

#1

“Not a 20-years’ war”

Excerpt from an editorial in the Manitoba Free Press from August 3, 1914 hypothesizing about the possible length of the war.



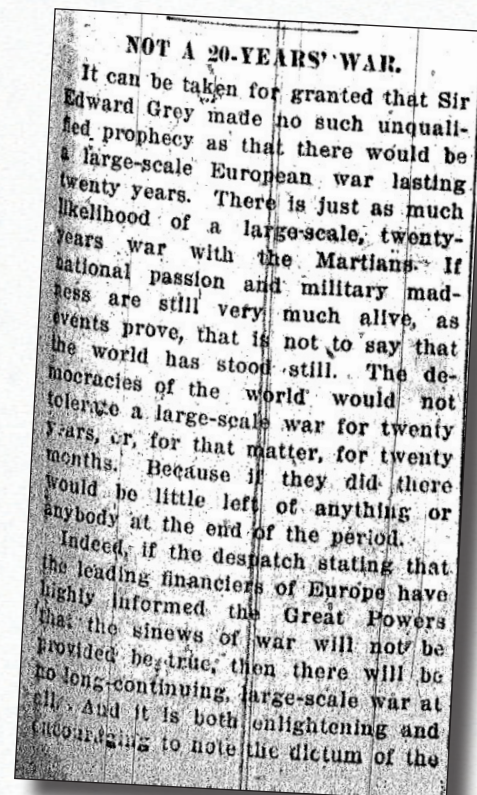
Comments in brackets are not part of the original document. They have been added to assist the reader with difficult words.

“Not a 20-years’ war”

There is just as much likelihood of a large-scale, twenty-years war with the Martians [creatures from Mars] ... the democracies of the world would not tolerate a large-scale war for twenty years, or, for that matter, for twenty months. Because if it did there would be little left of anything or anybody at the end of the period ... if the last big-scale war of the world has not already been fought, the prospective [the upcoming war] one, if it materialize, will certainly be the last.

... there is much to support the view that a large scale war would be of short duration.

“Not a 20-Years’ War.” Manitoba Free Press (August 3, 1914), p. 11.



Relieved that war has come at last

Excerpts from an August 5, 1914 article in the Vancouver Province that describes the reaction in different Canadian cities to Canada's entrance into the war.

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RELIEVED THAT WAR HAS COME AT LAST August 5, 1914

Ottawa, Aug. 5—Not since the South African [Boer] war have such scenes of patriotism been witnessed in the capital as last night Thousands stood in the streets and sang the National Anthem, "The Maple Leaf Forever," and "O Canada."

Quebec, Aug. 5—The announcement that Germany and Great Britain were at war was received with the greatest enthusiasm while English and French and Irish paraded together in a display of loyalty and patriotism such as has never been witnessed in the ancient capital.

Toronto, Aug. 5—Although a state of war between Germany and Great Britain had been expected, the official declaration came with a shock. Immense crowds gathered at the newspaper offices waiting for the definite news but when finally the bulletins were posted ... it was at first received in silence. Then all possible consequences were forgotten in an outburst of patriotic enthusiasm and the streets resounded with the cheers for the Empire Never ... has the city witnessed such a spontaneous outburst of patriotism and whole souled loyalty to the Empire. All night bands paraded the streets, at the head of the crowds waving flags and cheering for King and country.

Montreal, Aug. 5—... Cheering and flag waving were indulged in by thousands of enthusiastic young men and there was a repetition of the street demonstrations of the past three or four nights in support of the Triple Entente.

Edmonton, Alta., Aug 5—Scenes of great enthusiasm were witnessed on the streets last night when the news of the declarations of war between Great Britain and Germany were announced There were several riots, and a German who denounced the British Empire was badly beaten.

"Relieved that War has Come at Last." Vancouver Province, (August 5, 1914), p. 4.



#3

"War declared!" Scene outside "Star" office

Photograph of the scene outside the offices of the Toronto Star newspaper, at midnight August 4, 1914, after Great Britain declared war.

**PRIMARY
SOURCE**
Canadians' reaction to
the start of WWI



"War declared!" Scene outside "Star" office, midnight, August 4th.

