44645-44646.

<sup>90</sup> "Alleged Profits of The William Davies Company in 1916 on Bacon, as Indicated by Department of Labour to be Five Cents per Pound, Untrue: Actual Profits Two-Thirds of a Cent Per Pound," *The Monetary Times*, 20 July 1917, 26-28; Rider, 341-342.

<sup>91</sup> The Cabinet also recommended that the Minister of Labour standardize the system of costs accounting for cold storage businesses so that the net profits rather than the gross margins could be readily available for future analysis. Canada, Parliament, *Sessional Papers, 1917*, vol. 210b, 23.

suspensions of another whitewash investigation.<sup>92</sup> Liberal MP George Kyte made the charges plain and stated that Henderson was appointed to prevent The Davies Company from being harmed, and he even provided his service *pro bono* because of the payoff he received from defending Allison. To Kyte, “the chain of events and the chain of logic are perfectly plain and obvious, and it will be obvious to the general public.”<sup>93</sup>

As critics expected, the Royal Commission’s report submitted on 1 November 1917 exonerated The William Davies Company, Matthews-Blackwell Ltd, and Flavelle from engaging in any unlawful practices. However, the report revealed that The Davies company’s practices were not entirely ethical. Between August 1916 and February 1917, The Davies Company exclusively benefitted from a fixed minimum price with the British Government. This assurance gave them a competitive edge because the company could scale up its production without fear of collapsing prices.<sup>94</sup> There was no evidence indicating that Flavelle personally secured the guarantee but considering his close relationship with the British Government suspicions were warranted.

The Davies Company’s accounting practices were also controversial. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the company purchased a new factory in Toronto for \$350,000, but the directors wrote off \$150,000 of the cost as future depreciation after the war. Discerning the future value of the building was impossible, yet the recorded loss reduced the company’s taxable income.<sup>95</sup> By manipulating the tax system, The Davies Company substantiated criticisms that big business was untrustworthy and further exemplified outstanding flaws of wartime taxation. But while evidence

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<sup>92</sup> “Sidelights on the Ending Profiteering Inquiry,” *Saturday Night*, 4 August 1917, 1.

<sup>93</sup> *Debates*, 24 July 1917 (George Kyte, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 4, 3749.

<sup>94</sup> The Commission found that Matthews-Blackwell Company, which the Royal Commission was also investigating, was unaware that the Davies Company had such arrangements. Canada, *Royal Commission on the William Davies Co., Ltd. and Matthews-Blackwell, Ltd. Report* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917), 8-9.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

validated suspicions of illicit practices, not all the rumours circulating about the company were proven true. A former employee, John T. Wardle, had written to the British and Canadian Prime Ministers informing them that the company was deceiving them. As Wardle explained, hog carcasses were excessively soaked in saltwater to increase their weight and sell at a higher price. Wardle was fired, which subsequently raised suspicions that his allegation was true, but the Royal Commission found that the practice was a secret curing procedure needed for the trans-Atlantic voyage.<sup>96</sup>

Concerning The Davies Company's profits, the investigation found that the war was undoubtedly a prosperous time for the largest packing company in Canada. Between 1913 and 1916, the company's profit rose from \$166,826 to \$1,539,473. When evaluating profits upon paid-up capital, the company made 80 percent of its investments in both packing house plants and retail stores. During the same period, dividend payments increased from \$112,500 to \$800,000. Considering that Flavelle owned 50 percent of the company's stock as of May 1917, there could be no denying that he had earned a fortune during the war. As Rider calculated, Flavelle earned over \$1.6 million from The Davies Company's profits between 1915 and 1917,<sup>97</sup> but since these profits were liable to taxation, the Commission deemed them legitimate.

Although Flavelle and the Davies Company were exonerated by the Royal Commission,<sup>98</sup> its findings provided evidence supporting suspicions of illicit practices and the exploitation of wartime conditions to earn massive and abnormal profits.<sup>99</sup> For these reasons, Flavelle exemplified the limits of wartime justice. There were widespread demands for Flavelle's resignation as the Chair of the IMB, especially among the labour and farmers' movements. The

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<sup>96</sup> *Royal Commission on the William Davies Co.*, 4, 9-10.

<sup>97</sup> Rider, 345.

<sup>98</sup> *Royal Commission on the William Davies Co.*, 26-27.

<sup>99</sup> "Eighty Per Cent. Flavelle," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 28 November 1917, 5.



TLC, which already resented Flavelle for his opposition to the fair wage clause, called for Flavelle's resignation during the 1917 annual convention.<sup>100</sup> The farmers' conventions occurred before Flavelle's profiteering became known, but the agrarian press reviled Flavelle. As Chipman stated, "Sir Joseph [was] one of the biggest profiteers in Canada." He added that if the newly established Union Government wanted to prove their sincerity to stop illicit practices and profits in the food industries, then they would remove Flavelle from public service.<sup>101</sup> With public pressure mounting against him throughout the country, Flavelle offered to resign, but as Rider notes, Flavelle's supporters in the Cabinet and the British government urged him not to cave to political pressure. Even Winston Churchill, the new British Minister of Munitions, requested that Flavelle retain his position.<sup>102</sup> Flavelle agreed to remain the Chair of the IMB for the remainder of the war, but his public employment infuriated patriots across the Dominion.

Returning soldiers were also infuriated by Flavelle's food profiteering. According to Pettipiece's sources, Borden gave a speech to thousands of returning soldiers who disembarked a ship in Halifax. During his speech, the Prime Minister was repeatedly interrupted by the soldiers shouting, "To Hell with Borden" – a play on Flavelle's infamous statement, "To Hell with Profits." Pettipiece described a similar occurrence in Kitchener, Ontario, but as Pettipiece pointed out, the daily press would not report these incidents because they supported the pro-conscriptionist Union government during the lead up to the 1917 federal election.<sup>103</sup> To add

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<sup>100</sup> Canada, Department of Labour, "Report of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada," *The Labour Gazette*, October 1917, vol. 17, (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917), 843; "Our Food Controller," *Labor World*, 29 September 1917, 3; "Bread Costs More Here Than Any Other Place in Canada," *B.C. Federationist*, 12 October 1917, 2.

<sup>101</sup> "The Pork Packers' Reply," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 1 August 1917, 5; "Minister of Munitions," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 17 November 1917, 5; "A Suggestion to the Government," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 14 November 1917, 6.

<sup>102</sup> Rider, 348.

<sup>103</sup> "Grim Men of War Give Borden a Rude Jolt," *B.C. Federationist*, 30 November 1917, 1.

credibility to Pettipiece's claims, Borden wrote in his diary at the time of these incidents how there was a "very strong feeling everywhere against Flavelle."<sup>104</sup>

A further testament to the widespread and profound patriotic outrage was the diversity of artistic expressions intended to condemn Flavelle and his food profiteering. One of *Saturday Night's* featured writers, Henry Franklin Gadsby, published a series of articles condemning Flavelle and was accompanied by illustrations, blending the concrete and fabricated worlds. In the illustration below, Flavelle is depicted as a vampire to reflect his evil and parasitic nature. Mocking the baronetcy Flavelle received from the British monarchy, the German Kaiser stands in the foreground, bestowing Flavelle with an Iron Cross and insinuating that Flavelle's actions served the enemy. In the background, three women and a baby appear to be in anguish. This emphasized how Flavelle's success was predicated on exploiting women and children struggling to cope with rising food prices. The term "food profiteer" appears across Flavelle's belt, thus designating his identity with war-centric rhetoric. Gadsby also published a 10-page pamphlet titled "Joseph discovered by his Brethren," which highlighted parallels between Joseph Flavelle and Joseph from the book of *Genesis*. It depicted how both Josephs rose from the bottom strata of society to a place of prominence through their shrewdness and business savvy. In further similarity, Flavelle's wartime fortune from food shortages mirrored how Joseph of Israel made the Pharaoh a fortune by overstocking food in anticipation of a seven-year shortage.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> CTA, *Borden's Diary*, 22 November 1917.

<sup>105</sup> H. Franklin Gadsby, *Joseph Discovered by his Brethren* decorations by R. E. Johnston (Staff Artist), Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.



FOR SERVICES RENDERED

106

For the Liberal party, Flavelle's windfall of wartime profits proved to be the most opportune profiteering scandal since John Wesley Allison's "Million-Dollar Rake-Off." Interestingly, the *Canadian Liberal Monthly* was already zeroing in on Flavelle before O'Connor's report. For instance, an illustration published in June depicted Flavelle holding a money bag while being knighted by Borden. In the background there were cold storage facilities exploding with food while hungry men, women, and children grasped their empty baskets.<sup>107</sup> After O'Connor's cold storage report, the Liberals intensified their efforts to villainize Flavelle and associate him with the Conservative party.<sup>108</sup> In *The Grit*, the Liberals' special periodical during the lead up to the 1917 federal election, the Liberals published a goblin-like Flavelle in situations emphasizing his immorality and close association to Borden.

<sup>106</sup> "For Services Rendered," *Saturday Night*, 21 July 1917, 1.

<sup>107</sup> "The Reward for accumulating FOOD, is A Knighthood for the Food King, Sir Joseph Flavelle?" *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, June 1917, 174.

<sup>108</sup> For examples, see "The Cat Out of the Bag," *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, August 1917, 229; "Bleeding the Public," *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, October 1917, 33; "Not Title," *The Grit*, 1 December 1917, 2.



109



110

The *Toronto Star*, which was still sympathetic to the Liberal party in July, published a poem about Flavelle shortly after O'Connor's report was published in the press:

We used to sing of songs of birds,  
Or winter's woods forsaken.  
But other times, see other rhymes—  
So now we sing of bacon.

At night it's forty-five a pound,  
But fifty when we waken,  
Could even a king,  
Have such a thing,  
As toast and eggs and bacon?

Five million gone in "margins" which,  
They claim Sir Joe has taken,  
Yet we've forgot,  
The taste of hot  
and juicy breakfast bacon.

Sir Joseph writes Sir Robert thus:  
"Those profits are mistaken.  
They're All (you bet!)  
Legitimate:  
Not watered —like the bacon."

If patriotic knighthoods spring,  
From profits from us shaken,  
We'd like to know,  
What titles go,  
With every pound of bacon.

111

As the 1917 federal election neared in December, there were no signs of the Liberals' strategy abating. The Laurier Liberals mocked the Unionists' campaign slogan, "How would the Kaiser vote?" with "Who Will Sir "Bacon" Flavelle Vote For?"<sup>112</sup> Other slogans referred to

<sup>109</sup> "Oh Boy! Ain't it a Grand and Glorious Feeling?" *The Grit*, 7 December 1917, 2.

<sup>110</sup> "When It's Up It's Down," *The Grit*, 11 December 1917, 6.

<sup>111</sup> "Baconian Poetry," *Toronto Star*, 17 July 1917, 8.

<sup>112</sup> "Who Will Sir "Bacon" Flavelle Vote For?" *The Grit*, 11 December 1917, 5.

Flavelle directly while appealing to the patriotism of soldiers, farmers, and women.<sup>113</sup> Such extensive efforts to villainize Flavelle demonstrates how governing officials remained divided in their interpretations of profiteering. Rather than respond with uniformity, Liberals, Conservatives, and state officials such as O'Connor, developed conflicting opinions that added to the sensationalism of the food profiteering controversy.

For organized labour and farmers, Flavelle became a symbol of wartime injustice and the willful ignorance of Borden, who permitted his friends and party supporters to exploit the war for profit.<sup>114</sup> But rather than use Flavelle's food profiteering to denounce Borden's administration specifically, labour and agrarian leaders used the controversy to illustrate the deeply rooted evils of party politics and big business. Following O'Connor's report on cold storage, Chipman argued that regardless of whether O'Connor or The Davies Company were accurate, food processing and distribution were in dire need of regulation, if not outright nationalization. The wealth and power of packers and cold storage operators were so immense, even before the war, that it would have been impossible to achieve that much success without cheating farmers and consumers. Flavelle's food profiteering during a period of war demonstrated that the time had come for big business to be reigned in by the state.<sup>115</sup> Even those initially skeptical of price regulation, such as Good, became avid supporters.<sup>116</sup> Organized labour professed similar support for state regulation. During the 1917 TLC convention, the executive report demanded that the federal government protect consumers by controlling food prices and eliminating all speculation in the

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<sup>113</sup> "Farmers, Will You Vote For 'Bacon' Flavelle?" *The Grit*, 12 December 1917, 6; "Millions for Flavelle; \$1.10 For the Boys," *The Grit*, 10 December 1917, 2; "Women of Canada, Vote for 'Bacon' Flavelle," *The Grit*, 10 December 1917, 2.

<sup>114</sup> For an illustration depicting Borden's willful ignorance, see "'British Justice,' According to the Borden Scales," *B.C. Federationist*, 30 November 1917, 1.

<sup>115</sup> "The Pork Packers' Reply," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 1 August 1917, 5; "Hampering Food Distribution," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 12 December 1917, 13.

<sup>116</sup> "Price-Fixing and Food Control," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 17 May 1917, 825; "A Clear Statement Would Aid Production," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 8 November 1917, 1727.

necessities of life.<sup>117</sup> Appropriating the excessive profits in food through taxation also became intertwined with the demands for a conscription of wealth.<sup>118</sup>

### **Regulating Food and the Food Profiteers**

The hypocrisy of Flavelle's self-professed patriotism and exploitation of the war for profit and prestige aggravated patriots across the Dominion; in 1917, Borden's administration was also caught in a hypocritical position. In late 1916, food prices rose at an unprecedented rate, but the Cabinet did not change its strategy of non-intervention. For instance, on 1 January 1917, White announced that a new "Thrift Campaign" would provide a concerted effort to educate consumers on thrift practices. In a speech to the Toronto Board of Trade on 3 January 1917, White stated, "Let the people of the Dominion, by thrift and economy, make their dollars fight the Huns."<sup>119</sup> Civil organizations such as the National Council of Women of Canada and the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire were recruited to operate "thrift centres" to distribute government literature and host classes on household economics, including food substitution, food preparation, backyard gardening, and general consumption strategies.<sup>120</sup> In contrast to the non-interventionist approach of the Thrift Campaign, an order-in-council was passed on 7 February 1917 empowering the Minister of Customs to license newsprint exports, fix the quantity and prices of newsprint, and later additional regulations were passed for newsprint's distribution and transportation.<sup>121</sup> The purpose of the newsprint regulations was to limit exports to American markets so that the Canadian publishers could have a guaranteed supply. For patriots struggling to cope with rising food prices, and those enraged by unchecked

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<sup>117</sup> "Ninth Annual Convention of the Canadian Federation of Labour," *Labour Gazette*, October 1917, 843, 850.

<sup>118</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1917*, 420.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

<sup>120</sup> Kloske, "From Spenders to Savers," 81, 120, 124.

<sup>121</sup> Canada, Parliament, *Sessional Papers, 1917*, vol. 114, 23.

food profiteering, the newsprint regulations provided compelling evidence that Borden's administration was willing to disregard their principles of non-interventionism when it suited the big interests but not when it was in the interests of ordinary patriots.<sup>122</sup>

Among those who negatively reacted to the newsprint regulations were Borden's non-partisan supporters. As Paul explained in *Saturday Night*, "There is no great national emergency calling for such action on the part of our law maker... If we are to abrogate the law of supply and demand in one instance, why not in others?"<sup>123</sup> Fred Field echoed the same sentiments in *The Monetary Times*, "The acceptance of the government's right arbitrarily to fix the price of a commodity, save in the case of some great national emergency...might lead to the disorganization of our entire commercial situation." Field noted that the newspaper dailies were attempting to downplay the gravity of the regulations – which is perhaps unsurprising given that they were the beneficiaries – but Field contended the public would not be fooled.<sup>124</sup>

Following the newsprint regulations, Borden's administration struggled to justify maintaining their minimalist regulatory framework on food, especially as patriots became increasingly outspoken about federal inaction. Gustave Francq claimed in *The Labor World* that the number of resolutions demanding action against the high cost of living and food profiteering reached the thousands.<sup>125</sup> Francq himself published numerous articles condemning the government's continued inaction and for permitting food speculators to profit from wartime conditions.<sup>126</sup> Meanwhile, the Liberals pressured the Conservatives in the House by demanding a

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<sup>122</sup> Historian Tom Traves argues that Canadian publishers had exceptional influence over the Liberal and Conservative parties because newsprint was critical for party propaganda, war propaganda, and war regulations. Tom Traves, *The State and Enterprise: Canadian Manufacturers and Federal Government, 1917–1931* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 52-53.

<sup>123</sup> "Pap for the Newspapers," *Saturday Night*, 10 March 1917, 1.

<sup>124</sup> "Fixing Paper Prices Wrong Principle," *The Monetary Times*, 2 March 1917, 7.

<sup>125</sup> "How the People are Exploited," *Labor World*, 23 June 1917, 3.

<sup>126</sup> "The Price of Bread," *Labor World*, 19 August 1916, 3; "The Wheat Gamblers," *Labor World*, 19 August 1916, 3; "The Food Problem," *Labor World*, 12 May 1917, 3.

complete overhaul of food industry regulation, including maximum and minimum prices for commodities, control of flour mills and transportation, closing of the wheat exchanges, and the regulation of consumption in restaurants and hotels. White responded by repeating his non-interventionist principles but admitted that wheat futures may require regulation.<sup>127</sup>

When the Cabinet expanded the powers of the Minister of Customs to further regulate newsprint, White decided to remove duties on American wheat, wheat flour, and semolina beginning on 16 April. The Liberals criticized the move as a disingenuous effort to assist the Conservatives in the upcoming Saskatchewan and Alberta provincial elections in June.<sup>128</sup> To demonstrate honest intentions, the Liberals urged White to go further by passing legislation to exempt wheat permanently and include other items on the free list to help farmers. The Liberals also revived Cockshutt's proposals from the August 1914 parliamentary session by recommending the prohibition of food speculation.<sup>129</sup> As they highlighted, Allied Governments in desperate need of flour made massive bulk purchases, allowing speculators to corner the remaining portion to send prices soaring. Adding to the speculative craze was the volatility caused by peace talks.<sup>130</sup> On 28 April, the Cabinet caved to the pressure and passed an order-in-council prohibiting all speculative grain trading in futures and appointed a censor to monitor all transactions. Then on 8 June, Charles A. Magrath was appointed as a Fuel Controller, primarily

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<sup>127</sup> *Debates*, 3 May 1917 (Alexander Maclean, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 1, (William White, Conservative), 1056; *Debates*, 15 May 1917 (William White, Conservative), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 1, 1438.

<sup>128</sup> Turriff referenced how the Solicitor General, Arthur Meighen, recently visited the western provinces and concluded the Conservatives stood little chance unless the Conservatives supported free wheat. Turriff suspected the Conservatives were playing both sides of the controversy, telling those in the West the measure would be permanent while telling those in the East it was temporary. *Debates*, 24 April 1917 (John Turriff, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 1, 750-755.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, (John Turriff, Liberal), 750-755.

<sup>130</sup> George Kyte provided an example of wartime speculation mania. Kyte cited an article in the *Ottawa Citizen*, which showed how reports in Chicago anticipated new peace terms from the German Chancellor. However, the speech was postponed, sending wheat prices soaring as speculators priced in the likelihood of a longer war. *Debates*, 3 May 1917 (George Kyte, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 1, 1039.



to avoid a winter fuel shortage that occurred during the preceding winter.<sup>131</sup> A few days later, the Cabinet created The Board of Grain Supervisors of Canada to fix wheat prices and regulate distribution,<sup>132</sup> and on 16 June, another order-in-council was passed appointing a Food Controller.<sup>133</sup>

The appointment of a Food Controller appeared to signal a major shift in the regulatory strategy of the federal government, but upon closer inspection, it reflected only a slight deviation from the pre-existing policies. William J. Hanna, who accepted the position of Food Controller on 19 June,<sup>134</sup> had an impressive resumé of public service. He had a long career as a Conservative politician. He was also an advisor to Borden, the former Provincial Secretary for Ontario renown for his progressive prison reforms, and was the Director of Standard Imperial Oil Company.<sup>135</sup> Shortly after his appointment as the Food Controller, Hanna established a national headquarters for his office at Ottawa and appointed Regional Food Controllers and sub-committees. On 29 June, Hanna released an official statement of his mandate. As he outlined, the primary duty of the Food Controller office would be to optimize food exports to Allied forces; stimulate production, discourage waste, promote food substitutes; and coordinate activities with Herbert Hoover, the head of the U.S. Food Administration. A more measurable target was to reduce the consumption of wheat, beef, and bacon by one-third. As Hanna understood, the success of his office was dependent on the support of “every man, woman and child in Canada.”

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<sup>131</sup> *Debates*, 12 June 1917 (George Foster, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 3, 2235.

<sup>132</sup> W. Sanford Evans, “Georgian Bay Canal Commission Wheat Prices and a Comparative Study of United States and Canadian Markets (Interim Report no. 1)” in *Sessional Papers of the Dominion of Canada, 1918*, 53, no. 14, 37; *Debates*, 3 May 1917 (Alexander Maclean, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 1, 1062.

<sup>133</sup> *Debates*, 19 June 1917 (Robert Borden, Conservative), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 3, 2433.

<sup>134</sup> CTA, *Borden's Diary*, 19 June 1917.

<sup>135</sup> Gayle M. Comeau, “HANNA, WILLIAM JOHN,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 14, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed 25 February 2019, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hanna\\_william\\_john\\_14E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hanna_william_john_14E.html); Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1917*, 364; “Food Controller Appointed,” *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 4 July 1917, 5.

Specific segments of the public service and civil societies were called upon to cooperate, including Provincial governments, municipal bodies, civil organizations, church societies, and newspapers.<sup>136</sup> Hanna was also responsible for protecting Canadian consumers from hoarding and speculation, which is to say, to protect consumers from food profiteering.<sup>137</sup> The public response to Hanna's appointment was considerably positive during the initial establishment of his office. Chipman was skeptical of Hanna's effectiveness but generally hopeful,<sup>138</sup> while Gustave Francq was excited that consumers finally had a federal authority to protect them from the "greedy food speculators."<sup>139</sup> Once they realized the limitations of Hanna's mandate, however, the excitement was replaced by compounded frustration.

Contrary to popular expectations, Hanna did not fix food prices and profits, nor did he prosecute food profiteers. Instead, the Food Controller's office concentrated its resources on disseminating information on food conservation and consumption – effectively continuing the federal government's pre-existing strategy. One of Hanna's main initiatives was launching a national pledge card campaign to encourage obedience to "meatless days" and food substitution (such as replacing beef and bacon with fish and vegetables or using brown bread instead of white bread).<sup>140</sup> Hanna did use some mandatory restrictions, but they were focused on consumption and production rather than food profiteering. For example, between July and September, Hanna imposed restrictions on foods in public eating houses; prohibited the use of wheat for alcohol;

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<sup>136</sup> Hopkins, *Canadian Annual Review* 1917, 364-366; William J. Hanna, *Report of the Food Controller* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1918).

<sup>137</sup> William J. Hanna, *Report of the Food Controller* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1918), 15-16.

<sup>138</sup> "Food Controller Appointed," *Grain Growers' Guide*, 4 July 1917, 5.

<sup>139</sup> "Our Food Controller," *Labor World*, 29 September 1917, 3.

<sup>140</sup> For a list of relevant Order-in-Councils, see Canada, Parliament, *Sessional Papers, 1918*, vol. 14, no. 56.; "Food Control," *The Monetary Times*, 21 September 1917, 9; "Food Controllers' Activities," *The Monetary Times*, 2 November 1917, 8.

and flour exports became regulated through licenses.<sup>141</sup> To accommodate the expanding regulatory framework, Hanna established the *Canadian Food Bulletin* in October to centralize the flow of information. Taking these initiatives together, Hanna did not drastically depart from the wisdom embedded in the Cost of Living reports because the central thrust of the Food Controller's office was focused on education with some regulations guiding consumption and production. Regulations to curb food profiteering through nationalization or fixing food prices and profits were not pursued.

In August, the failures of Hanna's inaction became apparent after the shocking discovery that the Montréal Health Department destroyed millions of pounds of spoiled food. The oversight of such large-scale destruction undermined the efforts of countless households dutifully abiding by the Food Controller's advice to reduce consumption and use less preferable food substitutes. It also seemed to validate suspicions that large amounts of food were hoarded for higher profits.<sup>142</sup> Pettipiece and Francq brought attention to this claim by publicizing statements by O'Connor, who confirmed the existence of excessive food speculation. They also cited Hanna's acknowledgement that there was an excessive number of "middlemen" in food distribution.<sup>143</sup> But to the utmost frustration of patriots demanding an end to food profiteering, Hanna still refused to intervene. As a staunch believer that government intervention would cause more harm than good, Hanna responded to the demands by suggesting further taxation measures.<sup>144</sup> In effect, he passed responsibility for addressing food profiteering to White.

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<sup>141</sup> *Debates*, 3 May 1917 (George Kyte, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 1, 1039; *Debates*, 3 May 1917 (Alexander Maclean, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 1, 1062.

<sup>142</sup> "An Appeal to Mr Hanna," *Labor World*, 18 August 1917, 3.

<sup>143</sup> "Cold Storage Plants Must Disgorge," *Labor World*, 14 July 1917, 3; "Robbing the Consumer," *The Voice*, 27 July 1917, 1; "Food Controller Hanna Makes Discovery," *B.C. Federationist*, 28 September 1917, 1,5; "Our Food Controller," *Labor World*, 29 September 1917, 3; "What is the Matter Anyway?" *B.C. Federationist*, 9 November 1917, 1.

<sup>144</sup> "Consider Distribution," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 18 October 1917, 1617; "Food Controllers' Statement," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 10 October 1917, 5-6.

As outlined in Chapter Two, Borden's administration introduced new direct taxation measures in 1917 as a response to profiteering. Indeed, two days after the Royal Commission was authorized to investigate The William Davies and Matthew-Blackwell companies, White introduced *The Income War Tax Act*.<sup>145</sup> Then two weeks after the Royal Commission's report exonerated Flavelle and the William Davies Company, White enacted special taxes to limit the packing industry's profits to 2 percent of the annual turnover of sales.<sup>146</sup> During this period, federal taxation was undoubtedly moving in a progressive direction, but many patriots believed it did not go far enough. Fraud and tax evasion undermined the public's confidence that big business was even abiding by the lenient taxation measures. More importantly, the taxation of food profits only addressed the immorality of excessive food profits and provided nothing to protect consumers from rising prices nor illicit practices of food hoarding and price-fixing.

With the federal election in December 1917, there was hope that a new government would finally address food profiteering with more meaningful policies. Indeed, both the Laurier Liberals and the Unionists endorsed food regulation as part of their conscription of wealth. Laurier's 1917 election manifesto promised that a Liberal government would take drastic steps to regulate food prices and bring food-producing factories under government control, including nationalization if deemed necessary.<sup>147</sup> The Unionist's manifesto made similar promises, although it did not directly endorse nationalization. It did, however, recognize that corporate combines were increasing the cost of living, which was a significant turnaround given how Cabinet members and state investigators argued that such a correlation was an incredible

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<sup>145</sup> *Debates*, 17 August 1917 (D.C. Ross, Liberal), 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 5, 4653; Canada, *House of Commons Journal*, 25 July 1917, 12th Parl. 7th sess., vol. 53, 507; White, *The Story of Canada's War Finance*, 54.

<sup>146</sup> If 2 percent of the annual turnover in sales exceeded 7 percent of the capital invested, then the profits between 7 percent and 15 percent would be taxed at 50 percent, and 100 percent in excess of 15 percent. "Control Packers' Profits," *Canadian Food Bulletin*, 17 November 1917, 14; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1918*, 407. Another profit ceiling was introduced in 1918 to limit maximum annual profits to 11 percent.

<sup>147</sup> "Manifesto of the Right Honourable Sir Wilfrid Laurier," *Canadian Liberal Monthly*, November 1917, 53.

explanation for rising prices.<sup>148</sup> With politicians from both parties endorsing a more comprehensive approach to regulating food, patriots had good reason to believe that the new government would prohibit food profiteering after the election.

During the lead-up to the election, the Laurier Liberals made Hanna one of their primary targets to smear the credibility of Borden's administration. By September, Paul noted how the public was turning against Hanna and "criticisms grow every day more numerous."<sup>149</sup> Atkinson was among these critics and alleged that Hanna was permitting "the fleecing of the people."<sup>150</sup> Closer to the election, the Liberals' propaganda became very derogatory. *The Grit* offered Borden's Union party a more suitable name as the "Unionist-Profiteer Party";<sup>151</sup> deemed Hanna as a "friend of the profiteers"; and reiterated comments that the Food Controller's office was "the biggest bluff."<sup>152</sup> Rather than portray Hanna as a greedy corrupted Conservative, the Liberals focused on his upper-class incompetence. *The Grit* ridiculed Hanna's difficulties procuring information on food prices and suggested that Hanna "should visit a few housewives around Toronto, or anywhere." In general, *The Grit* reduced food control in Canada as nothing more than "fatherly advise to 'economize.' Eat less and save the difference."<sup>153</sup> The agrarian and labour editors examined in this study offered similar criticism towards Hanna's failures. As Chipman noted, many people expected the Food Controller to fix prices throughout Canada, and while Chipman urged him to do so, he emphasized the importance of imposing controls without the class prejudice against farmers that was characteristic of Borden's administration. Rather

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<sup>148</sup> Robert Borden, "Formation and Personnel of Union Government," in *Manifestos 1916-17* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1918), 7-9; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1917*, 587.

<sup>149</sup> "Misconceptions as to Food Control," *Saturday Night*, 1 September 1917, 1; "A Food Control Absurdity," *Saturday Night*, 22 September 1917, 1; "Mr. Hanna on Problem of Price Fixing," *Saturday Night*, 6 October 1917, 1.

<sup>150</sup> "Fight the Food Profiteers," *Toronto Star*, 22 September 1917, 9.

<sup>151</sup> "Women of Canada Think of Your Men," *The Grit*, 12 December 1917, 1.

<sup>152</sup> "Ha! Ha! Hanna!" *The Grit*, 10 December 1917, 1.

<sup>153</sup> "How Hanna Helped the Grafting Profiteers," *The Grit*, 12 December 1917, 7.

than target honest toilers, Chipman urged Hanna to go after the “army of middlemen,” especially the corporate firms, who were “absolute parasites” siphoning value from farmers and consumers to amass enormous profits.<sup>154</sup> Good was in complete agreement.<sup>155</sup> And as historian Bradford Rennie discusses, farm women opposed Hanna by refusing to sign his pledge cards until food profiteering ceased.<sup>156</sup> In the labour movement, dissatisfaction towards Hanna was similarly acute. Pettipiece rendered Hanna’s initiatives, such as meatless days, futile because the real problem was the food sharks, pirates, and profiteers exploiting wartime conditions for large profits. Indeed, Pettipiece condemned Borden’s new Union government as a tool of the big interests.<sup>157</sup> By this point, Francq retracted his enthusiasm regarding Hanna’s appointment and cited how food controllers in England, France, and the United States, had no problem fixing maximum prices for foodstuffs. As Hanna refused to pursue their strategies, Francq highlighted how food processing companies, such as Ogilvie Flour Mills Co., distributed 25 percent dividends.<sup>158</sup>

The relentless attacks and criticism from both partisan and nonpartisan press took its toll on Hanna. The sensationalism of accusations and criticism escalated. There was even a rumour that Hanna secretly gorged on extravagant \$4.00 meals. This particular rumour prompted Hanna to respond in the *Canadian Food Bulletin*, wherein he claimed that the groundless insinuation resulted from “German agencies” seeking to discourage the public from supporting food conservation.<sup>159</sup> Overwhelmed by criticism, Hanna resigned on 24 January 1918, claiming that

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<sup>154</sup> “Fixing Food Prices,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 10 October 1917, 5; “Food Controller’s Statement,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 10 October 1917, 5-6.

<sup>155</sup> “Consider Distribution,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 18 October 1917, 1617; “A Clear Statement Would Aid Production,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 8 November 1917, 1727.

<sup>156</sup> Rennie, 117.

<sup>157</sup> “What is the Matter Anyway?” *B.C. Federationist*, 9 November 1917, 1.

<sup>158</sup> “Our Food Controller,” *Labor World*, 29 September 1917, 3; “Cold Storage Plants must Disgorge,” *Labor World*, 14 July 3; “An Appeal to Mr Hanna,” *Labor World*, 18 August 1917, 3.

<sup>159</sup> “The German Menace In Canada,” *Canadian Food Bulletin*, 17 November 1917, 1.

he had become too ill to fulfill his duties (though later that year he resumed his position as Director of Imperial Oil).<sup>160</sup> It is clear that the attacks hurt Hanna. In the annual report of the Food Controller's office, he rationalized them as a consequence of the fierce political rivalries during the lead up to the 1917 federal election: "To such popular misconception originally existing, which found expression in hundreds of newspapers and magazines, is attributable the severe criticism to which my office and myself in particular were subjected. The fact that an election was pending and actually under way, tended to seriously prejudice the mind of the people as to the usefulness of the work I could perform."<sup>161</sup>

Before resigning, Hanna submitted a report that summarized the work of his office in 1917. He reasserted that production and consumption were the primary factors driving up prices and further contended that political rivalries and sensational journalism created the belief in food profiteering.<sup>162</sup> Hanna also criticized the public's fixation on pre-war prices rather than economic conditions because it failed to show how his initiatives prevented further increases.<sup>163</sup> Despite these negative sentiments, Hanna defended his work as an overall success. Interestingly, he alleged that his office nearly eliminated food profiteering, which is a peculiar contradiction of his statements alleging that profiteering was sensational rhetoric. Hanna does not provide a statistical basis for his claim and instead refers to the licensing system he imposed for certain foodstuffs during his final months as Food Controller. As Hanna stated, the licensing system,

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<sup>160</sup> Gayle M. Comeau, "HANNA, WILLIAM JOHN," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 14, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed 25 February 2019, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hanna\\_william\\_john\\_14E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hanna_william_john_14E.html).

<sup>161</sup> *Report of the Food Controller*, 14.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>163</sup> As an indication of Hanna's tendency to generalize, he believed only the French people were "...consistently patient and reasonably considerate throughout the war..." *Ibid.*, 7.

which tabulated the flows of commodities, rendered “profiteering impossible, or at least immediately discoverable and punishable.”<sup>164</sup> It was a contestable claim to say the least.

Following Hanna’s resignation and the Unionist victory in the 1917 federal election, Hanna’s assistant H. B. Thompson took the reins. Thompson did not have the best reputation as an administrator. In the *B.C. Federationist*, Pettipiece denounced “Highpockets Thompson” as inept. Meanwhile, the character sketch in *Saturday Night* dubbed him the “Play Boy of the West.”<sup>165</sup> Following Hanna’s succession, the Food Controller’s office was reorganized into the Canada Food Board (CFB), which included more executive positions to coordinate efforts with provincial governments.<sup>166</sup> The institutional overhaul improved the Board’s operational capacity, especially for administering the new licensing system to monitor commodity flows. However, the underlying strategies of the CFB did not embrace food price and profits controls, nor did the CFB prioritize the prosecution of food profiteers.

As Thompson set about improving the efficiency of the former Food Controller’s office, the food commodity index increased 30 percent from the previous year – part of an overall increase of nearly 75 percent since 1914. During 1918, there would be another additional 17.5 percent increase. Even Jasper J. Salmond, the new editor of *The Monetary Times*, hoped that the CFB would introduce more extensive regulatory controls for food to combat the rapid rise of prices. Regulations were introduced for specific commodities, but as Salmond reflected, it was “comparatively little” to other Allied countries, which utilized food rationing and price controls.<sup>167</sup> Meanwhile, the agitation against food profiteering showed no signs of abating.

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<sup>164</sup> *Report of the Food Controller*, 45.

<sup>165</sup> “New Federal Food Control Owns Spurious Labour ‘Union,’” *B.C. Federationist*, 8 February 1918, 6; “Canada’s Food Controller: A Character Sketch by William Hamar Greenwood,” *Saturday Night*, 1 June 1918, 3.

<sup>166</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 514.

<sup>167</sup> *The Monetary Times* also conveyed a sense of hope that Thompson would invoke farther-reaching measures than his predecessor. “Food Control,” *The Monetary Times*, 1 February 1918, 9.



Laurier continued to reference rampant food profiteering among “heartless speculators... attempting to build up fortunes out of the hunger of the masses.”<sup>168</sup> In *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, the Liberals blamed the CFB and pointed out that it was merely continuing Hanna’s practices of protecting the profiteers through inaction and leniency.<sup>169</sup> In response to the Liberal attacks, George Foster told Laurier that his accusations were “not only a false but a mischievous doctrine to be preached at the present time.”<sup>170</sup> Hence, even up to early 1918, some Unionists remained steadfast in their interpretation that food profiteering was mere sensationalism.

In early 1918, the press continued to report on evidence justifying concerns about food profiteering. O’Connor, who was still employed as the Cost of Living Commissioner, made another controversial report on 1 February 1918. He discovered approximately one and a half million eggs in cold storage. This was particularly surprising because the egg supply in Ontario had been nearly exhausted in January. O’Connor noted that the eggs were destined for foreign markets, but he contended that some of the supply should have been allocated for domestic consumers.<sup>171</sup> It was a familiar argument because Borden’s administration used a similar logic of balancing domestic supply and demand to justify their control of newsprint.

Another sensational story circulated following a story of how Winnipeg incinerator officials notified the city that the William Davies Company destroyed 8,500 pounds of poultry in cold storage. After the officials investigated the facility, they found an additional 50,000 pounds held since 1916. The Winnipeg General Hospital, which required approximately 3,600 pounds of poultry per month, had requested to purchase the stock in October 1917, but the company

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<sup>168</sup> Canada, “Index Numbers of All Commodities by Groups, 1891-1918,” *The Canada Year Book 1919* (Ottawa: Thomas Mulvey, 1920), 483.

<sup>169</sup> “Mr. Food Controller,” *The Canadian Liberal Monthly*, March 1918, 88.

<sup>170</sup> *Debates*, 27 March 1918 (George Foster, Unionist), 13th Parl. 1st sess., vol. 1, 213.

<sup>171</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1918*, 514; “Only Enough Eggs for Week in Stock,” *Toronto World*, 2 February 1918, 1.

refused to sell at market prices. As Paul described, “With a huge storehouse, and an ever-increasingly monopolized market, these profiteers kept hugging the chickens tighter and tighter awaiting their sale for a favorable market.”<sup>172</sup> The CFB’s investigation confirmed that the food was, in fact, deliberately kept off the market to maintain high prices.<sup>173</sup> Thomas Crothers, the Minister of Labour, investigated the controversy. Without discussing the details, he stated his satisfaction that there were no wrongdoings committed.<sup>174</sup> Of course, it is important to keep in mind that his perspective was premised on the primacy of corporate liberty to buy and sell goods freely. Expectedly, patriots were outraged at these new revelations of food profiteering, especially because the notorious “King Pin Profiteer” and “Bacon King” Sir Joe Flavelle was once again involved.<sup>175</sup>

In addition to egg and poultry hoarding, numerous other cases legitimized the persisting resentment about food profiteering. Amid press reports was a case involving 800,000 pounds of fruit, vegetables and eggs destroyed in a Vancouver incinerator,<sup>176</sup> as well as loads of salmon dumped by fishermen because they could not be canned.<sup>177</sup> In Montréal, over one million dollars worth of food had been destroyed in a local storage plant. In London, Ontario, 20,000 dozen eggs were destroyed in addition to the discovery of hoarded butter.<sup>178</sup> As late as May 1919, nearly 100,000 pounds of meat was being hoarded in a Montréal cold storage facility.<sup>179</sup> If these local reports were not enough to legitimize the belief in food profiteering, then suspicions were certainly justified from the findings of the American Federal Trade Commission. The

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<sup>172</sup> “The Great Canadian Hogtopus Dumps Its Chickens in the Sewer: Scandalous Waste of Food by the William Davies Company While the Food Controller Calls Upon Us to Save! Save!” *Saturday Night*, 30 March 1918, 2.

<sup>173</sup> “The Misuse of Cold Storage Plants,” *Saturday Night*, 20 April 1918, 1.

<sup>174</sup> *Debates*, 26 March 1918 (Thomas Crothers, Unionist), 13th Parl. 1st sess., vol. 1, 202.

<sup>175</sup> “Food Speculators Glory in Defeat of O’Connor,” *B.C. Federationist*, 12 April 1918, 8.

<sup>176</sup> “Tons of Food Burnt In Vancouver’s Incinerator,” *B.C. Federationist*, 22 February 1918, 3.

<sup>177</sup> “Salmon Dumped in B.C. Waters,” *B.C. Federationist*, 12 August 1918, 1.

<sup>178</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1918*, 573.

<sup>179</sup> *Debates*, 29 May 1919 (Rodolphe, Liberal), 13th Parl. 2nd sess., vol. 3, 2906.

Commission exposed rampant food profiteering in the United States, as well as conspiracies to obstruct the investigation and destroy evidence.<sup>180</sup> In response to these reports, there was an intense outcry for retribution, but again, neither the Justice Department, nor the federal government, nor the Cabinet responded with the immediate imprisonment of the offenders.<sup>181</sup>

Borden's administration was becoming wise to the situation's urgency and expanded the state's regulatory powers in 1918. The CFB was permitted to force wholesalers and merchants to sell their supplies of food if deemed necessary. What motivated this regulation were repeated incidents of food spoiling in train cars because of prolonged idling.<sup>182</sup> A more significant change came near the end of the war on 4 October 1918. The Cabinet passed an order-in-council to reinvigorate the municipal level cost of living machinery. Under the new framework, municipal councils could establish "Fair Price Committees" with powers to fix local commodity prices. It was a considerably de-centralized framework that resembled the German system described by Judson C. Welliver in *Maclean's Magazine*.<sup>183</sup> An obvious flaw in the Canadian system was that the Fair Price Committees were to be paid for at the municipality's expense, and prosecutions were still required to proceed through the Provincial Attorney General.<sup>184</sup> This approach may have been sound in theory, but the municipalities and provinces struggled to make strong cases. As the CFB report in 1918 stated, "Complaints of evasions and offences were received almost every day from all over Canada." In total, there were 142 fines, 4 imprisonments, 133

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<sup>180</sup> "Says Meat Packers 'Conspirators'" *B.C. Federationist*, 30 August 1918, 8; "US Packers Combine," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 14 August 1918, 5.

<sup>181</sup> "Tons of Food Burnt In Vancouver's Incinerator," *B.C. Federationist*, 22 February 1918, 3; "La Corde pour les profiteurs," *Labor World*, 23 March 1918, 1; "Trades Council Wants Profiteers Prosecuted," *Labor World*, 23 March 1918, 4; "Demand Cold Storage Control," *Labor World*, 9 August 1919, 4; "No Title," *B.C. Federationist* 12 August 1918, 6; "Cold Storage Investigation," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 20 March 1918, 6.

<sup>182</sup> *Report of the Canada Food Board*, 60.

<sup>183</sup> "Food-Price Control: A Comparison of German and British Methods," *Maclean's Magazine*, June 1917, 47-48.

<sup>184</sup> "How 'Fair Prices' Will Work," *Canadian Food Bulletin*, November 1918, 6.

suspensions, 17 confiscations, and 8 forced sales by the CFB's Enforcement Division.<sup>185</sup> The type of prosecutions was also controversial because editorialists highlighted that penalization was concentrated towards small restaurants rather than big business. For example, in *Saturday Night*, an article pointed out that a local merchant was fined \$100 and costs for allowing a few pounds of vegetables to spoil. Meanwhile, the big profiteers like Flavelle had been permitted to squander thousands of pounds of food without serious consequence.<sup>186</sup>

Between early to mid-1919, there were other reasons labour and farmers leaders were dissatisfied with the Fair Price Committee machinery. Creating Fair Price Committees was voluntary and dependent on municipal resources. Additionally, there were no mandatory appointments for labour and farmer representatives. As Good argued, fixing prices was too great a task for municipal administrations because they would likely fail at balancing competing class interests. The Fair Price Committees in Sarnia and Windsor, for example, had issued orders limiting the sale price of eggs and butter. These orders irritated Good because he believed egg and butter prices in those localities were reasonable. Given the poor judgement of these Committees, Good urged the administrators to abandon fixing prices for specific products and instead direct their attention towards investigating the illicit practices of large firms cornering markets and charging exorbitant prices. In a concluding remark, Good contended that the mismanagement of the Fair Price Committees to address food profiteering was yet another reason why the farmers needed to organize as a class.<sup>187</sup> In *B.C. Federationist*, Pettipiece similarly condemned the Fair Price Committees as the primary mechanism to combat food

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<sup>185</sup> *Report of the Canada Food Board*, 59-61.

<sup>186</sup> "Justice Favors the Rich," *Saturday Night*, 17 August 1918, 2.

