

until the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, the explosion in Halifax was the biggest artificial explosion ever recorded. All that was ever found of the *Mont Blanc* was a cannon and part of an anchor that landed over 3 km away.

Within hours, however, aid was on its way from neighbouring towns. Within two days, a ship from Boston arrived with over \$3 million in relief supplies. Thirty million dollars was collected from around the world to help rebuild the city and assist the survivors. American generosity is still celebrated today with a gift of a special Christmas tree shipped from Nova Scotia to Boston each year.



"Enemy Aliens"

War often has a way of bringing out both the best and worst in people and nations. On the one hand, Canadians were united as never before, making courageous and generous sacrifices for the war effort. On the other hand, the pressures of war also encouraged suspicion, blind intolerance, and personal greed.

When war broke out, there were about 500 000 German, Austrian, and Hungarian people living in Canada. Others, such as the Ukrainians, had come from the territories or allies of the German and Austrian empires. At first, the government urged that these citizens be treated fairly. During the Laurier years, they had been welcomed into Canada. Many had come to escape militarism and oppression in their home countries. They had become successful farmers, business people, and workers in Canada's industries.

But as war fever turned to hysteria, these people were viewed with suspicion and even hatred. Rumours of spies and sabotage, including fears that enemies were planning to blow up the Welland Canal, fueled the suspicions. People

demanded that these "enemy aliens" be fired from their jobs and locked up.

In response to the pressures, the government used the **War Measures Act** to place restrictions on "enemy aliens." The War Measures Act gave the government sweeping powers to "ensure the security, defence, peace, order, and welfare of Canada." People suspected of sympathizing with the enemy could be arrested or searched. Many people labelled as "enemy aliens" were rounded up and sent to internment camps in remote areas.

Over 8597 "enemy aliens" were held in these labour camps during World War I. The majority were Ukrainians. Conditions in the camps were harsh. The men worked long hours and were often poorly fed and clothed. Other "enemy aliens" were forced to register with their local police and report on a regular basis. Some had their homes or businesses vandalized.

Mr Spade, who was German, lived at 2 or 4 Jersey Avenue in Toronto. At that time we lived at number 14. This happened after supper because I didn't see it, but I heard them talk about it. A whole gang of men came around and got him and took him over to Clinton Street. They tarred and feathered him. Why I don't know. Except he was a German.

People of German ancestry in the town of Berlin, Ontario, tried to show they were loyal to the British side in the war. They changed the name of the town to Kitchener, after the British War Minister. Carlstadt in Alberta also changed its name to Alderson after the British commander of the Canadians at Ypres. Other "enemy aliens" contributed to the war effort by raising funds. An official investigation by the North-West Mounted Police found that "there was not the slightest trace of orga-



The Spirit Lake enemy alien internment camp in northern Quebec. Rather than live alone, some women joined their husbands in the camps. Describe the conditions of the camp shown in this photo.

nization or concerted movement amongst the enemy aliens" that could be considered a threat to Canada.

Under the War Measures Act, the government also introduced censorship. It banned the publication and distribution of books and magazines in "enemy" languages. When the war ended, the War Measures Act was no longer in effect.

Today, people question the trade-off involved in passing such an act. On the one hand, the government needed special powers to respond to the emergencies of war. To many people, this was a war for democracy. On the other hand, the act meant that Canadians lost some of their basic democratic rights and freedoms.

FAST FORWARD

The War Measures Act has been used three times in Canada's history. The first time was during World War I. The act was introduced again during World War II. In World War II, Japan was an enemy nation and more than 16 000 Japanese Canadians were sent to internment camps under the act. In 1988, the Canadian government formally apologized to these Japanese Canadians and provided them with financial compensation. No apology has ever been extended to those who were interned during World War I, however. Some communities, such as the Ukrainians, are attempting to raise awareness of this fact.

In 1970, the War Measures Act was passed again to deal with the terrorist FLQ crisis in Quebec. It was the first time the act was ever used in peacetime. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau justified his government's action by saying that the crisis in Quebec represented a threat to overthrow the government. Some people believe it was used more to put down political protest in Quebec, and that there was no real threat to the government. The issue is still controversial.