Canada and the Great War

The Big Idea: Does A National Identity Emerge?
A National Identity?

What is a nation? What does Canadian identity mean?

Born here?

Speak French? English? Neither?

Citizen?

Born to Canadian parents in another country?

In 1914 was there a Canadian identity or was it more like British identity?
Canada 1914

Patchwork of regions with very little connection in terms of communication or even transportation (very hard to get across Canada)

Regions had little to no contact- not even for trade purposes

Wartime training can be seen as the spark to increasing our ‘unity’

Young men from all over Canada came together in one place to train, first at Valcartier and then England

Consider this source:
Private Ben Wagner

“We were in Whitley Camp (England) and right alongside us was a battalion from French Canada. We didn’t speak much French and they didn’t speak much English, but they were the finest sports you ever saw...You met people from Nova Scotia, or from Prince Edward Island, clean through to British Columbia”
Canada Prepares for War

War Measures Act 1914- suspend civil liberties, transform the country for war- regulate people’s behaviours

“enemy aliens”- people in Canada who held citizenship with Germany, Austro-Hungarian immigrants- had to carry identity cards

Internment camps (24)- created to hold those deemed dangerous- Ukrainians, Italians, Germans etc...
BUSHMEN AND SAWMILL HANDS
WANTED
JOIN THE
224TH CANADIAN FORESTRY
BATTALION
ALEXANDER MCDougall
LT. COL.
HEADQUARTERS
43 BANK ST. OTTAWA

MOO-CHE-WE-IN-ES.
PALE FACE, MY SKIN IS DARK
BUT MY HEART IS WHITE.
FOR I ALSO GIVE TO
CANADIAN PATRIOTIC
FUND
Interventionist State

“Canadians learned to live with unprecedented government controls and involvement in their daily lives. Food and fuel shortages led to meatless mondays, fuelless sundays”- Historian Desmond Morton

Urban Canada prospered with huge government contracts given out for manufacturing- Western provinces received very little and yet had to provide the food for the war

Increased pressure to help pay for the war- Canadian Patriotic Fund, Victory Bonds, Direct Taxation (Income Tax act)

Propaganda
Come into the Garden Dad!

Make this summer’s garden provide next winter’s vegetables.

Buy Victory Bonds

They serve France

How can I serve Canada?
Women and the War

2500 women served in the Canadian medical corps

Women also contributed millions of hours of unpaid labour in various non-government associations- Red Cross, Great War Veterans association, YWCA, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE)

Unmarried women were in a unique situation- a massive wartime labour shortage- women filled factory positions and also urban women moved to farms to help produce food for the war

Is this a leap forward for women’s rights?
Race and Recruitment

So...how supportive were Canadians to the outbreak of war?

Who do we know was supportive and why?

Who do we know was worried about the war?

What about French Canadians?

Reading- evidence of a conflict between English Canada and French Canada, proof of any conflict within the Canadian army between the two groups? Any proof of a ‘unity’ between the languages? Statistics- can they help us prove anything?