**What Role Did Canada Play in Boer War?**

**Introduction**

* In 1899, Britain became involved in a war in southern Africa;
* Britain wanted to colonize land where Dutch settlers had lived for more than 300 years;
* Dutch called themselves Farmers – or Boers in their language;
* British won easy victories in the beginning until Boers used guerrilla tactics.

**A British War or an Imperial War?**

* From the start, the British believed the Boer War was not just their own;
* Losing the war would mean losing all their colonies in Africa;
* Would mean a loss of trade routes to the rest of the Empire;
* Therefore, Britain believed this was an imperial war.

**Canada’s Attitude Toward the Boer War**

* Britain asked Canada to send troops to southern Africa under British command;
* Laurier knew that Quebec would never support sending troops and Ontario would abandon the Liberals if they remained neutral;
* Laurier had to make an important decision and compromise:
  + Canadian troops would not be ordered to go and fight in the war;
  + Canada would pay for and equip volunteer forces to join the fight;
  + Forces would fight together as a Canadian unit but under British.

**Laurier and Bourassa Disagree**

* Henri Bourassa was a politician from Quebec;
* Bourassa believed sending troops would act as a precedent for future conflicts;
* Also disagreed with Laurier’s practice of seeking compromise on so many political issues.

**Canadian Contributions to the War**

* At first, Canada sent 1000 troops to the war;
* Lord Strathcona, who was president of BMO and backer of the CPR, paid for a volunteer regiment (Lord Strathcona’s Horse Regiment);
* The Indian Act of 1876 stated that First Nations were not eligible to join the military;
* The Anderdon Band deregistered from the Indian Act and served in Boer War.

**Conclusion**

* By the time the war ended in 1902, 7368 troops had served in South Africa;
* 12 were women nurses who worked in military hospitals;
* They inspired hundreds of other women who would serve in WWI;
* 89 Canadians were killed in action, and another 130 died as a result of disease;
* Truly was a volunteer army.