

K. OF C. CATHOLIC ARMY HUTS

IN EUROPE, SIBERIA AND THE DOMINION OF CANADA

The Montreal Standard
The wonderful work that has been accomplished for the alleviation, as much as possible, of the discomforts of our men overseas, and providing them with comforts both here and abroad is being carried on by the Catholic Army Huts, not only in Europe, but in Siberia and this Canada of ours.

In the Standard Art Section this week will be seen the pictures of the Catholic Army Huts in the Dominion of Canada, interiors and exteriors. These show, in the most practical way, how the boys' comforts can be looked after, and will continue to be looked after in years to come, because, through the great generosity of our people of all races, nationalities and creeds, this work can now be carried on in a satisfactory way. All great movements start from really small foundations and to ascertain how this great work for uplift and the making of good citizenship started, the Standard made investigation, which resulted in the following:

PROBLEMS OF RECREATION

In 1915 the Military Chaplain Service Corps of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces saw the practicability from every viewpoint of providing recreational as well as spiritual comforts for the boys in khaki and in blue. Without hesitation, the chaplains enlisted the valuable services of the noble women of the Motherland. These heroines eagerly accepted and immediately joined forces with our chaplains to lay the foundations of what proved to be one of the greatest blessings during this terrible world-crisis. In the very heart of the Empire the "Catholic Army Huts" was organized. The association at once called into existence a Catholic Army Club at 24 Grosvenor Gardens. This undertaking was so successful that another hut was opened at 30 Grosvenor Gardens. The popularity of these recreational centres was so encouraging, and the general tone so elevating that a third club was added at St. George's Station. All these huts were staffed by the Catholic Women's League. Soon substantial quarters were spent on recreation quarters at their London Barracks. Entertainment was provided for elected soldiers at St. Dunstan's and the Eccentric Club (discharged homeless soldiers. As the war progressed the demands increased for more huts. Experience demonstrated the indispensable need not only of effective moral safeguards to save the individual soldiers from spiritual ruin, but also furnish harmless distraction so that the cream of Canadian manhood might escape contamination from vice and vermin. Obligations multiplied so rapidly and the draft on the silent suffering public in England was so exhausting that an appeal was sent over to Canada. The services of the Canadian Knights of Columbus were sought and won. Some \$3,000 collected by them from the Councils, principally in Ontario, and their Catholic friends. The effect was magical. Huts sprang up everywhere that prudence suggested. Bramshot expanded and became perhaps one of the best known Catholic huts in England. Witley followed after some tiresome formalities had to be circumvented. Here shell-shocked and nerve-racked felt a peace unknown in the trenches. This C. A. Hut is easily the finest in Witley Camp. Shorncliffe during 1917 and part of 1918 was equipped with chapel-reading rooms, but the Canadian troops have now abandoned this area, likewise Shorncliffe. While it is a fact that all these huts and canteens have been patronized alike by Protestants and Catholics, this unique condition was particularly so in the case of Seaford, Bexhill and Cooden. Many soldiers have gone home grateful, indeed, because of the exceptional kindness and good advice of Miss May Quinlan, Mrs. and Miss Turpin, Miss Lucas Shadwell and Miss McPhail. Mr. Reed Lewis, honorary librarian, directed the distribution of libraries at the different units. This work was much appreciated by the soldiers. Frenchman Pond was quite a comfort centre. When Kimmel Park, Rhyll, was opened as a demobilization camp, the C. A. Hut was fitted up, and now a second hut has been added. Buxton enjoys a much needed hut on account of it being a Canadian Discharge Depot with two large hospitals attached. For over eighteen months a combination hut was operated at Purfleet. Chapels and recreation quarters are maintained at Epsom and Sunningdale, the former being utilized to serve the large Canadian Convalescent Camp, and the latter the Forestry Base.

