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Robert Page was born in Toronto and received his early education in North York. He obtained his B.A. and M.A. from Queen's University and his doctorate from Oxford where he wrote a thesis on Canadian imperial relations between 1895 and 1903. His historical research has focused on themes relating to Canadian imperialism, resource development, and environmental issues. He has taught at Trent University in Ontario in both the History Department and the Environmental and Resource Studies Program, the latter of which he chaired for a number of years. Outside of academic work, he has done considerable public policy analysis on energy and the environment. He was consultant to the Dene Nation for the Berger Inquiry on the Mackenzie Valley pipeline and he currently serves as Chairman of the Advisory Council to the federal Minister of the Environment. His publications include Canadian History Since Confederation (Georgetown, 1972 and 1978), with Bruce Hodgins; Imperialism and Canada (Toronto, 1972); and Northern Development: The Canadian Dilemma (Toronto, 1986); he is now researching a biography of Premier Sir George Ross of Ontario.
THE BOER WAR AND CANADIAN IMPERIALISM

The Boer War years were exciting ones for the young Dominion in its march to political maturity. In October 1899 Canadian troops were sent overseas formally for the first time; they went “Marching to Pretoria” to support the British Empire in its war effort against two small countries in southern Africa. Unlike the world wars of 1914 or 1939, Mother Britain was not in danger, for the Boer Republics total available manpower was not much more than that of the city of Toronto. Yet British paramountcy in Africa had been challenged and the challenge could not be ignored.

The resulting war fever which erupted in Canada was a combination of naive idealism and emotional patriotism; it was the high watermark of the wider movement of imperialism. Britain appeared to be at the height of her power and prestige while Canada as a junior partner in the Empire basked in the reflected glory. But the Boer War and the militarism which it sparked also raised profound concerns, especially in Quebec, about the long-term implications of imperialism and their cost to Canada. Critics argued that the country had far more appropriate ways of using its human and financial resources than on imperial adventures in distant parts of the globe. Hence this curious little war created political tensions within Canada which remained long after the troops came home.

The Nature of Canadian Imperialism

In the post-Confederation era, Canadians’ attitudes towards the Empire to which they belonged gave few warnings of the exuberant feelings to come. In the 1870s and the 1880s, there were expressions of loyalty to Britain, but little public enthusiasm for events or movements external to Canada. Canadians were looking inward, absorbed by the ethnic and sectarian disputes surrounding Louis Riel or the Manitoba Schools question. Sir John A. Macdonald’s attitude was broadly representative: he frequently expressed his unbounded loyalty to the British connection on the public platform, but was careful to ensure that little was done to strengthen existing ties. For example, he opposed sending Canadian troops to the Sudan to help rescue Gordon in 1884 and later ordered his ministers to avoid implicating the government in the imperial federation movement. Yet if the British connection was ever in doubt, such as in the election campaign of 1891, Macdonald could mobilize his imperial patriotism with such slogans as “a British subject I was born, a British subject I will die.” But it is important to recognize that he portrayed himself as a protector of the status quo rather than a champion of closer, formal Anglo-Canadian bonds through some kind of imperial federation. Rather, he was appealing to the deep intellectual, emotional, and political traditions of Loyalism in Canada and to the ongoing fears of American expansion; in this Canadian-American context, the Empire was the critical ingredient in preserving Canadian “independence.” In the 1890s,
aggressive American activities such as the Venezuela boundary dispute only served to rekindle Canadian unease and strengthen the logic of the imperial alliance.

By the 1890s, Macdonald’s passive imperialism was replaced by a much more active, aggressive variety in many parts of English Canada. As in Britain itself, this “new” imperialism became a potent political, economic, social, and spiritual force. There were many causes and aspects of the “new” imperialism. One of the most significant was the intense interest of Canadians in overseas missionary activities. This commitment combined many of the virtues of spiritual salvation and political progress. Among protestant denominations it triggered an unprecedented upsurge of emotional and financial support for missionary efforts. This desire to bring Christian civilization to less fortunate nations was a broad concept involving religious, commercial, educational, medical, and political aspects. Britain had a responsibility as the highest form of modern civilization to pass on its benefits to those who were less advanced. The British Empire was to be the vehicle for this divinely ordained process of power politics. Yet it is essential for understanding the strength of the imperial movement to see the genuine idealism of many of the participants. Kipling’s “The White Man’s Burden” reflects this concept of service:

Take up the White Man’s burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives’ need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.

This message was so potent because it was impossible to separate the political from the spiritual content.

These themes of Christian expansionism emerged in the popular biographies of African martyrs like Livingstone, the periodic Mission Sundays at most churches, and the huge interdenominational conferences. The famous boast was “to evangelize the world in this generation.” Newton Wesley Rowell later even quantified Canada’s own responsibility with great precision: to convert 40 million souls through sending 1,600 missionaries at an annual cost of $3.2 million. Rowell argued that Canada had to recapture the spirit of the crusades through a militant commitment to the gospel. Even the normally staid Toronto Globe could not restrain its rhetoric on this subject.

These journeyings, martyrdoms, voluntary surrender of self and all the human heart holds dear for the sake of sharing with remote and
unsympathetic peoples the Christian ideal and life, form the bright-
est and most reassuring chapter in the story of man.

For the *Globe* as for many Canadians, this movement provided the great hope
for the future of the world, a future based upon the twin pillars of Christianity
and imperialism. The spread of the gospel under the protective arm of the British
Empire would open the way for a new golden age of peace and prosperity. The
*Pax Britannica* would lead to the *Pax Christi*; imperialism was merely the
secular arm of Christian expansionism. Given these sacred overtones of Empire,
it was no wonder that many Canadians in a highly religious age were less than
objective in their public attitudes towards imperial issues.

