

Mr. GERMAN: Does the minister know whether these statements differ in any material particular from the statements found in the report of the Royal Commission? In that report these matters are gone into very fully.

Sir THOMAS WHITE: These are statements presented by the company and certified by the auditors of the company. Whether they differ in detail, or the extent to which they differ in detail, I am not prepared at this moment to say. They are, however, official statements of the company which I lay before Parliament as such in order that they may be printed for the information of the members.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Yesterday my hon. friend said that the Government had information that the pledgees of certain stock of the company would adopt the suggestion involved in the resolutions. Is my hon. friend prepared to lay that information on the Table?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: There are no further written documents than those which I have laid on the Table. I stated to the House a moment ago that these negotiations have been carried on between officials of the two companies and members of the Government. I said yesterday that the owners and pledgees of the stock would, I was confident, be prepared to enter into the agreement referred to in the resolutions.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: All this was verbal?

Sir THOMAS WHITE: All our negotiations have been oral.

Motion agreed to.

FORBIDDEN CIRCULATION IN CANADA.

REPORT OF SURGEON GENERAL FOTHERINGHAM AS TO STATEMENTS IN "THE FIDDLERS."

Right Hon. Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I should like to convey to the House the report of Surgeon-General J. T. Fotheringham with regard to a matter which has led to inquiry in the House, that is, the circulation in Canada of a book called "The Fiddlers." Cablegrams have been despatched to Great Britain for further information. No replies have as yet been received, but in the meantime I thought it desirable that the report of Surgeon-General Fotheringham to the Minister of Militia and Defence should be presented to Parliament for the information of hon. members.

Sir Robert Borden read this report:

Memorandum.

Department of Militia and Defence.

Ottawa, 30th July, 1917.

The Honourable the Minister,
Dept. of Militia and Defence.

Reference to Canada and Canadian troops in
"The Fiddlers."

Sir,—I have the honour, in reply to your submission to me of pamphlet marginally noted and of certain attached communications, to submit the following for your consideration:

1. The pamphlet is, apparently, meant to attract attention to alleged shortcomings on the part of the British Government in the matter of temperance legislation, and would appear to affect Canada only in so far as Canadian troops are held up therein as horrible examples of the result of certain alleged failures on the part of the British Government.

2. Without being meant as an attack on Canadian authorities or Canadian troops its statements reflect very seriously upon the morals and military efficiency of Canadian troops. It is suggested, please, that if allowed to reach the Canadian public these statements should be accompanied by a full and definite refutation in the public interest.

Harm has already been done by similar irresponsible and exaggerated statements from other sources. Alarm and anxiety have been aroused in some quarters in Canada altogether out of proportion to what the facts of the case would warrant, and such ill results could not fail to follow upon the publication of the pamphlet in question unless it were accompanied by a statement of the truth, which is altogether different from the picture presented in the pamphlet in question.

3. Statements occur in the pamphlet reflecting on the Canadian troops as to (a) alcoholism, (b) venereal disease. These are all grossly exaggerated and overdrawn. The general impression left upon a reader could not fail to be erroneous. The picture is entirely contrary to my own observation and experience during two years of daily contact with all ranks, for six months in England and for eighteen months on our western front.

A.—As Regards Drink:

It is a gross libel on the men and a great unkindness to their relatives at home to set forth isolated examples (which are not now called in question) without stating percentage and numbers of troops involved and showing the real prevalence of the conditions charged.

(a) It is equally unfair to quote as representative of present conditions the state of affairs at the outset of the war, and particularly at Salisbury Plain,—if for no other reason than that the majority of the First Contingent were British born and left but few relatives in Canada.

(b) Positive evidence to the contrary may be quoted as follows:

Major General John Hughes in reporting on the 28th June, 1917, to the Adjutant General, Ottawa, upon the subject of his visits and inspections made during the month of May last in England and France states as follows:

"I asked for the crime sheets of the last month in every camp and was pleased to find that for drunkenness there was less than one case per thousand men per week, and this was