<sup>187</sup> "Fair Price Committee and Prussianism," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 19 December 1918, 2081; "Another Fair Price Committee Breaks Out," *The Farmers' Advocate* 29 May 1919, 1055; "The Mythical Coal Shortage," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 12 June 1919, 1135.

profiteers. He contended that the crucial design flaw was that the big interests merely had to approach the Committees and convince them to set a price in their favour. In this way, the big interests could control the price-fixing machinery to facilitate their profiteering. Whether in Canada, Australia, or the United States, Pettipiece believed that the price-fixing initiatives “has been a fraud and a sham. There has been no sincerity in the whole business, as the balance sheets of profiteers reveal all too true.”<sup>188</sup> As Good and Pettipiece’s arguments exemplify, the Fair Prices Committees were not unanimously embraced as effective means to combat food profiteering.

Similar to Hanna’s annual report, Thompson’s CFB report described food regulations in 1918 as a resounding success. Thompson accounts for the difficulties in enforcing regulations, but food control became more feasible as the Allied Governments coordinated their purchases through the Allied Provisions Export Commission. As Thompson pointed out, the Export Commission prevented bidding wars among Allied Governments and stabilized food supplies by coordinating and tracking foreign purchases more closely, and thus enabling the Canadian government to withhold a sufficient food supply for the domestic market. Thompson also highlighted how the secrecy of large foreign purchases was partly responsible for the mystery behind why food prices could fluctuate wildly and why food supplies were being held en masse only to disappear suddenly.<sup>189</sup> However, while food regulation was arguably more feasible by the end of the war, Thompson’s interpretation of these efforts as successful conflicted with the mounting evidence of rampant food profiteering and skyrocketing food prices, which persisted into the post-war period. Without any noticeable impact on arresting the rise of food prices, let

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<sup>188</sup> “Profiteers Benefit By Fixing of Prices,” *B.C. Federationist*, 21 February 1919, 3.

<sup>189</sup> Canada, *Report of the Canada Food Board, February 11-December 31, 1918*, (Ottawa: Canada Food Board, 1918), 13-14.

alone arresting food profiteers, many patriots felt corporations and governing officials betrayed them. Indeed, only a few months after the CFB's 1918 report, politicians and pundits once again spoke of how food profiteering threatened to incite a revolution.<sup>190</sup>

## Conclusion

By the end of 1918, the federal government had expanded the responsibilities of the state far beyond the regulatory framework of the pre-war period. Rather than restrict the state's involvement in gathering and publishing information on food prices and utilizing indirect taxes such as tariffs to influence the flow of food commodities, the state acquired a wide range of new responsibilities. Under the Food Controller's office, and subsequently the CFB, the state used a licensing system to monitor food commodity flows; orders-in-council regulated food consumption, distribution, and production; direct taxes appropriated food profits; and Fair Price Committees fixed food prices and investigated illicit practices at the municipal level. But contrary to these significant advancements, patriots did not always use pre-war standards of regulation as their meterstick, especially not the labour and farmer pundits analyzed in this study. The alternative scale of measurement was whether food profiteers were being brought to justice; illicit practices were being prohibited; and excessive food profits were being appropriated. References to wartime regulations in Allied countries also provided another popular meterstick. When evaluated by these standards, the impact and significance of the federal government's regulations were not impressive because prosecutions of big interests were few and far between. Meanwhile, as governing officials relished in the "success" of their administration, evidence

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<sup>190</sup> *Debates*, 11 March 1919 (François Pelletier, Liberal), 13th Parl. 2nd sess., vol. 2, 1857; "Trying Out Government by Farmers," *Saturday Night*, 15 February 1919, 1; "Why Bolsheviki Power Grows" *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, 18 January 1918, 4.

continued to surface of illicit commercial practices of food hoarding and price gouging. With food prices continuing to break all-time highs, many low-income patriots who sacrificed dearly for the war effort felt that there was little to celebrate regarding wartime food regulation and much to resent.

## Chapter 4.

### “Remember, all the profiteers are not pork Barons”: Alien Profiteering and Xenophobic-Patriotism

In early March 1918, Great War Veterans paraded in the streets of Toronto and Hamilton to protest alien profiteering. *The Toronto Daily Star* probed the dispute and outlined the veterans' contention that there was an inequality of sacrifice among ethnic communities. While dutiful Canadian citizens of British origin were leaving their jobs and businesses to enlist, aliens stayed on the home front to reap the benefits of wartime prosperity. In addition to alien workers allegedly earning up to ten times the pay of the average soldiers' wages of \$1.10 a day, Lieut.-Col. Hardy, the President of the Toronto District of the GWVA, was angered by the wartime success of alien businesses. Hardy remarked, "Remember, all the profiteers are not pork barons, there are wonderful possibilities in the peanut stand, the fruit store and the shoeshine parlor." To rectify a situation in which aliens were undeservedly reaping the benefits of wartime prosperity, Hardy, along with other prominent GWVA leaders, such as Sgt. William Turley, the Ontario branch's secretary, demanded that the federal government take drastic action to conscript alien wealth. There were numerous proposals to this end: conscript allied aliens of military age; intern enemy aliens and use them to fill labour shortages; or allow enemy aliens to find employment but appropriate their wages earned in excess of the lowest military pay. Hardy warned that the continued indifference of Borden's administration would likely incite anti-alien violence, especially among the returned soldiers.<sup>1</sup> Considering that veterans led raids and riots that

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<sup>1</sup> "80,000 Alien Enemies at Large, Paid Many Times \$1.10 A Day," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 8 March 1918, 14.



targeted alien wage-earners and businesses throughout the war, Hardy's warning was not far-fetched. Indeed, six months later, anti-alien sentiment reached another breaking point and veterans led anti-alien riots in metropolitan centres across the Dominion.

Profiteering's ethnic dimensions complicates its inclusion in the labour and agrarian revolt narratives. Historians have been attentive to how wartime conflicts concerning race and ethnicity influenced class relations;<sup>2</sup> however, the absence of discussion on alien profiteering allows the broader profiteering controversy to be framed as a social antagonism that only existed on a vertical axis, whereby farmers and workers at the bottom of the axis drew upon profiteering to challenge the economic and political elite at the top. The recognition of profiteering as a social antagonism on a horizontal axis (among ethnic groups) complicates the narrative of the revolt, it provides an opportunity to understand the diversity of wartime disillusionment that fuelled efforts to reconstruct Canada's post-war democracy.

In this chapter, the term "xenophobic-patriots" represents those who formulated patriotic sensibilities with overt xenophobic sentiments. British Canadians stand out as the staunchest advocates of xenophobic-patriotism because they used the wartime sacrifices of the British Canadian community to reinforce their notions of Anglo superiority. It is important to note that xenophobia, racism, and nativism were interconnected in the formation of social prejudices. For example, hostility towards unnaturalized Germans accentuated hatred towards the German race more generally. However, xenophobia is used here as the primary noun because it reflects the tendency of British Canadian patriots to refer to "alien" status rather than directly to race.

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<sup>2</sup> Goutor, *Guarding the Gates*; Avery, *'Dangerous Foreigners'*; Avery, *Reluctant Host*; Creese, "Exclusion or Solidarity?". As a contentious claim, Brock Millman argues that ethnic and racial identities decisively overshadowed class during the war. Brock Millman, *Polarity, Patriotism, and Dissent in Great War Canada, 1914-1919*.

As this chapter argues, Great War culture became a foundation in which new and old xenophobic sentiments coalesced. In addition to the heightened glorification of British culture, which served to justify the sense of superiority among British Canadians, the belligerent status of empires and nations created a new rhetorical space to discriminate against ethnic and racial groups. The patriotic lexicon helps navigate these wartime dynamics because overlapping war-centric identities reveals areas of acute social vulnerability that British Canadians used to advance their political, economic, and social interests. “Enemy aliens,” being non-naturalized citizens of enemy origin, faced immediate and intense hostility because of their suspected disloyalty and danger posed to national security. As enemy aliens were marginalized in Canada’s patriotic community, British Canadian patriots could claim that they were undeserving of wartime prosperity, thereby setting the stage for accusations of enemy alien profiteering. But while alien status informed the construction of profiteering, the reverse was also true – that wartime profits influenced the construction of aliens. Some British Canadians resented the wartime prosperity of neutral and allied aliens. For example, Greeks were targeted because they owned a disproportionately large share of public eateries, stores, and service shops in Toronto.<sup>3</sup> It is doubtful that these ethnic minorities enjoyed exceptional prosperity on a mass scale. Andrii Maukuch has considered this question for Ukrainian Canadians and concluded that the war merely accelerated their movement from subsistence farming into commercial farming; meanwhile Ukrainian Canadian wage earners saw their wartime gains eroded by inflationary pressures the same as British Canadian wage earners.<sup>4</sup> However, it is important to emphasize that

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<sup>3</sup> As cited by Gallant et al., Greeks only constituted 0.05 percent of the Toronto population, but the Board of Health indicates they owned or operated at least 35 percent of all public eaters, as well as many stores and service businesses. Thomas Gallant et al., *The 1918 Anti-Greek Riot in Toronto* (Toronto: Thessalonikeans Society of Metro Toronto Inc. and the Canadian Hellenic Historical Society, 2005), 41.

<sup>4</sup> Andrii Makuch, “Ukrainian Canadians and the Wartime Economy,” in *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War*, ed. Frances Swyripa et al. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1983): 69-78.

xenophobic-patriots evaluated success relative to the hardships and prosperity experienced during the war. It did not matter if Ukrainian Canadians were merely catching up to British Canadian living standards and equalizing opportunities – the mere acceleration of their living standards was a basis for provocation, especially as British Canadians claimed to endure the most severe hardships of the war. It was this imbalance of *wartime* prosperity that fuelled the claims of alien profiteering.

In a general sense, this chapter's analysis on alien profiteering informs our understanding of how the war-centric cultural shift created new dynamics to negotiate the terms of belonging in Canada. More than a reflection of pre-war bias, wartime ethnic prejudices became infused in changing material conditions and the ideological currents of Great War culture.<sup>5</sup> Undoubtedly, some British Canadians drew upon patriotic sensibilities in localized conflicts with more short-term material goals, such as removing labour competition, but these tensions fed into a broader movement to reconstruct Canada as a British democratic society. By situating these conflicts within this context, seemingly sporadic anti-alien riots, protests, and lobbying can be recognized as part of a broader democratic revolt legitimized by the wartime sacrifices of British Canadians. British Canadian veterans emerged as leaders in this movement and used their moral authority to pressure governing officials to adopt their xenophobic-patriotic policies. They also used intimidation and violence against alien profiteers to shape the moral economy from the bottom up.

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<sup>5</sup> For a collection of historical essays that emphasize how the Great War was largely a continuation of pre-war prejudices, see *Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War*, ed. Frances Swyripa and John Herd Thompson (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1983).

## The Insecurities of Enemy Alien Presence and Prosperity

Before profiteering rhetoric was used to identify the immorality of alien profits, xenophobic-patriots advocated for stringent regulations on enemy alien wealth because they perceived it as a threat to national security. Indeed, public anxiety towards Canada's enemy alien population was intense at the beginning of the war because Canada had a substantial population of immigrants who had an enemy origin and ancestry. Drawing upon the 1911 census, John Hopkins identified approximately 160,000 German and Austro-Hungarian nationals by birth residing in Canada. Combined with the naturalized population of Germans and Austro-Hungarians, Hopkins estimated that the "Teutonic total" was over half a million – or approximately 7.25 percent of the Dominion's total population.<sup>6</sup> This was significantly larger in comparison to Britain, which claimed only 50,633 Germans and 16,141 Austrians and Hungarians out of a population of forty-three million (or roughly 0.0016 percent).<sup>7</sup>

Despite this large "enemy" population, Borden's administration responded sluggishly with enemy alien regulations by comparison with the British government. The first anti-alien regulations imposed by Borden's administration followed the instructions of Lewis Harcourt, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, who advised Borden to detain enemy reservists. The Cabinet passed an order-in-council on 7 August authorizing the arrest of Germans (and later Austro-Hungarians and Turks) reservists attempting to leave Canada, as well as individuals of enemy origin who were suspected of espionage, hostile acts, or in violation of any law.<sup>8</sup> These

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<sup>6</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review* 1914, 276; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review* 1915, 353.

<sup>7</sup> Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in Our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 50.

<sup>8</sup> Canada, Order in Council 1914-2085, "German officers and reservists in Canada - Message S. S. [Secretary of States] of Colonies," Privy Council Office, vol. 1095, 312130; Canada, Order in Council 1914-2086, "Germans officers and reservists in Canada if remain neutral not disturbed - Will not be allowed to return to Germany will be arrested etc" Privy Council Office, vol. 1095, 312131; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review* 1914, 147-148; LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4229, file 15101.

initial regulations were hardly comparable with the British government's implementation of registration, internment, and territorial vigilance under *The Aliens Restriction Act* passed on 5 August 1914.<sup>9</sup> It would take until 28 October 1914, which is to say, after nearly three months at war, for the Cabinet to authorize registration and internment in Canada.<sup>10</sup> The Cabinet could have acted sooner once the *War Measures Act* was passed on 22 August,<sup>11</sup> but they used their wartime powers sparingly to authorize regulations prohibiting enemy aliens from owning firearms, ammunition, dynamite, explosives, and bestowing police with the authority to search enemy aliens with reasonable suspicion.<sup>12</sup>

Canada's Cabinet ministers did not follow the more aggressive path of Asquith's government because they approached "the alien problem" with more balanced considerations of Canada's short-term and long-term national interests. As Kordan Bohdan highlights, Borden, and the Minister of Justice, Charles Doherty, expressed a paternal obligation to protect enemy aliens because they were solicited to Canada to work and settle. Furthermore, they feared that if the Canadian government were to treat enemy aliens as criminals indiscriminately, it would damage Canada's reputation as a destination for immigrants.<sup>13</sup> In hope of encouraging tolerance towards enemy aliens, Borden and other Cabinet ministers issued public statements declaring that all law-

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<sup>9</sup> Panayi, 45-55.

<sup>10</sup> Canada, Order in Council 1914-2721, "Aliens of Enemy Nationality in Canada regulations resp'g [respecting] the Registration and internment as prisoners of war where advisable of - Min. Justice," Privy Council Office, vol. 1102, 312766.

<sup>11</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 19 August 1914 (Robert Borden, Conservative), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 20.

<sup>12</sup> Canada, Order in Council 1914-2283, "Arms - Ammunition etc not to be in the possession of any persons of Austro-Hungarian and German nationality - M. Justice," Privy Council Office, vol. 1098, 312328; Canada, Order in Council 1914-2358, "Regulations and Orders for the prevention of the giving out of informations - Prevention of espionage and generally for the security of the force of His Majesty in Canada etc - Premier," Privy Council Office, vol. 1099, 312403.

<sup>13</sup> Bohdan, 223-224.

abiding persons of German and Austro-Hungarian nationality were to be treated respectfully.<sup>14</sup>

Even when the Cabinet authorized internment, they did so believing that it could be used to provide food and shelter to enemy aliens thrown out of work, and when economic conditions improved, those deemed as “non-dangerous” internees would be released.<sup>15</sup> Of course, other considerations influenced the release of internees, such as labour shortages (and this point will be addressed in more detail later). For now, it is important to emphasize that anti-alien regulations in Canada progressed without the urgency and comprehensiveness evident in the British government’s “iron grip.”<sup>16</sup>

The disparity between Canada and the United Kingdom’s anti-alien regulations converged by late-1914, but it once again widened drastically in mid-1915. Following the sinking of the *Lusitania* on 7 May 1915 and the intense anti-German riots that followed, Prime Minister Asquith introduced sweeping measures that interned or repatriated all non-naturalized enemy aliens. By November 1915, 32,440 enemy aliens in the United Kingdom had already been interned, and by the end of the war, over half of the German population of 57,500 was repatriated.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, it was only until 5 August 1918 – roughly three months before the war ended – that all enemy aliens were required to register in Canada.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, by the end of the war, there had only been a total of 8,579 internees, the majority of whom were Ukrainians

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Borden, “Canada and the Great War,” *Empire Club of Canada: Addresses Delivered to the Members During the Session 1914-1915*, ed. Alfred Hall (Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Limited, 1915), 13; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 282.

<sup>15</sup> Bohdan, 79, 122.

<sup>16</sup> Panayi, 46-78.

<sup>17</sup> Many of those who remained were British-born women, but they assumed their husband’s nationality and counted towards the German population because they married German men. Panayi, 82, 97.

<sup>18</sup> Canada, Order in Council, 1918-1908, “Regulations - Control and Registration of Aliens - Cancellation Regulation 1916-09-20 and enactment of new regulations in lieu thereof - M. Justice,” Privy Council Office, vol. 1203, 325097. The Cabinet also passed a regulation requiring women of enemy alien nationality who married a British subject to retain their enemy status. Canada, Order in Council 1918-0570, “War Regulation that a woman of alien enemy nationality does not by reason of marriage with British subject lose such nationality etc - M. Justice,” Privy Council Office, vol. 1191, 323758.

interned as Austro-Hungarian nationals.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the absence of mass registration and mass internment, Borden's administration would not undertake major repatriation efforts as only 1,300 internees were deported.<sup>20</sup> From the perspective of xenophobic-patriots, Borden's administration was not addressing the enemy alien problem with the appropriate level of seriousness exhibited by the British government. And yet, the recognition of enemy alien status and the marginalization of aliens through internment, registration, disenfranchisement and various prohibitions legitimized xenophobic-patriotism.

With most of the enemy alien population "at large," xenophobic-patriots demanded their dismissal from places of employment. Undoubtedly, there was a material incentive for dismissing enemy aliens because jobs were scarce due to the depressive economic conditions that prevailed until mid-1915.<sup>21</sup> However, within the context of the war, xenophobic-patriots could bolster their animosity by claiming that enemy aliens were draining the "silver bullets" needed for the Allied war effort. Compounding this argument was the accusation that enemy aliens would use wartime wealth to aid the German and Austrian war effort. Such arguments influenced labour markets throughout the Dominion. For instance, these arguments led to the dismissal of German and Austrian street cleaners in Calgary, who were promptly replaced by "loyal" British workers.<sup>22</sup> When J. H. Woods, Editor of *The Calgary Daily Herald*, commented on the replacement. He offered his full support and contended that the German and Austrian workers would use their meagre wages to support the German war effort.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The number of internees included 2,009 Germans, 5,954 Austro-Hungarians, 205 Turks, 99 Bulgarians, and 312 classified as miscellaneous. Avery, "Ethnic and Class Relations in Western Canada during the First World War," 276; Peter MeInycky, "The Internment of Ukrainians in Canada," in *Loyalties in Conflict*, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Bohdan, 252-253.

<sup>21</sup> "War and the Cost of Living," *Monetary Times* 1 October 1915, 5-6; Also see Finance Minister White's assessment of the Canadian economy in, Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 20 August 1914, (William White, Conservative), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 25-26; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 239.

<sup>22</sup> Bohdan, 70.

<sup>23</sup> "War and Unemployed," *The Calgary Daily Herald*, 10 September 1914, 6.

While it may seem far-fetched that enemy aliens in Canada would support the enemy war effort, there was a series of court cases that lent some validity to these fears. In one case, Emil Nerlich, one of Toronto's most well-known German businesspersons, was arrested in January 1915 and later found guilty of funding the return journey of a German Army Lieutenant, Arthur Zirzow. After being convicted, Nerlich successfully appealed the ruling and argued that he believed he was merely providing money to assist financial hardship as a German Aid Society manager.<sup>24</sup> But while Nerlich's case was contestable, other Germans and Austrians were arrested for helping enemy reservists cross the U.S.-Canada border, including H. J. Glaubitz, the London Public Utilities Board General Manager.<sup>25</sup> As the war dragged on, speculation and rumours regarding the scale of enemy alien clandestine activities intensified, further fuelling demands to restrict enemy alien wealth. In the Nipissing region, rumours circulated that local enemy aliens were sending money to support the enemy war effort and were even conducting military drills.<sup>26</sup> Supporting these allegations was an article in *The Porcupine Herald*, which claimed that \$50,000 worth of enemy alien wages were flowing to German bankers in New York every month.<sup>27</sup> The mayor of Pembroke, L. J. Morris, also claimed that 1,300 Germans residing in his town were operating a German spy network.<sup>28</sup> For patriots who accepted the claims of their political leaders that silver bullets would win the war, it was unacceptable that Germans and Austrians were using Canada's wealth to aid the enemy war machines.

Compounding the dangers of enemy aliens' silver bullets was the danger of their presence in the workforce. As discussed in Chapter One, Germanophobic literature, such as

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<sup>24</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 356-360.

<sup>25</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 362-363.

<sup>26</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 285.

<sup>27</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 354-355, 363.

<sup>28</sup> Bohdan, 94; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 364.



William Le Queux's *The Invasion of 1910*, heightened fears of spies and saboteurs.<sup>29</sup> Once the war began, this festering paranoia became a more tangible concern and xenophobic-patriots used it to oppose the employment of enemy aliens. As Bohdan notes, shortly after the outbreak of the war, French, Italian and British hotel waiters in Toronto and Montréal criticized their employers for keeping hundreds of enemy aliens employed.<sup>30</sup> This hostility grew directly out of fears of espionage in the hotel industry, where persons of high repute gathered and shared sensitive information. Indeed, Hopkins stated that these suspicions persisted throughout 1915<sup>31</sup> – most likely because of stereotypes from Germanophobic literature. But while there was no credibility that enemy spies were operating in the hospitality industry, there was credibility that saboteurs were targeting infrastructure and war production. In late 1914, a German American saboteur, Fredrich Busse, was caught conspiring to blow up the Welland Canal, and was coordinating the plan with Franz von Papen, the Military Attaché to the German Embassy in the United States (and one of Hitler's key political allies during his rise to power). Munitions plants, and other war production facilities, were similarly targeted by German saboteurs between early and mid-1915, particularly the war factories in the Windsor area. As xenophobic-patriots read in the papers, the Peabody plant that produced soldiers' uniforms exploded, and bombs were discovered near the Gramm Motor Truck Company, the Ford plant, and the Invincible Machine Company.<sup>32</sup> Even by the Summer of 1916, fears of saboteurs were kept alive after the National Storage Company's plant in Jersey City was sabotaged, resulting in the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of military supplies and numerous deaths.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Queux, *The Invasion of 1910*, 212-213.

<sup>30</sup> Bohdan, 70.

<sup>31</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 364.

<sup>32</sup> Millman, 75-76.

<sup>33</sup> "First Explosion Terrific: Earth Torn Away and Great Hole Filled With Blazing Debres," *Toronto Star*, 31 July 1916, 1; "Held As Plotters in Black Tom Fire," *Toronto Star*, 10 August 1916, 1; Also see

For the most part, the threat posed by saboteurs was exaggerated, but the absence of widespread registration and internment made xenophobic-patriots insecure about their enemy alien colleagues. In 1915, miners from Vancouver Island to Cape Breton demanded the dismissal of enemy alien employees. The Cabinet, worried that the presence of enemy aliens would incite unrest, passed an order-in-council to facilitate their removal and internment.<sup>34</sup> As Bohdan notes, enemy aliens in numerous mines were subsequently interned and replaced by British Canadian miners. For example, in Fernie, the attorney general and acting premier ordered the internment of three hundred miners of “Austro-Hungarian” nationality.<sup>35</sup> While historians typically emphasize that the removal of enemy aliens in these workplaces was the outcome of nativist opportunism, it is important to consider the connotations of their removal within the context of Great War culture. British Canadians, whether miners, public administrators, elected officials, employers, and as members of the community more generally, supported measures to minimize the presence and prosperity of enemy aliens because their xenophobic-patriotism deemed them a threat to the war effort. This patriotic rationalization is essentially inseparable from the context in which opposition to enemy aliens emerged.

The intensification of hostility towards enemy aliens proceeded like a rising tide, but that does not mean that those designated as enemy aliens remained passive while their social status, liberties, and livelihoods were assaulted in profound ways. One approach for removing the stigma of their enemy alien status was to reaffirm patriotic identity through donations to war charities.<sup>36</sup> Enlistment was another means of asserting patriotism as an individual and a

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<sup>34</sup> Canada, Order in Council 1915-1501, “Aliens of Enemy Nationality who are found competing for employment with aliens of our allies or whose presence in company with friendly aliens on public works etc. may lead to disorder etc. may be interned as prisoners of war etc. - Min. Justice” Privy Council Office, vol. 1118, 314806.

<sup>35</sup> Bohdan, 98-101.

<sup>36</sup> Borden defended the patriotism of Germans and Austrians by citing their contributions to the Patriotic Fund and other war charities. Borden, “Canada and the Great War,” 13.

community, albeit registered enemy aliens were prohibited and visible/ethnic minorities were obstructed by informal barriers, especially before the summer of 1916, when recruiters were less desperate for recruits.<sup>37</sup> Fostering public support through the press was a third strategy to win public support. The German-Canadian Alliance of Saskatchewan, which claimed 4,000 members, ceased their meetings during the war to ease tensions, but in addition to their own public statements in the press, they petitioned Borden to restrict the English-speaking press from misrepresenting Germany and “stirring up hatred and race feeling.”<sup>38</sup> Although Borden was sympathetic, he did nothing more than issue his own statements encouraging ethnic tolerance.

There were limits to how much enemy aliens could foster sympathy among xenophobic-patriots. Professor F. V. Riethdorf from Woodstock College was quick to denounce the Kaiser and other German military intelligentsia as evil, but regardless of his validation of the Two Germanies view, Riethdorf was subjected to accusations of disloyalty.<sup>39</sup> Eager to prove his patriotism, Riethdorf resigned his position as a teacher and joined the Speakers’ Patriotic League, but after criticism continued, he enlisted in the Canadian Medical Army Corps. Despite these efforts to demonstrate patriotism, Claude Macdonell, MP for Toronto South, still considered Riethdorf untrustworthy. Ironically, Macdonell claimed that Riethdorf could not be trusted because of his disloyalty towards the German people.<sup>40</sup> As Riethdorf’s experience exemplifies, some xenophobic-patriots believed that enemy aliens were disloyal and untrustworthy regardless of an individual’s contributions to the war effort.

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<sup>37</sup> Swyripa, 53-54; James Walker, “Race and Recruitment in World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities In the Canadian Expeditionary Force,” *Canadian Historical Review* 70, no. 1 (March, 1989): 1-26.

<sup>38</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 277. Also discussed in Boudreau, “The Enemy Alien Problem in Canada, 1914-1921,” 38-39.

<sup>39</sup> Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 19 August 1914 (Donald Sutherland, Conservative), 12th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 1, 4-5.

<sup>40</sup> For an overview of Professor F. V. Riethdorf’s wartime controversy, see Adam Crerar, “Ontario and the Great War,” in *Canada and the First World War*, ed. David Mackenzie (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 255.

Enemy aliens could also sabotage the efforts of those in their own communities to assert their loyalty to Britain and patriotism. One of the most sensational instances was in August 1914, when Bishop Nicolas Budka, the Ukrainian ecclesiastic of Western Canada, publicly supported Austria and called upon Ukrainians in Canada to return home and take up arms. Shocked by Budka's treasonous statement, three thousand Ukrainians gathered in Winnipeg to denounce him, as well as profess their loyalty to Britain through resolutions and by singing "God Save the King."<sup>41</sup> In addition to the negative publicity created by Budka, Frances Swyripa describes how Russophile Ukrainians sought to exploit the war to expose the anti-Russian bias of Austrian Ukrainians by feeding the press reports of their sedition.<sup>42</sup> Some sedition charges were falsified, but Hopkin's record of the war cites some valid charges, at least among Germans and Austrians. In one case, a German named Hollinger pleaded guilty to expressing his sympathy with Imperial Germany. As Hollinger allegedly stated,

Germany is going to win this War. They will take Warsaw and Great Britain, too, and I hope to God she does. Your old fool of a King should have had his soldiers fighting on their own soil and not fighting in France. They have no right there. They are cowards. The Germans will be here and you had better speak German. The whole world is going to be ruled by the German Emperor.

From the perspective of a patriot, Hollinger's statement was shocking and served to strengthen xenophobic-patriotic demands that enemy aliens were unworthy of belonging. However, despite occasions of Germans and Austrians pleading guilty, Hopkins stated that during the sedition trials of 1915, the justices and juries exhibited considerable mercy, as defendants were often excused or given suspended sentences.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 278-280.

<sup>42</sup> Frances Swyripa, "The Ukrainian Image: Loyal Citizen or Disloyal Alien," in *Loyalties in Conflict*, 48.

<sup>43</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 355-356.

In addition to seditious comments, pro-German newspapers were found circulating in Canada advising German-Canadians to disregard Allied reports of victories and negative portrayals of the German government. Hopkins noted that before American-German literature was prohibited on 6 November 1914, most of the pro-German literature originated in the United States.<sup>44</sup> But even after the ban, Hopkins stated that German newspapers in Canada expressed a “veiled friendliness for Germany... though not overt in character or serious in result.” For example, a German newspaper in Winnipeg, the *Der Nordwesten*, reproduced pro-German speeches from a U.S. Congress debate; the Alberta *Herold* declared Canada had no business spending money in a European war; the Winnipeg-based *West Canada* described Germany’s “Further Successes in Poland” and welcomed further victories. The English-language dailies remained vigilant in 1915 and publicized evidence of sedition to legitimize the belief that enemy alien communities were disloyal. For instance, in retaliation to sedition, John Dafoe’s *Winnipeg Free Press* published an article stating,

Protestant or Catholic, Liberal or Conservative, it has made very little difference. All the German organs of this Western country have been whole-heartedly behind the cause of German militarism and German autocracy. They have supported at heart a Kaiser who boasts of his divine right. They have supported a state wherein the military party dominates the civil power. They have supported a constitution based on enfranchisement of wealth, powerlessness of popular assemblies and irresponsibility of the ministries. What is the explanation?<sup>45</sup>

Such statements from the mainstream press reflected the availability of space to voice support that enemy aliens, and even naturalized citizens of enemy origin, deserved marginalization.

As the war continued, the xenophobic-patriots gained distinct advantages in their publicity battles against enemy aliens. Censorship and propaganda were among their greatest advantages because they presented the war in a black and white dichotomy of good versus evil.

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<sup>44</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 284-285.

<sup>45</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 360-362.

Both censorship and propaganda played important roles in actualizing one of the watershed moments that escalated Germanophobia – namely, the portrayal of the Lusitania Disaster as a German atrocity. Before the *Lusitania* departed New York, the Imperial German Embassy warned the American public that the German navy considered it a military target because it was classified as a British cruiser destined to enter the war zone around the British Isles. It was also known to German intelligence that the cargo manifest included war materiel.<sup>46</sup> Despite the warnings, nearly a crew of 700 and 1,200 passengers (including 157 Torontonians) boarded the ship.<sup>47</sup> When the U-Boat torpedoed the *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland on 7 May 1915, over 60 percent of the passengers died. The *Toronto Star* ignored the German's allegations that the *Lusitania* was transporting ammunition and shells.<sup>48</sup> Instead, the attack was used as propaganda to reaffirm the evil of the German war machine. Following the reports, there was a widespread uproar. In Toronto, the clergy were among those galvanized by the attack and took to their pulpits to denounce Germany and bolster support for the war effort. Among them was Rev. Dr. Cayley of St. James Cathedral, who proclaimed that "The German nation is in the hands of a band of men who are the very incarnation of the spirit of anti-Christ. This is a call to every man to do his part in order that this thing shall be done away with."<sup>49</sup> The Lusitania Disaster shook even pacifists to the core. Nellie McClung, a pacifist and feminist, believed that the *Lusitania* was a clear demonstration of Germany's evil, pushing her to endorse the war against the "Prince of Darkness."<sup>50</sup> Adding to public outrage was that the Canadian Press Despatch reported that the *Lusitania* sinking was being celebrated in Germany.<sup>51</sup> There were even press reports of enemy

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<sup>46</sup> "Sinking Justified, Says Dr. Dernburg," *The New York Times*, 9 May 1915, 4.

<sup>47</sup> "75 Torontoians Safe," *Toronto Star*, 10 May 1915, 1.

<sup>48</sup> "Britain Silent; No Revelation of Navy Doings," *Toronto Star*, 10 May 1915, 1.

<sup>49</sup> "Toronto Pulpits on Teutonic Savagery," *Toronto Star*, 10 May 1915, 8.

<sup>50</sup> Francis, 18-19.

<sup>51</sup> "Germans Gleeeful at their "New Triumph," *Toronto Star*, 8 May 1915, 1.

aliens celebrating the tragedy in Canada, including a “big celebration” in Sudbury. Police arrested several enemy aliens, but for some xenophobic-patriots, their tolerance for the presence and prosperity of enemy aliens reached a breaking point.<sup>52</sup> Riots ensued in cities across the Dominion, including Toronto, Montréal, and Winnipeg, and Victoria where anti-alien riots became so chaotic that martial law and eight hundred soldiers were used to restore order.<sup>53</sup>

The sinking of the *Lusitania* was a significant shock to the public psyche, but it was only one of many shocks that would exacerbate patriotic outrage towards enemy aliens. As xenophobic-patriotism gained traction, instances of confrontations, violence, and riots became part of a wartime trend. Soldiers and Great War veterans emerged as leaders of this anti-alien violence and activism for several reasons. Demographically, the majority of soldiers were British and British-Canada men between 20 and 30 years old<sup>54</sup> – an outcome from both British solidarity and the Anglo-Protestant hegemony of the military establishment.<sup>55</sup> These young British men had the greatest tendency to be aggressive and form mobs since they were among the most physically capable and coincided an age with high criminality rates.<sup>56</sup> But soldiers and veterans were also aggressive because they acted with a profound sense of moral authority from wearing the khaki.<sup>57</sup> For instance, as early as 27 August, soldiers *en route* to Europe physically confronted the Calgary city commissioners to persuade them to prohibit the employment of

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<sup>52</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 354-355, 362.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 364; Francis, 19; Bohdan, 96.

<sup>54</sup> Jonathan Scotland states that approximately 70 percent of soldiers joined below 30 years of age and 15 percent joined between 30 and 34. As Craig Heron notes, this constituted nearly one-third of the male population of military age. Nearly 40 percent of the CEF were born in the British Isles and other British possessions, while 51 percent were born in Canada. Out of the latter, Simon Jolivet estimates that only 35,000 French Canadians joined the military despite a population of over two million (the majority of which entered military service as conscripts). Jonathan Scotland, “And the Men Returned: Canadian Veterans and the Aftermath of the Great War,” PhD diss., (University of Western Ontario, 2016), 25; Simon Jolivet, “French-Speaking Catholics in Quebec and the First World War,” in *Canadian Churches and the First World War*, 86; *Broken Promises*, 24, 97; *Canada Year Book, 1914*, 60; “It Can Be Done Yet, If Necessary,” *Toronto Star*, 2 February 1916, 6.

<sup>55</sup> Jolivet, 81; Granatstein and Hitsman, *Broken Promises*, 24-30; Walker, “Race and Recruitment in World War I.”

<sup>56</sup> Millman, 128-130.

<sup>57</sup> Smith, “Comrades and Citizens,” 27.

enemy aliens.<sup>58</sup> Hence, as soon as soldiers donned their military attire, they were quick to enter the public sphere and leveraged their moral authority to pressure policymakers into restricting the presence and prosperity of enemy aliens.

Evidence of anti-alien violence seems to indicate that xenophobic-patriots, particularly soldiers and veterans, targeted individual aliens when there was evidence of disloyalty; however, indiscriminate attacks tended to target profit-making establishments. An obvious assumption is that businesses provided accessible targets, but the apprehension of xenophobic-patriots crowds to ransack and destroy alien homes did not seem to occur unless that home was part of a family-run business. This trend implies that the double identity of being an unpatriotic alien, combined with the identity as a profiteer (whether explicit or otherwise), forged an exceptional vulnerability to xenophobic-patriotic violence.

There are many examples cited by historians that corroborate the tendency of how indiscriminate attacks focused on enemy alien profit-making establishments. In one case discussed by Smith, returned soldiers in Toronto broke into the apartment of Jos. M. Zuber by climbing through the window. Zuber had not made any seditious remarks, but he did own a provision store located below his home. After detaining Zuber from his bed, the soldiers collected his papers and interrogated him on the street to determine whether he was abiding by regulations. Later that night, a restaurant keeper was swarmed by a crowd of returned soldiers who interrogated him and stole merchandise. It was stated in *The Toronto Globe and Mail* that the veterans' raids were planned, but no arrests were made.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> "Germans will be Laid off by City," *The Calgary Daily Herald*, 27 August 1914, 1.

<sup>59</sup> "Alien workers Are Rounded Up," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 14 April 1917, 1, 8; Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 157, 158.



In Berlin, Ontario, xenophobic-patriots led by soldiers opposed enemy alien profiteers on a larger scale. With the majority of the residents German-Canada, Berlin remained a bastion of German culture and resisted the implementation of anti-alien regulations up to 1916, including the establishment of registration offices and prohibitions on German-language newspapers.<sup>60</sup> The leniency of alien regulations caused considerable friction with local British Canadians and even became subjected to external scrutiny. Atkins denounced Berlin's city councillors as pandering for votes. He was also infuriated by Berlin's low enlistment rates, leading him to describe Berliners as being undeserving of the "hospitality of a British country."<sup>61</sup> Atkins fostered animosity through his editorials, but it was the local soldiers who took action. Soldiers from the local battalion raided a German hall, destroyed German memorabilia, and abducted a Lutheran pastor from his home in retaliation for his unpunished sedition remarks. The rising ethnic tensions spilled into city hall, whereby the city council sought to deescalate the situation by renaming the municipality after Lord Kitchener. It was a symbolic gesture, but it did not stifle rising hostility. In January 1917, tensions came to a head after a soldier participating in a local parade was insulted by an onlooker. The seemingly insignificant incident escalated into a riot, and consequently, numerous German-owned businesses were destroyed.<sup>62</sup>

During the mid-war period, there was also an anti-alien riot led by soldiers and veterans in Calgary. The riot started from another seemingly minor incident – a veteran was kicked out of a restaurant by an enemy alien waiter. The atmosphere was already considerably tense in early

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<sup>60</sup> For a discussion on Berlin's German heritage and culture, see Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 355; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1917*, 436. Valeria Knowles estimates Berlin's population as three-quarters German-Canadian, while John Hopkins estimates it closer to half. Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 355; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1917*, 436; Knowles, 129.

<sup>61</sup> "It Can Be Done Yet, If Necessary," *Toronto Star*, 2 February 1916, 6.

<sup>62</sup> Millman, 139-141.

February because the fire that engulfed Parliament led to rumours of German sabotage.<sup>63</sup> The situation was also primed to become explosive because the restaurant owner had already been warned to dismiss its enemy alien employees but refused to do so. So, within this tense atmosphere, the insulted veteran returned with a posse and ransacked the business, but the violence did not stop there because riots continued for two days. Again, numerous enemy alien businesses were targeted and destroyed.<sup>64</sup> In April 1917, a nearly identical situation unfolded in Toronto after an Austrian waiter disrespected a disabled veteran. Enraged soldiers destroyed the restaurant, ransacked other enemy alien establishments, and ironically brought enemy aliens to police stations to ensure they were abiding by the law. As Ian Miller noted, public officials and local newspaper editorialists ultimately blamed enemy aliens for inciting the violence. Mayor Tommy Church of Toronto even demanded the police release the identities of all enemy aliens employed in the downtown core so their employers could be pressured to dismiss them.<sup>65</sup>

Opposition to enemy alien profiteers also targeted those reaping wartime prosperity through wages. One important dynamic that led to this tension was that wages on the home front rapidly exceeded stagnant military wages. Further stoking anxieties was that beginning in 1916, federal internment policy began to release enemy alien internees to address the acute labour shortages.<sup>66</sup> Other measures were being taken to increase the labour supply without relying on the release of internees, but these alternative plans could not provide sufficient short-term relief

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<sup>63</sup> During a Royal Commission investigation, it was concluded that the fire likely started from a cigar. Interestingly, the investigators noted that the District Attorney of New York, H. Snowden Marshall, was tipped off from the German embassy that the fire would occur, but oddly enough the commissioners never interviewed Marshall to learn the full story. One can only assume that the investigators did not believe the lead to be plausible. Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on Parliament Buildings Fire at Ottawa*, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1916), 1; "Reading Room Was Fire Trap At Buildings" *Toronto Daily Star*, 4 February 1915, 1; "German U.S. Ambassador Responsible for the Fire," *The Globe and Mail Toronto*, 4 February 1916, 1.

<sup>64</sup> Millman, 134-136.

<sup>65</sup> Miller, *Our Grief and our Glory*, 63-65.

<sup>66</sup> An exception to the release of internees was the incarceration of political radicals of alien origin following the Russian Revolution. Bohdan, 233-234.

and the Spring seeding season was fast approaching.<sup>67</sup> To deal with the labour shortage, Labour Minister Thomas Crothers assembled a council to discuss mobilizing interned labour through employment schemes. Sitting on the council were cabinet ministers, the Director of Internment, General Otter, and representatives from the GGA, the Grain Exchange, the Canadian Banks' Association, and major Canadian railways. The council agreed to systematically discharge "non-dangerous" internees to farms, railway companies, coal mines, steelworks, factories, and even munitions plants. Any non-dangerous internees who refused to accept private contracts were forcefully sent back to the destination of their arrest to find work on their own. Enemy aliens were thus pushed in and out of internment camps to suit the Cabinet's war effort strategies. By late November 1916, only 2,620 internees remained in detention.<sup>68</sup> From the perspective of xenophobic-patriots, the release of enemy aliens from internment camps into private employment meant that more wartime wealth would be siphoned by untrustworthy and undeserving enemy aliens.

The relaxation of internment policy was not a welcomed policy change from the perspective of xenophobic-patriots, and sometimes workers responded to the arrival of former internees with open hostility. On 20 April 1916, interned aliens were brought to work in a tannery in Acton, Ontario. Local townsfolk who disapproved of their presence made it known by ransacking the enemy alien homes. A similar event occurred in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, where British Canadian employees at the Eastern Car Company dropped their tools until their

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<sup>67</sup> For instance, the federal government was soliciting immigration from the United States, money qualifications under the *Immigration Act* were relaxed, and the *Alien Labour Act* was suspended. Another solution was the mobilization of the Dominion's "womanpower" for industrial and agricultural production. Mabel F. Timlin, "Canada's Immigration Policy, 1896-1910," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science / Revue canadienne d'Economie et de Science politique* 26, no. 4 (November, 1960), 519; Joan Sangster, "Mobilizing Women for War," in *Canada and the First World War*, ed. David Mackenzie (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005): 157-193.

<sup>68</sup> Bohdan, 205, 213.

employer fired the enemy aliens.<sup>69</sup> Great War veterans also undertook aggressive action to remove enemy alien labour from their places of employment. Lance-Corporal Charles O'Brien, a veteran who suffered wounds from the battle of the Somme, visited the Russell Motor Company's munitions factory to apply for a job. Allegedly, O'Brien was insulted by a "Hun" who told him to "Get the h— out."<sup>70</sup> After O'Brien informed his compatriots of the incident, they raided the plant. Accompanying them was Colonel Henry C. Osborne, Assistant Adjutant-General at Toronto's Exhibition Camp, as well as a *Globe* correspondent who published the mission in detail. After the group infiltrated the plant, they confronted its manager, Mr. H. D. Scully, who subsequently agreed that the plant would hire veterans over aliens. The group proceeded to interrogate munitions workers by forcing visible "foreigners" to produce their papers. Those who spoke broken English were detained and paraded through the streets until they reached the local police office to verify that they were abiding by regulations.<sup>71</sup>

As these instances of intimidation and violence illustrate, xenophobic-patriots overtly opposed the presence and prosperity of enemy aliens. And although there are exceptions, there is an identifiable trend that the targets of indiscriminate attacks were those who were later designated as "enemy alien profiteers" – i.e. enemy alien business owners and wage-earners. The layering of these two unpatriotic identities marginalized these individuals to such an extent that some public officials were willing to consider enemy aliens as responsible for inciting disorder even in the absence of provocation. But while some governing officials, including those in the Cabinet, could sympathize with the interests of xenophobic-patriots, federal wartime policies did not follow the more aggressive anti-enemy alien policies of the British government.

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<sup>69</sup> Millman, 142.

<sup>70</sup> Millman, 143-144; Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 157.

<sup>71</sup> "Alien workers Are Rounded Up," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 14 April 1917, 1, 8; Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 157-158.

Indeed, Borden's administration was more concerned about labour shortages than limiting the presence and prosperity of enemy aliens on a mass scale. For xenophobic-patriots, federal regulations were unsafe and unjust, and while they were willing to confront enemy aliens to enforce the moral economy on their own terms, they would need a more structured movement to pressure federal policymakers. When Borden's administration announced that his government would be conscripting men into the military and numerous ethnic groups would be exempt, xenophobic-patriots became enraged that their Prime Minister was going to exacerbate an already intolerable imbalance of wartime sacrifice.