THE HUTS IN SIBERIA

Owing to this isolated country we have not had many reports to date, but it may interest friends to know that there have been shipped thousands of packages of chewing gum; hundreds of thousands of cigarettes; sufficient musical instruments to equip a band; four phonographs specially designed by Edison for camp service—these are intensely popular; hundreds of pounds of candy and tobacco and other comforts for the boys in that black area. These supplies cost many thousands of dollars, but they are distributed absolutely free to all.

FRANCE

Owing to conditions in France the most of the work had to be done by the chaplains. Nothing of a permanent nature could be erected in mobile units. Of course, tents were provided behind the lines, and so extraordinarily useful did these tents prove to be that when the men were entering or leaving the trenches that one chaplain wrote that if the Catholic Army Huts did nothing else than supply these tents its existence was justified. Large marquees tents bring comfort to the 12th Infantry Brigade, the C. C. Reinforcement Camp and the 1st Brigade of Canadian Engineers. Since the Canadians entered Germany a Club has been established for the 22nd French-Canadian Battalion. A similar club has been opened in the 2nd Brigade of Engineers near Bonn.

CANADA—K. OF C. ACTIVITIES

The pressure from all quarters in the spring of 1918 demanded greater activity. So satisfactory and encouraging were the results from overseas with the very limited means at the disposal of the Catholic Army Huts that the Canadian Knights of Columbus pledged themselves to excel all previous efforts for the "boys over there."

A Dominion wide "Drive" was launched and the results were also inspiring. Over \$1,000,000 was subscribed. Mr. Joseph L. Murray, secretary-treasurer, enthusiastically supported by the several State jurisdictions was the principal in the planning and organizing. His tireless efforts in the production of the campaign literature were invaluable and proved a crowning success.

During August, 1918, some claimed that faint traces of "the handwriting on the wall" could be seen on the western front. The spirit of the world-crisis was still as buoyant as before. They felt in their very souls that right must eventually prevail. Their generosity did not lessen as their hearty response in September demonstrated.

The directorate contemplated widening the field of operation overseas. November was destined to thrill the civilized world with the peace news. The glorious tidings were flashed across the Atlantic: "The enemy pleads for peace." The signing of the armistice produced a radical change. Demobilization was in the air. Our gallant boys would soon be home. A new glow radiated from the hearts of many, many homes throughout the land.

To really comprehend the magnitude of the new labors contemplated, the reader has only to take his map of Canada, and draw a line through the principal centres from Halifax to Victoria. Today there being seventeen different huts in as many different cities. The undertaking called for a gentleman to take entire charge, one who was broad-minded, with wide executive ability and experience in administering a large public trust fund. Fortunately Lt.-Col. Clarence F. Smith, of Montreal, was prevailed upon, and the Executive invited him to act as controller for the work overseas and in our Dominion. During the past four years Col. Smith has been prominently identified with war relief work without remuneration and has won the gratitude of hundreds by his devotion to those who have suffered from the effects of this terrible world war. On taking control he decided that all the Huts or Hostels would be placed in charge of returned men wherever it was possible. The next step was making provisions at the embarkation piers. Today at Halifax, St. John and Quebec, there are well organized staffs, as well as volunteer groups of ladies and gentlemen who meet all the troops and jointly distribute comforts, including cigarettes, coffee, sandwiches and candy and fruit to the soldiers before they enter the troop trains. Beginning at Halifax and at all the dispersal stations across the continent can be found Hostels, canteens, sanitary and with a homelike environment that is attractive even to the most restless. In the old city of Quebec ample provisions invite the soldiers. The Hut here is operated under the control of the head office in Montreal. It is known as the "Chez Nous du Soldat." Traveling west we find two huts in Montreal, one at Phillips Square and the other on Sherbrooke street east. No more delightful and exceptionally well equipped centres can be found anywhere. Well ventilated sleeping apartments can be furnished to accommodate 100 men. Appetizing meals are served at cost. One of the attractive and refining influences is the group of young ladies who have volunteered their services under the supervision of Lady Hingstone and her staff of convalescers.

