

## War Activities of Johnny Canucks' Mothers, Sisters and Sweethearts

By Francis J. Dickie

THE happenings of to-day, born of passing time and change, make false the apothegms of yesterday. One of these to go shortly following the outbreak of the European war was: "That men must work and women must weep." To-day thirty million men are engaged directly and indirectly in the business of war. And though many more women than that number are shedding tears as a result, the large majority of them are mingling the tears of heartbreak and anxiety with the sweat of hard labor of many varieties, the greater part of which was formerly performed by their husbands, sons and sweethearts.

Because of and through the war women-kind in general have made a greater stride toward their goal for equal rights with the hitherto proud, haughty and superior male, than all the campaigning marches, political wire-pulling and intrigue, militancy and printed appeals put together brought them before.

To-day among the nations at war women are holding down such jobs and positions as taxi drivers, postmen—or women, rather—bank clerks, munition workers, farm hands, and a hundred other lines of endeavor too numerous and well known by now to need enumerating. Both along these lines and those which are to obtain for women better working, living, moral conditions and better legislative protection, the women of Canada have made greater strides than any nation of the Old World. Particularly is this so as regards the granting of the vote. And it is from the ballot and the ballot alone that worth while power really comes. Where women have won it, take notice how quickly in its wake came prohibition and the curtailment of other lines of vice having direct effect on mother, daughter and sweetheart.

But as the war looms largest in the topics of the hour, let us first take notice of what the Canadian women have done to aid father, brother and son fighting on the strange soil of Europe, three thousand odd miles away.

When Great Britain entered into the war on August 4th, 1914, Canada entered the war in unison. Never perhaps in the history of nations was there a land less prepared for conflict than the Dominion of Canada. Militant Canadians to that date were exceptional; the bulk of the press and the public were distinctly anti on the preparedness question; and there were not above ten thousand men in the entire Dominion versed in the arts of war. With the exception of a few thousand South African veterans, the rest were only the crude kind of soldiers always resultant from an indifferently maintained militia movement, which, in Canada, had been kept alive in scattered parts of the Dominion by a few men with "the war-bug," as they were dubbed by the unmilitarily inclined majority. Yet within six weeks Canada sent on board transports in Gaspe Basin on the Atlantic Coast 33,000 men, fully armed and equipped with everything an army on active service needed—from hospitals for field service to portable food kitchens, not to speak of the regular things required for the more deadly work of war. This army, the most rapidly mobilized in the history of the North American Continent, also was the greatest body of armed men to embark at one time in the entire history of the known world to that date. Since then a total army of 387,346 men have joined the army to December 31st, 1916. Of this number 52,026 were casualties to October 11th, 1916. Of this total, only 37,939 remained in the land of the living; that is were wounded. Of this number 12,000 have been returned to Canada. Of this number 4,000 are convalescing outside of hospitals; an equal number are being taken care of in hospitals, and the balance have been discharged as cured but unfit for further service and the majority will now be upon the pension list.

This brief mention of the Dominion's military achievement, one of the greatest in history in view of Canada's sparsely populated territory which though 111,992 square miles larger than her adjoining Republic, contains only one person to the square mile, or a total of but 8,075,000, this brief mention has been made so that the reader can the more readily and thoroughly understand what a task was

given the Canadian women to do in this time of stress, when their land was being looted of its ablest men. A great task faced them; and to their credit be it said that it was done thoroughly, conscientiously and with vastly less of waste energy, time and materials than was to have been expected from people taking up work hitherto unknown and utterly foreign.

According to Canadian census statistics

Canada when the war broke out 2,186,000 women capable of knuckling down and digging in to do the work caused by the exodus of 368,000 soldiers, and also to handle the tasks arising out of these men being in the trenches and a certain percentage of them wounded.

To-day something over 2,000,000 women are working in aid of the war or the charities resultant therefrom. There are some 30,000 varied societies with members numbering from half a dozen in some tiny hamlet to organizations with several thousand members in the larger centres. The principal of the societies are: The Red Cross; W.C.T.U. Belgian Relief;

say women are not the most meticulous in their methods of procedure, that all their books are wonderfully kept, clear and unconfusing.

