

Total War

Every aspect of society is mobilized by War. Everyone in society is very visibly affected by the war.

Women

The beginning of the second World War in 1939 saw many of the young and able men of Canada sent to fight overseas. For four years Canada sent every available man to defend their country. This left the country full of women and very few able bodied men. Before the war women in the workforce were mostly held to traditional feminine jobs, such as nursing, teaching or secretarial work. During the war, women had to fill in the gaps for all the men who were overseas fighting. This and the need to support the war effort by making munitions and supplies greatly added to the job opportunities women had outside their traditional roles. To help release men for active duty, for the first time, women were allowed into the army, navy and air force.

In the beginning, women's major role in the war effort was volunteer work in the form of mending clothes, preparing food, as consumers and of managing their family rations. A large part of the effort of homemakers during the war was saving and collecting materials that could be recycled and used to aid the war effort. They saved things like rags, bones, metals, paper, rubber and glass. There was even a program to increase the food production in the country. Women were urged to keep 'victory gardens' where they would can the fruits and vegetables from them.

Women worked on farms, in manufacturing, in trade and finance, in transportation and communication and in construction. Women also worked in war plants that were essential to the war effort because they made guns, ammunition and tanks. For the first time in Canadian history women also worked in shipbuilding and aircraft production. A lot of women held office jobs in these fields but there were also some women who worked as semi-skilled welders, electricians, drillers, painters, boilermakers, polishers, rope slicers, tractor drivers and crane drivers.

Children

in a Total War

Many Children were sent out of the cities and into the country in an effort to spare them from the bombing raids over Britain. Bombs were dropped on cities because they would cause the most devastation so the country side was a little bit safer.

In the 1942 New Brunswick Social Studies curriculum there was a section on why Canada was at war and what boys and girls could do to help the war effort. There were projects outlined for promoting war savings bonds and scrap metal and rubber collection. The War effort invaded schools, homes, and every other aspect of children's lives.