Imperialism, however, was not based solely on such assured assumptions of
world power for spiritual ends. Behind the apparent self-confidence and jingoism
of the imperial years lurked increasing uncertainty about Britain's ability to
maintain her position around the world. At the centre of these worries lay
disturbing economic trends. By the 1880s Britain as the unquestioned leader of
the industrial world had been overtaken by both Germany and the United States
in primary steel production. Her manufactured goods were also beginning to face
increased competition in every market from Hong Kong to Buenos Aires.
Prussia's rising military might had been demonstrated in her crushing defeat of
France in 1870 and her leadership in a new unified Germany. As the nineteenth
century entered its final decade, the economic, military, and diplomatic rivalries
of Europe were intensifying; the "Splendid Isolation" on which British foreign
policy had been based for so long was losing its splendour. The Royal Navy still
remained the strongest in the world, but its lines of communication were
stretched dangerously thin in protecting Britain's scattered interests on every
continent. The British army remained small and amateurish in comparison to
the large conscript continental armies and many of its available soldiers were
locked into garrison duty in Africa and India. As a result of these world trends,
some British cabinet ministers like Joseph Chamberlain were prepared to
establish new councils of empire in order to tap the human and other resources
of the white self-governing colonies like Canada and Australia. For such
visionaries, "imperial federation" thus became a means to sustain British world
paramountcy. By calling the colonies to their councils, they hoped to get them to
accept new military and fiscal obligations. One of the ironies of the imperial
movement, with all its arrogance and boasting, was that it was based, at least in
part, upon the insecurity caused by these growing dangers on the world stage.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, therefore, imperial issues sparked
greater and greater interest among English-speaking Canadians. Some of the
interest emerged from the factors mentioned above, some from other external
forces and events. In 1897, the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria provided
the excuse for a massive imperial celebration where colonial leaders such as
Laurier and colourful colonial troops played a prominent part. After the celebrations, Chamberlain hosted a Colonial Conference of the visiting prime ministers and, although no formal centralization of the Empire was agreed to, the meeting itself seemed a step towards the Empire’s unity envisioned by imperialists. In 1898 the Americans led by Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders embarked upon their own imperial adventure in the Spanish-American War. In this exciting international environment, Canada sought new status in the world through her involvement in the British Empire. Neither a dependent colony nor an independent nation, Canada was a semi-autonomous Dominion within the British Empire. Sensitive about their country’s international position, Canadians came to emphasize their role as a junior partner in the greatest Empire the world had ever seen. Despite new rivals, Britannia still ruled the waves; the maps did show so much of the world in red; and Victoria, the Queen and Empress, had become a symbol of the stability of the Empire with her sixty years on the throne. At the centre of this imperial political structure stood London, the greatest capital and financial centre of the world. Canadian schools and universities drew personnel and intellectual inspiration from Oxford, Cambridge, London, and Edinburgh. In the poetry of Rudyard Kipling, the music of Edward Elgar, and the historical writings of J.R. Seeley, the imperial themes found cultural and aesthetic expression. Imperialism thus came to embody so much that was enshrined in the ideals of Victorian society, with all its assumptions and contradictions.

Growing out of the above intellectual and emotional ingredients was a sense of pride in the achievements of the race. With the Empire and the British parliamentary tradition, Anglo-Saxons believed that they had created the finest expressions of democratic principles. To men such as George R. Parkin, Principal of Upper Canada College, this was the guiding feature of the Canadian political experience. Parkin explained this evolution using phrases reflecting the influence of social darwinism. He argued that “the glory of the British political system is often said to lie in the fact that it is a growth; that it has adapted itself and is capable of continuous adaptation, to the necessities of national development.” Behind this “steady process of evolution” lay a “race characteristic.” A “special capacity for political organization may, without race vanity, be claimed for the Anglo-Saxon people.” The basic sound quality of the racial stock would be improved further in Canada by the bracing northern climate, which also discouraged the immigration of allegedly weaker southern races, and thus gave Canada a key role to play, so Parkin believed, in the world-wide Anglo-Saxon Empire. Parkin called his major study Imperial Federation: The Problem of National Unity, which was an eloquent plea for tightening the ties of Empire into one unified “nation.” Like other writers on this topic, however, Parkin faced a basic contradiction. How could one reconcile local self-government for Canada with imperial federation? Parkin sidestepped the problem by proposing no clear scheme of federation. Charles G.D. Roberts, the novelist and historian,
took another approach by claiming that the problem did not exist. "It is possible to conceive of a form of Imperial Federation which would so guard the autonomy of each federating nation as to satisfy even those who desire absolute independence." For such idealists as Parkin, the concept of a British world state to provide an umbrella of peace, commercial prosperity, and spiritual elevation through the spread of Christian ethics was exceedingly attractive. If such a vision could foster a strong pro-imperial spirit, then British pragmatism would devise whatever political structures were necessary over time. Many Canadians, however, retreated from this concept of a formal constitutional "imperial federation," to favour the more ambiguous "imperial unity." This was more comfortable as it did not imply possibly threatening changes in the political structure of the Empire.

The imperial movement in Canada changed dramatically in the decade leading up to the Boer War. The early spokesmen like Parkin, George Monro Grant (Principal of Queen's University), and George Taylor Denison (Toronto magistrate) were joined in the 1890s by a wide following of urban middle-class supporters. The idealism of Empire seemed to transcend the troublesome local problems caused by urbanization and industrialization. It appeared to put human action on a higher plane. Even the media contributed to these images. The new telegraphic wire services brought news in minutes from around the world, creating a new sense of immediacy. Canada no longer seemed so far removed from events in Africa or Asia. The impact was heightened by the way that the urban press exploited the exotic and the brutal in order to sell newspapers. By the late 1890s imperialism seemed to be a movement sweeping western Europe and North America. There were even pseudo-scientific arguments of the social darwinists that imperial rivalries were part of an inevitable, wider pattern in history, the struggle for survival between nations or races. This was part of the process of natural selection out of which would emerge the "survival of the fittest." Hence war was not to be avoided, for it was part of the process of natural selection. As one author phrased it, "This dependence of progress on the survival of the fitter race terribly black as it may seem to you, gives the struggle for existence its redeeming features; it is the fiery crucible out of which comes the finer metal." Most of the imperialists, however, were more restrained in their rhetoric and their imagery. They were content to emphasize the more idealistic elements in their creed. Above all one must remember that imperialism is a term which scholars have to use with care. It could mean many different things to different people, depending upon the source and the context. But at the heart of its meaning in Canada lay assumptions of Anglo-Saxon superiority, which as will be seen not surprisingly alarmed non-Anglo-Saxons.

A further factor contributing to imperialism was the new interest in naval power and access to natural resources. The American naval historian,
A.T. Mahan, wrote a series of books on the pivotal role of sea power in world history and in particular the role of the Royal Navy in establishing British commerce and colonies. This concept was linked to growing concerns in the industrialized nations to have secure access to raw materials even in time of war. While Canada could not contribute seriously to the naval might of Great Britain, she could be a supplier of food and other essential materials. Canadians argued that British subsidies should be available to promote such trade by “all red” routes of fast steamships which could be converted in times of war to armed auxiliaries. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company with its transcontinental rail lines and its steamships on both oceans claimed to be the “all red” imperial highway from London to the Far East. Canadians also argued strongly for special subsidized telegraph cables from Canada to Australia, which would allow Britain to communicate with Australia directly, via Canada, free of foreign influence or control. Through these imperial arguments, Canadian transportation companies attempted to gain subsidies and divert business from American to Canadian hands.