### **Conscripting Alien Profiteers**

Similar to the progression of war and food profiteering controversy, the conscription crisis of 1917 represents a critical juncture in the broader alien profiteering controversy. Previous chapters have described how some patriots believed conscription would steepen hardships along a vertical, class axis; xenophobic-patriots asserted a similar contention but focused on the disparity of wartime sacrifices on a horizontal, ethnic axis. The premise of this rationale was that British and British Canadians contributed the most volunteers to the CEF, so it was unfair to extract even more soldiers of British origin and not include provisions to prevent non-British persons from reaping the benefits of wartime prosperity. It was at this point that xenophobic-patriots became more vocal towards the profits of non-enemy aliens and adopted the designation of "profiteers" to denote the excessive prosperity of aliens. As this section outlines, xenophobic-patriots failed to convince policymakers in the Conservative, Liberal and Union parties to adopt their programs for the conscription of alien wealth during the lead up to the 1917 federal election.

Heading into the conscription crisis, xenophobic-patriots were disadvantaged by the absence of an expansive and well-organized movement. For the most part, xenophobic-patriots exerted their influence and opposition through spontaneous grassroots militancy and promoted anti-alien policies through press coverage. In addition, Anglo-centric associations, such as fraternal lodges and imperialist groups, offered some scattered opposition to alien profiteers, such as how the Orange Order exposed employers with large numbers of enemy alien workers.<sup>72</sup> There were some organizations explicitly devoted to promoting anti-alien policies, but their activities were more focused on fostering public awareness instead of building a rank-and-file driven organization. Two such organizations were the Anti-German League and the Anti-German Union (later renamed the British Empire Union). Both organizations were founded in the United Kingdom in the wake of the Lusitania Disaster. By 1916, these organizations were established in Toronto and promoted the eradication of German presence, influence, and prosperity throughout the British Empire.<sup>73</sup> Among the executives in Canada were some reputable British Canadians, including Toronto city controller R. H. Cameron and the Dean of Trinity College, Rev. H. T. F. Duckworth. It appears that they managed Canada's part of an empire-wide signatory campaign for anti-German policies and boycotts against German businesses. They did not, however, become a substantial force in politics.<sup>74</sup> The main thrust of anti-alien political lobbying was driven by the nascent veterans' organizations, which leveraged their moral authority and expanded memberships to gain access to the Cabinet.

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<sup>72</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 363-364.

<sup>73</sup> Panayi, 202-209; "Organize to Combat Germans after war," *New York Times*, 17 August 1916, 16; Knowles, 129.

<sup>74</sup> H. T. F. Duckworth, "No Trading With Germans" (Toronto: The British Empire Union of Canada, 1916), 13; Panayi, 199-202; "Anti-German," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 10 February 1916, 6.

The GWVA was the first major Great War veterans' organization that emerged in Canada.<sup>75</sup> Local GWVA branches had been sprouting up across the Dominion since 1916, but it was only until 10 April 1917 that the GWVA created a national constitution to conjoin the local branches. During this inaugural convention, the delegates also discussed the urgent need to address the alien problem. Among their leading concerns was that the *Military Service Act* exempted those born in enemy countries and whose "mother tongue" was an enemy language. Exemptions also extended to those who were born in an enemy country but were naturalized after 31 March 1902.<sup>76</sup> But it was not so much the exemptions themselves that angered the veterans. Instead, it was how the exemptions enabled enemy aliens to stay in Canada and reap the benefits of a booming wartime economy. Capt. Ivan Finn, who represented a GWVA branch in Prince Albert, was among those who expressed his outrage at the GWVA convention and condemned the continued opportunities for aliens to prosper. A wide range of proposals was forwarded to address these grievances, including one plan to confiscate and sell the farms of German and Austrian settlers, and then use the proceeds to assist Canada's soldiers imprisoned in German internment camps. The cornerstone anti-alien policy approved at the convention was to conscript all aliens for public service, whether allied, friendly, or enemy, and use them as conscripted workers to fill labour shortages.<sup>77</sup> In June 1917, veterans in the Winnipeg branch of the ANV echoed similar sentiments and demanded the conscription of enemy aliens into labour battalions.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> For a reminiscence of the GWVA's early origins by one of its founders, W. D. Lighthall, see "The Future of the Great War Veteran's Assn.," *The Veteran*, December 1917, 14-15.

<sup>76</sup> Canada, *Military Service Act, 1917 Manual: For the Information and Guidance of Tribunals in the Consideration and Review of Claims for Exemption* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1918), 18-19.

<sup>77</sup> Morton and Wright, 71.

<sup>78</sup> "Conscript Enemy Aliens," *Toronto Star*, 22 June 1917, 1.

In an interview with a *Toronto Star* correspondent, some GWVA officials, including Sgt. William Turley, the GWVA Ontario branches' Secretary, elaborated on the conscription proposal as an explicit measure against alien profiteering. The process would follow some of the procedures of the *Military Service Act*, such as mass registration. Turley even suggested that medical examinations accompanying registration would provide "valuable sociological data" on people of non-British origin. Ulterior motives aside, Turley argued that the conscription of aliens could be implemented by expanding the mandate of the pre-existing Conscription Tribunals to oversee the placement of alien conscripts in essential industries. Subsequently, competitive wages would be paid to alien conscripts to avoid undercutting living standards, but any pay over the lowest paying military wage would be confiscated by the state and used for the war effort.<sup>79</sup> The policy received endorsement from some prominent governing officials, including the new Minister of Militia, Major General S.C. Mewburn.<sup>80</sup> However, convincing other Cabinet members to endorse this radical policy, particularly Doherty and Borden, would prove difficult.

Xenophobic-patriots were also dissatisfied with the terms of the *Military Service Act* because of its exemption of Greeks. Before Greece entered the war during the summer of 1917,<sup>81</sup> the presence of Greeks in the Ottoman empire raised suspicions of their disloyalty, leading to informal prohibitions on their enlistment.<sup>82</sup> With Greece entering the war as an ally, the enlistment of Greek nationals received new considerations. According to the 1911 census, Canada was home to 1,981 foreign-born Greek males over 21 years of age; only 353 were

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<sup>79</sup> "80,000 Alien Enemies at Large, Paid Many Times \$1.10 A Day," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 8 March 1918, 14.

<sup>80</sup> Bohdan, 222.

<sup>81</sup> The Greek King Constantine wanted Greece to remain neutral, but it was an open secret that his sympathies were with Germany (at least partly because of his familial ties to Kaiser Wilhelm II). Contrary to this position, the Greek government, led by the Liberal Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, sided with the Allies. After Constantine abdicated in July, 1917, Greece entered the war as an Allied belligerent. Gallant et al., 35-36.

<sup>82</sup> Gallant et al., 35-36; For a discussion on the informal barriers in enlistment, see Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War I."



naturalized as British subjects.<sup>83</sup> When the Greek and Canadian governments entered negotiations to create a plan for repatriation so the Greeks could fight in the Greek military, the shortage of oceanic transport proved an insurmountable obstacle. Subsequently, the two governments decided to exclude Greeks from conscription in Canada. The initial deterrence of Greeks from enlistment combined with their exemption status, led xenophobic-patriots to regard the Greeks as slackers and shirkers. This sentiment was exacerbated by the highly visible presence of Greeks in public spaces, particularly in Toronto, where Greeks owned or operated over a third of all public eateries and many service-sector businesses, but constituted a mere 0.05 percent of the population.<sup>84</sup> Believing that the Greeks were not making meaningful wartime sacrifices but enjoyed the benefits of a booming wartime economy, xenophobic-patriots such as Lieut.-Col. Hardy and Sgt. William Turley contended that the Greeks were alien profiteers.<sup>85</sup> To address this disparity of wartime sacrifices and alien profiteering, xenophobic-patriots advocated for a conscription of alien wealth.

The lead-up to the 1917 federal election may have seemed like an opportune time for Great War veterans to pressure Borden's administration into conceding to their demands, but the political leverage of organized veterans was compromised by their fealty to Borden's pro-conscription "win-the-war" administration. It was a complex situation that deserves elaboration because it partly explains why the conscription of alien wealth was not pursued by the Unionists.

The Conservative party's favourable electoral position in English Canada was significantly damaged by wartime profiteering scandals. As Liberal, labour, and agrarian propaganda suggested, the Conservative party was not a patriotic administration but rather a

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<sup>83</sup> Canada, *Canada Year Book 1915*, 82.

<sup>84</sup> Gallant et al., 38-41.

<sup>85</sup> "80,000 Alien Enemies at Large, Paid Many Times \$1.10 A Day," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 8 March 1918, 14.

group of corrupted elites exploiting the war for private gain. Many Conservatives disregarded profiteering rhetoric as sensationalism, but they still had to contend with the fact that their party's patriotic image was tarnished. Obtaining the public support of organized veterans, whose moral authority was paramount in Great War culture, was an ideal strategy. For the GWVA, which was the only national Great War veterans' organization in 1917, the "paramount" issue for GWVA branches across the Dominion was the immediate implementation of the *Military Service Act*.<sup>86</sup> Support was widespread because many patriots believed that conscription was needed to compensate falling enlistment rates. Without a steady stream of recruits, the CEF would be at reduced strength and thus risked the safety of those fighting overseas.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, conscription had an appeal to xenophobic-patriots because of its anticipated effect of forcing shirkers into the khaki, particularly French-Canadians.<sup>88</sup> Recognizing that conscription would benefit the Conservatives' electoral prospects, the Conservatives' strategy focused on convincing the public that the Conservatives were the "pro-conscription" party, and the Liberals, who wanted to hold a referendum on conscription, was the "anti-conscription" party.<sup>89</sup> To convince the public of this portrayal, the Conservatives undertook a multifaceted strategy involving highly interdependent political maneuvers.

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<sup>86</sup> "The Paramount Issue," *The Veteran*, December 1917, 11-12.

<sup>87</sup> For a historical analysis exploring the pro-conscription position, see A. M. Willms, "Conscription 1917: A Brief for the Defence," *Canadian Historical Review* 37, no. 4 (1956): 338-351.

<sup>88</sup> Many British Canadians believed that French Canadians were shirkers because of their low enlistment rates and large population. For conscription in French Canada, see Mourad Djebabla, "Historiographie francophone de la Première Guerre Mondiale: écrire la Grande Guerre de 1914-1918 en Français au Canada et au Québec," *Canadian Historical Review* 95, no. 3 (September, 2014): 407-416; Elizabeth Armstrong, *The Crisis of Quebec, 1914-1918* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974); *Conscription 1917*, ed. Carl Berger (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969); Granatstein and Hitsman, *Broken Promises*.

<sup>89</sup> For studies on the 1917 federal election, see Patrick Ferraro "English Canada and the Election of 1917," MA Thesis, (McGill University, 1971); Patrice Dutil and David Mackenzie, *Embattled Nation: Canada's Wartime Election of 1917* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2017); English, *The Decline of Politics*.

Believing that the Conservative party was unlikely to win in a conventional stand-off against the Liberal party, Borden and his colleagues attempted to form a coalition with pro-conscriptionist Liberals under a new “Union party.” Through this reformation, Borden’s wartime administration could contest the election under a new guise and simultaneously appeal to patriotic sensibilities by overseeing the war effort as a non-partisan administration. However, persuading Liberals to form the Union government was challenging because Laurier was aware of his party’s advantageous position and rejected Borden’s offer for equal representation on the Cabinet.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, Borden continued to negotiate with other Liberals and public figures. John English outlines many details of these negotiations,<sup>91</sup> but in sum, Borden’s efforts between July and early August proved fruitless, pushing him to adopt more desperate tactics.

The Conservatives rushed two pieces of legislation through parliament that drastically altered the electoral landscape. *The Military Voters Bill* empowered soldiers to vote regardless of whether they qualified as residents. The legislation also permitted soldiers to cast their vote in any constituency, effectively creating a floating vote anticipated to skew the election results in the Conservatives’ favour, assuming they could secure the soldiers’ vote.<sup>92</sup> Second, the *Wartime Elections Act* granted the women’s franchise to those with a direct relative with service in the Canadian military.<sup>93</sup> It also disenfranchised all aliens and conscientious objectors exempt from *The Military Service Act*.<sup>94</sup> Arthur Meighen, who introduced the legislation to the House, explained its necessity on the basis that it was unfair to those fighting the war to have enemy

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<sup>90</sup> Borden believed that Laurier opposed conscription for selfish reasons related to his political legacy in French Canada. Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs*, vol. 2, 726, 729. For Laurier’s perspective, see Oscar Skelton, *The Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier*, vol. 2 (1896 – 1919) ed. David M. L. Farr (Ottawa: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1965); CTA, *Robert Borden’s Diary*, 25 May 1917.

<sup>91</sup> English, 136-160.

<sup>92</sup> Dutil and Mackenzie, *Embattled Nation*, 125.

<sup>93</sup> For Arthur Meighen’s explanation, see Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1917*, 332.

<sup>94</sup> *Military Service Act, 1917 Manual*, 18-19.

aliens influence the election and wartime policies, particularly conscription.<sup>95</sup> It was a very overt way of reconfiguring political belonging in Canada based on patriotic identity as well as manipulating the electorate to favour the Unionist party. The Liberal Opposition denounced the mass disenfranchisement as being characteristic of a “junker aristocracy” and an “oligarchical Kaiserism,”<sup>96</sup> but rhetoric aside, some Liberals feared the legislation because it disenfranchised many of their supporters, particularly Eastern Europeans in the western provinces (which notably had its parliamentary representation increased from 35 to 57 seats).<sup>97</sup> As John Thompson emphasized, the significance of the adjustments to the franchise was not that it nullified Liberal votes as much as it undermined the confidence of Liberals in English-speaking Canada and pressured them to join the Union party.<sup>98</sup> But attracting the Liberals into the Union party also meant that Borden would have to adjust his electoral platform to ensure Liberals could still attract Liberal-leaning voters, especially farmers. To the dismay of the organized veterans who wanted the conscription of aliens, organized farmers tended to reject xenophobic-patriotism.

The strategic importance of the farmers’ vote was widely recognized throughout Canada. As Arthur Puttee remarked, the farmers’ movement yielded so much influence in national politics that they could “dictate terms to the country.”<sup>99</sup> Part of those terms included lenient enemy alien regulations because the farmers’ movement had become relatively tolerant towards ethnic minorities following the influx of Eastern and Southern European immigrants.<sup>100</sup> Between 1901 and 1911, census data indicates that residents of Austro-Hungarian origin increased from

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<sup>95</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review* 1917, 332.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 332-333.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 571.

<sup>98</sup> Thompson, 136.

<sup>99</sup> “Through The Guide Window,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 26 June 1918, 5; “The Farmers Responsibility,” *The Voice*, 27 August 1917, 1.

<sup>100</sup> Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy 1540-2006* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007), 51-86.

18,178 to 129,103 and almost 95 percent settled in the Prairies.<sup>101</sup> With the prairie population becoming more ethnically diverse, prominent figures in the farmers' and social gospel movements, such as Woodsworth, promoted the rights of the "desirable" immigrants and encouraged native-born Canadians to be tolerant and benevolent.<sup>102</sup> Since the agrarian movement included enemy alien members, agrarian leaders opposed unreasonable anti-alien measures and defended the patriotism of their membership. For example, on 7 February 1917, the *Winnipeg Free Press* published an article questioning the patriotism of the United Farmers of Manitoba (UFM) because there was an absence of patriotic gestures during their convention, assumedly because of its ethnically diverse membership. Chipman refuted the accusations and argued that many American and foreign-born members were patriots who made significant contributions to the war effort. As Chipman contended, "noise, flag flapping and resolutions" were not the basis for judging true patriotism.<sup>103</sup> Thus, the farmers' movement advocated for a relaxation of enemy alien regulations and were opponents of radical policies to conscript enemy alien wealth and labour. There were also pragmatic benefits to a relaxation of anti-alien policies, such as addressing the labour shortages during the critical seeding and harvest seasons. Chipman supported the release of non-dangerous interns and even urged that the federal government extend their leniency to immigration policy more generally.<sup>104</sup> Instead of conscripting alien labour, Chipman and Good proposed other solutions, including the employment of more women and youth; establishing labour exchanges; and outlawing non-essential businesses, especially

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<sup>101</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1915*, 353; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1914*, 276.

<sup>102</sup> Mills, 49-51.

<sup>103</sup> "Patriotism of U.F.A. Questioned," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 14 February 1917, 5.

<sup>104</sup> *The Grain Growers' Guide*. "Men for Farm and Army," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 16 February 1916, 5; "Farm Labour Situation," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 16 April 1916, 5; "Distributing Harvest Help," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 9 August 1916, 5; "An Aid to Immigration," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 21 February 1917, 5.

alcohol and luxury markets.<sup>105</sup> Expectedly, the Farmers' Platform did not support anti-alien policies.<sup>106</sup> With the farmers movement in firm opposition to the policies of xenophobic-patriots, the Conservatives could not endorse the conscription of alien labour and wealth without a massive political cost.

Another key social group with key swing votes was the labour vote in English-speaking Canada. The labour movement's stance on the enemy alien problem was more complicated than the outright opposition of organized farmers. As shown in David Goutor's research, the mainstream labour movement harboured antagonistic attitudes towards aliens based on nativism and racism. However, the TLC only mildly embraced patriotism as part of their xenophobic and racist policies, which remained centered on opposing Asiatic immigration and labour competition.<sup>107</sup> In 1915, the Executive Council of the TLC expressed their concerns regarding the unwarranted competition between alien internees and returned soldiers, leading the labour delegates to suggest a scheme to prioritize veteran labour.<sup>108</sup> However, most of the anti-alien policies passed by TLC conventions were directed towards Asian aliens, including the endorsement of boycotts and new quota-based restrictions on Chinese immigrants.<sup>109</sup> In 1917, there was a resolution for immigration authorities to use literacy tests to deter the "invasion" of

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<sup>105</sup> "The Labour Problem," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 16 January 1917, 6; "Labour Exchanges," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 27 February 1917, 6; "Conscription and Patriotism," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 6 June 1917, 5; "The Conscription Question," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 27 June 1917, 5; "The Political Situation," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 25 July 1917, 5; "Cutting Out the Luxuries," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 25 January 1917, 121; "Luxury," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 26 July 1917, 1193; "Conscription," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 5 July 1917, 1085; "War Workers for the Fields," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 8 February 1917, 209.

<sup>106</sup> *The Farmers' Platform* (Winnipeg: The Grain Growers' Guide, 1917; The Canadian Council of Agriculture, *The Farmers' Platform: A New National Policy for Canada* (Winnipeg: The Canadian Council of Agriculture, 1918).

<sup>107</sup> Goutor, *Guarding the Gates*.

<sup>108</sup> Canada, "Report of the Thirty-First Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada," *The Labour Gazette*, October 1915, vol. 16 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1916), 459, 464.

<sup>109</sup> Canada, Department of Labour, "Report of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada," *The Labour Gazette*, October 1916, vol. 16 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1916), 1679-1680; Canada, Department of Labour, "Report of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada," *The Labour Gazette*, October 1917, vol. 17 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917), 854.

illiterate Southern and Eastern Europeans,<sup>110</sup> but the TLC issued no official policy regarding their businesses or limitations on their wage-earning. Labour pundits such as Francq expressed support for the conscription of allied aliens through treaties or repatriation, but it was only until the 1918 TLC convention that this policy received formal support.<sup>111</sup> In sum, the TLC exhibited a continuation of pre-war racism and nativism towards Asians, as well as a mild embrace of xenophobic-patriotism that sought to safeguard the interests of returned soldiers and restrict the flow of enemy alien immigrants. As Goutor explains, the absence of more overt anti-enemy alien policies was because the TLC executive was wary of bringing ethnic and racial issues to the forefront of debate in fear it would deepen internal divisions. The TLC executive thus argued that the enemy alien problem should be relegated to a Dominion Advisory Council that included labour representation.<sup>112</sup> Based on the mixed position of organized labour, the conscription of alien labour and wealth was not a policy that was essential for winning the support of organized labour.

Without the support by major labour and farmer organizations, the Conservatives were not under sufficient pressure to endorse a radical position like the conscription of enemy alien wealth. However, this did not mean that Conservatives and Liberals did not appeal to prejudices in some way. The language used in the electoral platforms of both the Unionists and Liberals was ambiguous and pledged to support “strong” and “progressive” immigration policy.<sup>113</sup> By

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<sup>110</sup> As mentioned in the resolution, the American government implemented a literacy test, prompting fears that the undesirable immigrants turned away would flood into Canada unless the Canadian government imposed similar regulations. *The Labour Gazette*, October 1915, 464; *Labour Gazette*, October 1917, 853.

<sup>111</sup> In the *Labour World*, Francq argued that allied aliens should be interned if they refused to be conscripted. “No Exemption for Friendly Aliens,” *Labour World*, 21 July 1917, 3; Canada, “Report of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada,” in *Labour Gazette*, October 1918, vol. 18 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1918), 833.

<sup>112</sup> Goutor, 101-102, 117, 137, 192, 198.

<sup>113</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1917*, 587; Robert Borden, *Manifestos 1916-17* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1918).

avoiding specific promises, both campaigns could appeal to xenophobia, racism, and nativism among British and French Canadians alike, but it distinctly avoided making concessions to xenophobic-patriots. For Borden, this strategy proved worthwhile because he successfully recruited prominent agrarian leaders and Liberals,<sup>114</sup> thereby strengthening the electoral position of the Union party. With the formation of the Union party solidified, the Unionists gained many advantages. For instance, the only Liberal newspaper that remained loyal to Laurier was the *London Advertiser*.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, the Unionists could claim to be a non-partisan government, thus reinforcing their patriotic image. With so much press support from former pro-Liberal newspapers and agrarian papers, the Unionists pushed their “win-the-war” campaign propaganda full throttle and presented themselves as the pro-conscription choice. It was through these political maneuvers that Borden’s administration undermined the bargaining leverage of xenophobic-patriots in the veterans’ movement because the formation of Union party and its pro-conscription stance meant that most veterans were compelled by their strong pro-conscription stance to give Unionists their support regardless of their anti-alien policies. The election result supports this claim. As cited by Dutil and Mackenzie, the soldiers’ vote across the provinces averaged between 88 and 95 percent in the Unionists’ favour.<sup>116</sup> And notably, this success was achieved without the Unionists’ endorsement of conscripting alien wealth and labour.

It is important to emphasize that although the national platforms did not endorse xenophobic-patriotism, the same cannot be said regarding the local campaigns. Nathan Smith cites how Unionists Herbert Clements and Alexander Maclean, who contested constituencies on

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<sup>114</sup> Among the agrarian leaders that joined the Unionists were T. A. Crerar, the president of the United Grain Growers Limited; R. C. Henders, President of the MGGA; J. A. Maharg, President of the SGGA; John F. Reid, a director and executive of the SGGA, and Andrew Knox, director of the SGGA.

<sup>115</sup> Ferraro, 46-47.

<sup>116</sup> Dutil and Mackenzie, *Embattled Nation*, 249.



the West and East coasts respectively, proclaimed that the enemy alien question was the second most important issue next to conscription.<sup>117</sup> Liberal and Labour candidates also appealed to xenophobic-patriotism. In *The Grit*, an article described how the Liberal candidate Dr. J. G. Morrison, spoke at a rally in Sarnia and condemned Borden's administration for paying soldiers a daily wage of \$1.10 while allowing "foreigners" to earn a daily wage of \$4 on government munitions contracts.<sup>118</sup> Meanwhile, in Toronto, labour candidates endorsed a progressive income tax to target alien wealth.<sup>119</sup>

The popularity of opposing enemy alien wealth at a local level, coupled with its absence in the national platforms, highlights how xenophobic-patriots lacked sufficient political leverage to influence federal policy, but it remained a popular concern. The mixed signals from political leaders was undoubtedly a source of aggravation for xenophobic-patriots, especially considering that it persisted since the beginning of the war. To reiterate, in 1914, Borden's administration requested the public respect enemy aliens but subjected them to registration and internment, and further blamed them for inciting industrial unrest from their presence, but then released them from internment camps to find high-paying jobs; in 1917, national political platforms did not endorse the conscription of alien profiteers, but local candidates endorsed by the parties proclaimed alien profiteering as a leading political issue. And so, it is easy to understand why xenophobic-patriots were frustrated by federal party politics because their views were simultaneously legitimized and ignored. As federal policymakers would find out in 1918, the alienation of xenophobic-patriots was not without its consequences.

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<sup>117</sup> Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 174.

<sup>118</sup> "People vs. Profiteers," *The Grit*, 12 December 1917, 6.

<sup>119</sup> James Naylor, *The New Democracy: Challenging the Social Order in Industrial Ontario, 1914-25* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 104.

## **The Alienation of Xenophobic-Patriots**

In the months that followed the election, Great War veterans continued to demand the conscription of alien labour and wealth. As discussed by Nathan Smith, in February 1918, the Toronto GWVA branch hosted a meeting in Massey Hall to galvanize support for xenophobic-patriotic policies. In addition to reprimanding governing officials, the speakers condemned the lack of patriotism among those employing aliens over veterans. Leaders of public repute spoke at the rally, including Premier Hearst, Mayor Church, James Ballantyne of the Greater Toronto Labour party, and Rev. C.E. Manning of the Ministerial Association.<sup>120</sup> The following week, executive members of the Toronto GWVA branch, including Secretary George Murrell and Turley, continued to galvanize the rank-and-file to oppose the unsatisfactory status quo. Although some GWVA leaders preferred the conscription of aliens, such as the Toronto District GWVA Secretary James O'Connor, Murrell proclaimed that confronting the aliens in their workplaces was necessary because there were no signs of change. Some veterans eager to act even professed their willingness to face imprisonment. Not all GWVA leaders supported the raids, however. The Toronto Branch president, J. Tweedles, tried to dissuade the returned soldiers because he believed that the broader public would not condone such behaviour. Lieut.-Col. Hardy professed the same sentiment and regarded the use of excessive aggression as "Bolshevik tactics," and thus, antithetical to the democratic values that legitimized the Great War as a righteous struggle.<sup>121</sup> By using violence rather than democracy, Hardy argued that returned soldiers would be undermining their own patriotic identity.

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<sup>120</sup> Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 164.

<sup>121</sup> Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 166; Also see Smith, "The Mercenary Demands of Bolsheviks?"

As some veterans intimidated employers and aliens through direct confrontations at their workplaces and businesses, efforts to galvanize public support and negotiate with policymakers continued. Smith describes how in late March, another large demonstration involving veterans from the GWVA, the ANV, and their “ladies’ auxiliaries” was organized. The parade marched through the streets carrying banners that read “Take Heed Ottawa, Toronto is in Dead Earnest,” and “We did Not Fight to Fatten Aliens.” When the parade gathered at Massey Hall, speakers denounced the inadequacy of the prevailing anti-alien policies. Following this demonstration, Borden and other Cabinet ministers consulted veteran delegates to cool down tensions. The GWVA delegation, which included Lieut.-Col. Hardy, presented resolutions for the conscription of allied aliens and the conscription of enemy alien workers into government service. Until the government satisfied these resolutions, the delegation recommended that the government not proceed with the first draft or send soldiers from the First Contingent back to the frontlines. The Cabinet members did not reassure the GWVA delegation that decisive action would be taken. Instead, they offered a justification for the release of interned enemy aliens, including their fears of German retaliation against Canadian POWs and that mass internment would contravene international law.<sup>122</sup>

The GWVA delegation’s meeting with the Cabinet ministers could be considered an important symbolic victory considering the organization was still in an early stage of development in 1918 and gained direct access to Cabinet members,<sup>123</sup> but ultimately, the xenophobic-patriots were once again left empty-handed. It was becoming clear that more allies were needed to pressure policymakers into action. Organized labour was the sensible choice because xenophobic-patriotism still thrived in various labour circles and working-class

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<sup>122</sup> Smith, “Comrades and Citizens,” 164-172.

<sup>123</sup> By the end of 1917, the GWVA claimed a membership of 25,000. Morton and Wright, 79.

neighbourhoods. However, alliance building proved difficult even in places such as Toronto, where strong anti-alien advocacy could be expected. A meeting was held between the District GWVA officials in Toronto and TLC representatives in May, but the latter clarified that they opposed the GWVA's official policy of regulating alien wages.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, the TLC executives and delegates from across the Dominion met with the Cabinet to discuss war-related issues, including the alien problem. As the executive reported at the TLC convention in September, the delegates declared their opposition to any scheme that would infringe upon workers' industrial freedom of workers, including the conscript alien wages. The Labour delegation also declared their approval of releasing non-dangerous internees.<sup>125</sup> Thus, the labour movement's most prominent organization declared itself in support of the status quo and undermined the more radical demands of xenophobic-patriots. As for the labour press, Pettipiece, Francq, and Puttee expressed their sympathy to the situations facing soldiers and acknowledged their animosity towards aliens as legitimate, but all three believed it was immoral to treat men like cattle, and furthermore, that employers should be the primary targets of criticism since they were making profits from employing the aliens.<sup>126</sup> In Pettipiece's words:

The profiteers who have waxed fat while the fighting men were overseas would in this case have made their profits by exploiting the alien... the removal of the alien will leave the real enemy entrenched and will still leave the returned soldier a poor working man even if he borrows the job that the alien now has the loan of."<sup>127</sup>

Expectedly, organized farmers remained unsupportive of conscripting aliens even after the election. As evident in the farmers' movement's mottos, "Equal rights to all and special

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<sup>124</sup> Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 177.

<sup>125</sup> *Labour Gazette*, October 1918, 831-833.

<sup>126</sup> "Returned Soldiers Idle Alien Enemies Employed," *B.C. Federationist*, 26 April 1918, 1, 8; "Soldiers Suggest Force Against Orientals," *B.C. Federationist*, 18 January 1918, 1; "Alien Enemies and Conscript Labour," *Labour World*, 6 April 1918, 3; "The Position of the Alien," *The Voice*, 14 June 1918, 1.

<sup>127</sup> "Deporting Aliens No Solution," *B.C. Federationist*, 21 February 1919, 7.

privileges to none” and “the greatest good to the greatest numbers,” reflected their continued ambitions to minimize ethnic tensions.<sup>128</sup>

With many labour and farmer leaders at odds with radical anti-alien policies, xenophobic-patriots were determined to have their views asserted in the GWVA at the very least. In August 1918, veterans had the opportunity to do so during the second Dominion GWVA convention held in Toronto. Following a similar tactic as the TLC executive, the GWVA executive attempted to avoid the alien question threatening to divide their organization, so they omitted alien profiteering in their opening statement but it did not go unnoticed. Xenophobic-patriots made an immediate backlash against the omission, and consequently, the GWVA convention convened a special committee to facilitate debate on the alien question. By the end of the convention, a series of anti-alien resolutions were passed. As Smith contends, the GWVA conference adopted a “moderate position... undoubtedly by executive officials attempting to restrain the radicalism of reactionary members.” However, it is more appropriate to describe these anti-alien policies as an extreme position.<sup>129</sup> As outlined in *The Veteran*, the convention supported interning enemy aliens not steadily engaged in work of national importance and forcing the internees to work under military rule. Such a resolution completely disregarded the arguments by the Cabinet about abiding by international law and being fearful of retribution to Canadian POWs under German control. The convention also supported adjustments to restrict the travelling radius of enemy aliens to five miles from their permanent residence; the regulation of enemy alien property; the strict enforcement of the laws governing enemy alien registration; an adjustment to the Dominion Income Tax to be more severe on alien incomes, including an

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<sup>128</sup> “Through The Guide Window,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 26 June 1918, 5; “Building the New Order,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 5 November 1919, 5.

<sup>129</sup> Smith, “Comrades and Citizens,” 178-179.

additional super-tax of 10 percent to all enemy alien incomes; the abolition of enemy alien publications; the removal of enemy aliens from all Federal, Provincial, and Municipal departments; that the *Military Service Act* apply to all allied aliens; the prohibition of licences for Allied alien employment in non-essential work with preference given to returned soldiers in the granting of such licenses. The convention did not include resolutions endorsing the conscription of enemy alien wages above military pay, but this was supplemented by their support for more extensive internment and adjustments to the income tax. Significantly, the GWVA convention did not pass resolutions against war and food profiteering because their attention was divided between demobilization policies and alien profiteering.<sup>130</sup>

Xenophobic-patriots in the GWVA Dominion convention must have been satisfied that their organization officially supported a series of harsh anti-alien policies, but with Borden's administration remaining indifferent to their demands, there was little reason to hope there would be a complete reversal in federal policy. Feeling embittered, resentful, and suffering from post-traumatic stress, the returned soldiers' temperament was explosive. On 1 August 1918, the last day of the GWVA Dominion convention, a minor altercation between a returned soldier and a waiter ignited a four-day riot. Thomas Gallant et al. provide a detailed description. After getting intoxicated, Private Claude Cludernay, a veteran who lost his leg in the war, went into White City Café on Yonge Street and became abusive towards a young Greek waiter. After bloodying one man's nose, the Greek employees had Cludernay arrested. The next day, Cludernay was found guilty of being intoxicated and disturbing the peace, resulting in a \$2 fine, but since Cludernay lacked the money to pay it, he remained in jail. When Cludernay was released, he returned to the Café and apologized for his behaviour; however, Cludernay's friends had other

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<sup>130</sup> "Impressions of the Conference," *The Veteran*, September 1918, 25, 28; "The Second Convention," *The Veteran*, September 1918, 10-12.

plans because they believed the Greek waiters beat him so severely that Cludernay had to be hospitalized. Intending to retaliate, the veterans congregated outside White City, ransacked the restaurant, then proceeded to loot and destroy another eleven Greek restaurants. By 3 a.m., the crowd of roughly 12,000 finally dispersed. The police did not attempt to intervene to save the Greek businesses, but they did form a picket to protect Toronto's financial district – a clear indication of how authorities were more concerned about protecting areas of high-end British businesses than the businesses of marginalized aliens. The following day, Mayor Church addressed an audience at City Hall condemning the violence, but conversely, he acknowledged the legitimacy of the veterans' outrage. Church's expressions of sympathy failed to tame the xenophobic-patriots' rage, likely because they had grown weary of the lip service offered by governing officials throughout the war. Later that day, the veterans congregated again and destroyed more alien businesses. This time the police were ready and eager to end the rampage. A clash between the police and mob involved an estimated 50,000 Torontonians. Dozens of police and rioters were hospitalized, and hundreds of others received treatment by private doctors and drug store clerks. In the days that followed, tensions remained high. There were some incidents of violence at alien-owned restaurants, but it did not compare to the scale of destruction of the previous days. In the absence of rioting, xenophobic-patriots held large anti-alien rallies, where speakers galvanized support for more stringent anti-alien policies, including incarceration, deportation, taxation, and the closure of alien businesses. In the aftermath of Toronto's anti-Greek riots, there were eleven convictions for assaulting police and disturbing the peace – the sentence carried a maximum sentence of one-year imprisonment and a \$30 fine. However, there were no convictions for the attacks on the Greek businesses.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Gallant et al., 3-25.

In the wake of the Toronto riots, the Dominion GWVA's President, W. P. Purney, denounced the veterans for taking the law into their own hands. Loughnan also disavowed the "acts of violence by ultra-zealous patriots" and asserted that they were not representative of the GWVA. And yet, even Loughnan could not resist expressing some sympathy with the rioters' frustrations and rationalized their disillusionment as a consequence of the government's inaction and corruption: "Neglect to control profiteering, to work out a sane land settlement and labour policy, and to regulate the alien problem, have all combined as irritants upon men whose nerves have not been improved by their trials in the trenches."<sup>132</sup> Loughnan's response was strategic because he utilized the controversy to shape the opinions of the returned soldiers. Similar to Purney, he could not outright endorse the violent behaviour because it undermined constitutional authority, however, he also did not want to push the veterans away by contesting their sense of justice. What Loughnan was attempting to do was connect their outrage to the core problems that he and other GWVA executives prioritized – and among those problems were the evils connected to war and food profiteering.

The Dominion GWVA's monthly periodical, *The Veteran*,<sup>133</sup> was part of the executives' arsenal to influence the opinions of the rank-and-file. Dave Loughnan was the ideal editor. When Loughnan addressed his readership, he did so with convincing authority because of his honourable record of service. During the Second Battle of Ypres, Loughnan suffered horrendous stomach wounds and miraculously survived after crawling half a mile to safety. Upon returning to Canada in 1916 as a wounded veteran, Loughnan became the President for the GWVA's British Columbia branch and later served as the President of the Ottawa branch in 1920.<sup>134</sup> As

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<sup>132</sup> "The Toronto Riots," *The Veteran*, September 1918, 12-13.

<sup>133</sup> *The Veteran* was a monthly periodical that boasted a circulation of roughly 70,000.

<sup>134</sup> "The Retiring Editor of the Veteran," *The Veteran*, October 1921, 7; Morton and Wright, *Winning the Second Battle*, 79.



Loughnan's editorials illustrate, his wartime experiences enabled him to become a spokesperson for the dead, which he used to legitimize his visions for a reconstructed democracy. As Loughnan explained in the first issue of *The Veteran*, "These men in dying have laid an almost terrible responsibility upon us. They have paid the price, but it remains for us to settle what we shall take for that price. It remains for us to make sure that they shall not have died in vain but for some truly noble end. This legacy of responsibility we cannot escape."<sup>135</sup> When Loughnan proclaimed the need to transform democratic society, he did so not only as a spokesperson of organized veterans but also as a spokesperson of fallen soldiers.

In *The Veteran*, Loughnan provided space for a plurality of opinion but his editorials throughout 1918 focused on profiteering according to a vertical axis of inequality, and similar to Chipman, Francq, Pettipiece, and other pundits analyzed in this study, Loughnan used profiteering rhetoric to denounce "greedy capitalism."<sup>136</sup> More specifically, Loughnan targeted the "profiteering pork packer and munition maker" to illustrate how Canadian society was plagued by deeply-rooted evils.<sup>137</sup> In addition to Loughnan's editorials, he included articles and illustrations by those who shared his animosity towards war and food profiteers. J. W. Bengough, a well-known Canadian cartoonist and pundit who had made his fame in the popular liberal reform journal *Grip*, provided such a contribution.<sup>138</sup> In Bengough's illustration below, two visibly disabled veterans stand within earshot of an employer and capitalist, who, in the characteristic fashion of villainous profiteers, are presented as figures of extravagance, luxury, and gluttony. The capitalist, who clutches his report entitled "Profits 1914-1917", murmurs,

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<sup>135</sup> "The Legacy of Responsibility," *The Veteran*, December 1917, 9.

<sup>136</sup> "Our National Future," *The Veteran*, January 1918, 10.

<sup>137</sup> "Our National Future," *The Veteran*, January 1918, 10.

<sup>138</sup> Dennis Blake, "J.W. Bengough and *Grip*: The Canadian Editorial Cartoon Comes of Age," MA Thesis, (Wilfrid Laurier University, 1985).

“How are we going to fix These Boys?” The comment was reflective of their insincere and disrespectful attitude. The injured veterans, whose perseverance is displayed through their upright posture, reply to the capitalists’ remark by stating, “Maybe we’ll Fix you!!” The illustration reflects how returned soldiers resented patronization, especially from the wealthy and privileged who profited in safety.



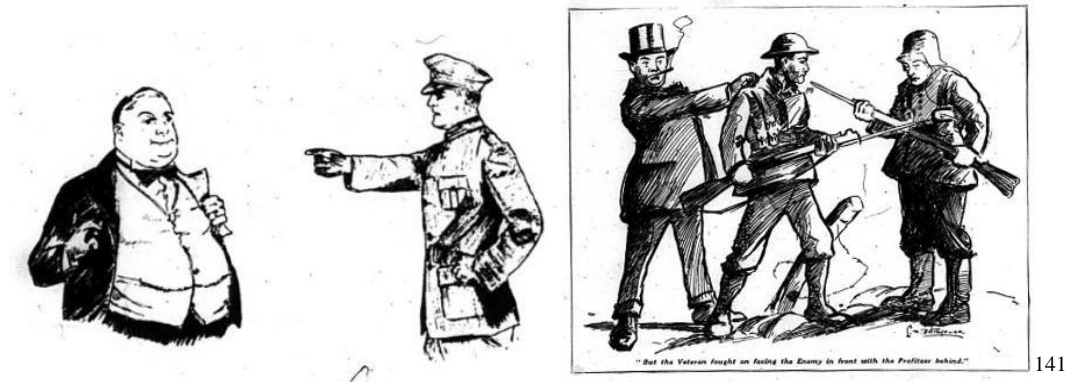
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A notable series featured in *The Veteran* that also legitimized the resentment felt towards war and food profiteers was by Harwood Steel, who later authored a history of the Canadian Army Corps.<sup>140</sup> In Steel’s article entitled “Our Enemies of Peace,” he denounced those who evaded their wartime duties and sacrifices by putting their own “safety-first.” An illustration accompanied the article of a disgruntled soldier confronting a plump, well-dressed, and carefree capitalist. In a second article entitled “The Profiteer,” Harwood condemned wartime profiteering and included another illustration of a capitalist pushing a British soldier towards a German

<sup>139</sup> [No title], *The Veteran*, January 1918, 16.

<sup>140</sup> Harwood Steele, *The Canadians in France, 1915-1918* (Toronto: Copp and Clark, 1920).

soldier. While the latter image emphasized how big business used soldiers during the war, the former normalized confrontations between returned soldiers and capitalists.



Another notable inclusion in *The Veteran* was a poem by E. Witherstone, the Secretary of the St. Catherine's GWVA Branch. It also appeared in *The Week*, a progressive periodical based in Victoria.<sup>142</sup> What stands out about Witherstone's poem is that it exposes how soldiers fighting on the Western Front were informed of rampant food profiteering and became profoundly angered by the treachery. It made them realize that the battle for democracy would not end with Germany's defeat, but rather, that it would continue on the home front against the profiteers. Witherstone's reference, "To allow 'Ours' to live—He must die," was reflective of the popular attitudes discussed in Chapter Two that treasonous profiteers deserved execution.

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<sup>141</sup> "Our Enemies of Peace: The "Safety-first," *The Veteran*, May 1920, 20; "Our Enemies of Peace: The Profiteer," *The Veteran*, July 1920, 20. In the latter illustration, the caption reads, "But the Veteran fought on facing the Enemy in front with the Profiteer behind."

<sup>142</sup> "The Rear Guard," *The Week*, 9 February 1918, 2.

**“The Rear Guard”**

“What are you leaving the war for,  
Bill?”

“To Hell with the war,” said he;  
“You can make a safe bet  
I’m fed up to the neck;  
What more could a man want to be?”

“You once told me you loved fighting,  
Bill,  
Has the joy of it gone astray?  
When you bayonet and gun  
You made holes in the ‘Hun.’  
For a dollar and ten cents a day.”

“You surely can’t make me believe,  
Bill,  
That midst all this slaughter and  
strife,  
Dodging “whiz-bang” galore  
And bombs by the score,  
You’d rather be home with your  
wife?”

“You’ve got the right dope,” answered  
William,  
“There’s a time when a man tires of  
fun,

When he feels much inclined  
To leave Glory behind  
And attend to some things—left  
undone.”

“For I hear that, away over yonder,”  
(Said Bill with a tear in his eye)  
“That our folks live in fear  
Of the Food Profiteer—  
To allow “Ours” to live—He must die.”

“It seems that instead of me staying  
To fight for our “rights” over here,  
I am needed much more  
Near my own cottage door  
To protect the loved ones I hold dear”

“So that’s why I’m packing my kit bag  
And taking my hand bombs away ;  
I’m leaving the “front”  
For a rear action stunt  
Ain’t we fighting for Freedom?  
Hooray!

Opposition to war and food profiteering exhibited in *The Veteran*, particularly Loughnan’s editorials, was not intended to merely cultivate disillusionment and animosity. Similar to labour and agrarian pundits, these discussions were intended to promote progressive and socialist reforms so that the war effort and democratic society could be improved. There were many familiar policy proposals supported in *The Veteran* that had synergies with the broader progressive and socialist embrace evident in the labour and agrarian press. These policies included the removal of patronage; implementing price and profit controls; a

“conscription of wealth” through harsher taxes on large income and corporate profits;<sup>143</sup> granting women’s franchise to rejuvenate political life;<sup>144</sup> endorsing the British Labour party platform, which included measures for the nationalization and the democratic control of industry;<sup>145</sup> removing unjust tax exemptions on Victory Bonds; combatting the influence of big business through adjustments to tariffs, combines legislation, and market manipulation;<sup>146</sup> and expanding co-operative stores.<sup>147</sup> Absent in Loughnan’s schemes were the anti-enemy alien measures endorsed during the GWVA’s 1918 convention. Indeed, Loughnan published articles in *The Veteran* challenging the legitimacy of alien profiteering. In February 1918, while GWVA members in Toronto and Hamilton participated in anti-alien demonstrations, Loughnan denounced the demands to conscript alien labour because it was virtually an endorsement of slavery. Moreover, Loughnan emphasized how the wartime designation of enemy aliens was flawed because Bohemians in Western Canada, who were ex-Austrian subjects, were bitterly hostile to the Austro-Hungarian empire.<sup>148</sup> Thus, although Loughnan could express sympathy with the frustrations of xenophobic-patriots, as well as provide xenophobic-patriots space in *The Veteran*, his position – like that of other GWVA Dominion executives and many labour and agrarian leaders – was more concerned about war and food profiteering than alien profiteering.

