

# The 1914 War Measures Act & Thomas Eustace

By Catrina Noivo for ENG 241 Fall 2018

## What was the 1914 War Measures Act?

A federal law adopted by the Canadian Parliament on August 2, 1914. Its main purpose was to create a way for the Canadian government to maintain security and order during war time. The law created controversy because it suspended the civil liberties of the people on Canadian soil who were considered "enemy aliens". The Act gave sweeping emergency powers to the Federal Cabinet and allowed them to bypass the House of Commons and the Senate in order to govern by decree when it perceived the existence of "war, invasion, or insurrection, real or apprehended."



## The Meaning of the Term “Enemy Alien”

Used to refer to people from countries, or with roots in countries that were at war with Canada.

What happened once someone was considered an “Enemy Alien”?

- The internees had their property confiscated, much of which was not returned at the end of the war.
- The internees were often required to work on large labor projects (building roads, cutting trails, working on logging and mining operations).
- They were paid less than half the daily wage offered to other laborers.

## The Consequences of the 1914 War Measures Act

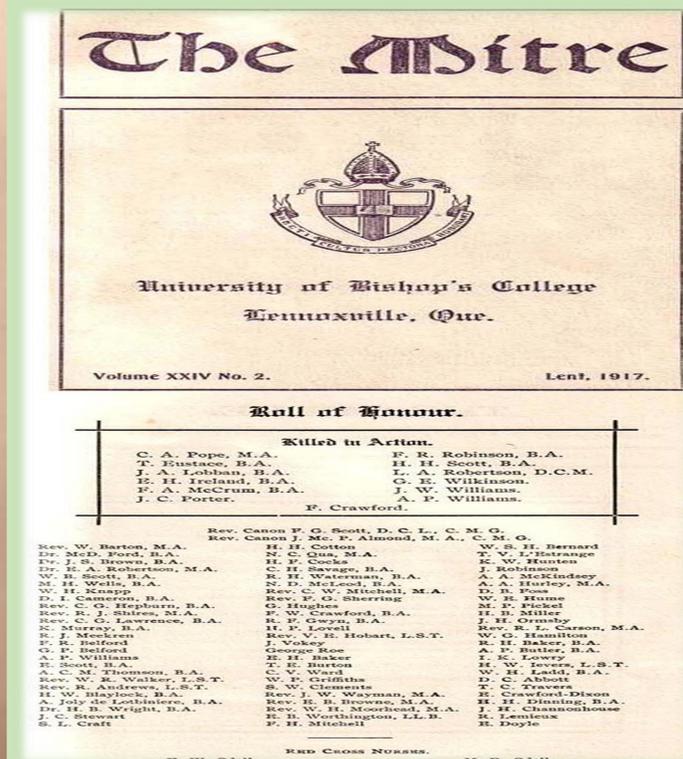
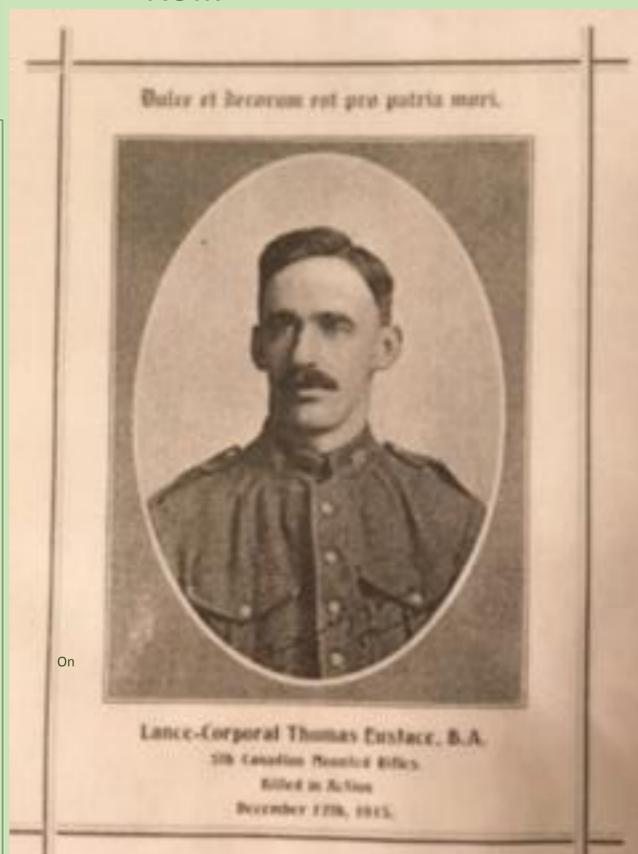
The Act gave the government full authority to censor and suppress communications; to arrest, detain and deport people without charges or trials; to control transportation, trade and manufacturing; and to seize private property.

As a result, the Act successfully banned 253 publications, including 222 American, 164 foreign-language and 89 leftist publications. It should be noted that socialist reading materials in particular were targeted for censorship. Additionally, individuals could be arrested for their political beliefs.

Over the course of the war, the federal government interned 8,579 “enemy aliens” in 24 receiving stations and internment camps across the country. The astonishing fact of this reality was that only 3,138 detainees were actual prisoners of war, the rest were regular civilians. The ethnic groups the most affected by this Act were those from German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, and Bulgarian origin.



Below, right, is a page from “The Mitre”, a Bishop’s University’s publication, in which Thomas Eustace is listed on the Honor Roll.



## Remembering Thomas Eustace (1888-1915).

Thomas Eustace was studying for a Masters of Arts in Theological Studies (LST) at Bishops. He was a member of the Baseball Club and Secretary of the BU Students Association.

He enlisted on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1915 as a Lance Corporal with the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Canadian Mounted Rifles.

On December 17, 1915, at the age of twenty five, he was killed on the Western Front.