Source: A. A. Chesterfield Fonds, Queen's University Archives

"War Declared!" Scene outside "Star" office, midnight, August 4th," Queen's University Archives, <http://archives.queensu.ca/Exhibits/archres/wwi-intro/canada.html> (Accessed August 10, 2011).

#4

The demon of war

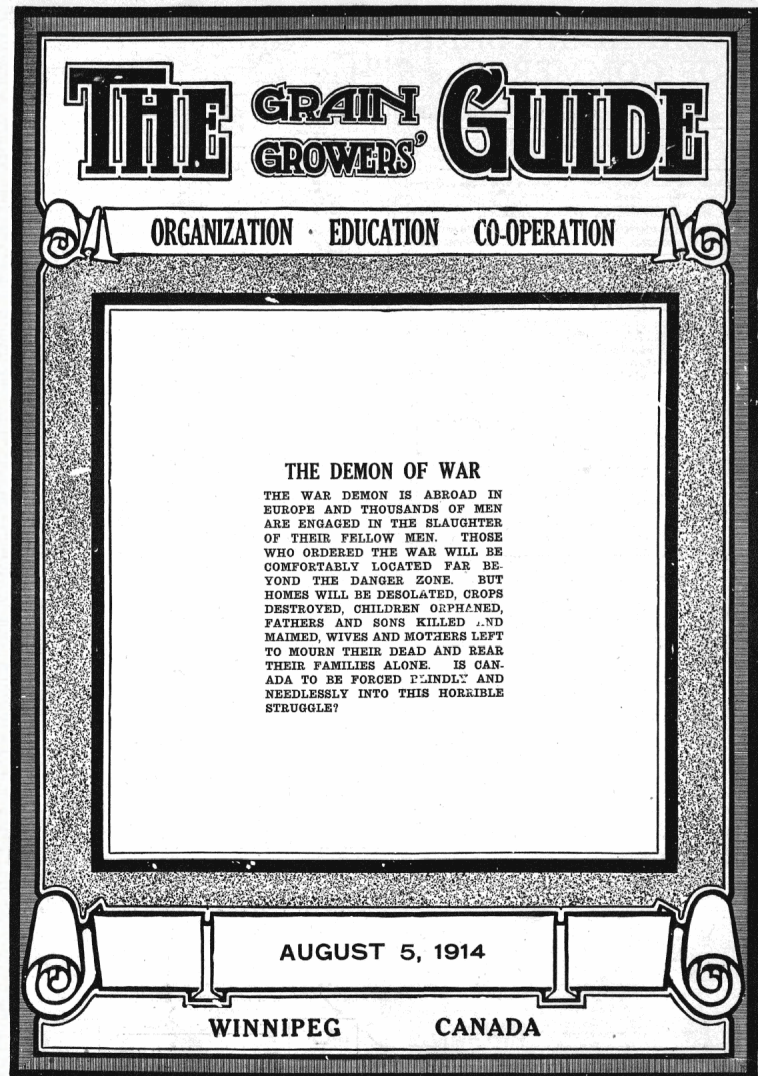
Front page of the August 5, 1914 *The Grain Growers Guide*, a weekly farming journal published by the Prairie grain growers' associations in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The guide was committed to social reform including the Temperance Movement and fighting for Women's Rights.



THE DEMON OF WAR

The war demon is abroad in Europe and thousands of men are engaging in the slaughter of their fellow men. Those who ordered the war will be comfortably located far beyond the danger zone. But homes will be desolated, crops destroyed, children orphaned, fathers and sons killed and maimed, wives and mothers left to mourn their dead and rear their families alone. Is Canada to be forced blindly and needlessly into this horrible struggle?

"The demon of war," *The Grain Growers Guide* (August 5, 1914), p. 1.



CIRCULATION OVER 35,000 WEEKLY

BEING LARGER THAN THE SWORN CIRCULATION OF ANY OTHER FARM JOURNAL IN CANADA



#5

Diary entry of Private Frank Walker

Excerpt from 20-year-old Private Frank Walker's diary from August 8-10, 1914. Walker was from Charlottetown, PEI and enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force soon after war was declared.