In the 1890s Canadian exports were facing increasing barriers in entering the American market. With the Dingley Tariff of 1897 and other American protective measures facing them, Canadian producers turned to consider expanded markets outside North America. The only serious alternative was the British Isles, and to a lesser extent other areas of the Empire. In the spring of 1897 and on the eve of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee, the Laurier government introduced an imperial preferential tariff, allowing British goods into Canada at a lower rate of duty than their foreign competitors. The move was exceedingly popular in Canada: imperialists hailed it as a step towards imperial unity, free traders as a measure of tariff reform, and industrialists as a means of protecting them from American imports, their great worry. The tariff reduction was offered as a free gift to Britain, but many Canadians hoped it would lead to Britain abandoning free trade and giving Canadian goods a preferential tariff in return. Liberal leaders like George Ross of Ontario campaigned in Britain for this change. Their hopes were increased when duties were imposed to raise revenue to cover the costs of the Boer War. With the opening of the prairie west, the Laurier government was concerned to find markets for Canada’s growing grain production. If Canadian grain had preferential entry into the British market, it would undercut the Dominion’s main competitors, the United States, Russia, and the Argentine, all of whom were outside the Empire. At the Colonial Conference of 1902, there was spirited discussion of the proposal; indeed, Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, resigned from the Balfour Government in 1903 to lead a public campaign for tariff reform in Britain. Britain, however, was unwilling to make such fundamental changes in her tariff policy and imperial preferential tariffs had to await the depression of the 1930s before they were adopted.
A related issue for Canada was the flow of development capital from London, the central money market of the world. Here Canadian investors and developers competed for capital with promoters from all over the world. The Canadian investment image had suffered bad publicity as a result of earlier oil and railway scandals. But the country's image did improve during the 1890s with the new "Wheat Boom" prosperity, the imperial preferential tariff, and Laurier's outstanding personal performance in London at the Diamond Jubilee. Finance Minister Fielding claimed that those factors led to Canada obtaining a 2.5 per cent loan, the first colonial government to get such a low rate. As Canada achieved her new profile in London as a junior partner in the Empire, she increased her ability to raise capital, a matter of great importance to Laurier facing the task of financing new transcontinental railways and other huge projects.

Another economic attraction of Empire involved supply contracts. Britain always seemed to be involved in various colonial expeditions and small wars requiring supplies, some of which were purchased outside the British Isles. From 1898, Lord Strathcona, the Canadian High Commissioner in London, tried to monitor the scene and alert Ottawa to any opportunities. After the outbreak of the Boer War, the Laurier Government demanded imperial preference so contracts for horses, forage, food, uniforms, wagons, huts, and so on would go to Canadian firms rather than to American ones. They were also successful in getting lesser contracts through the India Office for supplying the British forces involved the following year in the Boxer Rebellion in China. Some of the Canadian goods, however, were of poor quality. Of the thirty thousand uniforms sent to China many were substandard; much of the canned food sent to South Africa was rotten when opened by British military inspectors. As the government had few experienced officials to monitor their purchasing, it was hardly surprising that problems of quality control emerged. Yet the contracts were a practical benefit of Empire which Laurier was glad to exploit to solidify support for his government. Canadians demanded these contracts as an imperial right, not as a result of lower prices or higher quality. While economics did not trigger imperial enthusiasm in Canada, many Canadian companies like Massey-Harris saw the Empire as a useful and profitable market to exploit. Patriotism and profits often go hand in hand.

In the 1890s Canada was anything but a military power. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Canadian involvement in imperial military affairs had been very limited. In the 1850s at the time of the Crimean War, Britain had recruited an infantry regiment in Canada but the experiment had not been a success. In the 1880s a small body of Canadian boatmen had been raised to guide the relief expedition attempting to rescue Gordon in Khartoum. Generally, however, Canadians lacked an indigenous military tradition. The small permanent force consisted of about 1,000 men while the part-time militia while numbering 35,000 was poorly trained and of limited military value. The main purpose for
the militia was to support the civil authorities in times of strikes or riots. Their greatest challenge came in 1885 when some units were despatched westward to quell the Riel Rebellion on the banks of the North Saskatchewan. Even the command structure created tensions between the military and civilian authorities. The Canadian forces were commanded by an imperial officer sent out by London to bring discipline to the raw colonials. This officer inevitably aroused hostility in his efforts to eliminate politics from the militia and to instil a professional military spirit in the complacent Canadians. As a number of the militia officers, such as Sam Hughes, were also elected members of the House of Commons, there were always accusations about party patronage in appointing militia officers. A private soldier in the permanent force was paid only forty cents per day, less than half the rate of an unskilled labourer. Historian Desmond Morton has stressed the importance of these problems for recruiting: "Being a Canadian soldier meant choosing a hard, monotonous and ill-rewarded life and only a very few enthusiasts and many more who had utterly failed in other work were likely to enlist." For the militia the only real training took place in the summer camps which were sometimes subject to heavy drinking and imperfect discipline. However, by the 1890s, the situation had begun to improve. The Royal Military College at Kingston was graduating trained officers, money was scraped together for new equipment, and there was rising interest in the militia and its future importance to Canada.

The South African War, 1899-1902

It was against this background of growing imperialism, then, that the South African feud between Britain and the two Boer Republics appeared to be coming to a climax in the summer of 1899. Britain had originally captured the Dutch colony at the Cape during the Napoleonic Wars in order to secure the ocean route to India. But this conquest, like that of New France, left Britain with an alien and disaffected European population. In the early decades of British rule, some policy decisions such as the abolition of slavery infuriated the conquered Boer farmers, and consequently some of them trekked into the African interior to form two independent republics, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. These Boer principalities had to struggle to retain their freedom through the remaining decades of the nineteenth century. This task was complicated in 1869 when diamonds were found on the western boundary of the Free State and in the 1880s by the discovery of the largest goldfield in the world along the Rand in the southern portions of the Transvaal. The gold mines attracted fortune seekers and companies from around the world. The ultra-conservative Boer farmers were naturally reluctant to accord the miners full political rights for fear of losing control of their small country. The political grievances of these outsiders (or Uitlanders) were championed by Cecil Rhodes and others interested in overturning the Boer Government of Paul Kruger. Rhodes at this time was Prime Minister of the British Cape Colony to the south, and owner of the
Kimberley diamond mines, of one of the major gold mines on the Rand, and of the chartered company which ran Rhodesia to the north. Kruger’s fears of British intentions had been greatly increased by the Jameson Raid into his country in the last days of 1895. When the British Government did not repudiate and punish Rhodes for this private filibustering expedition, the Boers began to arm and prepare for war. By September 1899 the time for peaceful solutions appeared to be running out.

