

## Conscription Crisis

- By 1917 fewer volunteers
- Not enough to replace the dead or wounded
- Borden convinced that only more men could win the war

## French-Canadians

- Were opposed
- Recruitment in Quebec had been mishandled
- French language rights were being restricted in schools
- Felt no patriotic pride to Britain
- Henri Bourassa:
  - The country had already lost enough men and spent enough money
  - Country could be bankrupted
  - Agriculture and Industrial sectors were weakened
  - Political independence was threatened
  - Conscription would bitterly divide the country

## Others Opposed

- Prairie farmers needed their sons and hired hands to work in the fields
- Miners and industrial labourers felt that, through their work, they were already contributing to the war effort

## Rigging the Conscription Vote

- Conscientious objectors and immigrants were not allowed to vote in 1917. Might not support Britain.
- Women were not allowed to vote. Felt they might want to end the fighting and bring the men home.

## *Warfare in WWI*

- arguably the most brutal, awful war ever fought
- was a real turning point in war
  - o problem: old battle tactics with new, deadly technology
    - you have old 'pitched battles' being fought with machine guns and artillery
    - results in millions of deaths
    - difficult to assess total death, but numbers range around 15-20 million (soldiers and civilians)
  - o Hitler, twenty years later, will solve the problem of trench warfare
- **trench warfare** was the way WWI was fought
  - o opposing sides literally dug in via trenches/dugouts
  - o exchanged artillery fire and infantry charges back and forth, killing millions, for almost five years
- went in opposition of the **Schlieffen Plan**
  - Germany planned to hit France quickly and move counter-clockwise towards Russia
  - once they got stuck at the Front, neither side was moving
- WWI was the first war to see chemical weapons used
  - o chlorine and mustard gas was exchanged back and forth
    - often depended on the wind...

## *Canada's War Experience in WWI*

- life in the trenches was horrible
  - damp, cold, and overrun with rats
  - soldiers infested with lice (lousy?)

- lived in constant fear – if injured, often were left to die b/c rescue attempts were too dangerous
- if people refused to attack, they were shot

### **Second Battle of Ypres**

- April 22, 1915, CDN troops were the first soldiers to have poison gas (chlorine) used against them
  - urinated in rags to breath through – neutralized the gas
  - earned respect b/c we didn't run, as did the French
- 6000 died

### **Battle of the Somme**

- inept tactics – ordered to march at machine gun fire!
- 85% of Royal Newfoundland Regiment killed in a half hour
- 24 000 Canadians died in this offensive (page 31 passage)

### **Battle of Vimy Ridge**

- most famous battle for Canadians in WWI
- important area held by Germans since 1914
  - French and British tried again and again and couldn't
- CDN's called to battle in 1916
  - o CDN sappers (engineers) dug tunnels to secretly move up the front while soldiers shelled Germans
  - o on Easter Monday, CDN's attacked – brave and selfless - beat the Germans in a 3 day offensive
- CDN soldiers took more ground, prisoners, and artillery than any British offensive in the whole war
- milestone for Canada – our greatest WWI achievement
- after many battles where Canada proved itself again and again, we stood out as arguably the greatest fighting force in the entire war