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<sup>143</sup> “The Patronage Evil,” *The Veteran*, February 1918, 10-11; “Patronage and Mr. Calder,” *The Veteran*, March 1918, 9-10; “A Marked Improvement,” *The Veteran*, May, 1918, 9-10; “Conscription of Wealth,” *The Veteran*, March 1918, 15-16; “The Example of New Zealand,” *The Veteran*, February 1918, 11; “Our Labour Problems,” *The Veteran*, August, 1918, 11-12; “Robbers of the People,” *The Veteran*, May, 1918, 10-11; “Low Wages and Crime,” *The Veteran*, April, 1918, 12-13; “Reconstruction or Revolution,” *The Veteran*, December, 1918, 11, 17-18.

<sup>144</sup> “Women in Politics,” *The Veteran*, June 1918, 43.

<sup>145</sup> [no title], *The Veteran*, March 1918, 12; “Labour and New Social Order – program of the British labour party,” *The Veteran*, March 1918, 17-18; “British Labour and the New Social Order,” *The Veteran*, April 1918, 17-18; “Labour and the New Social Order,” *The Veteran*, May 1918, 22-24; “British Labour and the New Social Order,” *The Veteran*, June 1918, 21-22; “British Labour and the New Social Order,” *The Veteran*, July 1918, 20-22.

<sup>146</sup> “The Next Victory Loan,” *The Veteran*, October 1918, 12-13; “The Cause and Cure of Bolshevism,” *The Veteran*, February 1919, 16-18; “Land Speculation,” *The Veteran*, December, 1918, 14-15.

<sup>147</sup> “An Excellent Example,” *The Veteran*, November, 1918, 14; “Co-operative Stores,” *The Veteran*, November, 1918, 13-14.

<sup>148</sup> “Notes,” *The Veteran*, February 1918, 8.

The combined power of organized veterans, organized farmers, and organized labour presented a formidable front to challenge big business and party politics, but xenophobic-patriotism, especially in the veterans' movement, created a significant division.

## **Conclusion**

The intersection of war-centric designations of “enemy aliens” and “allied aliens” with the identity of profiteers complicates the history of profiteering as a source of progressive and socialist empowerment. As this chapter argues, xenophobia, as well as nativism and racism, influenced the construction of patriotic sensibilities, which in turn, informed a distinct outlook this chapter categorizes as xenophobic-patriotism. British Canadians were among the most radical xenophobic-patriots, and soldiers and veterans were their vanguards. In the context of the war, the presence and prosperity of enemy aliens became an urgent concern for these xenophobic-patriots because they believed it threatened national security. The morality of profit, whether through wages or business, was transformed by the war-centric cultural shift. However, as the wartime economy became more prosperous by the mid-war period, enemy aliens, and aliens more generally, faced intensifying scrutiny for siphoning wartime wealth from more deserving patriots. Federal policymakers in the Cabinet were expected to address the alien problem, but their own pragmatic and moral rationalizations were firmly at odds with the radical demands of xenophobic-patriots for the conscription of alien profiteers. Since xenophobic-patriots failed to obtain sufficient political leverage to force Borden's administration to make concessions, federal policy regulating the “alien problem” would remain dissatisfactory. In addition to being alienated from federal policymakers, the demands of xenophobic-patriots clashed with the priorities of the national-level GWVA, CCA, and TLC, which prioritized challenges to war and food profiteers. But while some xenophobic-patriots became disgruntled,

others became violent and were unwilling to wait for policymakers to enforce the moral economy from above. In retaliation for what they believed to be an unacceptable injustice, xenophobic-patriots used intimidation and violence, often targeting alien wage-earners, their employers, and alien-owned businesses. Soldiers and veterans often spearheaded these assaults. As the next chapter will discuss, xenophobic-patriots were central in the emergence of the broader democratic revolt. They aimed to reconstruct democracy, but in a way that safeguarded British Canadian patriotic interests.

## Chapter 5.

### “If Ye Break Faith with Us Who Die, We Shall not Sleep”: Direct Action in the Democratic Revolt

On 11 November 1918, patriots across the country were overjoyed by newspaper headlines. In thick bold font, the *Toronto Star* read, “FIGHTING IS OVER-OFFICIAL,” “ARMISTICE SIGNED; FIGHTING CEASED AT 6’O’CLOCK THIS A.M., TORONTO TIME,” and “HUN RETREAT NOW ROUT BRITISH ARRIVE AT MONS.” Under the headlines, a portrait of the Kaiser was accompanied with the caption of “vanquished.” There were also sensational stories describing Wilhelm II’s renunciation of the throne, his escape to Holland, and the establishment of a new German government.<sup>1</sup> For the time being, it appeared as though the war ended with a great victory: Belgium and Luxembourg were liberated; France was saved from subjugation; the threat of the German High Seas Fleet was neutralized; the British empire remained intact; political power in Germany was shifting away from the Prussian militarists; and German *Kultur* was discredited. It was a great victory, but it came at a great cost. In the final hundred days of fighting, the Canadian Corps suffered 30,000 casualties out of its 120,000 personnel.<sup>2</sup> In total, nearly 60,000 CEF soldiers were killed during the war and an additional 172,000 wounded. Upon returning to Canada, soldiers were not free of the misery from Europe either. Many struggled with shell shock and survivor’s guilt. Their individual stories were so tragic that some

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<sup>1</sup> “Socialist Leader Will Form A Govt. For Speedy Peace,” *Toronto Star*, 11 November 1918, 1; “Ex-Kaiser Flees, Now In Holland?” *Toronto Star*, 11 November 1918, 1.

<sup>2</sup> As Desmond Morton notes, this was twice the casualty rate of Passchendaele and three times Vimy Ridge. Morton, *Fight or Pay*, 208.



were literally marginalized. Buried at the bottom of the “Views in Brief” section of the *Toronto Star* was a notice that a returned soldier named Private V. N. Wenzel slit his own throat with a table knife, leaving his lifeless body to be discovered in an abandoned sandpit on the edge of London, Ontario<sup>3</sup> – notably, a location resembling the dreary landscape of no man’s land. Private Wenzel’s suicide exemplifies how the armistice did not mean an end to the war’s hardships.

A key dynamic of the post-war period, which this study recognizes as being roughly between late-1918 and 1921, is that Great War culture did not suddenly dissipate with the signing of the armistice. Imperial Germany was defeated, but the Great War for peace and democracy continued through demobilization and reconstruction. Among those who framed post-war reconstruction as a patriotic struggle was Loughnan. In the December 1918 issue of *The Veteran*, Loughnan cited the Union party’s use of late Lieut.-Col. John McCrae’s poem “In Flanders Fields” to emphasize the hypocrisy of the party’s patriotic image and their failures to uphold patriotic ideals. As Loughnan wrote in reference to McCrae’s poem:

It was a direct message from the dead to continue the good fight. It was a command from the unconquerable spirits who had passed into the great beyond, that we neither falter nor fail in the high resolve which actuated their noble example of self-sacrifice. Their last long sleep, ‘neath the poppies fields of Flanders, was placed without our guardianship – ‘If ye break faith with us who die, we shall not sleep.’<sup>4</sup>

By employing McCrae’s powerful and spiritual imagery, the Union government presented itself as an empathetic administration eager to uphold patriotic interests and principles. However, Loughnan argued that the Union government protected the big interests more than dutiful hard-pressed patriots. Loughnan cited numerous examples, including inadequate demobilization policies for soldiers and their families; awarding profiteers with lucrative contracts; failing to

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<sup>3</sup> “Soldier’s Throat Cut,” *Toronto Star*, 11 March 1918, 5.

<sup>4</sup> “If Ye Break Faith,” *The Veteran*, December 1918, 12-13.

control food prices and prevent labour troubles; and for their “desultory dabbings in the enemy alien question.” Based on these failures, Loughnan believed the Unionists were “breaking faith.”

With armistice signed, the time had come for patriots to address the prevailing wartime injustices. In an uplifting note, Loughnan rejoiced that “we [veterans] by no means stand alone in our dutiful condemnation... From coast to coast there is a growing determination that the principles of true democracy for which our Government fought Germany should be practised in their dealings with the people.” And if a “true democracy” could not be realized, then “the war was waged in vain.”<sup>5</sup> Loughnan and other patriots believed that the honour of wartime sacrifices demanded that postwar reconstruction establish a truly democratic society. This is what Loughnan called “the Legacy of Responsibility.”<sup>6</sup> Driven by the same set of ideals that underscored the war effort, and further compounded by intense post-war economic pressures, patriots across the Dominion answered the call of duty by using direct action to challenge the terms of reconstruction. As this chapter describes, in the months following the armistice, outraged patriots unleashed their anger through anti-alien riots and industrial conflict. With grassroots militancy reaching unprecedented levels, Loughnan declared that “unrest” had transformed into a “revolt.”<sup>7</sup> Understanding how this revolt manifested as part of a continued struggle against profiteers, particularly through direct action, is the subject of this chapter.

### **Enemies of Democracy: Profiteers and Bolsheviks**

During the late and post-war period, two key problems intensified disillusionment and militancy among patriots: material hardships and hostility towards Bolshevism. Both dynamics

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<sup>5</sup> “If Ye Break Faith,” *The Veteran*, December 1918, 12-13.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter Four. “The Legacy of Responsibility,” *The Veteran*, December 1917, 9.

<sup>7</sup> “The Cause and Cure of Bolshevism,” *The Veteran*, February 1919, 16.

need to be considered because they were intertwined with opposition to profiteering and the broader democratic revolt. As this section illustrates, material hardships legitimized the claims that there was an imbalance of wartime sacrifices, thus adding further urgency to the need to address the excessive profits of war and food profiteers. Meanwhile, the Red Scare and fears of Bolshevik activity in Canada heightened xenophobic-patriotism and intensified hostility towards immigrants from Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe. Since the signing of the armistice meant that civil unrest no longer threatened the safety of soldiers fighting on the Front, patriots in Canada no longer felt obligated by patriotic duty to remain passive and productive, ultimately leading to a widespread embrace of direct action to challenge the terms of democracy's reconstruction.

When the armistice was signed, patriots still considered post-war material hardships as part of their wartime sacrifices, which were in dire need of redress. In particular, Great War veterans faced exceptionally strenuous circumstances despite their wartime sacrifices, and for this reason, Great War veterans remained a highly militant group. Even while waiting for the return voyage to Canada, soldiers endured shipping delays and became outraged when conscripts were sent home early despite the "first over, first back" policy.<sup>8</sup> Further testing their patience, soldiers had to cope with the height of the Influenza outbreak in Britain, the worst winter in memory, a coal shortage, inadequate food and sleeping provisions, and a backlog for pay.<sup>9</sup> Facing excessive neglect from their military leadership, riots ensued while they waited to return to Canada. As noted by G.W.L. Nicholson, there were thirteen riots or disturbances involving

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<sup>8</sup> Nicholson, 531.

<sup>9</sup> Desmond Morton, 'Kicking and Complaining': Demobilization Riots in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1918-19, *Canadian Historical Review* 61, no. 3 (September 1980): 334-360; Howard G. Coombs, "Dimensions of Military Leadership: The Kimmel Park Munity of 4/5 March 1919," *Canadian Forces Leadership Institute* (October, 2004): 1-31.

Canadian troops in England between November 1918 and June 1919. The most severe riot occurred between 4 and 5 March 1919 in Kinnel Park, North Wales. It resulted in five deaths and twenty-three wounded.<sup>10</sup> Foreshadowing their militancy upon returning to Canada, the soldiers unleashed their outrage on “Tin Town” shops accused of profiteering as well as visible minorities whose presence in the military antagonized racist British Canadians.<sup>11</sup> Hence, it is important to understand that even before returning to Canada, some British Canadian veterans – a key social group in the democratic revolt – were apt to use violence against minorities and profiteers as an outlet to vent their frustrations.

Despite some setbacks, two-thirds of the CEF were returned to Canada within five months of the armistice and nearly the entire CEF within one year.<sup>12</sup> By the Fall of 1919, this entailed the demobilization of roughly 350,000 soldiers.<sup>13</sup> The return of Canada’s heroes was a cause for celebration, but from an economic standpoint, it increased unemployment while war production ceased. Veterans attempting to re-establish themselves faced a difficult journey. Privates, Gunners, Drivers, Sappers, Batmans, and Cooks, earned a daily wage of \$1.00 plus a field allowance of \$0.10; Sergeants earned a little more at \$1.50 including field allowance.<sup>14</sup> There was an additional separation allowance of \$20.00 a month for Privates with dependents and \$25.00 for Sergeants.<sup>15</sup> This pay was a reasonable sum at the beginning of the war, but wartime inflation eroded its purchasing power. According to the Labour Department statistics, the average weekly cost of a family budget of staple foods, fuel, lighting and rent in Canadian

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<sup>10</sup> Nicholson, 531-532.

<sup>11</sup> Morton, ““Kicking and Complaining””, 343-346.

<sup>12</sup> Nicholson, 531.

<sup>13</sup> Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1920* (Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1921), 26.

<sup>14</sup> Colonel A. Fortescue Duguid, *Official History of The Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919*, vol. 1 (Ottawa: J. O. Patenaude, 1938), Appendix 91, 61.

<sup>15</sup> Morton, *Fight or Pay*, 32.

cities across Canada in 1919 was \$22.18. By the Summer of 1920, this increased to \$26.91.<sup>16</sup> A rough calculation indicates that daily wages and separation allowances barely provided half the estimated costs of a monthly family budget. The inability of soldiers to provide a breadwinning wage meant that their dependents would have to earn their own source of income and rely on charities such as the Patriot Fund. Many working-class families had already become accustomed to diversifying the family income beyond the patriarch's wage, but for soldiers who were risking their life, it was deeply frustrating that their sacrifices and suffering were not being compensated enough to even maintain breadwinning status.

Rather than increase wages, Borden's administration provided supplemental forms of income and services overseen by a sub-committee of the Cabinet known as the Reconstruction and Development Committee, formed on 23 October 1917.<sup>17</sup> Upon being discharged, soldiers received a cash gratuity based on rank and length of service.<sup>18</sup> Single privates who served overseas received a gratuity between \$210 to \$420,<sup>19</sup> while married men could receive up to \$600.<sup>20</sup> Three major proposals to increase the gratuities were rejected for their "seriously detrimental" effect on the country's financial interests.<sup>21</sup> Other financial and social services were provided, including the expansion of the Dominion-Provincial Employment offices, discounted railway rates, vocational training, school loans, land settlement schemes and loans, and hiring preference for the civil service.<sup>22</sup> Despite these benefits, the *Canada Year Book* noted that soldiers struggling to find employment rapidly exhausted their war gratuity, compelling the

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<sup>16</sup> *The Canada Year Book* 1920, 549.

<sup>17</sup> *The Canada Year Book* 1920, 19.

<sup>18</sup> Loughnan described the war gratuity as payment as "blood money" for fighting overseas. [no title], *The Veteran*, February 1919, 10-11.

<sup>19</sup> Nicholson, 506.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 245.

<sup>21</sup> White's rejection of these increases was premised on the belief that further taxation would be detrimental to national interests, while printing would add to inflationary pressures. *The Canada Year Book* 1920, 41.

<sup>22</sup> *The Canada Year Book* 1920, 23-52.

federal government and the Patriotic Fund to provide unemployment relief during the winter months between 1919 and 1921.<sup>23</sup> As Elizabeth Lees highlights, Great War veterans who remained unemployed as late as the Christmas of 1921 were crowded into relief camps to earn the paltry sum of 50 cents a week after deductions for food and accommodations.<sup>24</sup>

For Great War veterans making the transition to civilian life, the dismissal of employed aliens and the closure of their businesses to reduce competition provided an immediate solution to their economic hardships. However, it could only provide partial relief at best. Even if veterans secured employment, the real value of their wages was still threatened by rampant inflation. As Labour Department statistics indicate, between 1918 and 1920, wholesale food prices increased 20 percent, culminating to a 146 percent increase between 1913 and 1920. Real wages in many sectors were declining over this period. For example, the weekly wages paid to common factory labourers rose under 100 percent, while the average wages in the building trades increased by 80 percent.<sup>25</sup> Most scholars agree that real wages declined,<sup>26</sup> but to David Bercuson's point, even if these statistics are unreliable, what matters most was the belief real wages were declining.<sup>27</sup> And so, British-Canadian veterans may have had something to gain by revolting against alien profiteers, but food profiteers were still culpable for driving up food prices, and war profiteers were hoarding wartime wealth. In this way, alien, food, and war profiteers remained enemies of the patriotic community for material and ideological reasons, and Great War veterans were especially eager to confront the profiteers.

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<sup>23</sup> *The Canada Year Book 1920*, 27-28.

<sup>24</sup> Lees, 1-2.

<sup>25</sup> *The Canada Year Book 1920*, 538, 546.

<sup>26</sup> McCormack, 122.

<sup>27</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 33-34.

Amid the turbulent transition to peace, another enemy of democracy came into focus – “the Bolshevik.” As discussed by Daniel Francis, opposition to Bolshevism built upon pre-existing hostility towards enemy aliens to such an extent that the two were often “confused and conflated in the public mind.”<sup>28</sup> Similar to Prussianism, Bolshevism represented another evil form of governance that threatened the hegemony of British democracy, liberty, and Christian civilization. Despite stating that life under Bolshevik rule “defies description,” Hopkins provided a vivid account in the *Canadian Annual Review*: “In Russia, disorganization, starvation, individual license, robbery, brutal crime, the over-throw of social laws and religious influence and ordered government, wholesale immorality, were natural products of the rule of men who were ignorant of all but wild theories nursed in malignant [sic] or disordered mind.”<sup>29</sup> Despite the disarray of the Bolshevik government, Hopkins stressed how they were eager to spread their doctrine throughout the world. The power vacuum forming in Germany was especially troubling because it provided an opportunity for the Bolsheviks to undermine the installation of a proper democratic government by funding the German Spartacans – a group of Bolshevik sympathizers led by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, and Frank Mehring.<sup>30</sup> Any doubt regarding the enemy status of the Bolsheviks was clarified by their military conflict with the Allied coalition. After the Bolsheviks seized power and murdered the Tsar – an operation Hopkins claimed was funded by the German government<sup>31</sup> – the Bolsheviks signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918 to end Russia’s war with Germany. Peace on the Eastern Front allowed Germany to concentrate its military strength on the Western Front, leading to the devastating Spring Offensive in 1918. The Allied Command was also worried that German expansion into Siberia

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<sup>28</sup> Francis, 153.

<sup>29</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1918*, 42-43, 48.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

would allow Germany to circumvent the Allied trade blockade, prompting the Allied coalition to occupy Russia's Archangel Port with troops from Britain, the United States, Italy, France, and six hundred Canadian soldiers. In October 1918, four thousand Canadian troops were also sent to support the Allied war effort in Eastern Russia. Although this contingent would return home without engaging the Bolshevik military, the expeditions into Russia were clear indications that the Bolsheviks were enemies of democracy.<sup>32</sup>

During the late and post-war period, there were growing concerns that the Russian Revolution encouraged the spread of Bolshevism in Canada. Hopkins claimed that the pro-Bolshevik organization, The Provincial Council of Soldiers and Workers' Deputies of Canada, distributed an estimated 150,000 pamphlets urging the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. Hopkins cited even more literature and provided a list of seditious activity and arrests, specifically those concerning pro-Bolshevik and anti-British statements by labour leaders.<sup>33</sup> But contrary to Hopkins's evidence, Francis highlights that there was no substantial evidence indicating Bolshevik sympathizers posed any real threat of staging a revolution. Police and RNWMP reports on labour unions and socialist political groups often exaggerated their radicalism, but consequently stoked the fears of Cabinet members that disillusioned Great War veterans would be receptive to Bolshevik rhetoric.<sup>34</sup> This led the Cabinet to introduce orders-in-council outlawing radical literature and organizations, including the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the Ukrainian, Russian, and Finnish Social Democratic parties.<sup>35</sup> Ernest

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<sup>32</sup> Gerald W. L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919* (Ottawa: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 482-495.

<sup>33</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1918*, 312-314.

<sup>34</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 54, 88, 238-239; Francis, 53.

<sup>35</sup> Canada, Order in Council 1918-2384, "Regulations declaring organizations, associations, societies etc as illegal I. W. W. [Industrial Workers of the World] Bolshevik Social Democrats etc - M. Justice," Privy Council Office, Series A-1-a, vol. 1207, 325573; Donald Avery, "The Radical Alien and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919," *The West and the Nation: Essays In Honour of W. L. Morton*, ed. Carl Berger et al. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1976), 216.

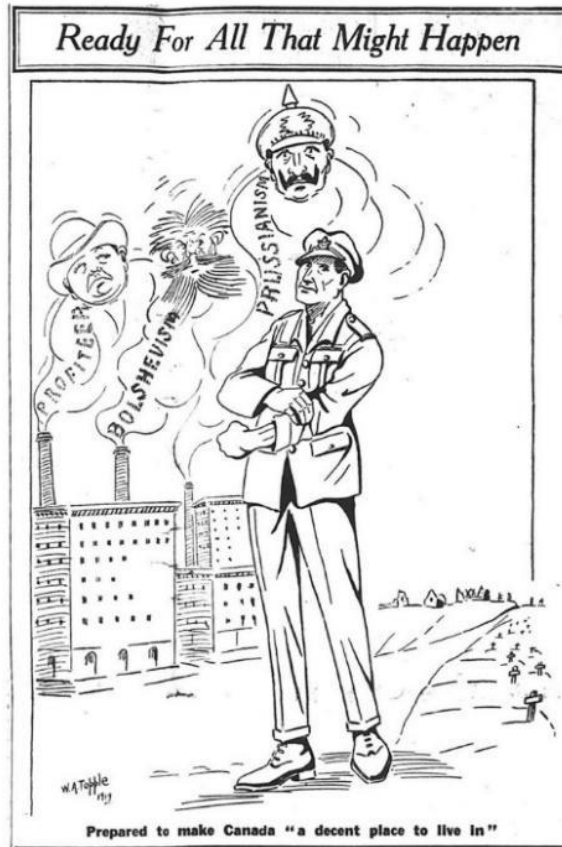


Chambers, the Chief Press Censor, also distributed information to the press on Bolshevik activity in Canada, and further solicited aid from university professors, patriotic clubs, churches, and filmmakers to propagate the evils of Bolshevik doctrine.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, as the war effort was winding down, patriots became concerned that democracy was not safe from the threat of Bolshevik revolutionaries nor from the traitorous and parasitic profiteers. In recognition of these threats, the *Manitoba Veteran* published an illustration by W. A. Topple highlighting how Great War veterans were eager to continue the fight against democracy's enemies. As the image portrays, a veteran stands on a path connecting a war-torn landscape to an industrial sector. The soldier exhibits his readiness to fight Prussianism, Bolshevism, and profiteering emanating from the factories.

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<sup>36</sup> Naylor, *The New Democracy*, 199; Francis, 77, 86.



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The threat of Bolshevism did more than add another enemy of democracy to the roster – it threatened to divide the priorities of veterans and other patriots during reconstruction. Concerns about an impending Bolshevik revolution heightened xenophobic-patriotism, which, as discussed in Chapter Four, conflicted with the prioritization of challenging war and food profiteers. In an attempt to avoid fragmentation, patriots in the labour, farmers’, and veterans’ movements who did not subscribe to an overtly xenophobic perspective argued that the threat of Bolshevism could be neutralized by addressing war and food profiteering, which was causing disillusionment and radicalism. Among the advocates of this view were Chipman and Irvine – the latter being the editor of *The Alberta Non-Partisan* and prominent figure in the labour,

<sup>37</sup> “Ready for all that Might Happen,” *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 4.

agrarian, and social gospel movements.<sup>38</sup> Loughnan also promoted this view in an article entitled, “The Cause and Cure of Bolshevism”:

That brings us to the question as to who really are the agitators of unrest. The query is easily and undeniably answered by the statement that every profiteering corporation, every “ring”, “merger,” and industrial or financial conspiracy to extract fleecing tolls from the people, is actively promoting Bolshevism in Canada. High tariffs and combines, manipulators of food stocks and the necessities of life, exploiters of labour, profiteers both great and small, are all indictable as agents of Bolshevism, for they are the parent promoters of unrest, the missionaries of discontent, and the instigators of revolt.

Loughnan’s article continues by referencing how profiteers posed as patriots, shaped Canada into a plutocracy, plundered the public treasury through Victory Bonds, and undervalued Canada’s natural resources when sold to big interests. Loughnan believed it was this illicit profit-making and exploitation that fuelled radicalism and made Bolshevism appealing.<sup>39</sup> In another article, Loughnan contended that it was not just workers who were susceptible to Bolshevik influences. If returned soldiers were mistreated and exploited, they too could be radicalized. To this end, Loughnan warned that manufacturers should not use manipulative tactics that allowed them to employ soldiers at lower wages, such as closing shop and dismissing their workforce so they could reopen shortly after and hire veterans at lower pay. As Loughnan explained, “tactics of this nature are a direct incentive to Bolshevism, and must not be tolerated.”<sup>40</sup> Pettipiece shared Loughnan’s sentiments and believed that if the government was willing to intern enemy aliens to protect Canada, then it was appropriate to do the same for profiteers. Appearing in *B.C.*

*Federationist*, the illustration below was accompanied by the caption “A Possible Solution of

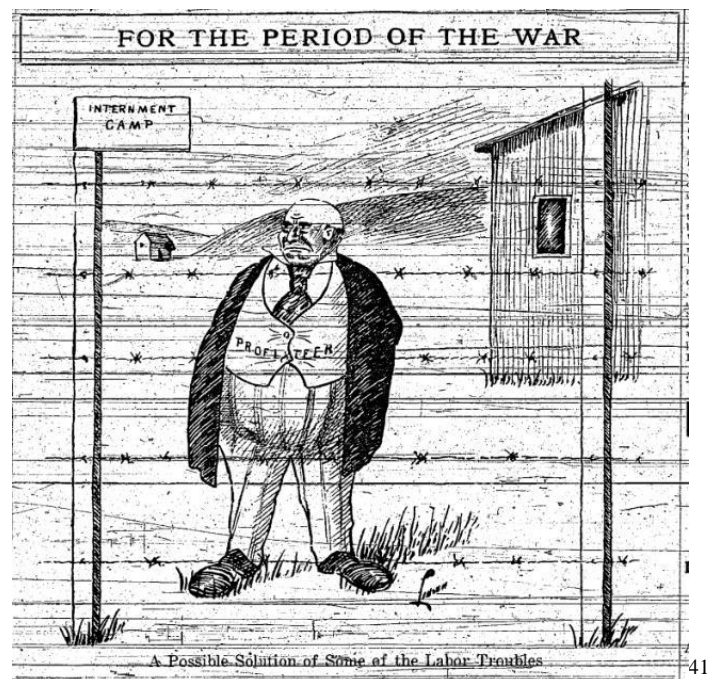
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<sup>38</sup> The Non-Partisan League is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six. *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, 20 December 1917, 1; “Why Bolshevik Power Grows,” *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, 18 January 1918, 4; “The Sympathetic Strike,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 11 June 1919, 5-6.

<sup>39</sup> “Our Readers’ Views – Fighting the Vested Interests,” *The Veteran*, July 1919, 49; “Our Readers Views – The High Cost of Living,” *The Veteran*, August 1919, 51-52; “The Cause and Cure of Bolshevism,” *The Veteran*, February 1919, 16.

<sup>40</sup> “Notes and Comment,” *The Veteran*, February 1919, 9.

Some of the Labour Troubles.” As the illustration suggested, arresting profiteers would appease demands for justice and simultaneously temper labour militancy.



Generally speaking, opposition to war, food, and alien profiteering was not mutually exclusive, but leaders of the veterans, labour, and agrarian movements had to prioritize their concerns during reconstruction. If patriots could form a united front against war and food profiteers, there was a higher likelihood of implementing meaningful reforms for reconstruction. But with the Red Scare in full swing between late 1918 and the Fall of 1919, many xenophobic-patriots resolved to reconstruct democracy according to their ethnic-oriented outlook. Similarly, patriots who opposed or downplayed a xenophobic-patriotic outlook were under immense pressure to assert their ideological and material interests. This led both patriots and xenophobic-patriots to embrace strategies of direct action, but they did so with competing visions of the post-

<sup>41</sup> "For the Period of the War," *B.C. Federationist*, 14 June 1918, 1.

war democracy, whereby the latter emphasized the need to assert the interests of British Canadians.

It is important to add that farmers were also under immense financial pressure during the post-war period. Indeed, the economic pressure they faced was immense because agricultural goods were among the first to be hit by post-war deflation.<sup>42</sup> According to statistics in the *Canada Year Book*, the peak price of wheat fell nearly 40 percent, from over \$3.00 in 1919 to \$1.89 in January 1921.<sup>43</sup> Thereafter, wheat prices continued to fall until they broke below \$1.00 in 1922.<sup>44</sup> With farmers' savings low and wealth leveraged,<sup>45</sup> many farmers found themselves in a perilous situation, leading the CCA to reaffirm their demands for pro-agrarian legislation, including lower tariffs, the restoration of fixed wheat prices, and other improvements to the grain trade.<sup>46</sup> Although farmers, particularly western wheat farmers, were in a dire situation, their challenge to post-war reconstruction was centered on political action as outlined in Chapter Six.

### **Direct Action and the Alien Profiteers**

Under immense material pressures, emboldened by anti-Bolshevik propaganda and infuriated by inadequate anti-alien policies, xenophobic-patriots continued to use violence to enforce the moral economy from below. As historians have documented, anti-alien riots and protests spread like wildfire between late-1918 and early 1919. The urban centers that experienced this wave of unrest included Vancouver, Calgary, Drumheller, Winnipeg, Sudbury,

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<sup>42</sup> John Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1920* (Toronto: The Canadian Review Company Limited, 1921), 91-106.

<sup>43</sup> Hopkins estimates that the wheat price collapse reduced the farmers' collective yield between 1920 and 1921 by \$500 million. John Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1921* (Toronto: The Canadian Review Company Limited, 1922), 23.

<sup>44</sup> Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1922-23* (Ottawa: F. C. Acland, 1924), 282-283, 292-293.

<sup>45</sup> Thompson, *The Harvests of War*, 65-70.

<sup>46</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1919*, 322; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 468-469.

Toronto, Hamilton, Port Arthur, and Halifax. During the riots, there was an increasing level of hostility directed towards left-wing radicals, but in many ways, the riots followed established wartime patterns: returned soldiers assumed leading positions in riotous behaviour; the businesses of ethnic minorities were destroyed; employers were intimidated into replacing their alien workers with veterans; local police authorities often allowed the violence to occur; and in the wake of violence, British-Canadian pundits and public officials expressed sympathy towards xenophobic-patriotism.<sup>47</sup> Not only were the anti-alien riots widescale, but there were also instances of serious ruthlessness. For instance, Bohdan describes how mobs in Vancouver attacked individuals with “foreign accents,” and in one case, a mob attempted to hang a 17-year old boy who made an anti-war remark, only to be stopped by police.<sup>48</sup> In the face of escalating hostility, Poles, Italians, Finns, Ukrainians, Russians, among other ethnic minorities, pleaded with Borden for protection, or at the very least, to allow them to leave Canada peacefully.<sup>49</sup> In the absence of more severe anti-alien policies, such as mass repatriation, intimidating alien profiteers into fleeing Canada was an outcome xenophobic-patriots welcomed.

Amid the violent uprisings, Loughnan expressed sympathy towards the xenophobic-patriots but he continued to redirect their hostility towards war and food profiteering. For instance, Loughnan agreed with the contention that enemy aliens encouraged the spread of Bolshevik doctrine and criticized the federal government for underestimating the Bolshevik

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<sup>47</sup> Morton and Wright, 122; Craig Heron and Myer Siemiatycki, “The Great War, the State, and Working-Class Canada,” in *The Workers’ Revolt in Canada*, 23-24; Francis, 96-98; Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 86-87; Reinhold Kramer and Tom Mitchell, *When the State Trembled: How A. J. Andrews and the Citizens’ Committee Broke the Winnipeg General Strike* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 22; Bohdan, 241-244; Avery, “Ethnic and Class Relations in Western Canada during the First World War,” 283-284; Avery, “The Radical Alien and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919,” in *The West and the Nation: Essays In Honour of W. L. Morton* ed. Carl Berger et al. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1976), 219.

<sup>48</sup> Bohdan, 225, 248-249.

<sup>49</sup> Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners*, 78; For primary source documentation of petitions for protection from ethnic organizations see LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4365, file 83069, 83083-83088.

threat.<sup>50</sup> But while acknowledging the dangers of Bolshevism in Canada, Loughnan's solution was not the imposition of draconian regulations. Loughnan argued that it was necessary to address the source of disillusionment that made Bolshevism appealing – namely outrage fostered by rampant war and food profiteering. The “cure” was to awaken the people to the true state of affairs of Canadian politics, broaden the teachings of Christianity, and address the unjust legislation that allowed the rich to become richer and the poor to become poorer.<sup>51</sup>

Loughnan's editorials sought to redirect the animosity of his readership from aliens to war and food profiteers, but *The Veteran* included space for xenophobic-patriots as well. Among the most jarring inclusions was an article published by Sgt. Guy Empey entitled, “Treat'em Rough.” Empey was an American Great War veteran who fought in the British Army. He also published a popular war story in 1917, *Over the Top*, which later became a Hollywood propaganda film.<sup>52</sup> In Empey's article, Bolshevism was described with striking similarity to Hopkins's demonizing portrayal, accounting for the chaos unleashed by the Bolshevik “maniacs” and their connections to pro-German sympathizers. Empey's extremism was evident in his encouragement of violently repressing Bolsheviks – both as a means to defend democracy and to provide veterans an emotional outlet:

Hardships will have to be suffered now. Millions of men cannot suddenly rush into employment. It takes time. Some will have to wait longer than others for that job. If you are one of the unlucky ones, show the stuff in you and grin and bear it. It won't be for long. Do not become a Bolshevik. If you feel like fighting go out and smash a Red – it is a great sport knocking them off soap-boxes... Then, back him into a corner (there is no danger in this – he won't fight – none of them will), take him by the throat with your left hand, haul back that good Yankee fist of yours and

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<sup>50</sup> “Alien Enemies Against,” *The Veteran*, June 1919, 9.

<sup>51</sup> “The Cause and Cure of Bolshevism,” *The Veteran*, February 1919, 16.

<sup>52</sup> For a historical study on the role of Hollywood in creating and disseminating propaganda, see Steven Ross, “Beyond the Screen: History, Class, and the Movies,” in *The Hidden Foundation: Cinema and the Question of Class*, ed. David E. James and Rick Berg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996): 26-55.

preach to him True Americanism. He will squeal like a pig. But don't listen to his squealing, just let him have it between the eyes.<sup>53</sup>

This encouragement of open violence against “Bolsheviks” provided a sense of normalization. Furthermore, it drew upon the rough masculinity prevalent among workers and soldiers that encouraged men to confront their fears and enemies head on.<sup>54</sup> It also reflected the Dominion GWVA's embrace of nationwide efforts to combat labour radicals.<sup>55</sup>

During the anti-alien riots between late 1918 and early 1919, numerous GWVA locals from across the Dominion, fraternal lodges, Protestant clergy, and municipal boards, flooded the Prime Minister's office with petitions demanding more extreme anti-alien regulations. Some petitions maintained anti-alien profiteering demands, such as coercing employers to replace enemy aliens with veteran labour, the appropriation of enemy alien wealth acquired during the war, as well as the confiscation of enemy alien land. A very popular demand among these petitions was the mass deportation of enemy aliens.<sup>56</sup> Hence, for xenophobic-patriots concerned about the presence and prosperity of enemy aliens and alien profiteers, deportation would address the root of the problem.

With grassroots militancy and anti-alien violence erupting across the Dominion, coupled with the bombardment of petitions from a diverse range of patriotic groups, federal policymakers were caught between a rock and a hard place. They wanted to act against Bolshevik radicals, but they were not eager to adopt harsh anti-alien policies. Ultimately, federal policymakers made a compromise. The first part involved repatriating dangerous, hostile, and undesirable internees. To this end, an order-in-council was passed on 23 January 1919 to authorize deportations.

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<sup>53</sup> “‘Treat'em Rough' on Bolshevism,” *The Veteran*, May 1919, 23.

<sup>54</sup> Heron, *Working in Steel*, 50; Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*.

<sup>55</sup> “The Winnipeg General Strike,” *The Veteran*, June 1919, 16.

<sup>56</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4365, files 83025-83145.



Internees were escorted back to Europe under armed guard between January 1919 and 27 February 1920.<sup>57</sup> While supported by xenophobic-patriots, the deportation of certain internees did not address the broader population of “undesirable” aliens, whether enemy or allied, nor alien profiteers. A much more significant compromise was introduced on 14 February 1919. Under the regulations of PC 332, municipal and provincial authorities could establish tribunals to assess the desirability of resident aliens and provide recommendations to the federal court.<sup>58</sup> As Bohdan describes, any citizen who could be deemed representative of the community’s feelings could be appointed to the tribunals, leading Bohdan to state that this was met by the “enthusiastic approval of those who wanted decisive action.”<sup>59</sup> In sum, the Cabinet empowered xenophobic-patriots to directly participate in the process of assessing alien desirability, which allowed them to channel their energy and attention towards vetting individual aliens rather than allow their outrage to build up and explode into anti-alien riots and violence. Unfortunately, there is minimal historical research on the alien investigation tribunals and conducting such research at the local level is beyond the scope of this national-focused study. However, it can be stated that there was at least one major provincial level alien investigation board launched in Manitoba under Premier Norris’s Liberal government. Headed by Ex-Sergeant A. E. Moore, an employee of the provincial government who later served as the President of the Provincial Command of the GWVA,<sup>60</sup> the Manitoba Alien Investigation Board proceeded to compile a list of undesirable aliens.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Bohdan, 241, 256.

<sup>58</sup> Canada, Privy Council Office, Order in Council, 1919-0332 “Regulations under War Measures Act Respecting the internment of aliens defining power and duties of judges etc - Actg M. Justice,” vol. 2815, 384817.

<sup>59</sup> Bohdan, 242.

<sup>60</sup> “Saving the World From Democracy: The Winnipeg General Sympathetic Strike, May-June 1919” (Winnipeg: Defence Committee, 1920), 83;

<sup>61</sup> Bohdan, 246-252.

The approach of distinguishing aliens as “desirable” and “undesirable” based on their individual merit was met with approval by Loughnan and other members of the Dominion GWVA executive. Indeed, this was a return to the pre-war discourse that was embraced by the former Minister of Immigration Frank Oliver, who sought to impose greater selectivity on immigrants after Clifford Sifton’s “open door” policy.<sup>62</sup> Loughnan approved of this approach and condoned the Alien Investigation tribunals’ assessment of individual aliens’ patriotism. As Loughnan believed, aliens whose family members served in the CEF had proven their loyalty and earned their belonging in Canada.<sup>63</sup> For patriots, such as Woodsworth and Pettipiece, who exhibited little to no support for xenophobic-patriotism, the Alien Investigation Tribunals were a travesty because deporting aliens was an immoral violation and would distract patriots from more meaningful struggles.<sup>64</sup>

Although xenophobic-patriots seemingly won a major concession, some parliamentarians continued to press the Cabinet to take further action, especially regarding the pace of deportations and adjustments to immigration policy. Among the critics was Herbert S. Clements, a Unionist MP representing Comox-Alberni, British Columbia. On 24 March 1919, Clements moved to have the government clearly define their internment and deportation policy. After all, there were no guarantees that the government would deport undesirable aliens identified by the Tribunals. Furthermore, Clements urged the government to immediately deport all interned enemy aliens on “cattle ships” if necessary. Other anti-alien demands include the close scrutinization of all new immigrants by the Immigration Department to ensure they did not bring in the “riff-raff of Europe” and “men of the I.W.W. and Bolshevik type” as happened under the

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<sup>62</sup> Goutor, 25.

<sup>63</sup> “Alien Enemies,” *The Veteran*, March 1919, 18-19; “Notes and Comment,” *The Veteran*, April 1919, 9-10.

<sup>64</sup> “J.S. Woodsworth On Alien Question,” *B.C. Federationist*, 14 February 1919, 1; “Deporting Aliens No Solution,” *B.C. Federationist*, 21 February 1919, 7; “Will Profiteers Be Deported?” *B.C. Federationist*, 4 July 1919, 1.

Liberals' stewardship; to require photo identification on all passports; and to permanently remove the franchise of aliens proven disloyal during the war. As Clements summarized, the "alien problem" remained one of the most serious questions concerning the public, and if not dealt with accordingly, there would be further trouble.<sup>65</sup> H. H. Stevens, the Unionist representative for Vancouver Centre, added another motion to amend immigration laws so that all persons of enemy origin would be prohibited from entering the country for at least 20 years if they were interned in Canada or by any other allied country; left Canada shortly before or after the war began; or committed an offence that jeopardized peace, safety, or the well-being of the British Empire or allied nations.<sup>66</sup> Arthur Meighen and James Calder responded to these demands, stating that the federal government's alien policy could not proceed until the conclusion of the Paris Peace Conference. The Great War had resulted in the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires. This presented difficulties in using the wartime designations of "enemy aliens" because national boundaries were being redrawn. As an example, Calder noted how the Treaty included provisions for the new state of Czecho-Slovakia, and while Czecho-Slovaks were allies of Britain, they also lived in Russia. The same situation existed for people of Polish and Ukrainian ancestry. Stevens, Clements, and other xenophobic-patriots would have to be patient before taking further action. In the meantime, they could celebrate a ban on all persons from Germany, Austria, Turkey, and Bulgaria,<sup>67</sup> as well as Doukhobors, Mennonites and Hutterites due to their pacifist beliefs and conscientious opposition

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<sup>65</sup> *Debates*, 24 March 1919 (Herbert Clements, Unionist), 13th Parl. 2nd sess., vol. 1, 753.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, (H.H. Stevens, Unionist), 769.

<sup>67</sup> *Debates*, 24 March 1919 (Arthur Meighen, Unionist), 13th Parl. 2nd sess., vol. 1, 756-759; *Ibid.*, (James Calder, Unionist), 771-772.

to enlistment. As Valerie Knowles highlighted, it was a significant shift in Immigration policy because it subsumed economic considerations to culture and ideology.<sup>68</sup>

In the end, the federal government would not utilize the lists produced by the Alien Investigations Tribunals to deport undesirable aliens *en masse*. On the contrary, the regulations concerning enemy aliens were reversed once the Paris Peace Treaty went into effect on 10 January 1920, including the removal of mandatory registration, parole, and the restoration of franchise rights. As a minor victory for the xenophobic-patriots, enemy alien residents would be prohibited from obtaining citizenship until 1929,<sup>69</sup> but there would be no far-reaching measures to address the inequalities of wartime sacrifice between British Canadians and enemy aliens.

It is argued here that the tribunals provided an institutional outlet for xenophobic-patriots to channel their discontent. However, the extent that tribunals curbed anti-alien riots after early 1919 is debatable, especially without further research. It is reasonable to conclude that the provision of a legal process to channel dissent had some impact – at the very least, it would have temporarily isolated the more radical and violent xenophobic-patriots who preferred direct intimidation and violence. The establishment of the tribunals also re-asserted the non-war-centric rhetoric of “desirable” and “undesirable” aliens, which indicated the gradual shift out of Great War culture. But there are two other reasons contributing to the decline of anti-alien riots. First, the gradual reestablishment of Great War veterans would have lessened the material tensions underlying the urgency of removing alien profiteers from their businesses and places of employment. The second reason, which will be described in greater detail in the next section, is that anti-alien rioting in early 1919 may have declined because xenophobic-patriots became fixated on countering the activities of militant labour radicals during the Spring and Summer of

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<sup>68</sup> Knowles, 102.

<sup>69</sup> Bohdan, 240-257.

1919. Ironically, many labour radicals were also professing their actions to be in the interests of protecting democracy but were doing so by challenging the war and food profiteers. In effect, Great War patriotism turned on itself in ways that exacerbated the fault line dividing those who prioritized the inequalities of society on a horizontal and vertical axis.

### **Direct Action and the War and Food Profiteers**

The wave of anti-alien riots that swept through the Dominion between the Fall of 1918 and the Winter of 1918-1919 marked the height of xenophobic-patriotic militancy, but it did not represent the high point of the democratic revolt. Between the Spring and Summer of 1919, labour militancy swept through the Dominion coast to coast and can be understood as an extension of the patriotic struggle to reconstruct democracy. The failures of Borden's administration to address food profiteering convinced workers that their best defence was to organize into unions, while war profiteering further convinced workers that their challenge against employers was righteous. Drawing upon these beliefs, prominent labour leaders claimed that radical strike tactics were needed to challenge the corrupt alliance between the economic and political elite, who were unwilling to protect true patriotic interests. Hence, labour leaders drew upon Great War culture to legitimize their radicalism and deemed it congruent with patriotism.