As the crisis deepened in South Africa during the summer, the Laurier cabinet was split as to the correct Canadian response. The Quebec wing led by Israel Tarte was strongly opposed to sending a contingent of troops while the Ontario and Maritime ministers appeared to be in favour. Laurier himself was very reluctant. Behind the scenes in Ottawa an agent of the Imperial South African Association, which was financed by Cecil Rhodes, lobbied hard to get a clear commitment from Canada. At the end of July, Parliament passed a pious resolution affirming support for the British position, but without any reference to sending troops. Frederick Borden, the Minister of Militia, however was privately planning a contingent with General Hutton, the British Commander of the Canadian Militia. In September when Borden raised the matter with Laurier, he received a clear rebuke: “I do not favour at all the scheme.” But the issue continued to gain momentum in English Canada thanks to the press, the militia officers, and the Conservative leader, Charles Tupper. To the consternation of his superiors, Sam Hughes offered to raise and lead a battalion for service in South Africa. The Hamilton Spectator claimed that the Boers had dynamited a train carrying British refugee women and children fleeing from the Transvaal. This story, with no basis in truth, reflected the sensationalist “Yellow Journalism” of the day and could not help but inflame public opinion and increase the pressure for a contingent.

Laurier’s political position was further complicated by pressure from London to send a contingent. Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, was annoyed by Canada’s refusal to offer troops, unlike the Australian colonies. Lord Minto, the Governor General, also pressed Laurier to act. Chamberlain’s real motives became clear in his confidential instructions to Minto: “I am sorry and a good deal disappointed at Laurier’s decision with regard to the contingent. We do not intend to accept any offer of volunteers. We do not want the men and the whole point of the offer would be lost unless it were endorsed by the Colony and applied to an organized body of the Colonial Forces.” Chamberlain wished to create a precedent for future colonial contributions to imperial wars, which was exactly what Laurier wanted to avoid.

On 7 October Laurier left Ottawa to fulfil a speaking engagement in Chicago. Two days later the Boers issued an ultimatum to Britain barely in advance of a similar move by London. Nonetheless, the fact that the Boers had initiated
hostilities greatly strengthened the moral position of Chamberlain and consolidated his support throughout the Empire. It seemed to give credence to the arguments that the Boers were out to destroy the British position in South Africa, possibly with the secret backing of Germany. Now the intricacies of the dispute dissolved into a simple question of defending British territory. When the time limit on the Boer ultimatum expired, hostilities commenced on 11 October 1899. Laurier hurried back to Ottawa to face the most serious cabinet crisis of his prime ministership. The English-speaking ministers seemed determined to send troops while Tarte and his Quebec colleagues were as firmly opposed. The Hamilton Spectator thundered: “While British women and children are being murdered at wholesale by the Boers, it is high time that the Boers’ friend Tarte was out of the government of a loyal British colony.” The chief Liberal paper in Ontario, the Toronto Globe, calmly replied that London had been promised a Canadian contingent but had requested Ottawa to make no public announcement, which was really stretching the truth. Such statements however, were a warning to Laurier that he was losing control of his party. Yet on his arrival back in the capital, Laurier in a note to the Governor-General dismissed the mounting public pressure as a “clandestine attempt ... made to force our hands.”

On 12 October the Laurier cabinet met to try to resolve the impasse. At the end of a whole day of debate, no solution emerged—which led Minto to wire Chamberlain that Laurier was still opposed to sending a force. Minto also reminded Laurier of Canada’s need for British support in the Alaska Boundary dispute with the United States. On the evening of the 12th, Tarte called a meeting of leading French-speaking MPs in order to try to solidify his position. However, he did not get the unanimous support he wanted, for a small group including Raymond Préfontaine, the mayor of Montreal, refused to endorse his hard-line opposition.

The next morning the cabinet met again to try to reconcile the split while ethnic tensions were rising in the country. The Toronto News threatened Quebec directly: “Unless the British Canadians of this province are cravens they will not tolerate a position of subjection to the French Canadians, and if through the ballot boxes there is no redress, they will find other means of emancipating themselves from the dominance of an inferior people that peculiar circumstances have placed in authority in the Dominion.” Given this type of rhetoric, and the whole “new” imperialism movement it reflected, the Ontario ministers were in no mood to back down and hand their constituencies to the Conservatives in the coming election of 1900. After a stormy day-long cabinet session, they eventually got their way with Laurier persuading all his cabinet to accept the change. A special order-in-council was drawn up authorizing the raising, equipping, and transporting to South Africa of one thousand Canadian “volunteers,” without summoning Parliament. This was justified “especially as such expenditures,
under such circumstances, cannot be regarded as a departure from the ... principles of constitutional government and colonial practice, nor construed as a precedent for future action.” This latter phrase was meant as a concession to Tarte and the Quebec opponents of a contingent. The ministers accepted it, but Henri Bourassa, a bright, young, Liberal MP, resigned his seat and sought re-election. He was returned by acclamation to the Commons where he became the anti-war and anti-imperialist voice of dissent.

Laurier’s handling of the crisis also aroused criticism in Ontario. John Willison, a political friend and editor of the Toronto Globe, wrote with some bitterness: “I am bound to say that I think it is unfortunate that Mr. Tarte should seem to have led the government on this question.” Laurier replied firmly to all his critics both within and without the party. “Military expenditure is of such a character that you never know where it will end; I am not ... in favour of it. We have done more in favour of Imperial defence in building the Intercolonial and the Canadian Pacific, than if we had maintained an army in the field in those last twenty years ... we should not countenance any suggestion of jingo bellowing.” While extreme French-speaking nationalists and English-speaking imperialists were still unhappy, Laurier hoped that his middle way would appeal to the large block of moderate opinion in between.