Kingston, the old "Himestone city," has been linked into the chain and warm welcome greets the boys as they stroll down King street to Congress Hall. Ottawa is in line and has a very homelike hut on Laurier avenue west. "Certainly the soldier boys first in everything," was the response of St. Patrick's Club when approached for their quarters. Toronto, with all the dash for which it is noted, secured the Arlington Hotel on King street west, and there, though overhauled this ornamental building so as to look after the welfare of some 200 of our boys in sleeping and refreshing and wholesome entertainment. It is one of the best in the Dominion. Hamilton not to be outdone, acquired Gould's Hall and the "ambitious city" is up-to-date being the finest of all. St. Peter's Parish Hall was obtained.

Nothing more could be desired from every view-point. Fort Arthur may be opened later.

MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN

Winnipeg—The Forrester Building, a massive up-to-date structure is fitted up complete with 100 beds. Saskatchewan is another link in the continental chain. Regina is being investigated, also Brandon.

ALBERTA

This province is preparing a proposition from a different angle. Vocational training is under deliberation.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Vancouver and Victoria have splendid quarters. The former is centrally located in the Riggs-Silman building, the latter in the Ritz Hotel.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH EXTENSION SOCIETY OF CANADA

CATHOLIC TRAINING

A recent American writer in the following delightful strain pictures the movements at work in the United States. His comment is worth more than one perusal. It reads: "Frenchmen might wear a straw hat in a snow-storm and no other Frenchman would bother about it. It would be assumed that he had reasons sufficient to him for his preference. It would be considered his own affair, a bit of the variety of life, and of no concern to any one else.

In America he would be a nine day's wonder. Some would jeer and jeer. Others would call the police. Others would form a society for the prohibition of straw hat wearing in the winter months.

In French civilization there is profound respect for individuality. In America there is little or none. The French recognize that without a free play of personality life must lose its spontaneity, its sincerity, its wholeness, its elasticity, its grace, and its color, and zest. In America we incline more and more toward standardization and the rule of the majority in matters which should be left open to the individual. We already live under a tyranny of public opinion which manufactures hypocrisy and compels mediocrity. For originality, for idiosyncrasy and individuality we have at bottom both fear and hatred. We are not willing to rely upon the appeal to the conscience and the education of the will. We are concerned with external conduct and impatiently seek external methods of controlling it, imposing the collective will by law rather than seeking to enlighten the sources of conduct and bring about right conduct from within.

This, it would seem, is standing policy on its head. It certainly represents a tendency which attacks symptoms rather than causes and ignores the fundamental realities of character making. Socially it produces results that are formal and apparent rather than essential, and creates a species of moralistic despotism which overrides the private conscience and destroys liberty where liberty is most precious. American democracy is headed away from freedom in this respect and the benefits of our political institutions will not compensate us for our loss. American democracy in this path will not produce a high civilization, which always must be founded on the mind and spirit. It will evolve only a crude mechanism without beauty or strength. Catholics cannot read this indictment without serious reflection. We would like to ask how different our lot in Canada? Are we not under very similar conditions? The moral forces at work who keep them in public, often to the annoyance of worthy citizens, begin by what they call an educative campaign. Then follows the legislative making a political issue of their idea and the fight is on. No one can deny, however, their ultimate object—a dead level, lighted uniformity. A world as prim as a spike-tailed coat and for the average human being just about as comfortable. The Catholic Church admits the advantage of good laws but it begins by curing the heart and raising the soul by the influence of divine grace. So we have freedom and also true morality. This is done through the ministry of the Sacraments. The reception of the Sacraments appreciates this and appeals to its Catholic readers to aid in spreading amongst us the sweet odor of Christ.

Donations may be addressed to: Rev. T. O'Donnell, President, Catholic Church Extension Society, 67 Bond St., Toronto.

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DIED
FLYNN.—At St. John's, Newfoundland, on Sunday, March 16, 1919, John Patrick Flynn, aged twenty-eight years. May his soul rest in peace.
FURLONG.—At Killalee, Ont., on Sunday, March 23, 1919, Rachel Costello, wife of Mr. Patrick Furlong. May her soul rest in peace.

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