

Impressions of a Signal Company.

FIRST PRIZE WINNER IN MAJOR LAWSON'S COMPETITION.

On joining a Signal Company you should always bear in mind that you belong to a unit of specialists; the word has a comforting sound, and will give you a sense of superiority over the common herd. You are no longer a mere cypher, though before you have had a sample of all the sections you may probably find it difficult to persuade yourself that you are indispensable.

A short description of the different departments of our gathering of specialists may be of interest to some of those desirous of joining a Signal Company, but who are ignorant of the chief features and advantages of this special branch of our Army.

I will mention, firstly, the office, with its atmosphere of dignity and seclusion. This part of the organisation is commonly known as the "King of Indoor Sports." The sapper who is assigned to this branch of the work may hear whispers of "bomb proof" from jealous outsiders, but he should remember that "the pen is mightier than the sword," and regard with supreme contempt all other departments of the Company. His section is always the brains of the outfit, and the others only exist as an afterthought. It is advisable to deal gently with Superintendents. Remember, they grow old with worry, and their responsibilities are said to be terrible, though what they worry about no one knows, it must be a military secret. All Superintendents have their peculiarities, and, like a nervous horse, they need to be humoured; but do not criticize their failings, for like all great men they cannot carry on if the mere rabble indulge in useless criticism. Some have a tendency to spend their time when off shift shining equipment and waiting for meals, but that is only the eccentricities of genius. Mention may here be made of the aristocracy of the unit, who have a somewhat distant connection with the Signal Office, the D.R. Section. To belong to this set, which is a very exclusive one, is usually the height of ambition for the young bloods of the Company, but such an eminence is only gained by the chosen few. A despatch rider is born, not made; it is also said to be hereditary. Occasionally, these distinguished personages have been known to ride motor cycles and deliver despatches, but that is only a side line. The main essentials are to be a good baseball player, dress as much as possible like a highwayman, and pose as the romantic element of the Company.

The linemen, another interesting race, are sometimes mistaken for travelling dentists, owing to the evil looking instruments with which they festoon themselves. They are the men who look for trouble, and, judging by their remarks, they are frequently successful in finding it. The members of this section undoubtedly work, but as they search for it, nobody sympathises with them.

If you are ever allotted to the horse lines do not imagine, as a consequence, that you will find employment in looking after horses. These valuable animals have a sense of humour, but it is not considered advisable to develop it. Consequently, many a would-be rider, who has visions of riding breeches and jingling spurs, finds himself scraping mud off the wheel of a wagon; and it is at times like this that your belief in yourself as a specialist is liable to wane somewhat, unless you have enthusiasm down to a fine art. It has been noticed that men employed at this work sometimes develop a "lean and hungry look."

Before being long in a Signal Company, you will probably hear or see something of the Wireless Section. The derivation of the word wireless is uncertain, but

it has been suggested that the word was originally workless. Cases have been known when one of these men has actually been seen working at wireless, but such discoveries are rare. As everybody in the unit, of course, earns his money as a specialist, these men are apparently paid for what they know. They can generally be seen in a semi-dressed condition, making their billets more comfortable, or arguing about the differential calculus.

Besides the main departments of the Company, there are several individuals or small groups of individuals without which the wonderful inner mechanism of the unit could not revolve smoothly. I refer to the Q.M. Stores, Cook House, and Mail Department. As an outsider, you might imagine that the first named of these three indispensable departments existed for the purpose of providing equipment to the personnel of the Company, but as one of many who have paid several unsuccessful visits there, I can assure you that the establishment is apparently used to keep all its contents as an exhibit. The only thing omitted to complete this impression is a number of "Do not Touch" notices.

Some famous person once said that an army fights on its stomach. As a Signal Company does not fight, the powers that be evidently consider that it is not necessary to cater to the stomach; at least, that is what some of us think. The cook and his accomplices in crime have all hearts of stone, and you will not get any more bacon either by threats or lavish compliments, though some still continue to peddle the old line of stuff.

The last individual to whom I would draw attention is the mail man; he is quite an important and picturesque personality. Spurs are apparently worn by this gentleman, for the same reason that an ambassador wears a sword, because there is no possibility of either being used. The wonderful gloss on his carefully parted hair is a triumph of toilet art. He delivers a few letters and parcels by way of recreation. His real business is to add tone to the unit.

SAPPER C. H. SHARRATT.

Our Job.

The Canadian Engineers are always "on the job," and in publishing Sapper O'Leary's fine allegorical drawing, we are reminded not only of our present work, but of the lifelong work which we shall inherit as a legacy from our fight for freedom; a work which we ourselves will leave unfinished (as all progress is only a step), but which we shall hand on to our sons, and they to their sons for ever.

National re-construction and national evolution can only be welded and moulded into a fine, complete edifice of national strength by the combined team work of all the people.

And keep this in mind—that to build a true and solid nation, purity and integrity are the main requirements in the individual. Politics must be pure, religion and art must be pure, commerce must be straight, and men must be all of these things.

That is the ideal nation, and the duty we shall inherit from the world-war is to build that nation.

LOST, STOLEN, OR STRAYED—A venerable seafaring gentleman out of the Arabian Nights. Recently turned Sapper for duration of war, but still answering to his old name of "Sinbad." Believed to be somewhere in France. Anyone giving information as to his whereabouts, will be rewarded (perhaps). Address, office of this journal.