In pressing Laurier to send troops to South Africa, English Canadians mobilized a number of arguments. The federal Minister of Justice, David Mills, in his 1900 book on the English in Africa stressed that the Dominions had to make sacrifices and demonstrate “moral stamina” if the Empire was to be preserved. If Britain was humiliated in Africa, Canada was weakened in North America. Others argued that as Britain had spent $55 million on Canadian defence, Canada had a moral obligation to help in South Africa. Imperial defence was like a chain: it was only as strong as its weakest link. Others saw it as an economic question. One Canadian journalist put it this way: “Canada has a strong commercial reason for seeing British ideas prevail in South Africa. Our manufacturers are now beginning to seek foreign markets, and under the rational rule of Great Britain, a large trade development awaits Canada there. Sending troops will strengthen Canadian commercial potential there: the wider the Empire, the wider the market for Canadian goods.” Laurier’s own explanation was given in a stirring speech to the embarking troops of the first contingent: “The cause for which you men of Canada are going to fight is the cause of justice, the cause of humanity, of civil rights and religious liberty. This is not a war of conquest.... The object is not to crush out the Dutch population, but to establish in that land ... British sovereign law, to assure to all men of that country an equal share of liberty.” This marked “a unique occasion in the history of the world; it is a spectacle which ought to make every Canadian feel proud of his country.” As French Canadians were very sensitive about religious rights and civil liberties, Laurier hoped this explanation would be the most convincing for his Quebec compatriots.
The Canadians in South Africa

The activities of the Canadian troops in South Africa are an interesting chapter in Canadian military history, but except for a short summary beyond the scope of this pamphlet. The first contingent of one thousand infantry (The Royal Canadian Regiment) was quickly enlisted, equipped, and sent off from Quebec City in a converted cattle boat. One week later the Laurier government offered a second contingent, but this was not accepted by London until the British forces suffered a series of defeats in mid-December. These men were going to fight for the Empire, but they were also demonstrating Canada's own strength and new imperial/national aspirations. The first contingent was fighting as a separate Canadian unit, led by Colonel Otter, a Canadian, with their own Maple Leaf insignia; they represented their nation's first military effort on the world stage. After a two-month training period in South Africa, where the burning African sun, harsh discipline, poor food, water shortages, and lice all took their toll on morale, the Canadians joined Field Marshal Lord Roberts' main imperial force on the western border of the Orange Free State just in time for the Battle of Paardeberg. To the delight of those at home, the Royal Canadians played a prominent role in the final events of the battle which led to the Boer surrender. Lord Roberts congratulated the Canadians for their "dashing advance" and Laurier caught the feeling of many Canadians when he exclaimed in the House of Commons: "Is there a man whose bosom did not swell with pride, the pride of pure patriotism, the pride of consciousness that, that day the fact had been revealed to the world that a new power had arisen in the West." After Paardeberg the Boers carefully avoided formal battles where superior British numbers could encircle them. Instead, as expert horsemen, they used their mobility to mount hit-and-run raids, often attacking out of the mists at dawn, and then disappearing back into the huge expanses of African grassland. In this type of warfare, the Canadian infantry was of limited use.

The second Canadian contingent composed of mounted rifles and horse artillery was more appropriate for the wide sweeps and the scouting required by the British forces. The war became characterized by long periods of intense boredom interrupted by short periods of furious fighting. In such circumstances, the greatest threat to life was from bad water and disease, not Boer bullets. Nevertheless, in June 1900, the British forces swept into Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal, and the Empire went wild with joy assuming that the war was over. Shortly afterwards the first contingent completed its tour of duty and returned home. The second contingent fought with British columns protecting the lines of communication or scouring the grasslands for small Boer forces. In November 1900, in one engagement where the Canadian rearguard held off the Boer attackers, three Canadians were awarded the Victoria Cross. This official Canadian contingent was augmented by a private force of 540 "rough riders" raised by Lord Strathcona at his own personal expense. When Lord Strathcona's
Horse completed their tour of duty early in 1901, there were no Canadian units left in South Africa, although a few individuals volunteered for irregular units, such as Ross’s Canadians Scouts, which carried through some of the more brutal aspects of the counter-insurgency campaign.

The second phase of the war, from June 1900 until the peace settlement in May 1902, was a tough guerilla war of attrition. The strategy of Roberts’ successor, General Kitchener, was to mount mobile flying columns to hunt down the Boer commando units in the field and to destroy their ability to live off the land. As part of this tactic, the Boer women and children were herded into refugee camps where they could be fed and sheltered. This in turn allowed the British to intensify their scorched-earth policy of burning the farms and removing the livestock in order to destroy the Boer supplies. The camps, however, were poorly run by the British military and nearly twenty thousand Boer women and children died of disease. The political outcry in Britain against such “methods of barbarism” led to extensive criticism of the war by 1902. It seemed to be such a cruel contrast to Kipling’s “White Man’s Burden.”

Given the nature of the second phase of the war, it was somewhat surprising that Canada offered more troops after the election of October 1900. Late in 1901, with the war becoming more unpopular, the offer was finally accepted by London. In January 1902 a battalion of 900 mounted rifles was sent and a further 2,000 men two months later. The latter arrived too late to see action in the war. These units appear to have aroused little enthusiasm in Canada and the British government paid all the costs. Canada also raised a battalion for garrison duty at Halifax so British regulars could be released for duty in South Africa. Canadian women also served the Empire in the war effort, some as military nurses and others as teachers in efforts to anglicize the Boer women and children in the camps. The Canadian contribution was only a tiny part of the overall imperial effort in the war. Canada raised a total of 8,400 men (including the 1,200 for the Halifax garrison), compared to 16,500 for the Australian colonies, 6,000 from New Zealand, and 355,750 from the British Isles. Proportional to population, Canada’s contribution was about one-quarter that of Australia and one-sixth that of the United Kingdom. In monetary terms Canada paid out £620,000 (including Lord Strathcona’s contribution) in comparison to £223,000,000 paid by the British taxpayer. In purchasing horses, food, and military equipment, London spent more in Canada than did Ottawa.

*The Political Battles at Home*

During the Boer War years, all the military battles did not take place in South Africa. Laurier experienced on-going problems with the General Officer Commanding the Canadian Militia, who was a regular British officer appointed by Canada on the recommendation of the War Office in London. When the South African War broke out, General Hutton held the post; he was an able,
dynamic, and determined reformer with a disturbing propensity for public speeches. Hutton wanted to free the daily administration of the militia from the interference of the minister. He believed that contracts and commissions were too closely tied to partisan considerations and he resented that his own actions were discussed in Parliament by militia MPs who were supposed to be subordinate to him. Naturally the Minister of Militia, Fred Borden, saw Hutton’s proposals as a challenge to his own authority, especially as Hutton stressed his goal of cleansing the militia of baneful and insidious political influences. As a result, Laurier and his colleagues requested his recall. When Governor-General Minto tried to defend Hutton, Laurier threatened to resign and thus create a constitutional crisis. Fortunately, Laurier chose to bypass the Governor General by forwarding his request directly to Chamberlain through the Canadian High Commissioner in London. As a result Hutton was ordered home for service in South Africa and the crisis passed. However, the general problem was not eliminated, as Hutton’s successor, Lord Dundonald, was also forced out under similar circumstances in 1904.