Preceding the escalation of labour militancy and radicalism during the Spring and summer, patriots continued to pressure the federal government to adopt more drastic measures to combat food profiteering. In May 1919, forty-three labour unions, four war veteran associations, and numerous (unnamed) civil groups met at a Vancouver Labour Hall to form The League for the Reduction of the High Cost of Living. During their first meeting, they passed a resolution urging the Provincial Government of British Columbia to control the prices, profits and distribution of foodstuffs within the province. This demand was distinct from the pre-existing

machinery of the Fair Price Committees because it would shift price-fixing powers from municipal councils to the provincial government. Similar to Good's criticism of the Fair Price Committees discussed in Chapter Three,<sup>70</sup> The League also demanded that the provincial committee have mandatory working-class representation to prevent the machinery from accentuating class exploitation rather than preventing it.<sup>71</sup> Another alternative advocated by The League involved nationalizing food distribution and processing, which, similar to the proposals for nationalizing war production, would eliminate food profits. To this end, The League passed a resolution calling for the nationalization of packing houses, cold storage plants, grain elevators, and other food depositories and distributing agencies.<sup>72</sup> However, the Cabinet remained indifferent to these lobbying efforts and refused to act without further investigation.

For years Liberal parliamentarians warned the Conservatives and Unionists that the failure to address rising food costs and food profiteering was setting the stage for a massive revolt, if not an outright revolution. During the Summer of 1918, these warnings gained credibility because labour radicalism was on the rise. In desperation to minimize disruptions to the war effort and stifle labour radicalism, Labour Minister Thomas Crothers used an order-in-council to outlaw strikes and lockouts on 11 July 1918. Accompanying the prohibition, Crothers made a public declaration supporting workers' rights to organize.<sup>73</sup> Fed up with the deceptive tactics of federal policymakers who offered words of support but then acted against the interests

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<sup>70</sup> "Fair Price Committee and Prussianism," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 19 December 1918, 2081; "Another Fair Price Committee Breaks Out," *The Farmers' Advocate* 29 May 1919, 1055; "The Mythical Coal Shortage," *The Farmers' Advocate*, 12 June 1919, 1135.

<sup>71</sup> "Cost of Living Committee Meets," *B.C. Federationist*, 23 May 1919, 1; "Profiteers Benefit By Fixing of Prices," *B.C. Federationist*, 21 February 1919, 3.

<sup>72</sup> "Cost of Living Committee Meets," *B.C. Federationist*, 23 May 1919, 1.

<sup>73</sup> Canada, Order in Council 1918-1743, "Labour Troubles - Measures for the prevention of lockout strikes and during the war including the appointment of a Board of Appeal and power to the Unites to make regulations etc - Min. Labour," Privy Council Office, vol. 1095, 312130. Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1918*, 492-493; Naylor, *The New Democracy*, 37-38.

of the working class, labour organizers continued to stage protests and strikes. With the signing of the armistice and the invalidation of organized labour's no-strike pledge, labour militancy gained immense momentum because patriotism could shift more decisively from a source of obedience to defiance. Recognizing the impending catastrophe, Liberal MP Joseph Archambault reiterated these dire warnings after the Governor General failed to address profiteering in his speech:

Is it possible that the Government is so blind that it does not see the tidal wave of labour unrest and legitimate revindications threatening to invade and flood our political and social institutions? ... In these times of rejuvenation of the world, the workingman is no longer satisfied to be the material instrument producing wealth for the profiteers, without receiving any share of the comforts of life for himself and his family.<sup>74</sup>

Archambault condemned the Unionists for protecting the profiteers and claimed that they were the "hidden hand of the masters of this Government."<sup>75</sup> Putting partisanship aside, Archambault urged the Cabinet to realize that the rising number of strikes correlated with the rise of living costs; workers were using profiteering to legitimize their militancy; and a massive wave of labour unrest was imminent unless the federal government acted decisively.<sup>76</sup> White was not convinced by the Liberals' claims and tabled information substantiating his skepticism. There were roughly 70 percent more working days lost in strikes in 1913 than 1918, and 165 percent more working days lost in 1911. White acknowledged that the number of workers involved in the strikes increased by comparison, but this was not enough evidence to claim rising prices and labour unrest were correlated.<sup>77</sup> Since a Royal Commission headed by Chief Justice Mathers was

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<sup>74</sup> *Debates*, 13 March 1919 (Joseph Archambault, Liberal), 13th Parl. 2nd sess., vol. 1, 440.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, (Joseph Archambault, Liberal), 438.

<sup>76</sup> *Debates*, 24 April 1919 (Louis Lapointe, Liberal), 13th Parl. 2nd sess., vol. 2, 1663.

<sup>77</sup> In 1918, there were 763,000 working days were lost in strikes versus the 1,287,000 days lost in 1913; 1,099,000 days in 1912; and 2,046,000 days in 1911. 30,094 workers were on strike in 1911 versus 68,489 in 1918. *Debates*, 28 April 1919 (Thomas White, Unionist), 13th Parl. 2nd sess., vol. 2, 1792.

already investigating industrial relations, White chose to await its findings expected in the early Summer.<sup>78</sup> To White's dismay, the Liberals' warnings of an impending wave of industrial unrest proved accurate and labour unrest swept through the Dominion before the Mathers's Commission could submit its final report. By the end of 1919, a record-setting 3,942,189 days were lost to strikes involving 139,988 workers and 1,913 employers.<sup>79</sup>

Between 1914 and 1919, Labour Department statistics indicate that membership in trade unions in Canada increased from 166,163 to 378,047.<sup>80</sup> The legitimacy of unionization in Canada further benefited from the rising prestige of unionism on the international stage. As world leaders at the Paris Peace Conference believed, the patriotism of the working-class deserved compensation through enhanced rights and institutional representation. Interestingly, Borden played a leading role in establishing labour rights and principles during the Conference. He even consulted P. M. Draper, the Secretary of the TLC. But despite endorsing a wide range of labour rights, Borden refused to take decisive action in favour of organized labour in Canada.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to the rising legitimacy of labour rights on the international stage, labour leaders in Canada appealed to patriotic outrage towards war and food profiteering to convince workers of the necessity to unionize. In the *Labor World*, an illustration directly depicted this correlation. As shown in the illustration below, big business, represented by a "big" capitalist,

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<sup>78</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Industrial Relations Report* (Ottawa: Labour Gazette, 1919), 3.

<sup>79</sup> *The Canada Year Book 1921*, 618. For strike statistics, see G. S. Kealey, "1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt," *Labour/Le Travail*, 13 (Spring 1984), 11-44.

<sup>80</sup> Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1921* (Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1922), 615; Department of Labour, *The Labour Gazette 1921* (Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1922), 1382. The increase in membership since 1913 may be partly attributable to the more comprehensive gathering of trade union statistics.

<sup>81</sup> In addition to a broad declaration of support for organized labour, in which "Labour must not be considered an article of commerce," the clauses of the Paris Peace Conference included provisions for the right of association; adequate wages to maintain a reasonable state of life; the adoption of the 8-hour day or 48 hour week; a weekly rest day for 24 hours; abolition of child labour; equal pay between men and women; the codification of equitable labour conditions for all workers; and a system of inspection and regulation to ensure the enforcement of laws. Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1919* (Toronto: The Canadian Annual Review Limited, 1920), 98-99.



stands comfortably holding up the basket of life's necessities. The caption, which was translated in both English and French, includes dialogue for both the capitalist and the worker: "The Wealthy War Profiteer" says, "I'll give you this basket of food if you can fetch it," prompting "The Non Union Worker" to state, "This scaffolding won't do, I guess I'll have to join the union, if I don't want to starve."<sup>82</sup> The illustration brings together two important dynamics related to rising unionization rates. First, many workers were compelled to act because their real wages declined between 1916 and 1919. And secondly, labour conflict was reconceptualized within Great War culture as being between workers and the exploitative profiteers. As unions battled their employers over bread-and-butter issues and labour rights, labour disputes were not merely a continuation of pre-war class conflict because it was connected to the struggle of reconstructing democracy and equalizing wartime sacrifices.



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Amid surging support for organized labour, labour radicals sought to capitalize on prevailing disillusionment. Western labour syndicalists fed up with the business unionism and

<sup>82</sup> "The High Cost of Living," *Labor World*, 10 March 1917, 3.

<sup>83</sup> "The High Cost of Living," *Labor World*, 10 March 1917, 3.

general conservatism of their eastern counterparts in the TLC decided to form a new organization called the One Big Union (OBU). On 16 March 1919, R. J. Johns, W. A. Prichard, J. Knight, J. Naylor, and V. R. Midgley formed the executive committee and coordinated its development with provincial executives.<sup>84</sup> The formation of the OBU placed the Canadian labour movement in a difficult position, however, because in addition to exacerbating the regional fragmentation of the labour movement, the OBU's extremist aspirations of abolishing profit and organizing all workers into a single union stoked fears that rising labour militancy was leading to a Bolshevik revolution. Radical strike tactics, such as general strikes and sympathy strikes, further tainted the labour movement's patriotic identity and invited criticism as Bolshevik tactics.<sup>85</sup> The association of labour militancy with Bolshevism thus undermined the framing of labour militancy as a patriotic struggle against profiteers. However, some labour leaders involved in these radical strikes countered these accusations by defending themselves as patriots. The centrality of patriotism as a key rhetorical battleground can be exemplified in the Winnipeg General Strike. Since historians have written about the Winnipeg General Strike at length, a detailed overview of the strike is not necessary, but what needs to be explored is how opposition to profiteering was central to the strike's claim to legitimacy, and that patriotism was central to its outcome.

Several short-term catalysts instigated the Winnipeg General Strike. First, organized labour and workers were aggravated by the failures of policymakers to protect their interests. In addition to the absence of meaningful pro-labour legislation from the federal government, Premier Tobias Norris passed regulations in March 1919 that required compulsory arbitration, outlawed sympathy strikes, and limited the legality of strikes and lockout tactics while offering

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<sup>84</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 100.

<sup>85</sup> "This Month's Vital Question—Have We Narrowly Escaped Soviet Government?" *Maclean's Magazine*, July 1919, 34-35.

no concessions to organized labour such as abolishing injunctions.<sup>86</sup> By mid-May, there were numerous pending labour disputes: the Winnipeg Building Trades Council was at a standstill regarding their demands for wage increases; leading industrial firms refused to negotiate with the Metal Trades Council for higher wages and a 44-hour workweek;<sup>87</sup> and municipal workers, including the police and street railway workers, were fighting for concessions. As Bercuson notes, when labour delegates met at the Labour Temple to discuss the labour situation, Winnipeg TLC executives Secretary Ernie Robinson and Harry Veitch joined forces with prominent Socialist organizers like Robert Russell to support a general strike and shift labour negotiations in labour's favour throughout the city. The general strike was still widely considered a radical tactic.<sup>88</sup> However, organized labour in Winnipeg had already been experimenting with general strikes one year earlier and resulted in what Ross McCormack describes as "a clear-cut victory" for Winnipeg's civic employees.<sup>89</sup> On 13 May 1919, labour delegates voted overwhelmingly in favour of launching another general strike. Two days later, men and women in Winnipeg walked off the job – half of them were non-unionized.<sup>90</sup> When Acting Prime Minister Thomas White received the news, he was shocked to learn that an estimated 27,000 workers were refusing to work until employers accepted the demands of the General Strike Committee.<sup>91</sup>

In response to the Winnipeg General Strike, a group of reactionary employers and professionals formed an anti-strike organization called the Citizens' Committee of 1000. Members of the Citizens' Committee were eager to defeat the strike because they interpreted it

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<sup>86</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 103-104.

<sup>87</sup> *Debates*, 2 June 1919 (Arthur Meighen, Unionist), 13th Parl. 2nd sess., vol. 3, 3035-3036.

<sup>88</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 58-65.

<sup>89</sup> Trade unionists also launched a one-day general strike in Vancouver to protest the murder of a member of the British Columbia Federation of Labour and Socialist Party of Canada, Albert Goodwin. McCormack, 146; Francis, 57.

<sup>90</sup> Mary Horodyski, "Women and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919," *Manitoba History*, 11 (Spring 1986): 28-37.

<sup>91</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 109-114.

as a rallying point for industrial militancy across the Dominion. Indeed, throughout the Spring and Summer of 1919, there were sympathy strikes and general strikes held in Amherst, Toronto, Brandon, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Regina, Vancouver, New Westminster, Victoria, and an additional twenty-one sympathy strikes in small localities.<sup>92</sup> Part of the Citizens' Committee's efforts to defeat the strike was anti-strike propaganda, which they published directly through their strike bulletin *The Citizen*. The focal point of this propaganda campaign was to discredit the patriotic identity of Strike Committee members as Bolshevik revolutionaries and traitorous pacifists. The hoped-for outcome of this strategy was two-fold. It aimed to galvanize xenophobic-patriots to oppose the strike by claiming that the Strike Committee leadership was backed by "an almost solid foreign-born following" intent on creating anarchy. As historians have pointed out, the Strike Committee actually had very little intercourse with foreign-language radicals and prohibited them from obtaining prominent positions in British-dominant unions and trade councils.<sup>93</sup> As for the Strike Committee leaders, who were primarily British-born, *The Citizen* focused on their radicalism and evidence of wartime disloyalty. For example, William Ivens, a social gospeller and the editor of the labour strike bulletin, *Western Labor News*,<sup>94</sup> was condemned for his wartime pacifism.<sup>95</sup> They also criticized Russell for publishing articles that refused to blame the war on the Kaiser and instead attributed its origins to capitalist rivalry.<sup>96</sup> By portraying the Strike Committee as enemies of democracy and traitors, the

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<sup>92</sup> For a map of general strikes in 1919, as well as other data concerning strike activity, see Figure 2 in Gregory Kealey, "1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt," *Labour/Le Travail* 13, (Spring, 1984), 20; Nolan Reilly, "The General Strike in Amherst, Nova Scotia, 1919," *Acadiensis* 9, no. 2 (Spring, 1980): 56-77.

<sup>93</sup> Kramer and Mitchell, 124-129; Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 127, 132.

<sup>94</sup> Worth noting is that William Ivens and *The Western Labor News* replaced *The Voice* and Arthur Puttee after denouncing the general strike tactic as "I.W.W. methods in 1918. As Ross McCormack states, "The power of the most prominent labourite and one of the most effective critics of the SPC [Socialist Party of Canada] in the West had been broken." McCormack, 146.

<sup>95</sup> Kramer and Mitchell, 29.

<sup>96</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 54.

Citizens' Committee hoped to alienate them from obtaining the community support needed to maintain the strike, such as the community-operated strike kitchens, financial aid, and general compliance to refuse to work.<sup>97</sup> For instance, the editors of *The Citizen*, Travers Sweatman and Fletcher Sparling,<sup>98</sup> interpreted the General Strike's disruption of food and milk distribution as the chaos characteristic of the Bolsheviks' revolution in Russia.<sup>99</sup> Other periodicals in Canada echoed the sentiments expressed in *The Citizen*, including *Saturday Night*, which claimed that the Strike Committee executives were "all Bolsheviks, tried and true" and "not wanted by any except a very small eastern radical element."<sup>100</sup>

The Strike Committee did not allow the propaganda of the Citizens' Committee to go unchallenged and issued their own interpretation of events through their pro-strike bulletin, *Western Labor News*. It is important to note how strike leaders such as Ivens were well versed in Marxist and socialist rhetoric, yet the identity of "capitalists" was frequently replaced with the war-centric designation of "profiteers." As Ivens explained in the first strike bulletin, the General Strike began as a dispute between the metal and building trades workers and their employers but transformed into a broader challenge against the war and food profiteers: "The profiteers are charging 10c to 20c for a 8c loaf. The victims bring the bread purchased to the strike committee. This MUST STOP – and stop NOW. Dealers will not be allowed to bleed the workers in this callous fashion. High prices caused the strike. Let a hint suffice."<sup>101</sup> Ivens expanded on the centrality of profiteering in another article:

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<sup>97</sup> Linda Kealey, "No Special Protection – No Sympathy: Women's Activism in the Canadian Labour revolt of 1919," in *Class Community and the Labour Movement: Wales and Canada 1850-1930* ed. Deian R. Hopkin et al. (St. John's: LLA Fur/CCLH, 1989): 134-59; Mary Horodyski, "Women and the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919," *Manitoba History*, 11 (Spring 1986): 28-37

<sup>98</sup> Kramer and Mitchell, 157.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-29, 101.

<sup>100</sup> "Front Page," *Saturday Night*, 31 May 1919, 1; "Lest We Forget," *Saturday Night*, 26 July 1919, 2.

<sup>101</sup> "Why the General Strike?" *Western Labor News*, 17 May 1919, 2; "Bread – Bread – Bread – Up – Up!," *Western Labor News*, 17 May 1919, 1.

Facing these facts, it was not hard to understand who caused the strike. The profiteer refused to recognize the men's organizations, and were unwilling to give him a living wage, though they admitted the justice of his demands. There was but one solution. The worker must get a more equitable share of the wealth of the world. And this strike had already demonstrated the ability of the worker to get his if he would consolidate his forces. Withdraw your labour power from the machine, said he, and at once profits cease.<sup>102</sup>

In this excerpt, Ivens identified Winnipeg's employers as profiteers, condemned their hostility to organized labour, and further denounced their unwillingness to share their wartime wealth. He also advocated the belief that a challenge against profiteers required workers to organize on a large scale so that their collective strength could be used to hit the profiteers where it hurts the most – their profits. Ivens also identified policymakers in the federal government as allies of the profiteers and referred to O'Connor's exposure of the William Davies Company's food profiteering and unwillingness to prosecute as a case in point.<sup>103</sup>

As this strike propaganda highlights, patriotism and opposition to profiteering were central to the strike's legitimacy. It was especially important for winning the support of one particular group – the returned soldiers, who were divided on the Winnipeg General Strike. Veterans adhering to xenophobic-patriotism were inclined to accept the strike's characterization as a Bolshevik and foreign insurrection, while veterans who supported the strikers' opposition to war and food profiteering were inclined to support it. This division was particularly stark in Winnipeg because it was a bastion of both labour radicalism and aggressive anti-alien activism. Regarding the latter, the Winnipeg GWVA supported radical xenophobic-patriotic policies, such as the confiscation of enemy alien wealth, and sought to re-investigate the sedition of Bishop Budka in the hope that it would lead to his deportation.<sup>104</sup> In addition, returned soldiers in

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<sup>102</sup> "Surging Throng Packs Church in Industrial Bureau," *Western Labor News*, 20 May 1919, 1.

<sup>103</sup> "Government Protects the Profiteer," *Western Labor News*, 3 June 1919, 4.

<sup>104</sup> "Loyal and Disloyal Citizens," *The Veteran*, June 1919, 11.

Winnipeg were renowned for intimidating aliens and participating in anti-alien riots.<sup>105</sup> But while veterans were fierce enemies of the strikers, they also became important allies. Their support strengthened the patriotic image of the strike through association, and moreover, the veterans could leverage their patriotic identity to act as a militant vanguard. By examining the Winnipeg General Strike as a patriotic struggle, the centrality of veterans becomes more evident, and in turn, sheds light on how patriots joined the strike as part of a democratic revolt.

As Bercuson highlights in his study, the Strike Committee was desperate to win the support of the veterans and went as far as pledging to aid the Winnipeg GWVA in addressing the alien question after the strike.<sup>106</sup> There was some credibility in this commitment because the Winnipeg TLC was already involved in the Manitoba Alien Investigation Board.<sup>107</sup> As veterans joined the strike, the GWVA executive panicked because it threatened to divide their organization. Executives from all three levels of the GWVA – namely, the Dominion Command, Manitoba Command, and Winnipeg branch – cited their constitution and the necessity of maintaining a non-partisan and non-political stance. Some of the GWVA rank-and-file in Winnipeg had other ideas and made declarations both supporting and opposing the strike.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, veterans were not only involved in the strike, but the Citizens' Committee was also employing veterans as special constables.

The GWVA executives could not prevent veterans from being involved, but they did contest attempts to steer the Winnipeg branch to the strikers' side.<sup>109</sup> A special meeting held on 3

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<sup>105</sup> "Confiscation of Alien Enemy Property," *The Veteran*, June 1919, 9-10; "GWVA Figures Show 'Incredible Number of Lurking Aliens,'" *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 5.

<sup>106</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 147.

<sup>107</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 87; For more on the alien investigations, see "GWVA Figures Show 'Incredible Number of Lurking Aliens,' *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 5.

<sup>108</sup> "The Unblazed Trail," *The Veteran*, June 1919, 4; "Strict Neutrality G.W.V.A. Stand During Strike," *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 5.

<sup>109</sup> Morton and Wright, *Winning the Second Battle*, 121-122.

June concluded with resolutions supporting the strike and the right to bargain collectively. The branch's declaration of sympathy for the strikers angered the President of the Manitoba Command, George P. Weir, and Vice-president of the Winnipeg branch J. O. Newton, who detested the strike leaders for being unpatriotic "pacifists" and "Red-agitators."<sup>110</sup> Newton and Weir repudiated the entire meeting, claiming that it had been packed by "unauthorized persons" and that constitutional protocols were disregarded. Weir and Newton were further enraged by *Western Labor News*, which claimed that the GWVA had joined the strike by sending representatives to sit on the Strike Committee. However, this was misleading because the assigned representatives were part of the GWVA's Emergency Committee, which also had representation on the Citizens' Committee. On behalf of Weir and Newton, C. V. Combe, the editor of the *Manitoba Veteran*, demanded that the Strike Committee repudiate their claim,<sup>111</sup> and in further retaliation, the Winnipeg executive resolved that they were "unqualifiedly ready and prepared to suppress all alien and other agitators, Bolshevism and any attempt to introduce soviet principles in Canada and the British Empire."<sup>112</sup> Indeed, the *Manitoba Veteran* was saturated with anti-alien articles, many of which were positioned beside articles related to the strike.<sup>113</sup> The declaration by Weir and Newton did not mean they were openly allying themselves with the Citizens' Committee but it made their personal sympathies clear.

While the GWVA executive protected their organization's neutrality, veterans found their way into the struggle regardless. The pro-strike veterans gravitated towards the leadership of

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<sup>110</sup> "Winnipeg City Has 8,000 Now To Cope With," *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 1.

<sup>111</sup> "Strict Neutrality G.W.V.A. Stand During Strike," *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 5.

<sup>112</sup> "Great War Veterans Do Not 'Support Strike,'" *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 5; "Says Revolutionaries Organized Parades to Avoid Oblivion," *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 7.

<sup>113</sup> "Winnipeg City Has 8,000 Now to Cope With," *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 1; "Returned Men Dominate Third Phase of Strike," *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 1; "The 'Over 94,000 'undesirables' are in Canada," *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 5; "Great War Veterans Do Not 'Support Strike,'" *The Manitoba Veteran*, 7 June 1919, 5.



Roger Bray, a former Methodist preacher and socialist who joined the army to escape unemployment in 1916. The pro-strike veterans stayed true to their aggressive militancy by conducting street parades, rallies, and even charged into the legislatures to confront the Premier and Mayor directly. Veterans also intimidated members of the Citizens' Committee by confronting them at their headquarters in Winnipeg's Industrial Bureau.<sup>114</sup> Such aggressive action was more common among Great War veterans because they relied upon their patriotic identity to soften the potential backlash from authorities. Conversely, had strikers of non-British origin acted so aggressively, it would have likely prompted a violent backlash by xenophobic-patriots who, again, would likely act with the expectation of judicial leniency. The same expectations existed for anti-strike veterans who were also politically active. On 6 June, they formed "the Returned Soldiers' Loyalist Association." As Bercuson describes, the Association proved to be a major boon for the Citizens' Committee for bolstering their legitimacy and the anti-strike presence. However, with veterans organizing on both sides of the strike, the stage was set for a disastrous confrontation. When demonstrations of pro-strike veterans and the Loyalist Association nearly collided on the streets, Brig.-General H. D. B. Ketchen advised Mayor Charles Gray to ban all public demonstrations. On 7 June, Mayor Gray made a desperate appeal to the returned soldiers in Victoria Park to adhere to the ban and avoid a potentially violent confrontation. The veterans agreed, but tensions remained high.<sup>115</sup>

Unable to break the morale of the strikers, A. J. Andrews and other members of the Citizens' Committee resorted to manipulative and desperate tactics, including false reports to Meighen, the government's mediator Senator Robertson, and other public officials, so that the strikers could be villainized as violent and uncompromising. Reinhold Kramer and Tom Mitchell

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<sup>114</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 143-145.

<sup>115</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 147-149.

provide an excellent account of these events and exposed how Andrews played a central role in escalating the conflict to its bloody conclusion. After misleading government officials about the state of affairs, Andrews authorized arrests under his own prerogative and used police Specials to arrest the strike leaders for sedition under the Criminal Code. This included Russell, Ivens, Heaps, Bray, John Queen, George Armstrong, Bill Pritchard, and Johns.<sup>116</sup> In retaliation, Great War veterans abandoned their pledge to cease public demonstrations and held a “silent parade” on Saturday, 21 June. During the parade, strike breakers began operating the streetcars, and when the protestors attempted to remove them from the tracks, the mounted RNWMP charged into the crowd with weapons in hand, ultimately killing one protestor, injuring two, and arresting eighty. Andrews also falsified his authority to intimidate the *Western Labor News* into ceasing production and surrendering their manuscripts, which Andrews used to convince the Provincial Government to conduct more arrests.<sup>117</sup> By 25 June, the Winnipeg General Strike was over. Following the public trials later that Summer, the strike leaders were sentenced to prison, and most aliens arrested during the strike were deported as “anarchists or Bolsheviks” under the revised Criminal Code.<sup>118</sup>

As emphasized by Bercuson and McCormack, the end of the Winnipeg General Strike marked a devastating defeat for labour radicalism during the post-war labour revolt. Facing mental and economic exhaustion, the unions in Winnipeg went on the defensive as there were almost no work stoppages and only two significant walkouts for eighteen months.<sup>119</sup> McCormack, who also interpreted the strike as “a complete failure,” stated that employers established open shops and banned union organizers from regaining control of their shop floors.

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<sup>116</sup> Kramer and Mitchell, 182-183.

<sup>117</sup> Kramer and Mitchell, 195-196.

<sup>118</sup> Valerie Knowles, 102.

<sup>119</sup> Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 176-178.

Meanwhile, civic employees had to sign no-strike pledges to return to their jobs. Within the labour movement, international trade unionists and labourites began reclaiming control of the movement and marginalized the presence of radical and revolutionary socialists.<sup>120</sup> The defeats in Winnipeg, Vancouver, and other areas in Western Canada pressured western workers to adopt defensive tactics more quickly than other parts of the country, but there were some segments of the labour movement that achieved more clear-cut success.<sup>121</sup> For instance, Nolan Reilley's study on the Amherst General Strike highlights how the Amherst Federation of Labour received support from the civic authorities, and after a three-week confrontation, the Amherst town council mediated a compromise that awarded shorter working days and higher wages.<sup>122</sup>

Victories and losses aside, the general strikes, sympathy strikes, and trade union strikes during the Spring and Summer of 1919 culminated in an unprecedented wave of labour militancy that shook the Dominion to its core. Pro-strike propaganda and the involvement of the Great War veterans demonstrates how the Winnipeg General Strike, as well as other strikes, were not simply large-scale labour conflicts – rather, they were part of a broad social and political struggle to reshape industrial democracy. Traditional bread-and-butter issues, such as wages, were imagined as measures to equalize wartime hardships and prosperity between patriotic wage-earners and profiteers. Meanwhile, the right to organize, control the workplace, and maintain a decent standard of living, were deemed necessary for reconstructing democracy in a way that would ensure a more equitable distribution of wealth and avoid the economic inequalities evident in the war. Great War veterans participated in this continuing struggle for democracy, but unlike the war against Imperial Germany, where the battle lines were distinct, the battle lines of 1919

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<sup>120</sup> McCormack, 167-168.

<sup>121</sup> Heron, "National Contours: Solidarity and Fragmentation," 270.

<sup>122</sup> Reilly, "The General Strike in Amherst," 75-77.

were more ambiguous and returned soldiers found themselves on opposing sides, thereby demonstrating how xenophobic-patriotism directly conflicted with patriotic opposition to the big business in the war and food industries.<sup>123</sup>

Examining the “workers’ revolt” through a patriotic lens provides a new perspective on this well-versed chapter of Canadian history. In addition to viewing the industrial militancy in a new light, this examination of the “democratic revolt” brings into focus a major concession offered by federal policymakers that receives only brief consideration by labour historians. Similar to the Alien Investigation Tribunals authorized in the wake of the anti-alien riots, federal policymakers established the Board of Commerce as a long-awaited concession to prohibit food profiteering. Its hasty formation and scandalous demise should be recognized as an important development during the revolt’s shift from direct action to political action because it reaffirmed to patriots that party politicians could not be trusted to protect true patriots.

### ***Acts of Desperation***

The Spring and Summer of 1919 was the high point of post-war industrial militancy, but governing officials living through this turbulent period had no assurances that it would not persist. The Winnipeg General Strike was broken with repression, but as Loughnan warned in *The Veteran*, “Suppression will not cure Bolshevism. It but spreads the disease, makes martyrs of those convicted, and hero-worshippers of their followers.”<sup>124</sup> If a post-war peace was to be established, the federal government would have to restore public confidence through meaningful

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<sup>123</sup> For Great War veterans’ activism in Vancouver and Toronto, see Lees, 42-60; Nathan Smith, “Comrades and Citizens,” 239-241.

<sup>124</sup> “Notes and Comment,” *The Veteran*, February 1919, 9.

action. Among their starting points was the introduction of new regulations to stop food profiteering.

By the summer of 1919, the evidence became insurmountable that opposition to food profiteering was a driving force behind industrial unrest. At the height of industrial strife, Borden noted in his diary how “Strikes are taking place in several western cities and I fear that conditions are becoming more and more serious. The workmen are angered at the high cost of living and speak everywhere of profiteers.”<sup>125</sup> Chief Justice Mathers, who was appointed to investigate industrial relations between mid-April and mid-June, reached the same conclusion.<sup>126</sup> Mathers travelled to cities and towns from the West Coast to the East Coast holding public hearings on the causes of industrial unrest and the desirability of joint industrial councils.<sup>127</sup> Numerous testimonies validated the belief that rampant food profiteering fuelled militancy.<sup>128</sup> John Brodie, the president of the Clerks and Freight Handlers organization in Vancouver, was among those who believed those who profited to the extreme “should have been brought out at sunset” for execution. Brodie’s reference to profiteering was not restricted to food profiteers either, as it extended to those who “became millionaires through profiteering and grafting.”<sup>129</sup> Isaac Dunwell, an unemployed veteran from Toronto, approved of such extremism. To normalize executions, he cited a widely circulated story that the Swiss people apprehended profiteers and threatened to hang them if they did not take an oath to stop profiteering. To demonstrate their

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<sup>125</sup> CTA, *Robert Borden’s Diary*, 28 May 1919.

<sup>126</sup> Canada, *Royal Commission on Industrial Relations Report* (Ottawa: Labour Gazette, 1919).

<sup>127</sup> For an overview of industrial councils, see Naylor, *The New Democracy*, 175-189.

<sup>128</sup> For testimonies directly criticizing profiteers, see LAC, *Commission to Inquire into and Report upon Industrial Relations in Canada fonds, Royal Commission on Industrial Relations Testimonies*, M-1980-1982, David Priestman, 380; John Brodie, 447; Walter Crosfield, 562; Jean MacWilliams, 782; S. G. Hughes, 1378; J. Sanbrook, 1119; Resina Asale, 1139; Oscar H. Hughes, 2586; S. J. Pee, 873.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, John Brodie, 451.

seriousness, they erected gallows in the streets.<sup>130</sup> Only two testimonies included demands for the execution of profiteers, but outrage and a deep sense of injustice was evident among many.

A more popular demand in the Mathers' testimonies was to address food profiteering through controls on food prices and profits. Disappointment and frustration towards the pre-existing regulatory initiatives were made very explicit. For example, R. F. McWilliams, representing the Local Council of Women from Winnipeg, explained to the Commission how "the women of the country...believe that the government either has not the power or has not the will to stop that profiteering." As McWilliams further explained, the hopefulness that accompanied the launch of the Canada Food Board transformed "into bitterness."<sup>131</sup> In terms of how these regulations should be structured, the testimonials were far from unanimous. H. Hawkins, a member of Edmonton's Typographical Union, recommended setting maximum costs on food in addition to minimum wages; J. Clarke, the Mayor of Edmonton, wanted the state to fix retail prices; John Doggett, a business agent of a Carpenter's Union in Toronto, wanted the nationalization of food industries and price-fixing; while others such as S. J. Pee of the Vernon Fruit Company in Calgary, and William D Baker, the Chair of the Brotherhood of Trainmen, urged the government to focus on the "middlemen" between the producer and the consumer.<sup>132</sup>

In early July, the Mathers' Commission report was submitted for consideration in Parliament. Based on the testimonies, the report stated,

From end to end of Canada the high cost of living was assigned as one, if not the chief, cause of labour unrest... There exists in the minds of a great many people a deep-seated belief that the high cost of living is due to profiteering in the

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, Isaac Dunwell, 2832. Approximately one month after Dunwell's testimony an article appeared in *The New Democracy* also describing the gallows incident. However, the article clarified that the story was dispatched from Geneva, rather than it occurring there. It was the people of Prague that allegedly threatened the profiteers with hanging unless they took an oath to sell at reasonable prices. "Profiteers To Their Knees," *The New Democracy*, 12 June 1919, 2; "Notes and Comment," *The Veteran*, June 1919, 9-11.

<sup>131</sup> LAC, *Commission to Inquire into and Report upon Industrial Relations in Canada fonds, Royal Commission on Industrial Relations Testimonies*, R. F. McWilliams, 1572-1573.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, William D. Baker, 1251; S. J. Pee, 873; John Doggett, 2858; J. Clarke, 965; H. Hawkins, 938.

necessaries of life, and that the chief instrument made use of to that end is the various cold storage plants... [which] intercept the supplies which the farmer would otherwise bring to the market for sale.

Hence, the belief that food profiteering was unnecessarily inflating food prices at the expense of consumers accentuated industrial unrest because it pushed wage-earners to strike for higher wages, benefits, and better living conditions.<sup>133</sup>

While the Mathers' Commission was investigating the causes of industrial unrest, a separate Cost of Living Committee was created on 30 May 1919 and ordered to inquire into the prices of foodstuffs, clothing, fuel, renting, and other necessities of life, and then provide recommendations to reduce costs.<sup>134</sup> There was considerable skepticism about the ability of the Committee to reach any meaningful conclusions. H. H. Stevens, who sat on the committee, claimed that their task was impossible given their deadline before prorogation in early July.<sup>135</sup> After all, the previous Board of Inquiry into the Cost of Living took nine months to produce its majority report, while R. H. Coats's minority report took sixteen months.<sup>136</sup> W. A. McKague, the editor of the *Monetary Times*, believed that its work could still be helpful because "...the publicity which will accompany its work, should be an important factor in impressing upon the public the fact that undue profits in Canada constitute an insignificant factor in retail prices."<sup>137</sup> Hence, McKague anticipated that the Committee's utility would be to educate the public on their

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<sup>133</sup> *Royal Commission on Industrial Relations Report*, 1, 6, 7-9.

<sup>134</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1919*, 333; CTA, *Robert Borden's Diary*, 30 May 1919. Fifteen members were appointed to the Committee, including ten Unionists (two being former Unionist-Liberals) and five Liberals: G. B. Nicholson, A. L. Davidson, F. L. Davis, E. B. Devlin, J.M. Douglas, W. D. Euler, W. S. Fielding, H. C. Hocken, A. B. McCoig, E. W. Nesbitt, J. F. Reid, J. E. Sinclair, H. H. Stevens, D. Sutherland, T. Vien.

<sup>135</sup> "The Cost of Living Committee," *The Monetary Times*, 6 June 1919, 9.

<sup>136</sup> Canada, *Board of Inquiry into Cost of Living: Report of the Board*, vol. 1 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1915), 5; Canada, *Board of Inquiry into Cost of Living: Report of the Board*, vol. 2 (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1915), viii.

<sup>137</sup> "The Cost of Living Committee," *The Monetary Times*, 6 June 1919, 9.

ignorance. Mathers also expressed doubt that the working class fully comprehended the complexities of the economy but believed the judgment of most workers was “sound.”<sup>138</sup>

On 5 July, the Cost of Living Committee submitted its report to Parliament. Its thesis validated those of preceding cost of living investigations: prices were rising because of inflation as well as an imbalance of supply and demand, and furthermore, that the reduction of the cost of living required optimizing production and distribution. The Committee acknowledged some evidence of “undue inflation, or of profiteering,” but its significance was regarded as imaginary and not any more substantial than during peacetime. Popular suspects of food profiteering, cold storage operators and millers, were discharged of any wrongdoing, while consumer extravagance was deemed a secondary cause of rising living costs. But contrary to their exoneration of food distributors and processors, the Committee recommended the creation of the Board of Commerce to address food profiteering. The report advised that the Board be given powers to investigate mergers, trusts, monopolies or organizations suspected of restraining or unduly enhancing the price of the necessities of life. Accompanying this recommendation, the report read “The publicity given to the investigations of such a board will have a steadying effect.”<sup>139</sup>

When parliamentarians discussed the Cost of Living Committee’s recommendations, the debate immediately descended into partisanship but there was a shared sense of urgency to act swiftly.<sup>140</sup> Parliament was scheduled to prorogue within a week, and legislators feared a resurgence of industrial militancy and civil unrest. George Nicholson, the Chair of the Cost of Living Committee, reiterated the report’s conclusion that whether profiteering had any

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<sup>138</sup> *Royal Commission on Industrial Relations Report*, 5.

<sup>139</sup> Canada, *Cost of living. Proceedings of the Special Committee appointed for the purpose of inquiring forthwith as to the prices charged for foodstuffs, clothing, fuel and other necessities of life, and as to the rates of profit made thereon by dealers and others concerned in their production, distribution and sale, etc., etc.* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1919), 6-13; *Royal Commission on Industrial Relations Report*, 7-8.

<sup>140</sup> *Debates*, 1 July 1919 (Arthur Meighen, Unionist), 13th Parl. 2nd sess., vol. 5, 4328; *Ibid.*, (Thomas Vien, Liberal; James Robb, Liberal; Daniel McKenzie, Liberal; William Fielding, Unionist), 4309, 4310-4312, 4321.



substantial effect on living costs, the *belief* in profiteering was enough to warrant action.<sup>141</sup> With the majority of parliamentarians eager to act before proroguing, the report was approved.<sup>142</sup> The next step was approving *The Board of Commerce Act* and *The Combines and Fair Prices Act*, which had been introduced on 28 June – only three days following the conclusion of the Winnipeg General Strike. The Acts established and empowered the creation of the Board of Commerce. The Board was to function as an independent federal tribunal with a mandate to protect the public's interests against the predatory food profiteers by investigating mergers, trusts, monopolies, combines, and illicit partnerships; fix prices and profits; establish guidelines for commercial practices; assess undue accumulation or hoarding of necessities of life; as well as initiate criminal proceedings. The combination of the Board's broad mandate, powers of enforcement, autonomy, and ability to interpret ambiguous terms such as "unfair" profit culminated in one of the most radical challenges to *laissez-faire* dogma for the time. But despite the unprecedented powers being given to the Board, the Unionists expected the legislation to receive royal assent within a mere four days. As one Liberal objected, the Bills had not even been translated into French, nor were parliamentarians provided with sufficient time to study the legislation. On these grounds, Jacques Bureau stated that the legislation could be justifiably obstructed.<sup>143</sup> Numerous Liberals and Unionists also argued that the creation of the Board was deceptive because it was clear to them that the government had no intention for the Board to succeed. It was merely a way of "throwing dust in the eyes of the people." Adding credibility to this argument was that the legislation of the Board was proposed by O'Connor two years earlier, so the timely introduction of the legislation following the wave of unrest revealed the

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<sup>141</sup> *Debates*, 1 July 1919 (George Nicholson, Unionist), 13th Parl. 2nd sess., vol. 5, 4307.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, (Robert, Richardson), 4323; *Ibid.*, (George Nicholson, Unionist), 4333-4334.

<sup>143</sup> *Debates*, 3 July 1919 (Jacques Bureau, Liberal), 13th Parl. 2nd sess., vol. 5, 4472-4474.

government's opportunism. Liberal MP Thomas Vien also expressed his worry that the discretion of the Board's commissioners would allow the "friends" of the Union government, such as Flavelle, to remain protected. Nevertheless, the legislation passed before prorogation and received royal assent on 7 July.<sup>144</sup>

The Board was to be headed by a chair and two commissioners. As acknowledged by Nicholson, the success or failure of the Board would depend on its personnel – both in terms of addressing profiteering and winning the public's confidence.<sup>145</sup> The Cabinet began receiving letters from a wide range of interests hoping to secure preferable representation on the Board. The appointment of "That Man O'Connor" had a strong appeal because he remained a popular figure willing to stand up to food profiteers, and moreover, he wrote the legislation empowering the Board of Commerce.<sup>146</sup> His appointment would also dismiss speculation that the government was eager to remove him from public office.<sup>147</sup> Recognizing his bargaining leverage, O'Connor made a public statement declaring that he would only join the Board as Chair, otherwise he would offer legal counsel to those "brought in contact" with the Board.<sup>148</sup> O'Connor may have been a public favorite, but there were some commercial interests who resented him. Corporate lobbyists, such as Michael Dwyer of W. H. Gillard & Co., warned the Cabinet that O'Connor was a "dangerous revolutionary man, full of theories, most unfit for such a position."<sup>149</sup> In the end, the Cabinet decided to appoint Hugh A. Robson as Chair.<sup>150</sup> Robson was a judge from Manitoba who recently headed the Royal Commission that investigated the Winnipeg General

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, (Jacques Bureau, Liberal; Thomas Vien, Liberal; Michael Clark, Unionist), 4497, 4507, 4466.

<sup>145</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4359, file 76717-76718, Nicholson to Meighen, 10 July 1919.

<sup>146</sup> *Debates*, 19 September 1919 (Horatio Hocken, Unionist), 13th Parl. 3rd sess., vol. 1, 451.

<sup>147</sup> "Conspiring for O'Connor's Removal," *Saturday Night*, 16 February 1918, 1; *Debates*, 27 March 1918 (Rodolphe Lemieux, Liberal), 13th Parl. 1st sess., vol. 1, 199.

<sup>148</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4359, file 76727, Robertson to Borden, 18 July 1919.

<sup>149</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4359, file 76634-76635, W. H. Gillard & Co. (Hamilton) Michael Dwyer to Beckett, 2 July 1919.

<sup>150</sup> LAC, *Board of Commerce of Canada fonds*, vol. 34, O'Connor to Meighen, 17 July 1919.

Strike. Borden was very determined to see to Robson's appointment, so much so that he made personal appeals to Robson and his employers at Union Bank.<sup>151</sup> After some convincing, Robson accepted the position. O'Connor was disgruntled by Robson's appointment, but ultimately he settled for the position as a regular commissioner. With Robson and O'Connor's appointments formalized on 11 August, the Board only needed one more commissioner, who was eventually appointed on 2 October 1919.<sup>152</sup> Acquiring the post was James Murdock, the Vice-President of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. Murdock secured the position under Robson's recommendation because the two had worked together during a labour dispute.<sup>153</sup> It also allowed Borden to fulfill his promise to provide labour representation on all major boards concerning reconstruction.<sup>154</sup> A notable absence on the Board was a representative for farmers, which led the CCA to pass a resolution demanding the appointment of another member.<sup>155</sup> The demand failed to sway to the Cabinet and the Board's executive remained confined to three positions.

The Board of Commerce commenced its operations in mid-August 1919. Among its initial activities were orders instructing sugar refiners to sell thousands of tons of sugar to domestic fruit packers in Western Canada, then fixed the sale price of wholesale sugar. However, some of those found in violation of the orders escaped penalization by pleading ignorance. In September, Robson and Murdock passed orders declaring any hog product above the prices on 10 March 1919 to be an "unfair profit." Meanwhile, O'Connor forbade any price increases on milk unless authorized by the Board. By November, the Board took on the retail clothing

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<sup>151</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4359, file 76722, Robson to Borden, 17 July 1919; file 76736, Robson to Borden 24 July 1919; file 76741, Borden to Union Bank President, 25 July 1919; file 76755, Union Bank President to Borden, 2 August 1919; file 76767, Robson to Borden, 5 August 1919.

<sup>152</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden Diary*, 11 August 1919.

<sup>153</sup> *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4359, file 76845-76846, Robson to Borden, 1 September 1919; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1916*, 429; Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 161.

<sup>154</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4359, file 76679, Trades and Labour Congress of Canada to Borden, 7 July 1919.

<sup>155</sup> "Canadian Council of Agriculture," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 19 November 1919, 7.

industry and fixed their gross profit on sales. Allegations of illicit combination were also investigated. For example, charges of unfair practices by T. Eaton Co. were proven groundless, but there were occasions where the Board forced dissolutions, such as a bread combine in Montréal.<sup>156</sup>

In general, the Board's activity was considerably limited and it discovered few profiteers. Considering that the CFB and Cost of Living Commissioner office had been abolished after the war, the public had expectations that the Board would fill the void but also be more effective. Similar to the previous food controlling initiatives, high expectations led to disappointment. In Parliament, a discussion on the Commissioners' salaries rapidly deteriorated into a series of attacks against the Board and the Union Government. Liberal MPs were angered that the Board was repeating the same mistakes as the Food Controller and CFB, specifically their focus on information gathering rather than prosecutions. Citing a Massachusetts paper, Liberal MP, John Sinclair highlighted how the American government was not hesitant to act because they charged five businessmen with conspiracy to raise the price of fish and establish a monopoly during the war. The profiteers were sentenced to one year in jail and fined \$1,000 each. Another twelve men connected to the conspiracy were also sentenced to six months in jail and fined \$500 each. Ironically, Sinclair contended that the reason for the Americans' success was money. The U.S. Government funded the Attorney General with one million dollars to conduct prosecutions against profiteers. By contrast, prosecutions in Canada relied upon municipalities that lacked financial resources. Unless more money was committed, Sinclair believed that the efforts of the Board were futile.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4359-C4360, file 76290, Board of Commerce Annual Report, schedule A, 5-7.