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August 8-10, 1914

Since the outbreak of the War-four long, unendurable days ago-I have been on pins and needles. Will they take me?-that's the question. It is maddening to think of those thirty thousand "chosen ones" (the volunteers in the first CEF) marching away to Glory and Adventure Thank Heaven! All fears are over now. I have PASSED Crowds of spectators watch our daily drills. This unusual solitude has gone to our heads, quite a bit. We strut around, for the most part, as if the destiny of the Empire hung on our every step.-Ridiculous, of course; but there is something grand about it.

-Private Frank Walker

Mary F. Gaudet (ed.), From a stretcher handle: The World War I journal and poems of Pte. Frank Walker (Charlottetown, PEI: Institute of Island Studies, 2000), p. 23.

#6

A rural perspective

An excerpt from an oral interview with Ben Wagner in which he describes the reaction in the rural community of Bruce County, ON to the outbreak of World War I.



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A rural perspective

"The reaction was very quiet. The people who did the most hurrahing were the people who weren't going to be affected in the war. The rest of us just more or less sat tight. Of course, our mothers didn't want us to go. There were three sons in our family and two of us were overseas, so we didn't do too badly ourselves. In the beginning people accepted the war, but it was quite apiece away from us. There wasn't the grimness about it that there was, say, in France or these countries right alongside the war ... The rural areas of Canada were a little slow to come to realize there was a war on."

-Ben Wagner

Gus Richardson (comp.) and Daphne Reed (ed.), *The Great War and Canadian society: An oral history* (Toronto, ON: New Hogtown Press, 1978), p. 95.

#7

Financial incentives

Excerpt from an oral interview with Burt Woods, who was an English orphan sent to Canada at the age of 11 to work as a farm hand where he worked five years before joining the army.



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Financial incentives

"When the war broke out, I run away from the home I was in I run away and joined the army, and gave me age as 18. I was between 14 and 15 ... (but) I just looked tough, you know, like a regular farm boy. I joined the army and went in as a sniper. The average young fella was running away, you know. Things are different now. You see, I was only getting five dollars a year and my keep (at the farm home). When I joined the army I was getting more-\$1.10 a day."

-Burt Woods

Gus Richardson (comp.) and Daphne Reed (ed.), *The Great War and Canadian society: An oral history* (Toronto, ON: New Hogtown Press, 1978), p. 95.



#9

The Angel of Death is abroad in Europe

Political cartoon from the August 12, 1914, Grain Growers Guide, a weekly farming journal published by the Prairie grain growers' associations in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The guide was committed to social reform including the Temperance Movement and fighting for Women's Rights.

PRIMARY SOURCE
Canadians' reaction to the start of WWI



Charles and Cynthia Hou (eds.), *Great Canadian political cartoons: 1820–1914* (Vancouver, BC: Moody's Lookout Press, 2008), p. 221.

#10

War clouds

Excerpt from article written by Francis Marion Beynon as part of her regular column “The Country Homemakers” which ran in The Grain Growers’ Guide from 1912 to 1917. Beynon resigned in 1917 because her antiwar position made her very unpopular with the readers to the point where she received personal threats.



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**The Country Homemakers
The Grain Growers' Guide
August 12, 1914**

It is unbelievable that a great European war can happen in this, the twentieth century. It is so illogical, so barbarous

War destroys the flower of a country's manhood, and leaves in its wake a trail, not only of dead bodies, but of wrecked homes and broken hearts.

And it is this infamous [shameful] thing that men say we women must not be given the right to decide upon—that because it is men who fight, it must be men who legislate about wars. Do these people ever ask themselves who it is that suffers the long years of privation [lack of usual comforts or necessities of life] that follow the war, who it is that supplies the men for the battlefield, who it is that stay at home and agonizes for husband, or son or brother out at the front? Do not the women of the country pay as big a price for war as the men? ... Then, shouldn't the women be allowed to say whether or not they are willing to pay this price in order to acquire or retain so many miles of territory?

Indeed, there is reason to hope that within the next decade the mothers of the world will rise up and put an end to war, that they will refuse to bear and rear sons to be shot down in order to settle a dispute between nations, or to gratify the greed of gun making corporations.