Such disagreements were largely behind the scenes, and did not affect public perceptions of the struggle in South Africa. The war in its early stages was very popular in English Canada, as witnessed by the curious new social phenomenon termed “mafficking” — after the wild emotional street scenes in London following the release of the news of the Relief of Mafeking. When the premature report of British troops entering Pretoria reached Toronto, the local citizens abandoned all their usual restraint. It was half past eleven at night when the bulletins were first posted outside the newspaper offices. The streets were largely deserted for the theatres and music halls had emptied sometime before. First the fire alarm bells and then the churches’ roused the population. As the people poured into the streets, the word was quickly spread. Flags, horns, and fireworks were produced; impromptu parades formed; and bonfires were lit with any combustible materials which were readily at hand, including picket fences and carts. Patriotic songs were sung including the theme song of the evening: “We are Marching to Pretoria.” As one contemporary book concluded, “It was the most spontaneous ebullition of pure good spirits the Canadian public ever experienced.” About three in the morning, the tumult died away and the streets cleared until dawn when the whole process began again. Work was out of the question for the mayor had proclaimed a public holiday. The fronts of businesses and residences were decorated with flags and bunting. The wild merry-making continued the whole day until about midnight when Toronto the Good finally wearied and people went home to bed.

But as the war dragged on in South Africa, the political infighting continued in Canada. Laurier caught in the crossfire tried to ride out the storm. On the one hand, he had English Canadians “mafficking” with delight and on the other he had his Quebec critics, led by his brilliant young protégé, Henri Bourassa.
Through a series of letters and in debates in Parliament, Laurier and Bourassa argued the points at issue. Bourassa stressed that sending troops was a reversal of the evolution towards full self-government, a step towards imperial military federation, and was taken without even consulting Parliament. The inclusion of the “no precedent” clause in the order-in-council was irrelevvent; the precedent was that the Canadian troops were fighting in South Africa to defend interests totally unrelated to Canada. The Dominion was renouncing her constitutional autonomy to return to the dependent status of a Crown colony. Bourassa viewed himself as the champion of the status quo trying to counter the revolutionary centralization of Chamberlain and his Canadian allies. He also saw himself as the spokesman of Gladstonian liberalism in Canada. True liberalism opposed the excesses of imperialism, being based upon the non-expansionist “Little Englandism” of the mid-Victorian era. Canadian Liberals, he charged, had abandoned their ideological roots in adopting the imperial jingoism of the Tories.

In reply Laurier stressed the give-and-take essential in the working of Confederation. French-speaking Canadians must choose to cooperate with English Canada and march at the head of Confederation or isolate themselves in a separate group with all the dangers that this isolation would imply. Bourassa’s opposition was not solely constitutional, for even if Parliament had been recalled he still would have opposed sending troops. Yet there was no way that Canada could oppose imperialism; it was only a matter of choice between the British and American versions. Laurier expressed his great regret that Bourassa had chosen to resign, for there was not the basic difference of principle that he claimed. In public Laurier refused to attack Bourassa in the hope that he could be enticed back into the fold. In keeping silent on the issue he paid a political price; to some it appeared that he approved of Bourassa’s action, which was of course extremely unpopular in English Canada. Bourassa’s own wit and sarcasm also infuriated many imperialists. During a public meeting in Montreal in which he was attempting to explain his opposition to the war and imperialism, a figure from the back of the hall interjected: “Ah but the sun never sets on the glory of the British Empire.” Bourassa thought for a second and then shot back: “This only goes to prove that not even God trusts the British in the dark.” In the emotional context of the Boer War, many Canadians could neither forgive nor forget such disrespect for the Empire.

One of the factors promoting this split was the differing versions of the war which appeared in the French- and English-language press. The English press drew jingoistic accounts from London-based wire services which portrayed the justice of the British cause, the decency and valour of Her Majesty’s forces, and the repressive nature of the Kruger Regime. The French-language press drew much of its material from Paris where the tone was clearly anti-British and pro-Boer. Here they exploited the worst aspects of the guerilla war — the farm burnings, the camps, and alleged atrocities of British troops. In addition other
arguments were employed to arouse sympathy in Quebec. *La Vérité*, an ultramontane weekly in Quebec City, blamed the war on the Jews and the financiers of London while *Le Temps* (Ottawa) claimed that the Boers were really part of the French race because many Huguenots had fled from France to settle in South Africa. Thus in Quebec sympathy developed for the Boers, who were facing the ignominy of conquest by Britain just as Quebec had in 1759.

Outside of Quebec, Goldwin Smith was the war’s most audible and persistent critic. An outspoken representative of mid-century *laissez-faire* liberalism, he never relented in his criticism of the war. He owned *The Farmer’s Sun*, an agrarian weekly which had a circulation of about fifteen thousand in Ontario. Smith felt a special bitterness for Laurier’s ideological heresy in bending to the public pressure to send troops. He found this mindless imperial enthusiasm disgusting. The volunteers were going “mainly from love of sport and excitement, or for the sake of medals ... to slaughter people who have done them no wrong.” England had not been in a worse moral position since the burning of Joan of Arc. British supremacy was only a means of protecting Cecil Rhodes and the financial interests behind South African mining. Smith’s outspoken views appear to have gained few converts while losing *The Farmer’s Sun* many subscribers. When Smith tried to mount an anti-imperialist movement in English Canada, to complement that of Bourassa, it never got off the ground. Goldwin Smith, however, was not alone in his views; there were scattered examples of labour and agrarian opposition to the war. Some argued that the Boers were simple, hard-working, God-fearing people like themselves or that the war was an example of capitalists manipulating the political process for their own ends. The potential for religious-based pacifism to oppose the war was muted somewhat by the missionary ethic in imperialism. There was also some Boer support within the Irish and German communities, but not nearly as much as was evident in the United States. However, there was a wider sense of concern felt by many Canadians about the militarism which the war promoted. Militarism emerged even in the poetry of the day.

To Arms, To Arms, for motherland and strike
the deadly blow!
Let crimson blood wash hill and dale, and
stain the ocean’s flow.

What the Boers had ever done to provoke such vengeance was never explained, but this martial fever appeared to some to be a disturbing factor for future tolerance and ethnic peace within Canada.