<sup>157</sup> *Debates*, 4 September 1919 (Daniel McKenzie, Liberal), 13th Parl. 3rd sess., vol. 1, 30-35; *Ibid.*, (John Sinclair, Liberal), 39-40.

Beyond the walls of Parliament, hostility towards the Board intensified as its limitations became apparent. In the *B.C. Federationist*, Pettipiece ridiculed the lack of prosecutions, leading him to pose the rhetorical question, “What is the new board for, anyway?”<sup>158</sup> Loughnan also offered a critique in *The Veteran*. As Loughnan emphasized, the legislation required the Fair Price Committees and the Provincial Attorney-Generals to obtain permission from the Board before commencing any prosecutions, making prosecutions even more convoluted than previous regulations. In addition, *The Combines and Fair Prices Act* restricted the sale of goods to conventional channels so that wholesalers, manufacturers, and jobbers could refuse to sell to co-operatives. In effect, the legislation became “a direct weapon against co-operation” and thus contravened Robson’s proclamation that the Board of Commerce was “the people’s court.”<sup>159</sup>

The Board of Commerce’s choice of regulations also became an area of intense criticism. Michael Clark, a Unionist-Liberal, was shocked that the Board threatened to prohibit agricultural exports unless prices dropped. Such an order conflicted with the recently established Wheat Board, which sought to keep wheat prices high to stimulate production. The contradiction prompted Clark to allege that the Commissioners had reached “the verge of economic insanity.”<sup>160</sup> O’Connor’s milk regulations were also harshly scrutinized. O’Connor set the price of milk below the prevailing export price and imposed a \$1,000 fine or imprisonment for anyone who disobeyed. Liberal MP James Robb claimed that such an order would encourage the slaughter of cattle, which would adversely lower the production of milk, cheese, and butter.<sup>161</sup> Leaders in the labour and agrarian movements shared this resentment. In the wake of the milk

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<sup>158</sup> “No title,” *B.C. Federationist*, 12 September 1919, 4.

<sup>159</sup> “Canada’s Feeble Fight Against Profiteering,” *The Veteran* September 1919, 14-15.

<sup>160</sup> *Debates*, 19 September 1919 (Michael Clark, Unionist), 13th Parl. 3rd sess., vol. 1, 444-445.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, (James Robb, Liberal), 446.

regulations controversy, the CCA passed a resolution demanding the Board's dissolution.<sup>162</sup> And when O'Connor fixed milk prices higher in Montréal, from 13 cents to 15 cents in October, and announced his intention for additional increases, Francq condemned O'Connor in an article entitled, "Baby Murder and Milk Prices." As Francq alleged, "No piece of legislation or quasi-legislation has struck harder at the very vitals of the working classes than this action of the Board of Commerce regarding the increased price of milk."<sup>163</sup> As the press was flooded with opposition to the Board, the Cabinet's mailboxes similarly flooded with letters demanding that the Board rescind its orders, reconstitute its executive members, or be dismantled.<sup>164</sup>

After only a few months in operation, the Board of Commerce was under attack by those it sought to appease and protect. It undermined consumers' interests by raising prices, producers' interests by lowering prices, obstructed municipal and provincial machinery from prosecuting profiteers, and undermined cooperative buying. The only substantial defence of the Board of Commerce stemmed from parliamentarians who reiterated their belief that the creation of the Board was necessary to tame civil unrest as Parliament approached prorogation. At most, it was hoped that the Board could regulate the spread of prices between producers and consumers, but the Board was yet to show success in this regard.<sup>165</sup>

In response to the backlash in Parliament, O'Connor wrote to Borden indicating that his confidence in the Board was wavering. What concerned O'Connor was that the demands of parliamentarians to abolish the Board undermined its authority to act as an independent

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<sup>162</sup> "Canadian Council of Agriculture," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 19 November 1919, 7.

<sup>163</sup> "Baby Murder and Milk Prices," *Labor World*, 11 October 1919, 3.

<sup>164</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C-4359-C4360, file 76290, Board of Commerce Annual Report, 30; LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4360, file 76291, F. M. Moffatt Care Funn's Ltd. To Borden, 29 September 1919; file 76910, W. L. Smale Live Stock Associations of Manitoba to Borden, 18 October 1919; file 76935, Western Canada Live Stock Union (Victoria) to Tolmie (Minister of Agriculture), 14 November 1919; file 76295-76297, Western Canada Live Stock Union to Foster, 8 January 1920; file 76299, Canadian Council of Agriculture to Foster, 12 January 1920; *Debates*, 29 June 1920 (Robert Borden, Unionist), 13th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 5, 4472.

<sup>165</sup> *Debates*, 30 September 1919 (Francis Keefer, Unionist), 13th Parl. 3rd sess., vol. 1, 706.

tribunal.<sup>166</sup> If threats of dismissal were not enough, O'Connor was also troubled by the difficulties of having the Board function at all. Following the amendments to the *Civil Service Act* in November 1919, the jurisdiction of appointments for the Outside Civil Service was transferred to the Civil Service Commission, thereby requiring appointees to undergo screening and evaluation.<sup>167</sup> This development was a win for those who wanted the civil service to be merit-based; however, these amendments were very obstructive to the Board because it depended on the expeditious appointment of consultants specialized in various areas of commerce. Robson and O'Connor believed that their job had become "impossible" and advised the Cabinet and the Civil Service Commission to exempt the Board, but the response was that the Board had insufficient grounds for exemption.<sup>168</sup> Frustrated by the lack of support, O'Connor requested in early March that the Government "abandon its attempt to control profiteering by means of this Board," but the Government would not comply – at least not yet.<sup>169</sup>

In an attempt to buttress the Board's declining legitimacy, the Commissioners decided to clarify the Board's legal authority to fix profits and prohibit sales by submitting questions to the Supreme Court on 9 January 1920.<sup>170</sup> In addition, the Board's authority was challenged by Sir William Price, the president of a large pulp and paper company in Québec called Price Brothers Inc.. Price believed that the transfer of the Paper Control Tribunal powers to the Board of

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<sup>166</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4360, file 76899-76900, O'Connor to Borden, 1 October 1919.

<sup>167</sup> Hodgetts et al., 50-51.

<sup>168</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4360, file 76311, Robson to Roche, 22 January 1920; C4359 file 76190, O'Connor to Foster, 26 January 1920; file 76210-76211, O'Connor to Foster, 5 February 1920; file 76205-76206, Robson to Foster, 16 February 1920; file 76311, Foster to O'Connor, 13 February 1920.

<sup>169</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4359, file 76212-76213, O'Connor to Foran, 3 March 1920; file 76214-76216, O'Connor to Foster, 3 March 1920.

<sup>170</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4359, file 76109, Robson to Foster, 1 March 1920.

Commerce on 29 January 1920 was illegitimate because newsprint did not constitute a “necessary of life” and it was illegitimate to regulate the industry during a period of peace.<sup>171</sup>

Shortly after Price launched his constitutional challenge against the Board, Robson dealt a near-fatal blow by resigning on 27 February 1920. According to Robson, the reasons for his resignation were two-fold. First, he did not want to permanently move his home from Winnipeg to Ottawa;<sup>172</sup> and second, Robson lost sympathy with the Board. Robson believed that the Board’s strategy was erroneous from the start because rising prices were not caused by widening profit margins. As Robson argued, such speculation was only prevalent among “the thoughtless.” Robson provided a list of additional reasons why he opposed the Board: he believed that a meaningful increase in production could only be accomplished by assisting producers obtain higher export prices; prosecutions discriminated against producers of necessities and not luxury goods; retailers and co-operatives faced an excessive regulatory burden;<sup>173</sup> and the Board obstructed the powers of the Provincial Attorney-Generals to unilaterally prosecute profiteers. Robson contended that the only benefit from the Board’s operation was the publicity generated by investigations to educate the public and to deter illicit-profit making.<sup>174</sup> For O’Connor, Robson’s resignation did not come as a surprise because his correspondence with Robson reveals that he had been arguing with Robson about the most effective regulatory strategy as early as October 1919. Robson attempted to convince O’Connor that their federal machinery was useless and that price regulation should be a municipal prerogative. O’Connor, who had already dealt with the Fair Price Committees while serving as the Cost of Living Commissioner, believed that

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<sup>171</sup> Bernard Hibbitts, “A Bridle for Leviathan: The Supreme Court and the Board of Commerce,” *Journal of Ottawa Law Review* vol. 21, 1 (1989), 76-78.

<sup>172</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4359, file 76090, Foster to Robson, 23 February 1920.

<sup>173</sup> O’Connor sent a letter to Meighen denying that the Act had any impact on co-operative buying whatsoever. LAC, *Board of Commerce of Canada fonds*, vol. 34, O’Connor to Meighen, 4 March 1920, 3.

<sup>174</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4359, file 76091-76092, Robson to Foster, 23 February 1920, 1-2.



municipal authorities were too inexperienced and fearful of deterring local business to be dependable.<sup>175</sup> What is most peculiar is that Robson accepted the position of Chief Commissioner when he appears to have never been in sympathy with it in the first place. Indeed, Robson made it clear to O'Connor that the only reason he did not resign earlier was at the request of the various Cabinet ministers.<sup>176</sup>

Robson's resignation had the makings of a massive scandal because a few days following his resignation, Murdock submitted a letter to the Cabinet charging that Robson had sabotaged the Board's success. He alleged that Robson grossly neglected his duties through his prolonged absences in Winnipeg and even attempted to solicit Murdock's resignation on multiple occasions.<sup>177</sup> Murdock also insinuated that Robson conspired against the Board. For instance, when O'Connor requested information from two newspaper companies that proposed a merger, Robson informed the companies that the request was not mandatory.<sup>178</sup> While these charges were scandalous, they paled in comparison to Murdock's other charge – that Robson was providing legal advice to interests challenging the Board in the Supreme Court. During the *Reference* case, in which the Commissioners submitted questions to clarify the Board's powers, the Chief Justice decided to base its assessment in a practical scenario. The case in question involved the Crescent Creamery Company from Winnipeg, which challenged the Board's milk regulations.<sup>179</sup> Murdock found a letter in the Board of Commerce office addressed to Robson, but, assuming it was for general purposes he opened it and discovered that it was from Jabez B. Hugg K.C., the lawyer

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<sup>175</sup> LAC, *Board of Commerce of Canada fonds*, vol. 34, Robson to O'Connor, 6 October 1919; O'Connor to Robson, 10 October 1919; O'Connor to Robson, 20 October 1919.

<sup>176</sup> LAC, *Board of Commerce of Canada fonds*, vol. 34, O'Connor to Robson, 17 October 1919.

<sup>177</sup> Murdock stated that Robson was away in Winnipeg for half the period. O'Connor also complained to Robson regarding his absences and the difficulties they posed to the operation of the Board. LAC, *Board of Commerce of Canada fonds*, vol. 34, O'Connor to Robson, 20 October 1919.

<sup>178</sup> LAC, *Board of Commerce of Canada fonds*, vol. 34, O'Connor to Robson, 21 October 1919.

<sup>179</sup> "Commerce Bd. Action A Surprise to Court," *Toronto Star*, 3 February 1920, 1.

representing the Crescent Creamy Company. Hugg requested that Robson revise his factum for the case.<sup>180</sup> In clear recognition that the request was illicit, Hugg provided Robson instructions on how to reply through his associate “so that you will not appear to have any connection with the revised proof.”<sup>181</sup> When Murdock confronted Robson about the letter, Robson claimed that Hugg had been a clerk at his office, studied law with him, and was on familiar grounds, but deemed the letter “an unwarranted impertinence.” When Robson resigned shortly after, Murdock suspected Robson was attempting to avoid a scandal. But, despite Murdock’s charges, the Cabinet did not reprimand Robson, and for the time being, the scandal remained hidden from the public.<sup>182</sup>

Following Robson’s resignation, the Board of Commerce faced the rulings of the Supreme Court. Legal historian Bernard Hibbitts has examined these court proceedings in detail.<sup>183</sup> In the *Reference* case, the prosecution argued that the Board of Commerce’s jurisdiction infringed provincial powers outlined in the constitution concerning property rights, civil rights, and the administration of justice. On 1 June 1920, the Supreme Court reached a split decision, so the case was passed onto the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. In the meantime, the Board’s constitutional powers remained in limbo. In the *Price* case, the Supreme Court reached a majority verdict that deemed the transfer of powers from the Paper Control Tribunal to the Board beyond the jurisdiction of the Cabinet, and in addition, designated newsprint as non-essential.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Worth noting is that Hugg was one of the Canadian Manufacturers Association’s leading legal counsels, who fought to defend the right to use injunctions against labour in Manitoba. Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg*, 105.

<sup>181</sup> LAC, *Board of Commerce of Canada fonds*, vol. 34, J. B. Hugg to Robson, 18 February 1920.

<sup>182</sup> The Government kept the correspondence secret from both Parliament and the public because Hugg protested that it was improper to disclose private correspondence. LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4359, file 76099-76107, Murdock to Unnamed, 27 February 1920, 1-9; file 76108-76114, Robson to Foster, 1 March 1920, 1-7.

<sup>183</sup> Bernard Hibbitts, “A Bridle for Leviathan: The Supreme Court and the Board of Commerce” *Journal of Ottawa Law Review* vol. 21, 1 (1989): 65-117.

<sup>184</sup> Hibbitts, 80-88.

Thus, by the Summer of 1920, the Board's authority over newsprint was revoked, the constitutionality of its general powers remained unresolved, and its Chair had resigned. O'Connor pleaded to Borden to allow him to amend the legislation to clarify its authority, but the Prime Minister was unwilling to cooperate and preferred to leave the legislation unchanged until the Privy Council's ruling.<sup>185</sup> Frustrated and humiliated, O'Connor submitted his letter of resignation on 15 June. Before departing his post, O'Connor submitted the Board's first annual report highlighting the insurmountable problems he encountered from the Civil Service, the Government, and lobbyists. But despite the tribulations of operating the Board, O'Connor reaffirmed his belief that it was the proper course of action to address food profiteering. He cited numerous profiteers in the sugar industry to legitimize his claim, where profit margins were unnecessarily high, and offences were committed. The report also stated that profiteers could be suppressed by confining wholesale purchases to refiners and prohibiting speculative purchases.<sup>186</sup> Such a definite case of profiteering against powerful sugar interests and self-interested speculators was precisely the form of action patriots expected. Moreover, in June, O'Connor and Murdock exposed profiteering among a Consumers' Association that offered a delivery service for groceries. Sales representatives used low prices on certain commodities to lure customers into purchasing memberships but then charged prices higher than advertised. This tactic allowed the Association to make up to 100 to 200 percent profits on various commodities. The Board recommended prosecution against the Association and its manager.<sup>187</sup> It was yet another demonstration of the Board's ability to find real food profiteers. Nevertheless, O'Connor

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>186</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4360, file 76394-76415, In the Matter of an Investigation of a Complaint made by one J. Gale Against Durchoer & Gosselin, General Merchants, of Eastview, Ontario Having Taken Unfair Profits on Sale of Granulated and Brown Sugar Contrary to the Provisions of the Combines and Fair Prices Act, 1919 and in the Matter of Orders nos. 4 and 16A of this Board for a General Enquiry Into Fair Profits, 11 June 1920.

<sup>187</sup> LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4360, file 76382, Montgomery Bros. to Foster, 10 May 1920; file 76383-76393, The Board of Commerce of Canada, Decision Re Consumers' Association, 4 June 1920.

was being attacked by numerous segments of society and alienated from political support, so in a farewell statement, O'Connor wrote, "If I cannot look after the interests of the Canadian people as I undertook, and am expected by them to do, I may as well look after myself."<sup>188</sup>

O'Connor's resignation and denunciation of the Government was a blow to the Unionists' credibility, but it was Murdock's resignation in late June that became what the *Toronto Star* described as a "bombshell."<sup>189</sup> Accompanying Murdock's resignation was a manifesto listing sixteen points describing how the Board of Commerce was sabotaged. The allegations were scandalous and began with the creation of the legislation as a half-hearted attempt to break the momentum of the Winnipeg General Strike and broader industrial unrest. Once realized, the Government sought to undermine the Board. For example, Murdock alleged that Robson was selected to ensure the Board's "safe and sane" operation. Murdock also alleged that the obstruction from the Civil Service Commission was done under the instructions of the Cabinet because they feared the public backlash that would likely result from proper investigations. Failing to replace both Robson and O'Connor further demonstrated that the Government wanted the Board to disintegrate. Of course, Murdock also included Hugg's communication with Robson to implicate Robson's collusion against the Board. And similar to O'Connor, Murdock reaffirmed that the Board of Commerce was a real benefit to consumers, and if it had been supported, it would have reduced the cost of living and brought more profiteers to justice.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Hopkins, *Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 489.

<sup>189</sup> "Murdock's Bombshell Shocks the Capital," *Toronto Star*, 25 June 1920, 8.

<sup>190</sup> For the list of Murdock's charges see, *Debates*, 29 June 1920, 13th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 5, 4467.

After shutting down a Liberal motion to investigate Murdock's charges,<sup>191</sup> the Cabinet had to decide whether it would allow the Board to disintegrate with Murdock's resignation, or whether they would appoint new commissioners to continue its operation. Likely sensing that the dismantlement of the Board immediately after Murdock's accusations would implicate guilt, the Cabinet opted to appoint new commissioners in early July 1920.<sup>192</sup>

It was not long before the Board was re-immersed in controversy. On 15 October 1920, the Board of Commerce fixed the price of sugar to remain high. Thomas Traves, who examined the Board of Commerce and the sugar refiners, provides an insightful overview of the controversy. Four days before the order, representatives from the sugar refining industry met with acting Prime Minister Meighen and cabinet members George Foster and Charles Doherty. The refiners urged the Government to protect the sugar industry from collapsing sugar prices,<sup>193</sup> which was triggered by the revival of sugar-beet production in Europe.<sup>194</sup> Interestingly, the consultant accompanying the sugar refiners was none other than O'Connor. Hence, "That Man O'Connor," who was once praised as a protector of the people, was now siding with powerful commercial interests. Following the Cabinet's consultation with the sugar interests, the Cabinet members met with the new Board of Commerce commissioners. The following day, the Board issued an order to fix the price of sugar. Similar to previous instances when the Board fixed milk prices to remain high, a public outcry ensued charging that the big interests had corrupted the

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<sup>191</sup> *Debates*, 29 June 1920 (William Mackenzie, Liberal), 13th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 5, 4470; *Debates*, 29 June 1920 (Andrew McMaster, Liberal), 13th Parl. 4th sess., vol. 5, 4476.

<sup>192</sup> Appointed as Chief Commissioner was its Secretary, William White. Accompanying him was the Deputy Minister of Labour, Frederick Albert Acland, and Purchasing Agent of the Department of Justice, Gerald A. P. Dillon. LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4359, file 76245-76246, Nicholson to Borden, 16 June 1920; LAC, *Robert Borden fonds*, C4360, file 76418, Clerk of the Privy Council to Borden, 5 July 1920; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 489-492.

<sup>193</sup> Thomas Traves, "The Board of Commerce and the Canadian Sugar Refining Industry: A Speculation on the Role of the State in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 55, no. 2 (1974), 168.

<sup>194</sup> Ernest Forbes, *Maritime Rights: The Maritime Rights Movement, 1919-1927 A Study in Canadian Regionalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979), 55.

price-fixing machinery.<sup>195</sup> For instance, Chipman's coverage of the sugar orders was initially entitled "The Sugar Order" and "The Sugar Case," but as the dust settled and the Cabinet's meddling became clear, Chipman declared it "The Sugar Farce."<sup>196</sup> In response to the public backlash, the Cabinet passed an order-in-council revoking the Board's order and declared that the Board was no longer functioning according to its intended design.<sup>197</sup> In the wake of the controversy, all the staff were removed except for one member to handle correspondence. Nearly a year later, the Privy Council found that the Board was *ultra vires* because the legislation infringed upon provincial jurisdiction over property rights.<sup>198</sup> Following the ruling, the Board of Commerce was formally dissolved.

As Hopkins wrote in 1920, the Board of Commerce accomplished "some good" by "soothing the people" during the turbulent period of reconstruction.<sup>199</sup> Traves agreed with Hopkins's assessment and noted that while the Board was ineffective because economic interests were too divergent for its powers, the Board's real victory was "symbolic, or rhetorical" because its failure succeeded in discrediting the regulation of prices and profits. It would only be until the Second World War, with the expansion of the bureaucracy, integration of professionally trained experts, and new economic theories, that policymakers could implement ambitious regulations like price and profit controls with confidence.<sup>200</sup> Although it cannot be quantified, it is convincing to argue that the Board played an important role mitigating post-war unrest in the

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<sup>195</sup> Traves, "The Board of Commerce and the Canadian Sugar Refining Industry," 169.

<sup>196</sup> "The Sugar Order," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 20 October 1920, 5; "The Sugar Case," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 27 October 1920, 5; "The Sugar Farce," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 24 November 1920, 5.

<sup>197</sup> Traves, "The Board of Commerce and the Canadian Sugar Refining Industry," 170; *Robert Borden Diary*, 14 October 1920.

<sup>198</sup> Brian Cheffins, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back, One Step Forward: Canadian Competition Law Reform, 1919 and 1935," *Historical Perspectives on Canadian Competition Policy*, ed. Shyam Khemani and et al. (Halifax: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1991), 163.

<sup>199</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 494.

<sup>200</sup> Traves, *The State and Enterprise*, 163-165.

form of direct action. However, there is more to consider when assessing its symbolic and rhetorical victory. The Board was not just a political embarrassment for the government – its demise legitimized prevailing disillusionment towards party politics in a general way. Many labour, agrarian, and veteran pundits connected profiteering controversy to the evils of party politics and the controversial creation, operation, and demise of the Board of Commerce provided them further credibility. The consequences may not be visible in continuing direct action, but it certainly was a relevant issue for the radical challenge to party politics waged through the electoral system.

## **Conclusion**

Following the armistice, there were two significant trends of grassroots militancy among workers and veterans: the first trend was the wave of anti-alien riots and anti-alien violence; the second was the wave of industrial militancy. These two waves of grassroots militancy have been examined as a separate phenomenon in Great War and labour historiographies. However, as this chapter argues, xenophobia and industrial militancy drew upon similar impulses driven by immediate material interests, wartime experiences, and patriotic consciousness. The return to a peacetime economy and demobilization accentuated the economic hardships faced by low-income and unemployed wage-earners. Many Great War veterans fell into this category and faced compounding anxieties from their experiences overseas. Meanwhile, the inadequacies of federal policy to address wartime inequalities accentuated prevailing disillusionment. With the end of the war formalized, patriots struggling to make ends meet sought to assert their interests from the bottom up and connect their struggles as part of honouring wartime sacrifices. The significant divergence among the strategies of direct action was whether patriotic sensibilities were guided by a xenophobic perspective or opposition to the elitism of big business and party

politicians. These views were not mutually exclusive, but the distinction provides an analytical structure to examine how patriotic consciousness progressed according to a horizontal and vertical axis of interests. It also focuses on how governing officials responded to the post-war revolt by offering concessions. Historians who have examined the anti-alien riots note the significance of authorizing Alien Investigation Tribunals, but the Board of Commerce has a more obscure presence in the revolt historiography. As this chapter illustrates, both initiatives were part of a concerted strategy to minimize patriotic dissent. While it is reasonable to argue that their implementation tempered the explosiveness of direct action, their failures to make a meaningful impact further justified the need for alternative political leadership. The subsequent chapter, which examines political action in the democratic revolt, will highlight the continuing relevance of the Board of Commerce's controversial legacy during the 1921 federal election, but more than that, it will bring into focus how the radical challenge to party politics of the post-war period was rooted in patriotic consciousness and wartime experiences.



## Chapter 6.

### “Thank God it’s only a dream”: Political Action in the Democratic Revolt

Patriots used strategies of direct action to challenge profiteering and the terms of post-war, but despite the scale and intensity of anti-alien violence, protests, and industrial militancy, there were few tangible gains to convince patriots that they were victorious. The Alien Investigation Tribunals did not result in the mass expulsion of “undesirable” alien profiteers, while orders issued by the Board of Commerce seemed to protect the profiteers in big business more than ordinary people. The controversial demise of the Board of Commerce further tarnished the virtuousness and patriotism of the Unionists or federal policymakers more generally. Of course, there were other initiatives during the post-war period that attempted to minimize the public’s hostility towards the economic and political elite, including conferences to reconcile class differences and the advancement of progressive reforms. But despite these efforts to appease demands for a “new democracy,” the popularity of the traditional political elite was declining in English Canada. Meanwhile, political leaders not affiliated with the Liberal, Unionist, and Conservative parties began to gain widespread support. The political history of the late-war and post-war period is well documented and includes analyses of the United Farmers parties, Independent Labour Party (ILP), and Progressive Party. What this chapter aims to contribute is an understanding of how the unprecedented victories of these parties were connected to Great War culture, patriotism, and profiteering.

As discussed in previous chapters, progressives and socialist pundits in the labour, farmers', and veterans' movements denounced party politics as an underlying evil that fuelled profiteering. The direct involvement of politicians in profiteering scandals as well as the failure of successive federal governments to appropriately address profiteering through regulations and prosecutions, continually validated the accusations that party politicians were corrupt and prevented the profiteers from facing serious reprisal. With the end of the war, patriots were no longer constrained by the political prioritization of the war effort and could oppose the traditional elite in elections on a broader scale. As the pundits analyzed in this study proposed, it was crucial to replace those at the helm of the government so a more virtuous assembly of governing officials could herald in a post-war democracy worthy of wartime sacrifices. But the political challenge of patriots went much further than merely replacing governing officials. The United Farmers, ILP, and Progressives contested elections through "independent politics," whereby electoral candidates were part of a highly decentralized political campaign driven by their grassroots constituents. Despite the disadvantages of decentralization, these "Independents" defeated the Liberal and Conservative provincial parties in Ontario, Alberta, and Manitoba; formed the Opposition in Nova Scotia; and won seats in other provincial legislatures. In another impressive display of strength, one-third of voters outside of Québec cast their ballots for Progressive/Independent candidates during the 1921 federal election, leading them to win more seats than the reformed Conservative party. It is crucial to emphasize that such a widescale rejection of party politics is unprecedented even by contemporary standards. Patriots, who were outraged after years of profiteering controversy and the failures of wartime political leadership, became receptive to the idea that independent politics should replace party politics. It was through their wartime experiences, material hardships, and understanding that wartime sacrifices

must be honoured, that patriots became determined to reconstruct democracy and defeat the profiteers even if that meant transforming democracy itself.

### **Politicization and Democratic Enlightenment**

The first key dynamic for understanding the emergence of independent politics in the democratic revolt is the politicization of the TLC, the CCA, and the GWVA. All three organizations were non-partisan at the beginning of 1917, but by 1920, they had abandoned or loosened their policy of non-partisanship to accept some level of direct political involvement.

The first critical juncture was the 1917 “Khaki” election. As outlined in previous chapters, the Union party was formed by pro-conscription Conservatives and pro-conscription Liberals. Forming a coalition was a major political advantage because the Unionists could present themselves as a “non-partisan” government, thus enabling them to secure the endorsement of “non-partisan” organizations. The combination of being seen as both pro-conscription and non-partisan was instrumental in securing the support of the GWVA and the vast majority of the soldiers’ vote. Securing the endorsement of organized farmers proved more complicated. Contrary to the impression given by some historians,<sup>1</sup> organized farmers were highly supportive of conscription because it was a patriotic priority to ensure the CEF was fighting at full strength. However, agrarian leaders, including Good and Chipman, argued that conscription should not interfere with food production because food was also necessary for ensuring victory.<sup>2</sup> To put these worries to rest, the Unionists passed an order-in-council fifteen days before the election that exempted the sons of farmers who were engaged in honest

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<sup>1</sup> Granatstein and Hitsman, *Broken Promises*, 75.

<sup>2</sup> “Conscription,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 5 July 1917, 1293; “Food, Famine, or Farm,” *The Farmers’ Advocate*, 19 April 1917, 667.

agricultural production. The strategy succeeded in winning agrarian support and six prominent farm leaders were elected under the Union party banner.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Unionists secured support from the farmers' movement during the election, it did not mean that agrarian leaders were abandoning their aspirations to challenge party politics. Chipman supported Borden's new administration but he simultaneously expressed his disappointment that there were so few independent farmers running in the election.<sup>4</sup> As Chipman accurately predicted, the Union party would collapse after the war, so it was important to have independent representatives in Parliament to negotiate reconstruction.<sup>5</sup> So while Chipman celebrated the Unionist victories in the West as a victory for the farmers' movement,<sup>6</sup> the push for organized farmers to enter federal politics continued even among pro-Unionists.

A major impetus for politicizing the farmers' movement emerged in 1916 with the establishment of the Non-Partisan League (NPL). The NPL was established as an independent political party and rose to prominence after it won enough votes to form the government in North Dakota. Such an impressive victory in the rural North-West state was inspirational and organizers created NPL branches across the prairies beginning in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. As Paul Sharp described, the NPL spread across southern Saskatchewan "like prairie wild fire." By 1917, the Saskatchewan NPL membership stood at 5,000 and in Alberta 3,000 members. The NPL's organizational efforts made less headway in Manitoba, but thanks to the efforts of Irvine,

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<sup>3</sup> The six victorious candidates were T. A. Crerar, the president of the United Grain Growers Limited and Minister of Agriculture; R. C. Henders, President of the MGGA; J. A. Maharg, President of the SGGA; John F. Reid, a director and executive of the SGGA; Andrew Knox, director of the SGGA; and Robert Cruise, a farmer candidate who won a seat during the 1911 federal election under the Liberal banner but received the nomination by the Grain Growers.

<sup>4</sup> "Guide and Union Government," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 7 November 1917, 5; "Guide and Union Government," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 7 November 1917, 5; "Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Manifesto," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 14 November 1917, 5; "Farmers in Parliament," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 26 December, 5.

<sup>5</sup> "Support Farmers' Candidates," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 21 November 1917, 5.

<sup>6</sup> The Unionists claimed 54 out of 57 constituencies west of the Great Lakes. "The Voice of the West," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 26 December 1917, 5; "Farmers in Parliament," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 26 December, 5.

who was appointed the Secretary of the Saskatchewan branch, a few local branches were established.<sup>7</sup> Irvine also became the editor of *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, which claimed a circulation of 8,000 by December 1917.<sup>8</sup> The NPL further benefitted from the support of Bland and Woodsworth, thereby indicating the NPL's ties to the social gospel movement. In terms of the NPL's political platform, it combined many popular progressive and socialist reforms, including an overall transformation of the state to include more experts; the nationalization of utilities and resources; high taxes on wealth; the elimination of patronage and speculation; and democratic reforms including Direct Legislation and the abolition of the Senate.<sup>9</sup> But most interesting of all was that the NPL wanted to push the farmers movement into politics.

The GGAs, United Farmers, and CCA, did not embrace the NPL's political path in 1917, but even in absence of their support, the NPL proceeded to contest provincial elections. In the June 1917 Saskatchewan election, the NPL fielded eight NPL-farmer candidates affiliated with the SGGA, but only David Skyes succeeded, and he did so as an independent Liberal who later rejoined the Liberal party. In Alberta, the NPL was better organized. The NPL's Independent-affiliated candidate, James Weir, won a three-way race during the Alberta general election in 1917. An even more impressive victory was by Louise McKinney, who became the first woman elected to a legislature in the British Empire.<sup>10</sup> The NPL enjoyed some success at the provincial level, but the 1917 federal election presented a formidable challenge. For the federal election, many prominent agrarian leaders supported the Unionist party, putting the NPL at odds with the mainstream farmers' movement. In explanation of why the NPL would not support the Unionists, Irvine stated in *The Alberta Non-Partisan* that the Unionists were only non-partisan in

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<sup>7</sup> Sharp, 77-78.

<sup>8</sup> [No Title], *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, 20 December 1917, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Sharp, 82-88.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-94.

name, and moreover, “real Liberalism” was no longer supported by the Liberals and Conservatives, but rather by the radicals and progressives outside party politics.<sup>11</sup> The NPL attempted to stand on its own and contested the federal election with four candidates, including Irvine who ran in East Calgary, but all were defeated. Despite this setback, the Alberta NPL remained steadfast and persisted into the post-war period, where it continued to pressure the UFA to endorse independent farmers’ politics.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to the general “non-partisanship” of the GWVA and CCA, the TLC endorsed political action and supported organized labour’s bid to contest the 1917 federal election. The decision to support political action was tied to the TLC’s firm opposition to how Borden’s administration pursued the implementation of conscription. As made clear in both the 1915 and 1916 TLC national conventions, the TLC was opposed to the implementation of conscription.<sup>13</sup> When the Cabinet announced their intention to implement conscription without consulting labour leaders, it expectedly caused an uproar. The most extreme reaction came from the radical wing of the labour movement. Western TLC locals, the BCFL and SPC, staged mass protests and also passed resolutions supporting the use of a general strike to retaliate. In contrast, the eastern labour movement, representing the more moderate socialist and progressive segments, took a different approach. As expressed by President Watters, it was reasonable to support conscription as a lawful measure enacted by the government. However, he strongly believed that the conscription of men should be preceded by a substantial conscription of wealth.<sup>14</sup> When the TLC met in September 1917, tensions between the delegates came to a head. A vote was held to

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<sup>11</sup> “Nonpartisan Candidates and Union Government,” *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, 14 November 1917, 5; “Union Government,” *The Alberta Non-Partisan*, 26 October 1917, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Sharp, 95-98.

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed overview of the TLC’s opposition to conscription, see Martin Robin, “Registration, Conscription, and Independent Labor Politics, 1916-1917,” *Canadian Historical Review* 47, no. 2 (June, 1966), 102-103.

<sup>14</sup> Canada, Department of Labour, “Report of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada,” *The Labour Gazette*, October 1917, vol. 17, (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1917), 848.

empower the TLC to launch a general strike if the government failed to conscript wealth. The result was 101 in favour to 111 against. Another vote was held to support the Committee on Officers' Report, which approved the lawfulness of the *Military Service Act*. This vote passed 134 to 101.<sup>15</sup> Importantly, within the Committee on Officers' Report was the Executive Council's recommendation for political action through the establishment of an Independent Labour Party.<sup>16</sup> This way, labour delegates elected to Parliament could help oversee the implementation of a meaningful conscription of wealth. The conference was a win for advocates of political action, but it also caused serious divisions. In addition to the western delegates who remained adamant about using direct action, the more conservative wing of the TLC, encompassing the AFL-affiliated international trade unionists, tended to oppose both direct action and political action. As argued by Samuel Gompers, the President of the AFL, the labour movement's success was attributable to its avoidance of politics and would benefit from supporting the Unionists.<sup>17</sup> Thus, organized labour took a major leap forward in the march towards political action, but it did so while being pulled in three directions.

With minimal time to prepare, labour organizers including James Simpson, Joseph Gibbons, T. A. Stevenson, and Laura Hughes founded the Canadian Labour Party (CLP) to provide a semblance of centrality and cohesion to the federal campaign. The CLP was not a party in the traditional sense. As Craig Heron explains, the CLP operated as nothing more "than a paper organization" that coordinated with local labour parties, most of which were in Ontario.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Martin Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930* (Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre, 1968), 100-111; Department of Labour, "Report of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada," 849.

<sup>16</sup> Department of Labour, "Report of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada," 850.

<sup>17</sup> Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 116; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1918*, 293.

<sup>18</sup> Craig Heron, "Labourism and the Working Class," *Labour/Le Travail*, 13 (Spring 1984), 49.

For example, the CLP's campaign in the Greater Toronto Area ran through the Greater Toronto Labour party, which had been founded earlier in November 1916. The party contested four constituencies and ran on a platform opposed to the "policy of procrastination, graft and profiteering that has reigned unchecked while the Borden administration has been in power." They also demanded the conscription of wealth and a square deal for veterans and their dependents. Other parts of the CLP campaign were run through the newly formed Ontario ILP, headed by Walter Rollo. The ILP was supported by sixteen local labour party branches during its founding convention in July. As per the British Labour Party guidelines, which the CLP emulated, labour parties across the Dominion made efforts to coordinate with socialist candidates to avoid competing in the same constituencies.<sup>19</sup> In Québec, a provincial section of the CLP was created through an unprecedented alliance involving moderate socialists. However, social democrats and conservative craft unionists did not contest the election because they did not want to split the vote and risk the Conservatives winning.<sup>20</sup> In addition to finding allies in socialist organizations, the CLP organizers hoped to find allies among the farmers' and veterans' movements. Francq, Pettipiece, and Puttee even postulated that a new party for "the people" could be formed to oppose big business and the party politicians.<sup>21</sup> Of course, the largest farmer and veteran organizations supported the Unionists, but the proposition highlights how patriotism was being used to establish political common ground.

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<sup>19</sup> For instance, in Vancouver the CLP did not contest James McVety and W.A. Pritchard because they were supported by the BCFL and SPC respectively. Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 114-115.

<sup>20</sup> Geoffrey Ewen, "Quebec: Class and Ethnicity," in *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917-1925*, 124.

<sup>21</sup> "Labor Party," *Labor World*, 6 October 1917, 3; "Labor's Statement to the Electorate," *B.C. Federationist*, 9 November 1917, 2; "Campaign Opened With Big Meeting At Labor Temple," *B.C. Federationist*, 9 November 1917, 3; "The Farmers Responsibility," *The Voice*, 27 August 1917, 1; "The Farmers' Viewpoint," *The Voice*, 31 August 1917, 1; Also see "Farmers, Artisans, and Politics," *The Voice*, 23 March 1917, 1; "The Farmers' Viewpoint," *The Voice*, 31 August 1917, 1; "Great Political Situation," *The Voice*, 3 August 1917, 1; "Playing the Old Game," *The Voice* 10 August 1917, 1.



When the votes for the 1917 election were tallied, the Labour candidates were soundly defeated. In twenty-seven English-speaking constituencies, the CLP candidates polled less than 20 percent, while the candidates running on straight ILP and Socialist tickets received less than 8 percent of the popular vote. Not a single Labour candidate succeeded in passing the post. As Robin explained, the Laurier Liberals were the main choice for those who opposed the Unionists, while internal strife and the lack of support beyond the ranks of organized labour confounded the CLP campaign.<sup>22</sup> Another impediment was that labour's challenge against the "pro-conscriptionist" Unionist party was widely deemed unpatriotic. Daniel Francis discusses this dynamic and cites how anti-conscriptionist sentiments voiced by radical labour leaders and socialists attracted unwanted attention from Great War veterans. Outspoken anti-conscriptionist, such as Fred Dixon, were assaulted; anti-conscription rallies were violently disrupted; and socialist offices and labour halls were raided.<sup>23</sup>

Although independent politics before the armistice was only embraced by a fraction of the labour and farmers' movements, the 1917 election was a pivotal event because it signalled the beginning of a broader embrace of independent politics. As described above, the NPL and the CLP initially spearheaded this movement. After the election, when patriots discovered that Borden's administration had not changed from its deplorable ways, pro-Unionists in the farmers' and veterans' movements began reconsidering whether their agrarian and veteran organizations should remain non-partisan, or whether the time had come to make a stand against the party machines.

Following the signing of the armistice, the political winds were once again shifting. The Unionists could no longer depend on their pro-conscription stance to win the support of returned

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<sup>22</sup> Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 117.

<sup>23</sup> Francis, 40-42.

soldiers. The Unionists had also damaged their standing among farmers by rescinding the exemption status for farmers' sons in 1918.<sup>24</sup> Puttee remarked that the betrayal would hopefully show farmers not to place their trust in the wrong leaders again.<sup>25</sup> And to his approval, this seemed to be the case because the farmers' movement began embracing political action more decisively. By the Spring of 1919, Chipman returned to frequently criticizing both Conservative and Liberal parties for failing to represent the people and for failing to protect them from profiteers.<sup>26</sup> Recognizing the difficulties caused by the high cost of living and rampant war and food profiteering, Chipman understood why labour radicalism was rising. He did not condone radical strike tactics, such as the Winnipeg General Strike, but he anticipated that civil dissent would shift from direct action to political action, whereby workers, farmers, and veterans could form a political alliance to transform the political, economic and social systems. Speaking from the veterans' movement, Loughnan shared this optimism.<sup>27</sup>

In early 1918, a large group of employers organized the Canadian Reconstruction Association (CRA) to head off industrial strife and promote industrial growth.<sup>28</sup> When labour militancy was on the rise, the CRA claimed it was a Bolshevik insurrection. In response, *The Grain Growers' Guide* countered the CRA's red-baiting by claiming the CRA was attempting to divide workers, farmers, and veterans in fear of their combined political strength. As depicted in this illustration by Arch Dale, the representative of organized farmers wielded "the ballot" to chase away the CRA representatives who were decrying Bolshevism. Behind the farmer,

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<sup>24</sup> Canada, Privy Council Office, Order in Council, 1918-0962, "Military Service Order - Cancelling exemptions amended by placing ages between 20 and 23 - Min. M. and D. [Minister of Militia and Defence]" vol. 2814, 324151. For an overview of the farmers' exemption controversy, see Granatstein and Hitsman, *Broken Promises*, 83-99.

<sup>25</sup> "The Farmers Don't Like It," *The Voice*, 10 May 1918, 1.

<sup>26</sup> "The Rule of the People," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 14 May 1919, 5.

<sup>27</sup> "Big Strike Ended," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 2 July 1919, 6; "No Title," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 11 June 1919, 6; "Notes and Comments," *The Veteran*, February 1919, 12; "The Winnipeg Strike," *The Veteran*, June 1919, 16.

<sup>28</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1918*, 329-330.

representatives for returned soldiers and labour watch the spectacle and laugh at the CRA's expense. The message of the illustration is straightforward. It shows that organized farmers, workers, and veterans were on the same side against manufacturers. Moreover, it emphasized how workers, farmers, and veterans would not fall victim to fear-mongering and red-baiting tactics.



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As for organized veterans, labour leaders did not abandon their attempts to foster political cooperation between the veterans' and labour movements. Considering that roughly 55 percent of military recruits were manual labourers,<sup>30</sup> there was a solid empirical foundation for labour leaders to claim that the interests of returned soldiers and organized labour were the same.<sup>31</sup> Bringing the organized veterans into an alliance would have immense benefits, especially as the veterans' movement rapidly expanded. By the end of Fall 1919, there were roughly 500,000

<sup>29</sup> "A Wild Cry to Organized Labor and the Returned Soldiers to Come to the Help of Special Privilege," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 16 April 1919, 6.

<sup>30</sup> For statistics on recruitment according to occupation, see Granatstein and Hitsman, *Broken Promises*, 97.

<sup>31</sup> "Suggests a Returned Soldiers Union," *B.C. Federationist*, 18 January 1918, 6.

Great War veterans in Canada.<sup>32</sup> In February 1920, the GWVA claimed 761 branches and 200,000 members. *The Veteran* also boasted a circulation of 70,000. Besides the GWVA, there were other major veteran organizations as well. The Grand Army of Canada (GAC) established itself as a rival to the GWVA based on different membership criteria.<sup>33</sup> In April 1920, it amalgamated with the Veterans' Gratuity League (VGL) to form the GAUV and claimed a membership of 100,000.<sup>34</sup> The ANV was another large veterans' organization but had fewer members than the GAUV.<sup>35</sup> In a short period, the veterans' movement had become formidable. With their high moral authority, overlapping interests with labour, and rising organizational strength, organized veterans were an ideal ally in the struggle to reconstruct democracy. As shown in Frederick Thursby's illustration below, labour organizers anticipated that their alliance with the veterans was a profiteer's worst nightmare. For the time being, the profiteers could find solace that a formal political alliance between veterans and labour was still "only a dream." However, Thursby anticipated that it was only a matter of time before the profiteers faced their day of reckoning.<sup>36</sup> In the *Labor World*, Francq made the same prediction.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 6.