Women have never been cowards when it came to serving their country in their country's need, but when they become legislators they will find a saner method of settling differences of opinion than by sending their sons to rot on the battlefield.

- Francis Marion Beynon

Francis Marion Beynon, “The Country Homemakers,” The Grain Growers Guide (August 12, 1914), p. 8.



#11

Speech by Prime Minister Robert Borden

An excerpt from a speech delivered by Prime Minister Robert Borden in the House of Commons on August 14, 1914, ten days after Canada entered the war.



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Speech by Prime Minister Robert Borden
House of Commons
August 14, 1914

"In the awful dawn of the greatest war the world has ever known, in the hour when peril (danger) confronts us such as this Empire has not faced for a hundred years, every vain (excessively proud) or unnecessary word seems a discord (to work against the rest of society). As to our duty, all are agreed: we stand shoulder to shoulder with Britain and the other British dominions in this quarrel (fight). And that duty we shall not fail to fulfil as the honour of Canada demands. Not for love of battle, not for lust of conquest, not for greed of possessions, but for the cause of honour, to maintain solemn (serious) pledges, to uphold principles of liberty, to withstand forces that would convert the world into an armed camp; yea, in the very name of the peace that we sought at any cost save that of dishonour, we have entered into this war; and, while gravely conscious of the tremendous issues involved and of all the sacrifices that they may entail, we do not shrink from them, but with firm hearts we abide (accept) the event."

Robert Borden, "Sir Robert Borden declares war," *Courage remembered: The world wars through Canadian eyes* (Mount Allison University), 1996, <http://www.mta.ca/library/courage/sirrobertbordendeclareswar.html> (Accessed 20 July 2011).



#12

Memoir of Private Harold R. Peat

Excerpt from the memoir of Harold R. Peat describing the beliefs of the soldiers in August 1914. Peat was a member of the Third Battalion First Canadian Contingent (the First Canadian Contingent was the first division of the CEF sent overseas) and wrote a detailed memoir about his experiences in World War I after returning from the front.



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Memoir of Private Harold R. Peat 1917

A few days later Bill voiced the opinion of the majority of the soldiers when he said, "Oh, this bloomin' war will be over in three months." Not alone was this Bill's opinion ... but the opinion of the people of Canada, the opinion of the people of the whole British Empire

It was this overconfidence which brought only thirty-three thousand Canadian men to the mobilization camp at Valcartier, in answer to the first call to arms, instead of the one hundred thousand there should have been.

Harold R. Peat, *Private Peat* (Toronto, ON: George J. McLeod Publishers, 1917), pp. 4–5.

#13

Interview with Maria Pawel

Excerpt from an interview with Ukrainian immigrant Maria Pawel about reactions to Canada's entry into World War I. Pawel was born in the Ukraine in 1897 and immigrated to Canada in 1911, where she settled in Saskatoon.



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Interview with Maria Pawel

"I remember when they declared war. You know, I didn't know very much. War to us was something horrid. We didn't know what it was all about. So I remember the only thing everybody was shouting was "War! War! War!" And there was mobilization then, and young men were mobilized. I remember them bravely marching They were taught to be patriotic, and then war came. Whether you liked it or not, you go because it's your duty. Young men didn't realize where they were going."

Gus Richardson (comp.) and Daphne Reed (ed.), *The Great War and Canadian society: An oral history* (Toronto, ON: New Hogtown Press, 1978), p. 110.

#14

Paying the price of war

Excerpt from Nellie McClung's book *In Times Like These*, a collection of essays based on speeches given by McClung during the 1914 Manitoba election campaign. McClung was an outspoken feminist, pacifist, social reformer and Canada's most well-known suffragette (woman who campaigned for women's right to vote). Although a dedicated pacifist, she later changed her opposition to the war after her son enlisted.