These fears about the impact of the war appeared to be substantiated by events in Montreal in March 1900. The English in Montreal had been taunted by the French-language press with the British defeats in the early stages of the war. When the tide changed with the Relief of Ladysmith, McGill students poured
into the streets to besiege the offices of *La Patrie, Le Journal*, and *La Presse*. Then they moved on to stage a provocative demonstration at the branch of Laval University then in Montreal. Students from the latter organized a counter demonstration. During the evening hours, the students were joined by “tough” elements from the city and rioting occurred. At length the militia were called out to restore order and protect property, but for two or three nights there were sporadic disturbances between rival groups flaunting the Union Jack or the Tricolour. *The Star* and *La Patrie* resumed their name-calling and newspapers outside Quebec ran stories on the “war” in Montreal. These disturbances alarmed a number of Quebec officials who now realized the depths of public feeling and the need for care in handling future events.

In the spring session of 1900, Bourassa introduced his special motion on the war, emphasizing the sovereignty of Parliament and the need to preserve the status quo in imperial relations. In a lengthy and carefully worded speech which occupied forty-four columns of *Hansard*, Bourassa hoped to attract the support of a substantial number of moderate Liberals and Conservatives apprehensive about imperial passions. But when the motion was put to a vote, only six Liberals and four Conservatives, all French-speaking, supported it. For Laurier it was a major victory in two ways. The vote showed that he had contained the revolt within the Quebec caucus while at the same time demonstrating to his English colleagues the extent of the Quebec concerns on imperial issues which they could not forget as a governing party dependent upon the support of that province.

During the late spring of 1900, the opposition hammered away at the government, but without much impact. With numerous war contracts being let, the Tories were hard at work in search of a scandal. On 6 June 1900 F.D. Monk, a Quebec Conservative, led off with a series of charges involving the emergency rations supplied to the Canadian troops in South Africa. Laurier immediately appointed a Select Committee of four Liberals and three Conservatives to investigate the charges. The majority report indicated some problems of quality, but drew no general conclusions. The Tory minority report was a scathing denunciation of a patronage fraud which endangered the lives of Canadian soldiers. On the vote in the House, ten MPs who normally supported the government broke ranks to vote for the minority report, thus creating the closest vote of the session. However, with the capture of Pretoria in June, the public concern about the war was receding. The leading press stories in the summer of 1900 were the Boxer Rebellion in China and the American presidential election campaign. With this relaxed public mood as background, Laurier announced the election in early fall.

In the campaign the Conservatives attempted to make Tarte and the contingents issue the main focus of their attack. In the Tory press, Tarte was accused of being the disloyal friend of the Boers who controlled the Laurier cabinet. Even some imperialists were appalled by this campaign. Lord Minto
wrote to his brother, "The writing of the leading opposition papers in Ontario has been positively wicked, simply aiming at stirring up hatred of French Canada. It is perfectly monstrous." In Britain "you do not call a man disloyal if he disapproves of the war. Here if he is only lukewarm, and is a French Canadian, he must be a rebel." But in the end this excessive language, which was a product of political desperation, weakened the impact of the Tory campaign. For their part the Liberals campaigned in English Canada stressing their great imperial achievements — the preferential tariff and the troops for South Africa. In the critical province of Ontario where the Conservatives hoped to make significant gains, Liberal Premier George Ross campaigned hard on the imperial theme. He claimed that the Conservatives had talked about preference and colonial contingents, but it was the Liberals who had acted. For Laurier it was politically useful to have someone else give the hard imperialist message given the sensitivities of Quebec. In his speeches Laurier pleaded for a new sense of national unity now symbolized by French- and English-speaking Canadians fighting shoulder to shoulder in South Africa. Some Liberals now pointed to the emerging economic prosperity as proof of Liberal good management, including the war contracts from Britain. In Quebec dissenting Liberals and Conservatives included anti-war and anti-imperialist planks in their platforms. Neither party attempted to discipline these nationalist rebels for fear of losing them. In the election campaign the important fact was not the differences between parties but the internal divisions within each.

The election results were a substantial vote of confidence for Laurier and his moderate approach to imperialism. He increased his overall majority from twenty-three in 1896 to fifty-three on the basis of gains in Quebec and the Maritimes. In Quebec the Tory ranks were cut in half while in Ontario they gained twelve seats. Some of their traditional supporters who had abandoned the party in 1896 over the Manitoba Schools issue now returned to the Tory fold because of imperialism. Outside of Ontario the war issue seems to have had little impact and the prosperous times allowed the Liberals to make overall gains in the election. For the Tories the election was six months too late for their strategy to work.

In the months following the November election, partisan tensions eased. Tupper resigned as Conservative leader, to be replaced by Robert Borden (cousin of the Liberal Minister of Militia and Defence). Borden's style was less strident and bombastic which lowered the temperature of imperial debates. Besides, the Canadian troops were all home or on their way back. While partisan feuding eased, ethnic tensions did not. After the election of 1900, the attacks on Laurier continued from Bourassa and the Quebec nationalistes. As the war dragged on their emphasis changed from isolationist arguments to those concerning the morality of imperialism. In March 1901 Bourassa introduced a controversial Commons resolution requesting the British Government to make
peace on the basis of independence for the two Boer Republics and opposing any further Canadian contingents or even British recruiting in Canada. Also as Canada had contributed her blood and money, she deserved a place at the peace conference when it took place. In reply Laurier expressed his surprise that one so opposed to sending troops should be so concerned about a role at the peace conference. Besides, the war was almost over, so the question of sending more troops was purely academic. Laurier looked forward to a confederated South Africa under the British flag with liberty and equality for all. Bourassa’s motion only attracted three supporting votes after which the House rose and sang “God Save the Queen” as a gesture of purification from the disloyal views. When more troops were sent early in 1902, however, some of Bourassa’s arguments appeared to be substantiated.

During this period Bourassa worked to keep the issue of imperialism before the Quebec public. At the Théâtre National in Montreal, he expounded his message in the strongest language yet. Having exhausted the manpower of the British Isles and surrounded by hostile rivals, Britain was now turning to her colonies, he charged, for recruits to maintain her “frantic ambition.” The honoured political traditions of the United Kingdom had been corrupted by Chamberlain in his vain pursuit of militarism and gold. This creed had been carried to Canada by Chamberlain’s agents, men like Lord Minto and General Hutton. In stirring up the imperial movement in Canada, Minto had ignored the constitutional traditions of his office. Hutton had boasted that he had smashed a cabinet in Australia and was ready to do the same in Canada. In addition Cecil Rhodes had sent his agents to Canada to promote support for an aggressive policy in South Africa. By the judicious conferring of knighthoods and honours, many Canadians were enticed to join the imperial movement. As public support began to increase, Chamberlain forced the South African War, so the passion of the moment would carry the colonies into imperial federation. Canadian politicians seemed to be motivated solely by their desire to achieve and retain office, prepared to abandon Canadian interests and principles for the glory of the imperial stage. Imperialism thus destroyed the spirit of tolerance and cooperation essential to the working of Confederation. In the Laurier era, Bourassa concluded, Canadian Liberalism had acquired some of the worst aspects of Toryism with its commitment to materialism, militarism, and imperialism.

