



## THE RED TRIANGLE



### CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR IN THE BEAVER HUT.

Ding-dong, clang, clang, rang the clapper as it flew from side to side above the heads of a few hundred Canadian soldiers gathered in the lounge of the Beaver Hut. A score of dainty little red and white ropes stretched downwards from the bell and two score of masculine and feminine hands, the owners of which stood in pairs on the outskirts of the throng, energetically made it ring.

Thus was the world-war rung out in the chief Canadian Y.M.C.A. centre in London, and the year of peace rung in. The Hut was congested to the point of immovability by Canadian soldiers on leave from their units on the Continent or in England. Here and there among the khaki was the blue and white of the Women Voluntary Workers in the hut, and it was a representative of each of these forces which made the old factory bell, discovered somewhere in London that day by one of the officers of the Hut, ring out with gladness as midnight struck.

The whole evening was spent in jubilant fashion by the hundreds of soldiers who were there for New Year's Eve, aided by the Y.M.C.A. staff and the voluntary workers. The floors were cleared of chairs and settees, and the old party games were played by a happy company.

Christmas Day also brought its joys, for it was one of the outstanding days in the life of the Hut. Never before was it so clearly demonstrated that the Hut was built for the benefit of the boys away from home, and never before was so much benefit and joyousness crowded into a twenty-four hour space.

"Oh, la, la! Bon anglais!" said a French Canadian boy in khaki, as he gleefully described to one of the Y.M.C.A. officers the good time he and a comrade had had in an English home. Not only Christmas, but the days before and after were spent by these two Quebec-ers as the guests of a cultured English family. With over 1,000 other similarly situated men they had been taken into the homes of London and given a royal time. Many of the hostesses came to the hut in the afternoon to meet their prospective guests, or sent representatives to conduct them to their homes. This was one of the great achievements of the Y.M.C.A. in London, and a service more appreciated by the men than any other it performed. It had been expected that 500 men would be accommodated in the homes, but this number was more than doubled.

In the same way Christmas Dinner in the Hut was prepared for 500 men, while 700 men were served, and served generously. The menu consisted of: Turkey (with real cranberry sauce), two vegetables, Christmas pudding, mince pie, nuts, oranges, tea and coffee. It was simple, but it was good. During the courses talented artists sang or performed for the large company, while, of course, the men had their usual robust round of popular songs and home ditties which went with a roar that shook the rafters. When the three sittings of dinner were over the guests of the day gave three hearty cheers for the

voluntary workers who served them and followed it with more cheers when a Canadian Sergeant-Major proposed a vote of thanks to the Y.M.C.A.

Souvenirs of the occasion were provided in the form of illustrated booklets showing the Beaver Hut and its various departments. Inside the front cover was this message: "To the folks at home: While I enjoyed my Christmas dinner here my thoughts were of you." A place was left for the soldier to sign, and the announcement, made at dinner, that every souvenir so signed and placed in the envelope provided would be forwarded by the Y.M.C.A., resulted in the rapid exhaustion of the supply of 600. The other men were supplied with similar booklets in which no message had been printed, in one of which a soldier wrote these characteristic words: "Dear Marjory—Had my Christmas dinner here. It was great." The emphasis of course, he put on the last word, and everybody else had the same feeling.

It was a wonderful day in the Hut. At 8 o'clock in the morning Captain Moore, the O.C., went through the dormitories and lounges (for many men spent that night on the chairs and settees), handing gifts to all the men who slept there Christmas Eve. He also gave them a Christmas greeting card, an invitation to dinner, and card on which was printed Queen Mary's Christmas message to soldiers and sailors.

During the forenoon the Hut Theatre was filled to the doors for the Christmas service. A splendid address was given by Captain Sovereign, a musical programme furnished, and an excellent Christmas film, "The Birth of Christ," exhibited.

The Billiard Room, always popular to the limit of its capacity, was a centre of interest during the morning when two English professionals, Pte. Stanley Newman and Arthur Peele, gave an exhibition, while in the afternoon a tournament, participated in by sixteen men representing the various parts of the Empire, was held. This event with prizes given by the Y.M.C.A., was won by an Imperial soldier, with an Australian in second place, and Sergeant Higgins, of Calgary, third.

Both performances in the Hut Theatre, matinee and evening, when high-class artists provided the programmes, were attended by capacity houses, the auditorium being "packed to the roof." The evening, however, saw the Hut comparatively quiet, but it was the eloquent quiet of a greater happiness and a larger service, for, had a search for the missing been instituted, they would have been discovered at the well-laden tables or before the blazing grates, or surrounding the pianos of their kindly English hostesses.

Besides the home entertainment thus arranged the Leave Department directed large numbers of soldiers to more distant points such as Exeter, Ilfracombe, Southport, etc., where the Department had secured the co-operation of the local authorities in entertaining them on Christmas Day. Reports from these points and from the men themselves indicate that they spent a most unique and enjoyable Christmas.

### BLIND OFFICER APPOINTED.

A blinded man to care for the blind is the policy of the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment indicated by the appointment of Captain E. A. Baker to a position on the vocational staff. Captain Baker's sight was destroyed in France by a German bullet three years ago, and he is himself a brilliant example of what a determined man can do to get the better of the handicap which he will now assist others to overcome.

Prior to enlistment he had graduated from Queens as an electrical engineer, and was employed as operating engineer in the power station of the American Cyanamid Company at Niagara Falls, Ont. He enlisted in the early days of the war and had served just 30 days in Flanders when his vision was destroyed. In those 30 days he had won the Military Cross and the Croix de Guerre, and it was the same courage which enabled him to overcome what to many would have been a crushing disaster. He was trained at St. Dunstan's Hostel for blinded soldiers.

The Department, largely on the recommendation of Captain Baker and one or two other blinded soldiers, has decided that all sightless veterans shall have the opportunity of being trained at St. Dunstan's which Captain Baker declares to be in every way the finest establishment of its kind in the Empire.

Altogether there have been about 80 members of the Canadian Forces blinded or nearly blinded since the beginning of the war, including a number who have gone blind or are going blind since their return from overseas. Of these, 43 are in Canada, a number having been definitely trained and fitted for self-supporting employment.

Captain Baker is already engaged in the effort to establish a hole-proof arrangement whereby blinded Canadians cannot leave England until they have been adequately acquainted with the willingness of the Government to give them the advantages of training at St. Dunstan's. Personal correspondence will be conducted with every blinded Canadian soldier before and after his return from Europe in order to keep the department acquainted with his condition and needs.

### SUGGESTED BASIS OF PEACE

#### With my next-door neighbour.

In order that the little suburban world we live in may be made safe for democracy, I should be pleased to have you look over the following three points:

1. The freedom of the backyard.—This will include the usual interchange of courtesies between your wife and mine and you and me. But it should go no further. You have more hens than I have, which disturbs the balance of power. But I have one more dog than you. This will naturally be a subject for arbitration in the future.

2. Looting during the absence of the commander-in-chief.—This has been going on systematically. My wife tells me the other day, while she was shopping, your cook came over and borrowed three pounds of butter from your non-commissioned houseworker. All crime should be considered personal. In case of undue assimilation, the offenders should be brought to justice.

3. Sniping.—We have evidence to show that one of your offspring, armed with a putty-blower (the use of which is a plain breach of intersuburban law), has been sniping one of my pet squirrels. In case of a repetition of this crime, by common agreement, your offspring should be deported to my cellar and made to look after my furnace for one week.