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In Times Like These by Nellie McClung, 1914

War is the antithesis (opposite) of all our teaching. It breaks all the commandments; it makes rich men poor, and strong men weak. It makes well (healthy) men sick, and by it living men are changed to dead men. Why, then, does war continue? Why do men go so easily to war - for we may as well admit that they do go easily? There is one explanation. They like it! ... But although men like to fight, war is not inevitable. War is not of God's making. War is a crime committed by men and, therefore, when enough people say it shall not be, it cannot be. This will not happen until women are allowed to say what they think of war. Up to the present time women have had nothing to say about war, except pay the price of war-this privilege has been theirs always.

Nellie McClung, *In Times Like These* (Toronto, ON: McLeod and Allen, 1915), p. 15.

#1

Scenes at the moment of the declaration of war

Excerpt from an online exhibit from Queen's University Archives describes the mood when Great Britain declared war on Germany.



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Britain had just officially declared war against Germany. Instantaneously, Canadians gathered in the streets, singing and cheering. Everyone wanted to be a hero and everyone wanted to go to war. Some suggest that those parading and singing in the streets were people unlikely to be affected negatively by the war. Others sat quietly in their homes, afraid and uncertain of the future that war would bring. Many English-speaking Canadians believed that the moment Britain declared war, Canada was also at war. There were still some very strong ties to Britain in Canada. People cheered because war meant steady employment for all and it put an end to the depression that was imminent in 1914.

“An Archival Look at World War I,” Queen’s University Archives, <http://archives.queensu.ca/Exhibits/archres/wwi-intro/canada.html> (Accessed 20 July 2011).

#2

Reactions to the outbreak of the First World War

Excerpt from the Canadian War Museum's online exhibition, "Canada and the First World War."



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Thousands showed up at their local recruiting stations eager to “do their bit,” many of them with strong emotional ties to Great Britain. The first contingent was 70 percent British-born, although many had lived in Canada for years and considered themselves Canadian. The percentage of native-born Canadians would increase throughout the war until, by 1918, more than half of the Canadian Expeditionary Force would be Canadian-born.

Germany's brutal invasion of Belgium had shocked many Canadians. Others had been influenced by school texts and poems depicting war as a romantic adventure. Questions of honour and glory also contributed to the war enthusiasm, and many saw the prospect of action as a temporary escape from the monotony of work and civilian routine. Some sought to escape the economic recession that plagued Canada, but many gave up good jobs in order to serve.

“Canada and the First World War,” The Canadian War Museum, <http://www.civilization.ca/cwm/exhibitions/guerre/reaction-war-e.aspx> (Accessed 20 July 2011).

#3

French Canada and recruitment during World War I

Excerpt from an article featured the Canadian War Museum's website written by Dr. Serge Durflinger, Professor of History at the University of Ottawa.



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When Canadians learned they were at war, huge flag-waving crowds expressing loyalty to the British Empire drowned out voices of caution or dissent. The war would be a moral crusade against militarism, tyranny, injustice, and barbarism. “There are no longer French Canadians and English Canadians,” claimed the Montreal newspaper, *La Patrie*, “Only one race now exists, united ... in a common cause.” Even Henri Bourassa, politician, journalist, anti-imperialist, and guiding spirit of French-Canadian nationalism, at first cautiously supported the war effort

... Following the nation-wide outbursts of patriotism in August 1914, French-Canadian support for the war began to decline. There existed among French Canadians a tradition of suspicion and even hostility towards the British Empire, and, while sympathetic to France, Great Britain's ally, few French Canadians were willing to risk their lives in its defence either. After all, for over a century following the British conquest of New France in 1760, France showed no interest in the welfare of French Canadians. In North America, les Canadiens [French Canadians] had survived and grown, remaining culturally vibrant without French support. By 1914, while an educated élite in French Canada professed some cultural affinity, most French Canadians did not identify with anti-clerical and scandal-ridden France

... When the first contingent of the CEF sailed in October 1914, it contained a single organized French-speaking company (about 150 men) The second contingent of over 20,000 men, despatched to Britain in early 1915, had a single French-speaking Québec battalion.

Serge Durflinger, “French Canada and Recruitment During the First World War,” The Canadian War Museum, <http://www.civilization.ca/cwm/explore/military-history/dispatches/french-canada-and-recruitment-during-the-first-world-war> (Accessed 10 August 2011).