By the summer of 1902, there was a loose association of nationalistes under Bourassa including the prominent Conservative F.D. Monk. Just after the peace was signed in South Africa, a rally at Drummondville drew five thousand people to hear speeches by Bourassa, Monet, and Lavergne. The resulting resolutions were wired to London to stiffen Laurier’s opposition to Chamberlain’s plans at the summer Colonial Conference to capitalize on the imperial wartime cooperation to obtain an agreement for formal federation or at least consolidation of the Empire.
Bourassa continued to publish articles and pamphlets in English in an attempt to rally support outside Quebec. All of these activities led to the formation of *La Ligue nationaliste* in March 1903 with Olivar Asselin as president and Bourassa as the leading figure. Reflecting British radicals like John Hobson, they developed an elaborate conspiracy theory to explain the Boer War and the apparent strength of the imperial movement in Canada. By October, the *Ligue* claimed ten thousand members and there were rumours that it would become a new political party to challenge Laurier in his native province. This threat did not materialize immediately, but remained lurking in the wings until the naval issue of 1909-11 brought imperialism back to the centre stage of Quebec and federal politics.

**Conclusions**

The Canadian experience in the Boer War involved both military and political components. For the soldiers that went off to South Africa and their supporters at home, it was an exhibition of Canada’s new role as a military nation and as a contributor to the defence of the Empire. Canada was coming of age and flexing her youthful muscles. As a result of this feeling, the war helped over the longer term to contribute to increased militia reform, to the debate on naval policy in 1909-11, and to the preparations — ideologically and militarily — for Canada’s awesome commitments in the two world wars. In English Canada the war and imperialism contributed to the growing sense of national self-confidence, that Canada had emerged on the world scene not as a colony of Britain, but as a junior partner in the greatest Empire that the world had ever seen. This type of adolescent nationalism was complemented by the economic potential of the Empire and the Canadian need for the imperial alliance to strengthen diplomatic relations with the United States.

But ironically imperialism and the Boer War also took a heavy toll in terms of national unity. For French-speaking Canadians, the war transformed imperialism from an abstract idea into a hard divisive issue within Canadian politics. While English-Canadian nationalism emerged out of imperialism, French-Canadian nationalism evolved in opposition to it. In the process Laurier was challenged in his own Quebec base. In the First World War, when English Canada would again appeal for French-Canadian support, Quebec would remember the excesses of British imperialism in South Africa. In addition, the Boer War in Quebec was symbolically linked for French Canadians to their own conquest in 1759. They could hardly be expected to help conquer another New France for the British Empire. In Bourassa’s eyes the tragedy was all the greater when the leader of the government and a number of his ministers were from Quebec, yet were impotent given the power of the English-speaking majority.
As Canada entered the twentieth century, these stresses within Canadian federalism were impossible to hide in either the euphoria of victory over the Boers or in the new prosperity of the Laurier "boom" years, and they would return to haunt Canadian politics and set the tone of Anglo-Canadian relations for several decades to come.
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

In the last two decades there has been a vigorous debate among Canadian historians about the nature of Canadian imperialism. The most important single work was Carl Berger’s *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Idea of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto, 1970). Berger argued that imperialism was an early form of Canadian nationalism. Along a similar vein but with more social and economic emphasis, Robert Page wrote “The Canadian Response to the Imperial Idea During the Boer War Years,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* (February 1970). Later that year, Douglas Cole challenged both of the above with his “Canada’s ‘Nationalist’ Imperialists,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* (August 1970); as did Terry Cook with “George R. Parkin and the Concept of Britannic Idealism,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* (August 1975). Both argued that Canadian imperialism represented a wider Britannic or Anglo-Saxon nationalism. A further conflict in the historiography of Canadian imperialism was provided by Norman Penlington, *Canada and Imperialism, 1896-99* (Toronto, 1965). He argued that Canadian imperialism was primarily an outgrowth of the tensions involved in Canadian-American relations.


There were some “instant books” produced by those who came back from South Africa. They include S.M. Brown, *With the Royal Canadians* (Toronto, 1900); W.S. Evans, *The Canadian Contingents and Canadian Imperialism* (Toronto, 1901); E.M. Graham, *A Canadian Girl in South Africa* (Toronto, 1905); W. Hart-McHarg, *From Quebec to Pretoria* (Toronto, 1902); E.W.B. Morrison, *With the Guns in South Africa* (Hamilton, 1901); and T.G. Marquis, *Canada’s Sons on Kopje and Veldt* (Toronto, 1900). The best of these is probably Evans.

There is still no full-length study of the Canadian troops in South Africa, although Carman Miller is close to complementing one. The best introduction is through Desmond Morton, *The Canadian General: Sir William Otter* (Toronto, 1974); and Carman Miller, “A Preliminary Analysis of the Socio-Economic Composition of Canada’s South African War Contingents,” *Social History*
(November, 1975). Richard Preston's *Canada and "Imperial Defense"* (Durham, 1967) is a good overall survey of the way Canada fit into wider imperial defence questions.


Henri Bourassa wrote a number of eloquent pamphlets which can be read in French or English, such as *Guerre Sud-Africaine* (Ottawa, 1900) and *Great Britain and Canada* (Montreal, 1901). For a more recent collection, see Joseph Levitt, *Henri Bourassa on Imperialism and Biculturalism, 1900-1918* (Toronto, 1970). On more general Quebec themes, see A.I. Silver, "Some Quebec Attitudes in an Age of Imperialism and Ideological Conflict," *Canadian Historical Review* (December 1976). On the role of the press, see the differing interpretations in Carman Miller, "English-Canadian Opposition to the South African War as Seen through the Press," *Canadian Historical Review* (December 1974); and Robert Page, *Imperialism and Canada, 1895-1903* (Toronto, 1972).

The best overall general history of the period remains R.C. Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto, 1976). This volume contains excellent references to secondary sources should readers wish to pursue the topics mentioned in more detail.