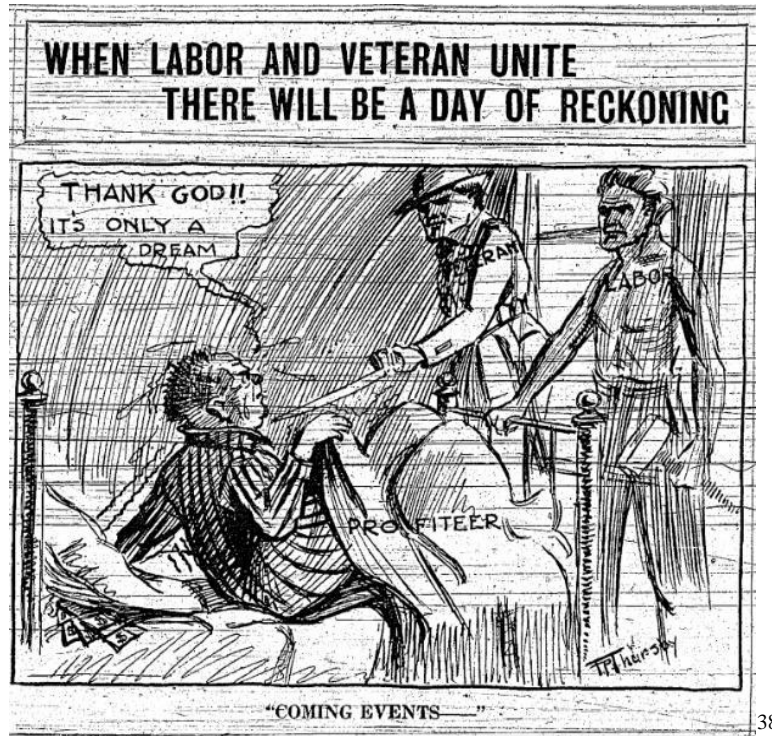
<sup>33</sup> The GAC provided full membership to all veterans and was thus the most inclusive veterans' organization. Morton and Wright, *Winning the Second Battle*, 119; Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 205.

<sup>34</sup> Morton and Wright note that figures indicating the total memberships may exaggerate the movement's overall strength because veterans could hold multiple memberships. Morton and Wright, *Winning the Second Battle*, 180-183, 200; Morton and Wright, "The Bonus Campaign, 1919-21," 167; Smith, "Comrades and Citizens," 210.

<sup>35</sup> Membership in the ANV required the ownership of either a service medal or six years' service in His Majesty's forces, or proof of service in France, or involuntary restriction to England. Morton and Wright, *Winning the Second Battle*, 75.

<sup>36</sup> "Coming Events," *B.C. Federationist*, 24 May 1918, 1.

<sup>37</sup> "The Coming Democracy," *Labor World*, 16 February 1918, 4.



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During the post-war period, significant pressure for the GWVA to embrace politicization began to arise from the rank-and-file. By early 1920, the Dominion GWVA Executive had to respond to this pressure because the GWVA rank-and-file began joining rival organizations which embraced political action, including the United Veterans' League (UVL) and the GAUV.<sup>39</sup> On a local level, some GWVA branches had already made this leap despite the official policy of non-partisanship. For instance, the GWVA were supportive of the Union government during the 1917 federal election and local branches supported electoral candidates. However, the GWVA Constitution was not supportive of politics. With pressure for political action mounting during the post-war period, the Dominion GWVA Executive unanimously agreed to delete Clause 77 in the Constitution that prohibited political discussion at the meetings of local

<sup>38</sup> "Coming Events," *B.C. Federationist*, 24 May 1918, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Lees, "Problems of Pacification," 83-84.

branches.<sup>40</sup> This did not mean that the GWVA would become a political organization but rather that the constitution allowed branches to deliberate politics with official sanction.

Contributing to the momentum of political action more generally was the inspirational leadership of the prominent social gossellers Bland, Irvine, Ivens, and Woodsworth.<sup>41</sup> As trained Methodist clergy, these leaders drew upon their professional training to urge the necessity of infusing public life with the holy spirit and Christian brotherhood. In English Canada, this message found a very receptive public audience. Since the beginning of the war, Christianity and patriotism were closely linked as Protestant and Catholic clergy bestowed the Great War to be a righteous struggle. Although there were anti-war attitudes within the social gospel movement, the prominent message of social gossellers was that the war should lead to the advancement of social reforms.<sup>42</sup> By heralding a new democracy firmly grounded in the Christian principles of cooperation and brotherhood, the inequalities of wartime sacrifice could be addressed and wartime sacrifices more generally could be honoured. The church was an important institution for guiding this transition, but social gossellers recognized that the labour, farmers', and veterans' movements were ideal vehicles to advance Christian principles espoused in progressive and socialist reforms. Labour, agrarian, and veteran editorialists similarly looked upon the social gossellers for inspiration and offered them praise.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> "Political Discussion," *The Veteran*, February 1920, 17.

<sup>41</sup> The authoritative study on the social gospel during this period is Allen, *The Social Passion*. Also see Allen, "The Social Gospel as the Religion of the Agrarian Revolt."

<sup>42</sup> *Canadian Churches and the First World War*, ed. Gordon L. Heath (Hamilton: McMaster Divinity College Press, 2014).

<sup>43</sup> "Dr Bland's Charges," *The Voice*, 1 December 1916, 1; "Politicians and Millionaires 'Get' Dr. Bland," *The Voice*, 8 June 1917, 1; "J. S. Woodsworth to Speak at Rex," *B.C. Federationist*, 4 October 1918, 1; "The Rising Tide of Democracy," *B.C. Federationist*, 1 November 1918, 3; "The Church and New Democracy," *B.C. Federationist*, 8 November 1918, 7; "The Doom of the Rich," *B.C. Federationist*, 13 December 1918, 7; "Reconstruction from People's Standpoint," *B.C. Federationist*, 24 January 1919, 3; "Shall We Forget?" *The Veteran*, August 1919, 14; "The Attitude of 'The Farmer's Advocate,'" *The Farmer's Advocate*, 6 February 1919, 203; "Dr. Bland at Brandon," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 20 January 1915, 4; "The Call to Christianity," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 6 December 1916, 6; "A Square Deal All Round," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 29 August 1917, 5; "No title," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 26 Sept 1917, 6; "A Soldier of the Spirit," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 3 September 1919, 5.

In 1920, Bland and Irvine published books that can be used to highlight how social gossellers drew upon Great War patriotism and profiteering to legitimize their ideas for reconstructing democracy. First, it should be noted that while Bland and Irvine were writing to inspire a radical transformation of democratic society, their books were written for different purposes. In *The New Christianity*, Bland aimed to define the social and cultural ethic that should inspire post-war reconstruction.<sup>44</sup> In contrast, Irvine emphasized the importance of fostering a Christian ethic but his main purpose was to outline an alternative system of political governance called “group government” (and will be discussed at a later point in this chapter). Although their approaches were different, both Bland and Irvine drew upon similar ideological inspiration and urged the need to reassert Christian values in public life so Canadian society could take the next evolutionary leap forward. Irvine stated that the post-war period was such a pivotal moment because there was a global shift taking place to usurp the highly competitive and materialistically driven political and economic systems. The spirit of religious protest was manifesting in organizations and movements (such as the labour, farmers, and veterans’ movements), who were ready to fight for the reassertion of Christian values in governance.<sup>45</sup> Bland presented a similar interpretation but provided a more detailed delineation of Christianity’s historical development. Beginning in 1915, Bland argued that civilization was undergoing a transition from the “Bourgeois/Plutocratic/Capitalistic Phase” into the “Labor Phase.” In this new era, “American Christianity” was emerging as the new social order based on principles of brotherhood and democracy. After this short transitional phase, a new economic order of Christian socialism would be established, whereby production for use and co-operation would gradually replace for-profit capitalism.

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<sup>44</sup> Salem Bland, *The New Christianity* (Toronto: McClelland, 1920).

<sup>45</sup> Irvine, 50-53.

Irvine and Bland drew upon Great War patriotism and profiteering to develop a common-sense understanding of why the time had come to reconstruct democracy with Christian principles. As Irvine wrote:

In the light of the democratic ideal men fought and died in Flanders, while, at the very moment of the ordeal, there were those who did not hesitate to use the calamities of the nation as a means of gaining wealth. Canada has compared in her imagination the spirit of Flanders – the spirit of to-morrow – with the spirit of the profiteer – the spirit of yesterday; and has committed herself to the former.<sup>46</sup>

In another excerpt, Irvine mentions specific types of profiteering scandals, including shell scandals, munition scandals, and pork scandals. He further denounced the fruitless but expensive investigations that merely “whitewashed [sic] the culprits.” Such corruption, Irvine claimed, proved that the industrial system in Canada was “a failure both from the point of view of efficiency and from that of morality.”<sup>47</sup> For Irvine, rampant wartime profiteering validated the need to transform industrial capitalist society, particularly the corrupted system of party politics. Although Bland’s discussion on profiteering was shorter, he offered a salient point: “A profit-seeking system will always breed profiteers. It cannot be cleansed or sweetened or ennobled. There is only one way to Christianize it, and that is, to abolish it.”<sup>48</sup>

With such radical proclamations calling for the gradual abandonment of capitalism amid the Red Scare, it is not surprising that Bland, Irvine, and other associated social gospellers were accused of Bolshevism. In *Saturday Night*, Paul characterized Bland’s ideas as revolutionary rhetoric cloaked in evangelicalism, and further suspected that Bland’s protégé, Ivens, was a Bolshevik given his close involvement in the Winnipeg General Strike.<sup>49</sup> But Paul’s antagonistic

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-24.

<sup>47</sup> Irvine, 35-36.

<sup>48</sup> Bland, *The New Christianity* (Toronto: McClelland, 1920), 28.

<sup>49</sup> “Bolshevism in the Methodist Church,” *Saturday Night*, 28 June 1919, 1; “Appertaining to Rev. Salem G. Bland,” *Saturday Night*, 5 July 1919, 1.



interpretation of the social gospel came in sharp contrast to its growing popularity. As Bland noted, the Methodist General Conference in October 1918, and a report by the Committee on the Church in Relation to War and Patriotism, shared his concerns towards the moral perils of profit, the need for democratic control of industry, the cultivation of the human spirit, and the maximization of national efficiency.<sup>50</sup> For progressives and moderate socialists in the labour, farmers', and veterans' movements, there was undoubtedly widespread support for Irvine and Bland's blend of Christianity and Great War patriotism because it provided powerful and accessible rhetoric to popularize the post-war revolution of democratic society.

With trained Methodist clergy calling for the revolution, it is no wonder that prominent politicians and manufacturers, including Borden and the Vice-President of the CMA John S. McKinnon, wanted to temper rising class tensions.<sup>51</sup> A detailed overview of the efforts undertaken by manufacturers and federal policymakers to reconcile class differences and appease the demands for reconstruction would be too expansive to cover here. However, there are some important points that can highlight the limitations of these efforts and thus why the momentum of politicizing the labour, farmers', and veterans' movement continued to accelerate.

Among the efforts for reconciliation were national conferences between manufacturers and farmers, as well as manufacturers and labour.<sup>52</sup> Regarding the latter, James Naylor argues that the National Industrial Conference between September 15 and 20 was a symbolic victory for the rising prestige of organized labour. However, manufacturers did not reach a consensus regarding key issues such as organizing rights, Whitley Industrial Councils, the 8-hour day, and

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<sup>50</sup> Bland, 29-33.

<sup>51</sup> "Premier Borden Makes an Appeal Against Strikes," *Toronto Daily Star*, 14 July 1919, 1; "The Position of the C.M.A. on Reconstruction," *Industrial Canada*, March 1919, 45-46.

<sup>52</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1919*, 509-510.

numerous social programs.<sup>53</sup> A group of large-scale American-based employers<sup>54</sup> and some large Canadian firms, such as Massey-Harris, were willing to experiment with industrial councils, corporate welfare schemes, and profit-sharing. Details about these schemes can be found in the studies by Naylor and Bryan Palmer, but an important insight to note is that they did not drastically improve workers' lives.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, Francq and Puttee offered immediate criticism and argued that corporate-led initiatives like profit-sharing was a futile attempt to overcome the inherently antagonistic relationship between capital and labour.<sup>56</sup> Reconciliation between manufacturers and farmers also struggled to find success. Prior to the Great War, there was a major attempt to find common ground on the key issues, particularly the tariff failed, but these efforts were to no avail.<sup>57</sup> As evident in this study, animosity between farmers and manufacturers further intensified during the war and it was common for both classes to accuse the other of wartime profiteering.<sup>58</sup> Aided by the "spirit of reconciliation" in 1918, organized manufacturers

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<sup>53</sup> Naylor, *The New Democracy*, 191-196, 207.

<sup>54</sup> Among the firms were Imperial Oil (headed by W. F. Hanna, the former Food Controller), International Harvester, Bell Telephone, Swift's, and Consolidated Rubber.

<sup>55</sup> Naylor, 170-176, 202-207; Bryan Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980* (Toronto: Buterworth & Company Ltd., 1983), 189; Also see Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1918*, 328-329.

<sup>56</sup> "The Identity of Interests – A Fallacy," *The Voice*, 13 April 1917, 1; "Profit Sharing," *Labor World*, 11 June 1921, 3. For discussions on profit sharing schemes in *Industrial Canada*, see "Labor Troubles Ahead," *Industrial Canada*, December 1916, 926; "Profit Sharing and Producers' Co-operation," *Industrial Canada*, February 1918, 1481.

<sup>57</sup> For editorial coverage of the farmer-manufacturer conference in 1914, see "Manufacturers and Farmers Confer," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 11 November 1914, 1; "The Conference," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 11 November 1914, 5; "Grain Growers and Manufacturers," *Industrial Canada*, December 1914, 492; "Conference Report Presented to the Premier," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 2 December 1914, 17; "Agriculturalists and Manufacturers Hold Conference in Winnipeg," *Industrial Canada*, December 1914, 497-499; "Are the Manufacturers' Sincere?" *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 18 November 1914, 5; "Made-in-Canada Campaign," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 6 January 1915, 9; "War Vindicates National Policy," *Industrial Canada*, August 1915, 472; "The Grain Growers and the Manufacturers," *Industrial Canada* February 1916, 1056; "The Manufacturers' Tactics," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 31 July 1918, 5.

<sup>58</sup> "War-Time Business and Profits," *Industrial Canada*, February 1918, 1466-1469. Parsons claimed that in 1917, one out of twenty people had automobile licenses in Western Canada, while the national average was one out of fifty-seven. "Our Relations with Labor and Agriculture," *Industrial Canada* July 1918, 154; "Manufacturer's Views," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 27 February 1918, 5; "Mr Parsons Reply," *The Grain Growers' Guide* 10 April 1918, 5; "The Manufacturers' Tactics," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 31 July 1918, 5; "Incomes and Profit," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 27 November 1918, 5; "Protectionism Fortified," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 15 January 1919, 6.

voiced their willingness to explore tariff revisions, especially the preferential tariffs within the British empire which could be mutually beneficial. But when manufacturers and farmers presented their views to the Henry Drayton's Tariff Commission created on 20 July 1919, their animosity resurfaced and both returned to accusing the other of wartime profiteering.<sup>59</sup>

As for Great War veterans, the GWVA professed its official commitment to cooperation and reconciliation. As evident in *Industrial Canada*, manufacturers were eager to have the veterans on their side against the emerging Bolshevik threat.<sup>60</sup> To foster goodwill, joint meetings between the CMA and GWVA were held in urban centers, including Hamilton and Toronto. The main topics of discussion was unemployment and the replacement of enemy alien labour. In Toronto, the meeting led to a standing committee with representatives from the CMA, GWVA, and Toronto Board of Trade.<sup>61</sup> It later managed a Repatriation Campaign in conjunction with local charities to raise funds for veteran clubhouses.<sup>62</sup> Manufacturers could assist veterans through charity drives and securing employment, but veterans were eager to secure concessions from federal policymakers, specifically the improvement of state welfare programs and monetary compensation for service. As a case in point, during the 1920 GWVA convention, the Resolution Committee received over 3,000 resolutions from GWVA branches expressing their disapproval towards the terms of re-establishment.<sup>63</sup> With policymakers exhibiting an unwillingness to make meaningful adjustments, the temperament of some veteran leaders became fiery, including

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<sup>59</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1919*, 440-442; White, *The Story of Canada's War Finance*, (Montreal: 1921), 70; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 123-126; 157-160.

<sup>60</sup> "Soldiers and Bolshevism," *Industrial Canada*, February 1919, 47.

<sup>61</sup> "Manufacturers and Soldiers," *Industrial Canada*, February 1919, 48; "A Get-Together Conference in Hamilton," *Industrial Canada*, March 1919, 55; "Activities of the Toronto Branch," *Industrial Canada*, April 1919, 52.

<sup>62</sup> "April Activities of the Toronto Branch," *Industrial Canada*, May 1919, 55.

<sup>63</sup> "The Fourth National Convention: Great War Veterans' Association of Canada," *The Veteran*, April 1920, 7, 9, 28; For an informative discussion on the traditions of land settlement compensation for Canadian/British veterans, see Scotland, "And the Men Returned: Canadian Veterans and the Aftermath of the Great War," 192-198; For the national politics of demobilization, see Morton and Wright, *Winning the Second Battle*.

Loughnan, who proclaimed that the government had already forgotten the sacrifices of soldiers and their “price paid in blood.”<sup>64</sup> Although many veterans gradually found their way back into the workforce, there remained an explosive temperament towards politicians whose frugality seemed unjustified.

The Unionists missed other opportunities to demonstrate their ability to usher in a new age of progressive advancement. For social programs, the Cabinet was not willing to challenge provincial jurisdiction, nor were they eager to permanently expand the state. These steadfast *laissez-faire* advocates wanted to reverse wartime state intervention, not expand it, so federal involvement in social assistance was limited. The most notable concessions were the provision of funds for temporary relief programs and assistance for provincial governments for mothers’ allowances and minimum wage regulations.<sup>65</sup> Meighen entertained popular demands for federal unemployment insurance and pension programs, even authorizing investigations during the lead-up to the 1921 federal election, but nothing would materialize.<sup>66</sup>

Patriots were antagonized by changes to fiscal policy as well. During the 1917 election, the Unionists professed their vague commitment to the conscript of wealth, but in 1918 and 1919, only minor adjustments were made to pre-existing war taxes. When Henry Drayton became the new Finance Minister in 1919, fiscal policy became even more distant from equalizing wartime sacrifices. After repealing the war customs duties, Drayton attempted to offset the loss of income through new taxes on “consumer extravagance.” Building upon the 1915 *Special War Revenue Act*, Drayton introduced an excise tax on high-priced goods.<sup>67</sup> But

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<sup>64</sup> “Lest We Forget,” *The Veteran*, April 1920, 16.

<sup>65</sup> Christie, *Engendering the State*; Margaret McCallum, “Keeping Women in their Place: The Minimum Wage Law in Canada, 1900-1925,” *Labour/Le Travail* 17, (Spring 1986): 28-58; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 369-370.

<sup>66</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 355.

<sup>67</sup> A 10 percent tax was placed on specific items sold at a price that passed a threshold to indicate their luxury status, like \$9 boots and \$2.50 cigars.

before low-income patriots could celebrate, they too had to contend with a new 1 to 2 percent sales tax on all goods minus certain food products and coal. Then in 1920, Drayton abolished the luxury excise taxes but retained the sale tax,<sup>68</sup> and in 1921, he discontinued the business profits tax and some residual luxury taxes but increased the sales tax to vary between 1.5 and 4 percent.<sup>69</sup> In effect, Drayton shifted the burden of taxation from corporate war profits to public consumption. Comparing the yields of these taxes it can be said that in just over one year, consumers paid 38 percent of what both the corporate and income taxes yielded in three. This meant that consumers were paying off the war debt faster than the taxes on wartime profits. Needless to say, there was a substantial amount of debt to pay. Between 1914 and 1921, national debt increased roughly 600 percent from \$336 million to \$2.3 billion.<sup>70</sup> Expectedly, Chipman condemned Drayton's fiscal policy with unforgiving words. He also used it to highlight how the Finance Minister remained a pawn of the profiteers. As Chipman noted, prior to the changes, Drayton consulted his "masters" among prominent commercial lobby groups, such as the CMA, the Wholesale Grocers' Association, and the Retail Merchants' Association.<sup>71</sup> Such a blatant disregard for the conscription of wealth was damaging to the Unionists.

On the democratic front, the Unionists (or, as they were renamed after Borden's retirement in 1920, the National Liberal and Conservative Party),<sup>72</sup> could boast some progressive advancements. Of course, granting the federal franchise to women in 1918 was no small feat, but given that the Unionists initially authorized women with relatives in the military to vote, the

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<sup>68</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 50-51, 56.

<sup>69</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 28.

<sup>70</sup> Over three years, the Business Profits Tax had yielded \$118 million and the Income Tax yielded \$76 million between 1918 and 1921. In contrast, the Sales Tax netted \$73.5 million between June 1920 and October 1921. These chronological references are fiscal years. Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1914* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1915), 353; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 29, 33.

<sup>71</sup> "To Relieve Business Wealth," *Grain Growers Guide*, 6 April 1921, 5.

<sup>72</sup> Henceforth, the National Liberal and Conservative Party will be referred to as Conservatives for short.

breakthrough of this reform was tainted with political opportunism.<sup>73</sup> In 1919, additional democratic reforms were undertaken, including over one hundred amendments to the *Dominion Elections Act*. The disenfranchisement based on wartime legislation was also reversed, but provincial legislation could maintain restrictions for provincial elections.<sup>74</sup> Joseph Flavelle's controversial knighthood notably accelerated the falling popularity of awarding such honours to individuals of privilege. This led to the abolition of awarding British titles through the Governor-General. And while progressives and socialists generally approved the end of this tradition, Hopkins noted it was never a leading concern.<sup>75</sup>

Undoubtedly, some of the post-war federal policies were worthy of celebration, but whether they represented a “new” democracy was highly contestable. As many labour, farmer, and veteran leaders professed throughout the war, the root cause of wartime profiteering was the unchecked alliance between the big interests and party politicians. And despite all the Unionists offered, the party system – the very root of the profiteering evil – remained unchanged. Politicians had to contend with revisions to the Civil Service, which made it more merit-based, but practices of patronage persisted.<sup>76</sup> The wealth made by the profiteers also remained relatively unscathed and there were no signs that there would be a serious tax on wartime wealth. As suspicion and hostility towards party politicians rose, patriots turned to their class representatives and organizations for alternative political leadership. It was a historic moment of inter-class

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<sup>73</sup> In addition to the federal franchise, all provincial governments granted the women's franchise by 1918 with the exception of Québec. Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1918* (Ottawa: J. de L. Taché, 1919), 647. Contrary to the belief that the passage of the women's franchise was because of women's wartime contributions, Bacchi argues that legislators granted the franchise in anticipation of women voting conservatively. Bacchi, 133-143.

<sup>74</sup> Among the changes include authorizing women to hold seats in the House of Commons, regulations governing the operation of the electoral process, such as polling hours, corporate sponsorships, anonymous literature printing, and the payment of elector expenses. Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1920* (Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1921), 716.

<sup>75</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1919*, 164-173.

<sup>76</sup> Hodgetts et al., *The Biography of an Institution*.

realization, one in which patriots across classes recognized that a new democracy required a radical challenge to the machinations of party politics.

### **Breaking Through and the Strategic Dilemma**

Labour, farmer, and veteran leaders gave the prevailing sentiments of outrage and disillusionment expression, directed it towards a purpose, and dared to use it. However, whether Independents could meaningfully defeat the experienced and resourceful elites in provincial and federal elections had yet to be proven – at least until Ontario’s momentous provincial election in 1919. As outlined by Kerry Badgley, organized farmers in Ontario formed the UFO as a pressure group in 1914. Leading the organization was William C. Good, James J. Morrison, Ernest C. Drury, and Col. J. Z. Fraser. The new organization experienced rapid growth during the war because of the provincial executive’s organizational skills, but also because of the rising hostility towards party politics and big business amid profiteering controversies.<sup>77</sup> By 1919, the UFO membership had grown to 48,000, and although the organization had developed a strong base of support, the venture into politics was not part of a meticulously orchestrated plan. Following the surprising success of two UFO candidates in two Ontario by-elections, the executives decided to contest the Ontario provincial election in October, 1919. The campaign was highly decentralized because local branches were given extensive autonomy over the policies of their fielded candidates, which were generally supportive of progressive reforms. To further highlight the decentralized structure of the campaign, it should be noted that the UFO campaigned without a provincial leader – a strategy that the traditional parties would not dare fathom.

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<sup>77</sup> Badgley, 51-53, 61-62, 130-131.

The CLP Ontario section also contested the Ontario election and found allies among other labour groups, the UFO, and the GAUV.<sup>78</sup> An important dynamic that was used to cultivate trust among these new allies was establishing a democratic process from the bottom up. As Badgley highlights, farmers and labour in Ontario opposed each other over critical issues, including the tariff, the 8 hour day, and prohibition, but some organizers managed to avoid these divisions by deferring these questions to a post-election referendum. Moreover, when John Johnston was fielded as a UFO/ILP/Soldier candidate for East Simcoe (and later succeeded), the three groups agreed to authorize the “right to recall” after the election, thereby giving them assurances that he could be replaced if there was political treachery.<sup>79</sup>

Out of a total twenty-five labour candidates, six were nominated by the UFO and several others were endorsed. In the words of Martin Robin, the election was “a minor revolution.”<sup>80</sup> On 20 October, the UFO won forty-five seats and Labour Independents won eleven; the Liberals’ secured twenty-nine and the Conservatives’ twenty-five. The former Conservative Premier, William Hearst, even suffered a defeat in his own riding.<sup>81</sup> Veteran candidates had a good turnout as well. Four additional ex-service men were elected, joining the fourteen returned soldiers who maintained their positions in the Ontario Legislature. Although representing different parties, this meant that a total of 16 percent of Queen’s Park were veterans. At least one of them, Sergeant-Major J. McNamara, ran on an Independent Soldiers’ Party ticket. It is also worth noting that soldier candidates were pitted against prominent members of the Liberal and Conservative parties, or other veterans. For instance, Lieut.-Col. Dougald Carmichael and Captain George B. Little collaborated with the UFO to run against the provincial Attorney

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<sup>78</sup> Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 220-227; Badgley, 75-77.

<sup>79</sup> Badgley, 76-77.

<sup>80</sup> Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 222.

<sup>81</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1919*, 661.



General and the Minister of Agriculture – the former emerging victorious by a thin margin. What this may exemplify is how some Great War veteran candidates acted as a sort of democratic vanguard that challenged prominent political rivals.<sup>82</sup> So although veterans did not emerge as a cohesive political force in Ontario, they were an important political force nonetheless.

After the UFO and ILP scored major victories in the Ontario election, Irvine reminisced that neither the UFO nor ILP expected to win so candidates and local branches did not consider the possibility of forming a government prior to the election.<sup>83</sup> After some negotiations, a coalition government was formed between the UFO and ILP. E. C. Drury from the UFO became Ontario's Premier, and Walter Rollo, the leader of the ILP, was appointed to the Cabinet. The importance of such a breakthrough victory cannot be overstated. Despite the advantages of extensive media outlets, party resources, social networks, patronage, political traditions, and experience, the Liberal and Conservatives were beaten. Significantly, their weakness in English Canada was exposed.

The victory of the UFO and ILP in Ontario opened a world of possibilities, but whether the UFO's victory could be repeated by Independents elsewhere was contestable. As Kerry Badgley notes, the UFO received 22 percent of the popular vote but 40 percent of the seats. In contrast, the Conservatives received 34 percent of the popular vote but only 23 percent of the seats.<sup>84</sup> The first-past-the-post electoral system worked in the UFO's favour, but it was wishful to think that this outcome was sustainable. Political organizers eager to challenge the Liberals and Conservatives faced a daunting question: should political organizing be based on a distinct class

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 660-661.

<sup>83</sup> Irvine, 243.

<sup>84</sup> It should be noted that the Conservatives contested an additional thirty-three ridings in comparison to the UFO, but in the Liberals' case, they had only four more candidates than the UFO and received 27.7 percent of the popular vote, but still received fewer seats. Badgley, 81; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1919*, 661.

identity or as a “people’s” party? The divide was far-reaching. UFO organizers who contested the Manitoulin by-election confronted this question early on, but there was no clear answer. Prominent provincial figureheads also became divided over the issue. For instance, J. J. Morrison supported occupational representation but Drury and Walter Rollo were advocates of a people’s party.<sup>85</sup>

Irvine’s *The Farmers in Politics* was a significant work in the debate on political organization because it outlined a new approach to democratic representation for Independents to consider called “group government.” Irvine was convinced that classes and occupations had irreconcilable differences, so the political system should be restructured to complement this reality. As an alternative to electing representatives through centralized parties, Irvine proposed that political representatives should be elected according to occupational identity. Following an election, the Cabinet would contain representatives from different occupational groups thus sharing the responsibility of government between classes. Proportional representation was critical to this scheme because it would ensure that all occupational groups receive representation in proportion to their demographics. Ideally, this system would undermine the ability of any single occupational group to dominate the government and avoid “autocratic party domination” made possible through party whips pressuring their party members to act against the interests of their constituents. Although the group government approach was not adopted in Ontario after the UFO-ILP victory, Irvine approved the decision because he believed the public needed proof that a four-party legislature could not function in a two-party system. He was confident that public opinion would eventually shift in favour of the group government system once its necessity was realized.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Morton, 75, 86, 107; Sharp, 140; Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 227.

<sup>86</sup> Irvine, 242-243.

Among Irvine's most prominent supporters was Henry Wise Wood, the president of the UFA since 1916.<sup>87</sup> Wood's endorsement of political action was provided reluctantly because he still feared political failure would weaken the farmers' movement. However, Wood recognized that political action had become too popular among rank-and-file members and other farmers' organizations, especially as the NPL continued to appeal to farmers to enter politics. Realizing that an increasing number of organized farmers in Alberta supported political action, Wood decided to approve of Irvine's group government approach. At the very least, farmers could politically organize as a class and avoid compromising their interests by merging into a coalition party. With the UFA embracing politicization, Wood convinced Irvine and the NPL to amalgamate with the UFA and avoid splitting the farmers' movement. Wood also declared that local UFA branches would be entirely responsible for political campaigns so that the UFA could avoid the corrupting influences of party politics and protect the organization from compromising its integrity as an organization for farmers.<sup>88</sup>

Among the leading figureheads for a broader coalition party or a "people's party" was Woodsworth and Thomas Crerar. As discussed by Allen Mills and Kenneth McNaught, Woodsworth advocated for a broader political approach to transcend traditional social cleavages and used his ties to the social gospel movement, labour unions, and the NLP to promote this strategy. Since Woodsworth believed it was necessary to reconcile differences, he proceeded in a similar vein as Bland's *The New Christianity* by stressing the integrative role of the church. However, Woodsworth added that a more inclusive political party modelled after the British Labour Party was necessary because of Canada's pluralism. By fostering a Christian spirit and collectivizing its political strength, Woodsworth believed that Canada could be transformed into

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<sup>87</sup> The authoritative study on the UFA is Rennie, *The Rise of Agrarian Democracy*.

<sup>88</sup> Morton, 38-39, 87-93; Sharp, 146-147, 164-165.

a socialist Christian society, which he called “the Co-operative Commonwealth.”<sup>89</sup> Thomas Crerar was another prominent advocate for the broadening out strategy. As outlined by J. E. Rea, Crerar initially urged Morrison to portray the UFO as an occupational movement, but after the UFO’s success was achieved through a plurality of support, Crerar adjusted his views.<sup>90</sup> Within the climate of the Red Scare, Crerar, and other western agrarian leaders, including Dafoe and Chipman, were sensitive to how the group government strategy could be misrepresented as a form of class domination. There were also concerns regarding whether occupational movements could sustain occupational politics.<sup>91</sup> For Alberta farmers, which had a strong financial base, this was less of a concern.<sup>92</sup> For the newly formed United Farmers organizations in British Columbia, Québec, and the East Coast, the broadening out strategy seemed more appropriate given the absence of organizational support and financial resources.<sup>93</sup>

The issue of whether independent politics should be organized based on distinct occupational groups or as a broad coalition party emerged as one of the most pressing questions for political organizers in the labour and farmers’ movements. What was no longer a question was whether the Liberals and Conservatives could lose control of the legislatures. The UFO-ILP victory had proven the potential success of independent politics, and consequently, many realized that the dream of reconstructing democracy could still become a reality. Indeed, after the establishment of the Drury government in Ontario, organized farmers rallied support for political action during the CCA convention in January 1920. With one hundred delegates from Ontario, the Prairie provinces, and New Brunswick present, the convention resolved that the CCA would

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<sup>89</sup> Mills, 69-81; Kenneth, 134.

<sup>90</sup> Rea, 71.

<sup>91</sup> Morton, 93-94; also see ““What is Class Policy?”” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 7 April 1920, 5.

<sup>92</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 111.

<sup>93</sup> These United Farmer organizations were only accepted in the CCA in 1920. Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 113.

support electoral candidates who were campaigning on the farmers' New National Policy.<sup>94</sup> In effect, the CCA endorsed the politicization of the farmers' movement, but stipulated that the CCA would not be a centralized body for political mobilization. With this newly created space for politics within the CCA, Thomas Crerar and eleven other parliamentarians representatives who broke away from the Union party, formed a national caucus under the banner of "National Progressive Party" in February, 1920. The "Progressives" would operate as a coalition of Independents at the federal level, so its label as a "party" must not be taken at face value.<sup>95</sup> Since the federal election was held in December 1921, Independents would have to proceed with their offensive at the provincial level first.

### **The Provincial Front**

The politicization of the labour, farmers', and veterans' movements has left a complex legacy. In each province, independent political action led to unique dynamics of internal rivalries and class cooperation. And while it is important to outline how each movement was distinct, it is also critical to recognize it as a part of a collective democratic revolt united through its embrace of Great War patriotism, its opposition to party politics, and the ambition of reconstructing democracy. As the editorialists analyzed in this study commonly believed, the reconstruction of democracy could not remain a "dream" because the reality of wartime sacrifices was too real. The failures of traditional legislators to justify these wartime sacrifices, such as bringing wartime profiteers to justice, became a new ideological foundation to inspire a democratic revolution through independent political action. Secondary sources provide many important insights for the

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<sup>94</sup> The platform was a series of progressive and socialist reforms related to tariffs, anti-combines legislation, taxation, soldiers' reestablishment, public ownership of utilities and infrastructure, the electoral process, the abolition of patronage, proportional representation, direct legislation and other policies related to the democratic process. The Canadian Council of Agriculture, *The Farmers' Platform: A New National Policy For Canada*.

<sup>95</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 109-112; Morton, 90, 106.

ways in which workers, farmers, and veterans waged this political challenge, but it is important to contextualize political action on the provincial front as a continuation of the Great War for democracy. Even as late as the early 1920s, there was still reason to believe that the profiteers could be brought to justice by defeating their allies in the provincial legislatures.

During the provincial election in British Columbia on 1 December 1920, the Liberals and Conservatives ran up against a wide range of political competitors, including Farmers, Soldiers, Labour, and Socialists – many of which ran as hyphenated candidates representing intersecting interests and identities. Among the candidates were a dozen Farmers who contested the election as a “People’s Party.”<sup>96</sup> One candidate, Rev. Thomas Menzies, exemplifies the connections between the farmers’ and social gospel movement, because Menzies was a Presbyterian minister as well as president of the Farmers’ Institute in Comox.<sup>97</sup> The labour movement was similarly eager to contest the election, but ideological divisions weakened their campaigns. In continuation of the division during the 1917 federal election, the socialist leaning BCFL ran its own campaign under their newly consolidated political wing, the Federated Labour Party (FLP), which supported moderate socialist/Fabian candidates including Woodsworth. As concluded by Robin, without a strong farmers’ movement, the FLP did not bother to form a meaningful alliance with farmer candidates. The FLP also had to contend with competition from the SPC, which could not be openly supported given their pro-Bolshevik sentiments. Based on these ideological tensions, the FLP and SPC fielded their candidates separately.<sup>98</sup> As for veterans, there is very minimal scholarship on their political activism during the post-war period, but Elizabeth Lee’s MA thesis provides a glimpse into these activities on the West Coast. In British Columbia, returned soldiers

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<sup>96</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 833.

<sup>97</sup> Canada, *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1922* (Ottawa: The Mortimer Co Limited, 1922), 474.

<sup>98</sup> Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 199-200.

exhibited an eagerness to enter politics and form a distinct Independent Soldiers' Party. Even before the removal of Clause 77, the GWVA Victoria branch assisted the election of Ex-Private Frank Giolma during a provincial by-election, while the South Vancouver branch unanimously resolved to support political action.<sup>99</sup> Tensions between local branches and official policy limited the potential of the GWVA's political activities from becoming more extensive, so the thrust of independent political action shifted to the UVL. The leaders of the UVL were former members of the GWVA and Comrades of the Great War, Jimmy Robinson and Comrade Carrol. And, as Lees notes, the RNWMP believed the linkages between the UVL and labour groups would lead to the radicalization of the UVL members.<sup>100</sup> When the UVL was reconstituted into the GAUV, the mainstream press censored its activities in solidarity with the more moderate-leaning GWVA, which did not contest the election directly. Despite mainstream censorship, the GAUV continued its campaign. It promoted a broad platform, whereby only three of twenty-four points focused exclusively on veterans' interests. However, the GAUV candidates were not the only returned soldiers contesting the election. The Liberals fielded their own soldier candidates who praised the Liberal administration, spent "lavishly" on their campaigns, and rewarded their loyalty with patronage. In addition, the Conservatives recruited prominent veteran leaders, including the former GWVA president C. W. Whittaker. The FLP also fielded their own veteran candidate W. J. Sloan.

The emergence of this diverse array of political candidates and parties in British Columbia demonstrates how the democratic revolt fuelled an intense political challenge, but not all challenges at the provincial level obtained the same success as in Ontario. The FLP claimed three of their fourteen contested ridings, while the seven candidates fielded by the SPC were

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<sup>99</sup> Lees, 82-83.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

defeated outright. Martin attributed the failure of Labour to their weak cross-class linkages and ideological rivalry within the labour movement.<sup>101</sup> The GAUV-labour candidates also performed poorly and failed to win a seat, leading Lees to state that they were disadvantaged by the inner rivalry between returned soldiers, organized labour, and socialists. She also adds that the GAUV's political program was issued too late, and furthermore, that by the time the election was held in the Fall of 1920, the veterans' movement was losing momentum from demobilization.<sup>102</sup> As for the farmers' candidates under the People's Party, Menzies secured his seat in Comox, but it was the only victory. In the end, the Liberal government under Frank Oliver emerged victorious with twenty-six seats and the Conservatives claimed thirteen.<sup>103</sup> The election illustrates how a will to stage a revolt existed, but the political campaigns were not organized effectively enough to capitalize on prevailing disillusionment and patriotic outrage, thereby allowing the Liberals to emerge as the primary beneficiaries.

In the prairie provinces, independent political action found more clear-cut success. In Alberta, the labour movement became absorbed by tensions between craft and industrial unionists. The "pure labourism" camp rallied under Alex Ross, who formed the Dominion Labour Party (DLP) in January 1919 to compete against ILP and formed a fruitful relationship with the UFA.<sup>104</sup> Joint meetings between the DLP and UFA were held in 1920 and 1921 to negotiate candidacies in mixed constituencies. When the election was held in 1921, the DLP ran a campaign with ten candidates and won four, while the ILP and SPC unsuccessfully contested seven and four ridings respectively. It was the UFA who won the day with 39 elected Farmer

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<sup>101</sup> Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 199-200.

<sup>102</sup> Lees, 84-93.

<sup>103</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 833-834.

<sup>104</sup> Alvin Finkel, "The Rise and Fall of the Labour Party in Alberta, 1917-42," *Labour/Le Travail*, 16 (Fall 1985): 67-69.



candidates. The Liberals' won fourteen and the Conservatives' only one. In celebration of the UFA's great achievement, Wood proclaimed that "The people of Alberta have spoken in no uncertain terms against politician [sic] representation... The people themselves will operate the political machinery by which they elect their representatives to serve them."<sup>105</sup> A remarkable aspect of the UFA's victory was that there was no provincial leader, so after the election a conference was held and the elected UFA representatives voted Herbert Greenfield to be the Premier. Inspired by the group government theory, Greenfield invited Ross to the UFA's provincial cabinet and appointed him as the Minister of Public Works.<sup>106</sup>

In Saskatchewan, local SGGA branches challenged the Liberal government during the 1921 provincial election under the Progressive banner. As Paul Sharp pointed out, what made this challenge unique was that the Saskatchewan Government was "a grain growers' government in all but name."<sup>107</sup> Despite the pre-existing dominance of the SGGA, a convention for independent political action was called by Harris Turner, the Vice-President of the Saskatchewan GWVA. By 31 May 1921, when the convention was held, Turner had already become a reputable figure. While fighting overseas he was blinded in both eyes and was later elected to the provincial legislature in 1917 for Saskatoon City.<sup>108</sup> During the convention, a range of political affiliates assembled, including independent Conservatives, agrarians, and Non-Partisan Leaguers. As Turner proclaimed, "Parties tend toward corruption and should no longer be permitted to exist." The convention supported replacing the Party caucus with a "business-like type of administration" involving all members of the Legislature. The convention also formed a

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<sup>105</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review* 1921, 855.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 853-856; Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 199-203.

<sup>107</sup> Sharp, 170.

<sup>108</sup> Canada, *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, 1922, 545-546.

Central Committee for assisting the organization of the Independent campaigns.<sup>109</sup> When the votes were tallied, the Martin government was returned with a majority of forty-six seats, but the Progressives managed to win six seats, Independents seven (including Turner) and one labour candidate.<sup>110</sup>

In Manitoba, the UFM also contested the Liberals in the 1920 provincial election. Similar to the determination exhibited in Saskatchewan for independent political action, organized farmers in Manitoba contested the Liberal Norris government despite it being one of the most progressive provincial governments in the country. The impulse for political action came from the UFM rank-and-file, who managed the electoral campaigns in their local constituencies as Independent-Farmers.<sup>111</sup> Meanwhile, the labour movement established a coalition between labourites, socialists, and OBU supporters through the provincial DLP branch and further cooperated with the Independent-Farmers. However, the limits of the alliance were made plain after the 1920 election. The Liberals emerged with a minority government claiming twenty-one seats; the Conservatives won thirteen; the Labour coalition won eleven seats and the Independent-Farmers nine. In an astounding testament to organized labour's determination, Ivens, George Armstrong, John Queen, W. A. Pritchard and R. J. Johns contested the election despite being imprisoned for their involvement in the Winnipeg General Strike. Ivens and Queen even emerged victorious. The Labour and the Independent Farmers could have formed a coalition government with Norris, or alternatively, formed a coalition-Opposition. But as Robin highlighted, the radical socialism of the Manitoba labour movement was too extreme for the progressive-oriented farmers. Following the election in 1920, a municipal election in Winnipeg

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<sup>109</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 811-812.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 811-813.

<sup>111</sup> Sharp, 168-169.

was held and the fragile labour coalition collapsed as an ideological schism between the socialists and the TLC-oriented international unionists tore the DLP apart.<sup>112</sup> Although the Independents did not replace the Liberal government in 1920, they had another opportunity in 1922. This time the UFM contested the election directly, but, as Morton stated, many of the moderate-leaning agrarians in the UFM were not willing to cooperate with the labour movement. When the election was held on 18 July, the UFM emerged with twenty-eight successful candidates, the Liberals and Conservatives had seven and six respectively, and an additional six Labour representatives and eight Independents were elected.<sup>113</sup>

Although French Canada is beyond the scope of this study, some key political developments can be mentioned in Québec specifically. The provincial election was held on 23 June 1919. Hopkins stated that there were Independent-Farmer candidates, but they did not contest the election as a distinct party. It was only until after the election, on 2 July 1919 at Montréal, that farmers formed their own provincial United Farmers organization. There were also returned soldier candidates, but Hopkins did not recognize them as having “a conspicuous part in the contest.”<sup>114</sup> It is perhaps unsurprising that soldier candidates did not have a strong presence because, as Simon Jolivet estimates, only 35,000 French Canadians joined the military despite a French Canadian population of over two million. Also, the majority of soldiers who did enter military service did so as conscripts.<sup>115</sup> Without a high number of returned soldiers to support the veterans’ movement, the potential for veterans’ political action in French Canada was minimal. For the labour movement, cooperation between moderate socialists and conservative

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<sup>112</sup> Stefan Epp-Koop, *We’re Going to Run This City: Winnipeg’s Political Left after the General Strike* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 25-27; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 750-753; Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 203-212.

<sup>113</sup> Morton, 226-228.

<sup>114</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1919*, 398, 725.

<sup>115</sup> Simon Jolivet, “French-Speaking Catholics in Quebec and the First World War,” in *Canadian Churches and the First World War*, 86.

craft unionists struggled to improve after 1917. As discussed by Ewen, moderate socialists such as Francq vehemently denounced OBU organizers and were suspicious of socialist encroachment. Internal tensions led to increased competition between the moderate and radical wings of the labour movement, ultimately stifling opportunities for political cooperation. With the labour movement in Québec still maintaining close ties to the Liberal party, and Catholic unions establishing roots in small industrial centres, independent labour politics was too divided to launch a major political challenge for the 1919 election. The Labour Party fielded six candidates, but only Adélard Laurendeau and Aurèle Lacombe were successful, and after the election they joined the Liberal government.<sup>116</sup>

On the East Coast, Independents did not form any provincial governments, but they demonstrated potential. Beginning with Nova Scotia, the Liberals had long-standing control over the provincial legislature as they were in power since 1882. And while the Conservative leader W. L. Hall called for change, so too did farmers, labour, and returned soldiers. The United Farmers of Nova Scotia was formed in January 1920, leaving very little time to prepare for the provincial election in July. The United Farmers followed the decentralized approach of their counterparts elsewhere in Canada. They did not contest the election through a centralized campaign, nor did they issue a party manifesto. Furthermore, the United Farmers held a convention in April and invited labour representatives to participate. Tempers flared after some farmers and workers exchanged insults. This led the convention to abandon its attempts to negotiate with the labour representatives. However, since the campaigns were overseen at the local level, labour and farmer constituents continued working together to avoid competition in all but one riding. Hopkins stated that the United Farmers cooperated with returned soldiers, but

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<sup>116</sup> Ewen, 126-127. Also see, Jacques Rouillard, *Le syndicalisme Québécois: Deux siècles d'histoire* (Montréal: Les éditions Boréal, 2004).

organized veterans did not campaign as a party. After pulling together a combined 30 percent of the popular vote, seven farmers and four labour representatives were elected and cooperated to form the Opposition in the Nova Scotia legislature.<sup>117</sup> In New Brunswick, the United Farmers had organized in February 1918 but similar to the United Farmers of Nova Scotia, there was no centralized campaign, nor was there an appointed provincial leader and platform. Labour's electoral bid was also conducted as a highly decentralized campaign, whereby the New Brunswick Federation of Labour merely passed a series of Resolutions for policy reform during their March convention. When the election was held on 9 October 1920, the United Farmers elected six members. An additional two candidates were elected representing Farmer-Labour. The Liberals managed to hold onto the legislature with twenty-four successful candidates and the Conservatives returned with fourteen.<sup>118</sup> In Prince Edward Island, the provincial election on 24 July 1919 was primarily a contest between the agrarian-focused Conservatives and Liberals – the latter emerging victorious after endorsing the CCA's New National Policy.<sup>119</sup>

This overview of post-war provincial elections illustrates that the hegemony of the two-party system at the provincial level faced an unprecedented challenge. Even in provinces where the Liberals or Conservatives retained control, their parties faced new competition from labour, farmers, and veterans. Although this examination is limited, some important conclusions can be drawn. First, political action among labour, farmers, and veterans was very diverse. Some Independents mobilized through parties supported by their class organizations, but even when this was the case, the campaigns were very decentralized. The absence of a distinct political organization/party, provincial leader, or party platform was not unusual. So, while the campaign

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<sup>117</sup> Forbes, 41-49; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 682-684.

<sup>118</sup> Forbes, 49; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 712-717.

<sup>119</sup> Forbes, 45; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1919*, 726-727.

issues may have varied across the provinces, it is evident that there was a shared spirit of independence that sought to contest party politics. Importantly, this spirit crossed class and regional boundaries. Secondly, when determining why this spirit emerged, this dissertation argues that wartime experiences and Great War patriotism led patriots across the country to similarly yearn for a new democracy free from the evils of party politics that led to wartime profiteering. Under new political leadership, the patriotic aspirations of reconstructing democracy could be achieved through progressive and socialist reforms. The growing popularity of independent political action and reconstructing democracy drastically transformed provincial legislatures across English Canada, and as the next section will demonstrate, the same can be said at the federal level, where opposition to profiteering remained a leading issue.

### **The Federal Front**

On 1 September 1921, Prime Minister Arthur Meighen announced that Canada would hold its first post-war federal election on 6 December.<sup>120</sup> Contesting the election were the Conservatives led by Meighen, the Liberals led by Mackenzie King, and the Progressive party led by the CCA-endorsed Thomas Crerar.<sup>121</sup> There were also numerous Independents who contested the election as candidates for the CLP, ILP, and as unaffiliates.

For the Conservatives, the election was an uphill battle. During his campaigning, Meighen was eager to invoke the achievements of Borden's administration, but it carried a dubious legacy. As John English remarked, Borden believed that he was establishing a new party that would "transcend the variety of Canadian political cultures" through the embodiment of national interest. And yet, Unionism's success was premised on the disenfranchisement of ethnic

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<sup>120</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 446.

<sup>121</sup> Morton, 106.

minorities, the outrage of French Canadians, unfulfilled promises, among other controversial advantages.<sup>122</sup> Such lofty idealism of imposing national unity from a cadre of mostly English-speaking elitists was disastrous in the post-war political climate, leading Meighen to minimize this controversial legacy. For instance, while speaking to an audience in Montréal, Meighen appealed for racial conciliation by advising French-Canadians “to bury the past and vote only in and for the present.” But Anglo-French hostility was not the only major obstacle. Meighen contended with repeated accusations of protecting the profiteers among big business. Meighen’s response, similar to the Conservatives’ strategy during the war, was to avoid profiteering rhetoric and instead justify the legitimacy of wartime profits based on “severe” war taxes.<sup>123</sup> He also shared the CMA’s tactics of pointing out the hypocrisy of profiteering criticisms, such as how the United Grain Growers’ company thrived from high agricultural prices but were rarely criticized for profiteering.<sup>124</sup>

The Conservatives’ 1921 campaign included a wide range of promises, including the promotion of Canadian sovereignty; economizing the state; railway policy adjustments; improved reestablishment for ex-servicemen; the reduction of the military; infrastructure projects; an expansion of agricultural services and food regulation; and restricting immigration among those incapable of assimilation within a “reasonable time.”<sup>125</sup> But recognizing that there were few areas the Conservatives could inspire the public, the Conservatives’ strategy focused on galvanizing the fear of change, particularly by heightening the dangers of lower tariffs as advocated by their political competitors. The hidden strength of this approach was to potentially dissuade workers and farmers from cooperating because both classes traditionally opposed each

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<sup>122</sup> English, 228.

<sup>123</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 450-451.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 455.

<sup>125</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 399-402.

other on tariff policy (the latter being in favour of lower tariffs). By dividing the opposition, the Conservatives could increase their likelihood of winning three-cornered contests. While speaking to his constituency in Portage la Prairie, Meighen boldly claimed that if he could narrow the election to the issue of the tariff, then victory would be assured.<sup>126</sup>

The Liberals approached the 1921 federal election with a much stronger position than their Conservative counterparts. The election of King as the Liberal leader after Laurier's death in February 1919 was a strategic selection. King's academic background appealed to those who desired professionally-trained experts in government administration, while his experience as the Deputy-Minister and Minister of Labour alluded to a friendlier disposition towards organized labour. King also advertised himself as an advocate of progressive ideals exemplified in his book *Industry and Humanity* (1918), which directly appealed to moderate socialists and social gospellers. As King wrote, the war justified society's transition into a "new spirit" guided by humanism, communalism, and scientific method.<sup>127</sup> The Liberals also benefitted from their support in Québec, because, as E. L. Patenaude warned Borden in 1917, the introduction of conscription without a referendum destroyed the Conservative's political standing among French-speaking Canadians.<sup>128</sup>

Anticipating strong support in French Canada, King focused his campaign on winning swing votes in English Canada. Although it is difficult to quantify the electoral benefits, King secured an alliance with the only major veterans' organization willing to endorse a federal party, the GAUV. In exchange for their support, King provided a written pledge to form a committee to re-evaluate veteran bonuses. Liberal candidates also received handbooks instructing them to

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<sup>126</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 449.

<sup>127</sup> Mackenzie King, *Industry and Humanity: A study in the Principles underlying Industrial Reconstruction* (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1918), xii-xx.

<sup>128</sup> English, 132-133.



support the veterans' bonus during their local campaigns. This strategy was clever because the veterans' campaign to increase the bonus was all but defeated. By gaining the support of the GAUV, King secured a means of bolstering the Liberals' patriotic image, which, as discussed in previous chapters, had been tarnished by their opposition to the Unionists' "win-the-war" campaign. It also benefited the Liberals because it denied the Conservatives' the opportunity to regain the trust of returned soldiers who continued to bombard them with criticism.<sup>129</sup> After the election, King's administration would only appoint a committee to investigate the bonus with no meaningful changes. As Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright noted, Sir Arthur Currie had to explain to the GAUV executive that King's written pledge was worthless.<sup>130</sup>

Another Liberal strategy to win swing votes in English-Canada was to appeal to the animosity towards big business and profiteering. In *Industry and Humanity*, King outlined his belief that it was imperative to eliminate parasitic monopolies and combines through state regulation.<sup>131</sup> Adding credibility to his image as an opponent of big business, King had introduced anti-combines legislation in 1910, and while serving as the leader of the Opposition in 1920, he demanded a full investigation into Murdock's charges against the Union government's sabotage of the Board of Commerce. Indeed, King sought to reinforce the anti-profitteering image of the Liberal party by recruiting James Murdock, the former Board of Commerce Commissioner, into the Liberals' ranks. Murdock would run on a Liberal-Labour ticket for Toronto South.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> "Truth Shall Make You Free," *The Veteran*, September 1920, 16. "Veterans and Politics," *The Veteran*, September 1920, 17; "In the Public Interest," *The Veteran*, July 1920, 17.

<sup>130</sup> Morton, "The Bonus Campaign, 1919-21," 166.

<sup>131</sup> King, *Industry and Humanity*, 254, 373, 514.

<sup>132</sup> Murdock was defeated in the election, but King appointed him Minister of Labour. Murdock would continue to have a life-long career as a Liberal politician and senator. Canada, *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide*, 1922, 180.

In a statement to the press on 26 September 1921, Murdock claimed that his decision to join the Liberals was because he believed that only they could provide “A sane, stable Government, by no one class, for no one class, but by all classes”.<sup>133</sup> As Hopkins described, Murdock became the most conspicuous Labour figure during the election and attacked the Conservatives “without gloves.”<sup>134</sup> Throughout the campaign, Murdock was a keynote speaker in Liberal rallies throughout Ontario. His contribution to the Liberal campaign was to draw upon his experience in the Board of Commerce to condemn the Conservatives as friends of the profiteers and reaffirm that the Liberals were the true people’s party.<sup>135</sup> On one occasion, during a rally in Hamilton, Murdock reminisced, “I had not been on the board very long before I found that in every instance where we reached a point where there was a chance to do something to check profiteering and bring the profiteers to book, a sort of behind-the-throne tourniquet was applied and our efforts were useless.” Murdock surmised that the Government’s creation of the Board was a mere ruse and its Commissioners were only expected to “make a noise.”<sup>136</sup> To substantiate his claims, Murdock referred to how Borden’s administration repeatedly obstructed his attempts to investigate the textile, cement and canning industries.<sup>137</sup> Overall, Murdock’s accusations that the Conservatives were corrupt and friends of the profiteers mirrored the Liberals’ campaign in 1917,<sup>138</sup> but in 1921, conditions were more favourable to capitalize on this

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<sup>133</sup> LAC, *Board of Commerce of Canada fonds*, vol. 34, Statement Given to the Press by James Murdock and Published September 26/21, 1-2.

<sup>134</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 504-505.

<sup>135</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1920*, 433; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 460.

<sup>136</sup> “Shell Cargoes Related to General Election” *Toronto Star*, 8 November 1921, 3; “Board’s One Function Was to Bluff People,” *Toronto Star*, 21 November 1921, 3.

<sup>137</sup> Hopkins, *Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 505-506; Also see, “That Man O’Connor On Murdock’s Trail,” *Toronto Star*, 21 November 1921, 3.

<sup>138</sup> “How Hanna Helped the Grafting Profiteers,” *The Grit*, 12 December 1917, 7; “The Masses or The Profiteers,” *The Liberal Weekly*, 23 November 1917, 28; “People vs. Profiteers,” *The Grit*, 11 December 1917, 6; “Farmers! Laborers! Consumers!” *The Liberal Weekly*, 7 December 1917, 89.

strategy because there was no “win-the-war” rhetoric to overshadow the issue of profiteering and political corruption.

Murdock’s aggressive campaigning throughout Ontario pressured the Conservatives to respond. Senator Robertson, the Minister of Labour, was campaigning in North Bay and denounced Murdock as the only Labour representative out of twenty-four appointed by the Government for special work during the war to have failed at his post. Meighen also declared at Owen Sound that Murdock’s failure was his own because he had ample powers to succeed as a Board of Commerce commissioner.<sup>139</sup> A more convincing challenge was undertaken by O’Connor, who made his own public appearances refuting Murdock’s claims.<sup>140</sup> Although O’Connor was deeply frustrated by the Government’s unwillingness to appoint him Chair of the Board of Commerce, not to mention the failure of the Union government to assist him at critical junctures, he remained a loyal Tory.<sup>141</sup> But it was precisely his loyalty to the Tories that the Liberal press sought to exploit to discredit him. In the *Toronto Star*, an article claimed that O’Connor received a government cheque for \$8,000 as payment for his support before the Government was expected to lose the election.<sup>142</sup> Incentives aside, Hopkins stated that there was “no doubt” the charges and speeches related to the Board of Commerce influenced the result of the election.<sup>143</sup> So even by 1921, the Board of Commerce controversy was not forgotten and can be considered a key issue.

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<sup>139</sup> Hopkins, *Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 507.

<sup>140</sup> “O’Connor Kept Busy Answering Hecklers,” *Toronto Star*, 28 November 1921, 3.

<sup>141</sup> There was speculation that O’Connor was going to receive a position in the Senate. “Mr. Meighen May Have His Slate Ready Monday,” *Toronto Star*, 15 September 1921, 1. Even after the 1921 election, O’Connor would be called upon for his services by the following Conservative governments. R. Blake Brown, “O’CONNOR, WILLIAM FRANCIS,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 16, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed February 27, 2019, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/o\\_connor\\_william\\_francis\\_16E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/o_connor_william_francis_16E.html).

<sup>142</sup> “That Man O’Connor On Murdock’s Trail,” *Toronto Star*, 21 November 1921, 3; “O’Connor Gets \$8,000 Check For Ottawa Work,” *Toronto Star*, 29 November 1921, 1.

<sup>143</sup> Hopkins, *Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 506.

The Liberals' use of profiteering controversy related to the Board of Commerce aimed to tarnish the Conservatives' reputation, but this strategy would not work against the Progressives. To counteract the threat of the Progressives, the Liberals focused on mirroring key policies – a strategy that W. L. Morton stated was historically important for the Liberal and Conservative parties to undermine new political rivals.<sup>144</sup> After depriving their opponents of their distinctive appeal, the Liberals and Conservatives could mobilize their vast resources, including the control of the daily press, financial resources, and broad social networks to undermine new political movements before they could consolidate into a tangible threat. To this end, the Liberals' strategy to defeat the Progressives and Independents was to adopt some of their progressive policies and then present the Liberal party as the more sensible choice. Lowering tariffs was a case in point, as well as funding for a wide range of social security programs, including widow, maternity, and veteran benefits, and pensions and insurance plans. In a similar appeal to the CLP's platform, the Liberals pledged to impose restrictions on Oriental immigration, but a discriminatory immigration policy was not supported in the CCA's New National Policy.<sup>145</sup> Without any support for addressing the wartime wealth of enemy aliens, or aliens more generally, it can be concluded that xenophobic-patriotism remained a marginalized current in federal politics (at least in terms of the parties' formal platforms).

There were distinguishing features of the Progressives and CLP platforms, but again, it is important to reiterate that constituent-level campaigns did not have to adopt these policies because they had considerable autonomy. To address the wartime profiteering of big business, the Liberals, Progressives, and Independents supported direct taxation on high incomes and

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<sup>144</sup> Morton, 270.

<sup>145</sup> For the Liberal, Labour, and Farmers platforms, see: Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1919*, 605-608; Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 508; The Canadian Council of Agriculture, *The Farmers' Platform: A New National Policy For Canada*; "The Immigrants We Need," *The Grain Growers' Guide*, 19 January 1921, 6.

corporate profits. However, the CLP platform and New National Policy went further by endorsing taxation on land values and prohibiting tax evasion through watered stock and bond exemption. The two platforms also had a much more ambitious plan for democratic reform because, in addition to proportional representation, their candidates often endorsed direct legislation; reforming or abolishing the Senate; and introducing measures for electoral transparency and accessibility. Lastly, while the Liberals' platform approved the subsidization of infrastructure and government assistance for developing natural resources and utilities, the CLP and New National Policy supported state ownership.

Believing that the Liberal platform was a more "safe and sane" form of governance, King proclaimed that the Liberals had absorbed the progressive spirit and that the Progressives represented a Bolshevik-style of class rule.<sup>146</sup> So confident in his campaign, King branded the Liberals as the pragmatic choice.<sup>147</sup> However, there was one distinct characteristic that the Liberals could not replicate – namely, how the Progressives and Independents opposed party politics. Constant profiteering scandals and political self-interest evident in the "game of politics" allowed labour, farmer, and veteran leaders to highlight how party politics bred corruption and immorality. But the Progressives and Independents did not simply promise to reform the democratic process – their very campaigns embodied these principles through their decentralized-grassroots orientation. So while the labour, farmers', and veterans' movements were important for providing guidance on policies and principles, candidates and constituents were in control. For instance, local organizers could negotiate terms of nomination and include stipulations for the right to recall, thereby adding a layer of accountability for elected representatives. Since constituents raised funds locally, the funding of the campaign was more

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<sup>146</sup> Morton, 104.

<sup>147</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 331, 461.

transparent and came in sharp contrast to the obscure sources of funding for the Liberal and Conservative campaigns. As proclaimed by James Simpson, the former vice-president of the TLC, labour candidate, and the editor of the *Industrial Banner*, “Mackenzie King was a leader of ‘pussy-footing Liberalism’ and a sympathizer and servant of the financial magnates ‘who have this nation by the throat.’”<sup>148</sup> Chipman could not have agreed more and made the meaning of the election explicitly clear in *The Guide*: “the real issue of this election is... whether we are to have rule by the people or rule by the profiteers.”<sup>149</sup>

On 6 December 1921, electors of the Dominion of Canada – including approximately one million women – cast their ballots in the first federal election since the end of the Great War.<sup>150</sup> Mackenzie King and the Liberal party would emerge as the election’s official winner. The Liberals’ greatest success was in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Québec, which gave them 85 seats out of the national total of 235. New Brunswick only sent one Progressive and the remaining nine were split between the Liberals and Conservatives. The Conservatives’ greatest success was in Ontario and British Columbia, where they won roughly half the seats and the Liberals and Progressives split the difference. As for Labour, there were no victorious CLP or ILP candidates, but three Labour-Progressives won and helped form an Independent Labour contingent in parliament.<sup>151</sup> The Progressives’ major foothold was in the prairie provinces. In Saskatchewan and Alberta, the Progressives/UFA won almost every contest, and William Irvine joined Woodsworth as another Labour representative after winning Calgary East.<sup>152</sup> In Manitoba, the Progressives polled with less than half of the popular vote but secured 12 out of 15 seats.

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<sup>148</sup> Quoted by Hopkins from *The Industrial Banner*. Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 464.

<sup>149</sup> “The Real Issue,” *The Grain Growers’ Guide*, 21 September 1921, 5.

<sup>150</sup> For the election result tally, see Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 509-519.

<sup>151</sup> Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 243.

<sup>152</sup> Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 509-511.

Woodsworth claimed another seat in Winnipeg North Centre as an Independent Labour candidate, while Meighen suffered an embarrassing defeat in his home riding.

Although the Liberals won the day, the 1921 federal election was a major blow to party politics. The Progressives/Independents won enough seats to form the Opposition. Moreover, they received roughly one third of the vote outside of Québec – putting them on equal footing with the Liberals.<sup>153</sup> The 1921 federal election demonstrated the power of a democratic revolt to completely reshape parliamentary representation. But while the electoral victories of the Progressives and Independents represented a major breakthrough, the ability of these Independents to rout the party politicians and transform democracy on a longer-term basis was far from certain.

## **Conclusion**

For four and a half years, the industrialized world was consumed by sorrow and despair – victimized by its own technological advancements and expansionist rivalries. When the war was formally concluded in the glimmering halls of Versailles in 1919, it was believed by many that the forces of destruction were at last giving way to those of creation. In this way, the nightmarish reality of the Great War gave way to a hopeful dream of transformation. And much like the beginning of the war, its end signalled what many believed to be another liminal event, whereby industrial capitalist society was to take its evolutionary leap forward. A new democracy, a new spirit, a new world waited on the other side – such were the claims of the visionaries who prophesized the coming of a world guided by Christian, humane, and patriotic principles. But in contrast to these intoxicating promises that offered solace to so many broken hearts, this world of

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<sup>153</sup> Excluding Quebec, the popular vote for the Liberals was 738,667, Conservatives, 807,759; Progressives, 737,597; Independents 44,755. Hopkins, *The Canadian Annual Review 1921*, 509-510.

tomorrow could only be achieved through prolonged struggle against the very leaders that oversaw the war effort. To countless patriots, Great War profiteering exposed the selfishness, deceptions, and exploitations of these leaders. It stripped them of their patriotic identity, devalued their prestige, and relegated them to the margins of the imagined patriotic society. Although patriots were embroiled in outrage towards wartime injustices, not all endorsed the confrontational approach of direct action and instead welcomed negotiations. However, cooperation with manufacturers and big business yielded few meaningful changes, and Canada's governing officials were eager to steer Canada back into familiar waters. For patriots who could not stomach the thought of returning to the past while their wounds were fresh and their spirit restless, it became clear that the path towards salvation meant fighting the very system they originally sought to defend. Patriots – as workers, farmers, and veterans – collectively wielded their ballots in mutiny against their Conservative and Liberal leaders. By empowering a new cadre of Independent representatives, patriots undertook a democratic offensive to dethrone those who stood for privilege and corruption. During this period, Canada passed through a phase of democratic enlightenment that seems to have lasted for only a moment. Not only were intellectuals rethinking the core functions of a democratic system in new ways, but local organizers directly experimented with these systems to practice what they preached. As the conclusion will explore, the political challenge by Progressives and Independents attempted to revolutionize the democratic process, but ultimately, they failed to embed the patriotic spirit of independent representation. The democratic revolt would eventually end, as all things do, but the yearning for a better democratic world would live on.



## The Decline of the Democratic Revolt and Conclusion

After the 1921 federal election, the dream of a new democracy seemed closer than ever, and yet, it was near the high-water mark of the democratic offensive. Following the Progressives' victory in the 1922 Manitoba election, the Liberal and Conservative parties began reasserting their political dominance on the provincial and federal fronts: British Columbia see-sawed between Liberal and Conservative governments in 1924 and 1928; in Saskatchewan, the Liberals held onto power against renewed Conservative encroachment; in Manitoba, the Progressive party merged with the Liberals to fend off the Conservatives; in Ontario, the Conservatives established a majority government in 1923; Québec remained firmly in the Liberals' grasp; and the Conservatives swept into power in the Maritimes after victories in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and for the first time since 1878, Nova Scotia. In Badgley's study on the UFO, she notes that a period of electoral apathy among the public began to prevail. In Ontario, where the electoral success of the UFO and ILP energized independent politics throughout the Dominion, voter turnout plummeted from 72.6 percent in 1919 to a historic low of 54.7 percent by 1923.<sup>1</sup> The UFA was resilient and held onto power, but the Progressives in British Columbia and the East Coast fell apart entirely. At the federal level, the Progressives similarly suffered major setbacks from declining support. In the 1925 election, the Progressives were reduced from sixty-five to twenty-four. In Ontario, only two Progressives were returned.<sup>2</sup> After Mackenzie King's minority government lost the confidence of the House in 1926, another federal election was held and even fewer Progressives were elected. Some of those remaining fled to the Liberal

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<sup>1</sup> Badgley, 112.

<sup>2</sup> Morton, 243-245.

party, but those who did not formed the “Ginger Group.” Significantly, this group later merged with the UFA to establish the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in 1932, which would reassert the presence of a third major political force. In this way, the democratic revolt lived on through activists and organizations, but the distinct milieu of post-war political action to defeat democracy’s enemies was over by the early 1920s.

The decline of the democratic revolt is also evident through declining memberships and militancy of the labour, farmers’, and veterans’ movements. Labour Department statistics indicate that the number of labour disputes involving trades decreased from almost 300 to 85 between 1919 and 1921. The average number of disputes would remain at a low of 81 until 1927, notably 30 disputes less than the average between 1901 and 1913. The number of employees involved in trade disputes also decreased from a high of 138,988 in 1919 to an average of 24,446 between 1920 and 1928. Trade union membership similarly fell from 378,047 in 1919 to a low of 260,643 in 1924. However, this meant that trade union membership was roughly 100,000 members higher than the early 1910s, so the trade union movement secured a permanent increase (assuming the earlier statistics were not inaccurate).<sup>3</sup> The United Farmers and GGAs also suffered sharp declines in the early 1920s. The UFA, which remained the most financially stable agrarian organization, had its membership drop from 38,000 in 1921 to 15,000 by 1922; the SGGA declined from 29,000 to 21,000 in 1922, and the UFM’s membership fell from 16,000 to 6,000 by 1923; the United Farmers on the West and East coasts collapsed; while the UFO persisted as a shell of its former self with dismal showings in the 1921 federal and 1923 provincial elections.<sup>4</sup> The GWVA suffered its own decline in memberships. Morton and Wright identify this decline through decreasing membership fees. Before the 1920 GWVA convention,

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<sup>3</sup> Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1929* (Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1929), 731, 738.

<sup>4</sup> Sharp, 161; Morton, 212.

the levy from membership fees averaged \$3,048 a month, but by 1922 it dropped to \$794.<sup>5</sup> As grassroots activism and militancy declined, the strategies of direct action and independent politics became even more challenging to succeed, and the struggle to reconstruct democracy lost its momentum.

Historians offer a wide range of explanations for the post-war declines in independent politics and the labour, farmers', and veterans' movements. Among these explanations, historians argue that the revolt collapsed because broad democratic movements have an inherent weakness that makes their sustainability difficult. This explanation is often accompanied with vague language. For example, Morton and Sharp alluded to how the Progressives lost their "old fire" and "zeal and energy."<sup>6</sup> Other vague terminology is used to describe the weakening momentum of the revolt, including its fading "oppositional culture,"<sup>7</sup> "movement culture,"<sup>8</sup> "ideological cohesion,"<sup>9</sup> and "spirit of class solidarity."<sup>10</sup> This dissertation builds upon this understanding but proposes that the decline of Great War culture offers a more precise conceptualization of the revolt's declining momentum. War-centric designations are useful to this end because they provide identifiable linguistic anchors tied to Great War culture. A brief analysis of why "profiteering" slides into marginality can thus shed light on how the post-war period became inhospitable for Great War culture to persist, and subsequently, why the ideological cohesion of the democratic revolt weakened.

As the controversy surrounding the Board of Commerce exemplifies, profiteering remained a relevant issue right up to the 1921 federal election but after 1920 there is a noticeable

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<sup>5</sup> Morton and Wright, 178-179, 182.

<sup>6</sup> Morton, 267; Sharp, 179.

<sup>7</sup> Rennie, 7-8, 31, 49, 50, 130.

<sup>8</sup> Badgley, 15, 92.

<sup>9</sup> Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour 1880-1930*, 251.

<sup>10</sup> Heron, "National Contours," 296.

decline in the frequency of profiteering rhetoric in the press. Two explanations account for this decline. The first relates to the end of the war effort and the second to shifting economic conditions. With the Great War being a “War to End All Wars,” there was little enthusiasm for keeping Canada’s war machine intact. But in addition to ideological aversion, the demand for war matériel ceased and the industry became economically unsustainable. With the economy phasing out military production, war profiteering became negligible. As for alien profiteers, the end of the war meant that the patriotic community was no longer threatened by the presence and prosperity of enemy aliens. Tensions further eased as British-Canadians and other “loyal patriots” re-established their businesses and found employment. As the abnormal absences of competition from the war effort ended, aliens could be said to earn their profits more fairly. Lastly, opposition to food profiteering lost its urgency because the economy shifted from inflationary to deflationary between 1920 and 1921. According to Labour Department statistics, wholesale prices for vegetable products fell nearly 40 percent; textiles and textile products fell 35 percent; and animal products 25 percent. Of course, consumers were not free from economic pressures. Fuel and rent remained high, while those unemployed or suffered wage cuts could not reap the benefits of lower prices.<sup>11</sup> But although the high cost of living remained a pressing issue, the deflationary conditions meant that holding onto goods resulted in a financial loss. As Francq noted in the *Labor World*, deflationary conditions rendered illicit practices of food hoarding a losing strategy.<sup>12</sup> Since food hoarding was a primary mode of illicit-profit making among food profiteers, it can be stated that changing economic conditions decreased the urgency and relevance of food profiteering.

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<sup>11</sup> Canada, *The Canada Year Book 1922-23*, 748, 752-753.

<sup>12</sup> “The War and Prices,” *Labor World*, 2 July 1921, 3.

It is also important to recognize that the term “profiteering” became separated from the cultural context that led to its rising popularity. The four patriotic sensibilities of safeguarding national security, public service, an equality of sacrifice, and maximizing national efficiency remained important ideological aspirations, especially for guiding reconstruction, but they were no longer part of an ongoing war effort. Asserting patriotic pressure to honour wartime sacrifices and injustices remained prominent in the immediate post-war period, but this pressure waned over time. Consequently, the war-centric cultural shift tied to patriotic consciousness and language similarly declined.

The war-centric designation of “profiteer” remained a popular term as patriots fought to embed their wartime ideals during post-war reconstruction, but profiteering – in the sense of Great War profiteering – lost its pre-eminence because it became detached from the broader economic and cultural context in which it arose. As profiteering faded from the forefront of public discourse, it continued to invoke powerful emotions and feelings among those who lived through the war, but it had become the feelings of memory. The moral boundaries of profit, being a constant process, remained controversial as it always does, but the debates transitioned into familiar pre-war terminology and new terminology that reflected the more current sentimentality. The issues remained, but the feelings had changed.

## **Conclusion**

Democracy and peace are some of the noblest ideals of human society – that humans should live free of war, violence, and fear; and that citizens should have the liberty and freedom to elect their government. Today, few individuals would openly condemn the ideals of peace and democracy, and although contemporary democracy is not the same as it was one hundred years ago, the virtuousness of the democratic ideal has remained a consistent aspiration over

generations. In August 1914, when Britain declared war on Imperial Germany, governing officials, religious leaders, and other public figureheads professed the war as the defence of democracy and peace. During the war, patriots – being those who professed their support for the war effort – remained committed to the belief that Imperial Germany was a legitimate threat to the civilized Christian world. And yet, through their wartime experiences, they came to realize the inconsistencies of wartime idealism. The accumulation of excessive wartime profits, some of which were made through illicit means, exposed how society's most honourable and selfless members could be targets of exploitation. With so many friends and loved ones fighting on the frontlines, patriots could not turn their back on the war effort but neither could they ignore the wartime injustices that came into focus through profiteering controversy. As patriots became increasingly frustrated and outraged by federal inaction and insincerity, an increasing number of patriots yearned to reconstruct society into something better. By centering the analytical focus on patriotism, specifically patriotic opposition to profiteering, this dissertation offers a new perspective that frames late and post-war unrest as a revolt for democracy – a revolt that stretched from coast to coast and transcended class identities and regional interests.

Arriving at the idea of the democratic revolt stemmed from addressing a seemingly simple question – why did profiteering rhetoric emerge from the recesses of the English language during the war to become a leading public concern? While researching profiteering, it became apparent that profiteering was a very subjective and emotionally driven concept rooted in the cultural context of the Great War. To understand profiteering, it thus became necessary to understand how it fit into this cultural context. This led to the development of the Great War culture framework, which outlines the emergence of a war-centric cultural shift that was needed to cultivate support for the war effort. Within this cultural shift, patriotism became the new

common denominator for social and political belonging, and profiteering, as one of many war-centric designations, was used by patriots to identify those who did not belong. By viewing the controversies of Great War profiteering in conjunction with the Great War culture framework, this dissertation identifies the ways in which workers, farmers, and veterans legitimized their revolt through shared patriotic idealism and wartime experiences.

Four patriotic sensibilities guided the war effort, and along with them, Canada's wartime transformation. It was through these transformations that patriots found inspiration for an alternatively structured society. The success and utility of public ownership, regulations to equalize wartime hardships through taxation, the efficiency and moral superiority of state regulation, and the ideals of public service – all demonstrated the potential of the government, state and civil society. Conversely, wartime experiences also revealed the failures of Canadian society. Among those failures was how profit undermined the efficiency of the war effort, the exploitation of war contracts served private economic and political interests, private interests reaped fortunes from the high prices of food and exacerbated shortages, and governing officials tolerated an inequality of wartime sacrifice. As patriots were pushed to their limits, the best and worst of society became increasingly apparent. Understanding how patriots became disillusioned by wartime profits, and drew upon wartime patriotism to challenge them, has been the main subject of this study.

Among one of this dissertation's main conclusions is that the federal government failed to respond to profiteering in a way that could silence their critics and restore the public's confidence that the war effort was optimal and just. Instead, state regulations, war taxes, public ownership, and judicial retribution fell short of popular expectations and allowed profiteering to become a major source of disillusionment. A key dynamic that led to this failure was how

Conservatives, Liberals, and state officials were divided. The postponement of the federal election at the beginning of the war, and the failure to establish a meaningful political coalition, exacerbated the partisan rivalries between the Conservative and Liberals parties. Seeking to gain a political edge, the Liberals did not hesitate to sensationalize profiteering and exploit the controversy to draw attention to Conservative corruption. Borden, White, and other senior Conservatives dismissed the legitimacy of profiteering rhetoric, but their claims were contradicted by continual evidence that profiteering was rampant. Some state officials, such as William Francis O'Connor, undermined the Conservatives' attempts to minimize profiteering controversy. Although O'Connor was a Conservative supporter, he validated public suspicions that profiteering among big business was a serious problem. Borden's administration, both as the Conservatives and Unionists, introduced legislation, taxation, and regulations to address profiteering but the limitations of these measures were made plain by the post-war revolt.

The continual evidence of profiteering made patriots receptive to criticisms of Canada's socio-economic and political systems. For leaders in the mainstream labour, farmers', and veterans' movements, including Pettipiece, Puttee, Francq, Chipman, Good, Loughnan, Irvine, Woodsworth, Bland, among others, profiteering was the outcome of society's deeply rooted evils. By harnessing patriotic rhetoric and fiercely condemning the profiteers, these leaders aligned themselves with patriotic sentiments and made arguments showing how class/occupational interests intersected with patriotic interests. As they professed, profiteers gained at the expense of true patriots – namely, workers, farmers, and veterans. The path towards re-balancing wartime sacrifices and purifying the democratic capitalist system, they argued, was through progressive and socialist reforms. These included taxation schemes; the regulation of profits, profits, and commodities; and public ownership to remove the profit incentive. Although



the Conservatives and Liberals could similarly support these reforms, labour, farmer, and veteran leaders distinguished themselves because they blamed the inadequate responses to profiteering on the corrupting influences of party politics. The Liberal and Conservative party machines were compromised by their illicit alliances with big business. So, while the Liberals and Conservatives remained in power and played their “game of politics,” meaningful action against the profiteers would be limited, if not impossible. To address this corrupt alliance, labour, farmer, and veteran leaders promoted democratic reforms, such as Direct Legislation, to empower the people and undermine the centrality of political parties. Moreover, they supported independent politics and decentralized political campaigns to elect truly independent and patriotic candidates to the legislatures.

Mainstream labour, farmer, and veteran organizations benefited from wartime disillusionment because patriots realized the necessity of collectivizing to defend themselves against war and food profiteers. They also gained support because they could function as vehicles to negotiate the terms of post-war reconstruction. However, not all patriots agreed with how labour, farmer, and veteran leaders interpreted profiteering. Some patriots, especially those of British origin, believed that profiteering existed in the form of alien wages and business profits. With federal policymakers and leaders of the TLC, CCA, and Dominion GWVA offering only mild sympathy towards this view, opposition to alien profiteering became largely driven by grassroots activism, especially through violence. Great War veterans emerged as distinguished leaders of this movement and opposed the presence and prosperity of enemy aliens. Later in the war, they also came to oppose the prosperity of aliens more generally. This distinctly ethnic-centric interpretation of patriotic interests has been identified in this study as xenophobic-patriotism, and it highlights how opposition to profiteering did not strictly develop along a

vertical axis of class conflict. Drawing upon the same patriotic ideals as those who denounced the profiteering of big business, xenophobic-patriots similarly strove to negotiate the war effort and the reconstruction of democracy but did so with ethnic prejudices at the forefront of their concerns. Although opposition to alien profiteering was not mutually exclusive for opposition to war and food profiteering, it had a significant impact because it divided the attention, energy, and vision of patriots undertaking the democratic revolt.

With the signing of the armistice, patriots were no longer constrained by their obligation to minimize disruptions to the war effort. All the pent-up frustrations and patriotic outrage, combined with the intense material hardships of the post-war period, ignited an unparalleled scale of civil unrest. And, as this study has shown, profiteering remained a central issue during the revolt. Without regulations to minimize food profiteering, patriots struggling to make ends meet were pressured to collectivize and stage protests and strikes. Working-class patriots and veterans also directly confronted employers and aliens, whom they alleged to have unjustly profited during the war. Xenophobic-patriots confronted the alien profiteers directly by removing them from their workplaces, intimidating their employers, and destroying their places of business. Labour organizers and their allies among returned soldiers also confronted employers and demanded fairer treatment, wage increases, among other demands as compensation for their wartime contributions. The important connection made in this study is that whether patriots were smashing in the windows of an alien-owned restaurant or whether they were dropping their tools and striking, they similarly justified their actions through patriotism. This study also highlights how federal policymakers responded to this dissent by authorizing Alien Investigation Tribunals and the Board of Commerce, but both failed to provide patriots with meaningful results. This

added further credibility to the claims of labour, farmer, and veteran leaders that new political leaders were needed to oversee post-war reconstruction.

With limited gains from direct action, patriots shifted their offensive to the political arena. Policymakers and employers offered concessions, but they paled in comparison to the changes promoted by visionaries such as William Irvine and his proposal for group government; Salem Bland's New Christianity; and Woodsworth's Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. As these social gossellers professed, wartime sacrifices could be truly honoured by revolutionizing the spirit and systems of democratic society. Importantly, Great War culture was relevant to these visions of a transformed society because all three figures similarly drew upon profiteering to justify the necessity of their proposed transformations. The ambitions of these and other leaders was reflective of a broader democratic enlightenment, whereby the creativity of reimagining democracy became widespread and obtained great legitimacy. But while these individuals stand out for their unique intellectual contributions, it was ordinary patriots who energized the transformation of democracy at the grassroots level. Patriots in English Canada channelled their dissent into local political campaigns supporting Independent candidates. In addition to challenging party politics by electing candidates, the radicalism of this challenge also stemmed from through the process in which they were elected. Independent candidates were supported through decentralized campaigns, raised funds locally, formed constituency-level coalitions, and agreed upon measures to add layers of accountability to their nominated candidates, such as the right to recall and post-election referendums. By emphasizing how the embrace of independent politics crossed regional and class boundaries, and furthermore, similarly stemmed from Great War culture and wartime experiences, the post-war political

challenge can be more explicitly recognized as part of a broader democratic revolt that was legitimized by Great War patriotism.

Although the Great War culture framework has room for improvement and the dynamics related to Great War profiteering and patriotism can be expanded upon, this study points to the importance of culture for understanding the emergence of democratic movements and how ideology is utilized to transcend traditional social cleavages. But what also makes this dissertation distinct is how it presents a story that illustrates how the Great War was a struggle for peace and democracy. This struggle is not implied in the sense of how it was framed by wartime propaganda by defeating Imperial Germany, but rather by the actions and aspirations of those on the home front who wanted to reconstruct democracy from within. Over the decades, the prestige of the Great War as a noble struggle has been eroded by the acknowledgement that all European empires, including the British empire, espoused militarism and undermined peace. Aside the highly contestable claim that the Great War was an important milestone for the emergence of Canadian nationalism,<sup>13</sup> the memory of the Great War in Canada is tainted as a pointless war that led to mass bloodshed and carnage. In keeping with this narrative, the Great War is regarded as one of humanity's great tragedies. Undoubtedly, the Great War will forever remain a tragedy but buried within the history of this struggle was a genuine yearning to defend democracy and recreate it from the bottom up. As exemplified by the discriminatory violence of xenophobic-patriotism, past visions of democracy do not always align with contemporary sentiments. Indeed, there is nothing to celebrate about the actions of xenophobic-patriots, but it remains important for understanding the emergence and progression of grassroots movements. What is inspiring, however, was the struggle undertaken by patriots to challenge the unchecked

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<sup>13</sup> Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, *The Vimy Trap or, how we learned to stop worrying and love the Great War* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2016).

political corruption and exploitation of the people by the privileged economic and political elite. It was this struggle against the war and food profiteers on the home-front that remains a lesser known part of the Great War's history. The ambition and idealism of patriots became a monumental force of change that had a lasting impact in a myriad of ways – not only in terms of public policy but also by creating a greater attentiveness to the need of enforcing equality and upholding democracy. Few moments in Canadian history can rival the scale and intensity of this revolt. And so, when we honour the sacrifices of those who fought in the First World War, we should honour them in the way that veterans such as Loughnan advocated – to think not only of their death and sacrifice, but to use their memory to protect peace and democracy.

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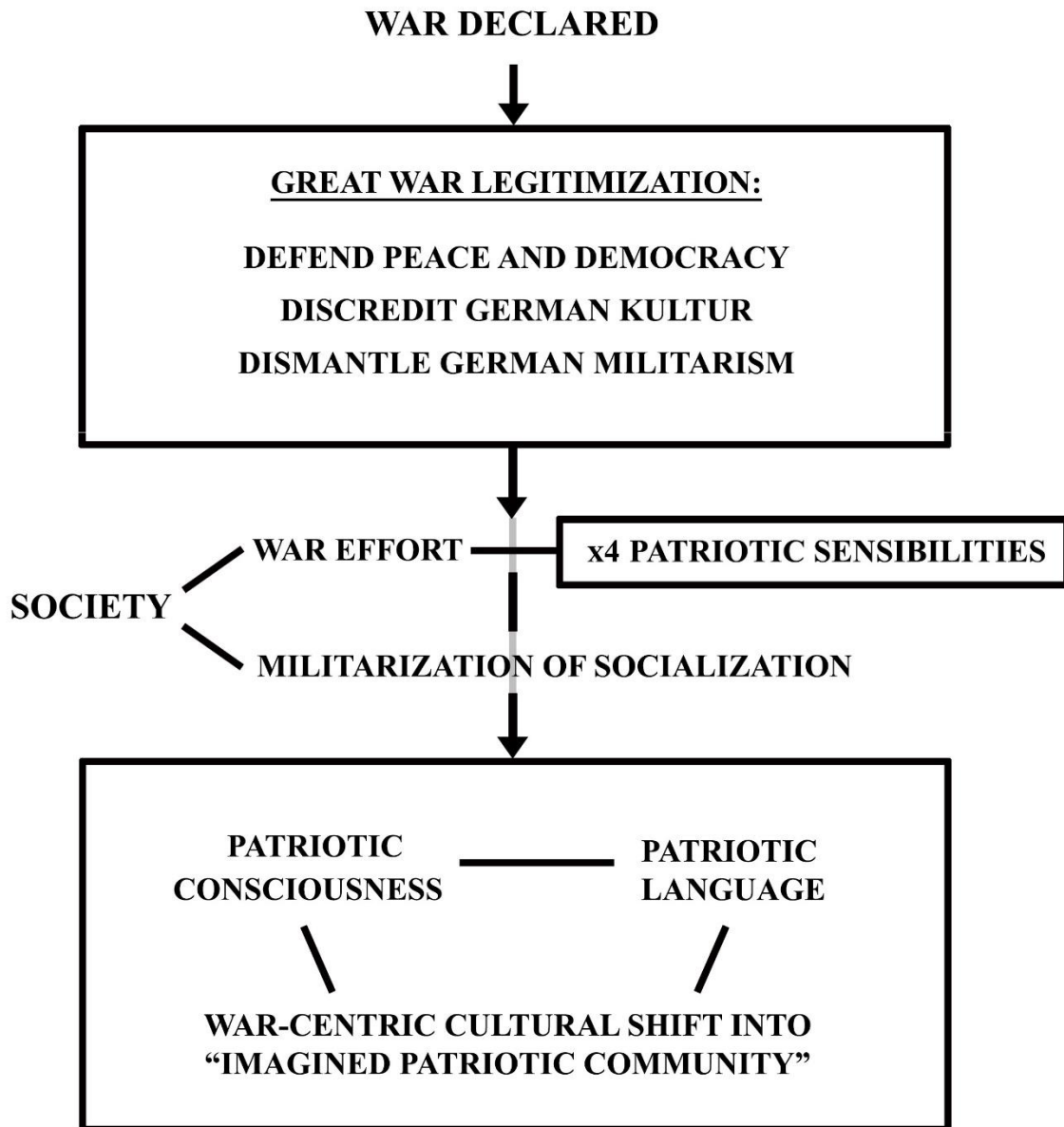
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## APPENDIX A: GREAT WAR CULTURE FRAMEWORK



*\*Enclosed areas represent ideological layers*