The report of Mrs. Stearns Hicks, Convener of the Red Cross Supplies Committee at Toronto, Ontario, where were assembled the bulk of goods forwarded to soldiers and hospitals at the front, shows that from September 1st, 1914, to July 1st, 1916, 3,555,803 articles were sent overseas. These consisted of 3,061,023 surgical bandages and other medical supplies; 14,983 sheets; 29,167 pillow cases; 36,099 night shirts, pyjamas and slippers combined; 10,527 flannel shirts; 54,700 cigars; 2,338 pounds candy; 15,422 cans of preserved fruit; 42,699 pairs socks; 260,000 miscellaneous articles. The similar report of the Province of Quebec covering from September, 1914, to June, 1916, shows that province to have forwarded 4,453,060 articles of the nature above-mentioned.

While the exact figures for all the societies in the seven other provinces who are engaged in similar work is impossible of compilation, a careful approximate estimate based on the output of the major assembling stations gives the astonishing figures of 100,000,000 parcels sent out from Canada to her men at the front and in French and English hospitals during the first twenty-three months of the war. As many of these parcels contained more than one article, the number of articles is perhaps five times that amount.

In addition to these things a total of \$30,000,000 has been collected in Canada for the British and Canadian Red Cross; the Patriotic Fund; Belgian Relief Fund; Serbian, Polish and Armenian Relief. The Belgian Relief Fund of Canada, according to the last report issued in September, had had \$2,275,000 cash contributed.

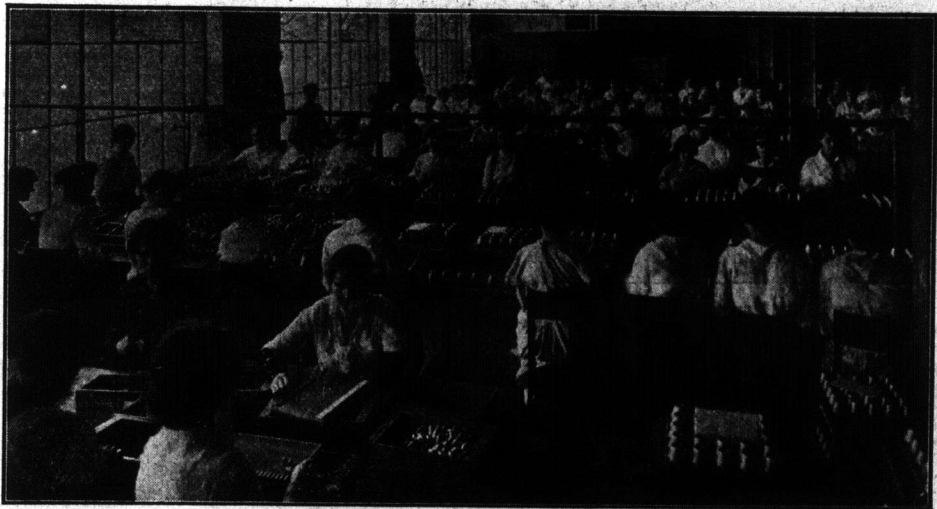
While not all of this thirty millions of dollars collected was due to women's work, a large part of it was. And here they showed their resourcefulness as collectors. "Tag days" of innumerable variety; concerts; lawn fetes; bazaars; house to house appeals; clever methods of getting free advertising space in the newspapers were resorted to. In connection with the concerts and bazaars infinite resource and ability to put up something worth while that would earn the greatest amount of money by really drawing more people than the usual little circles of friends and acquaintances that attend such things was exhibited. When such things paled by repetition, the bizarre and the unique was resorted to.

In one far western Canadian city on one occasion the ladies of a small society rounded up all the children in the town owning Shetland ponies. With collection boxes on each side of the animals and the flag of the country for the sufferers of which the money was being gathered also adorning the animals, the little boys and girls patrolled the town from end to end; in this manner not only was the main thoroughfares canvassed but the suburban. Of course, the appeal was no different than had women stood on the streets with boxes and plates; but by adding novelty to the idea and shoving the collection box under the nose of the individual in so unique a way, much more was collected than had the old style commonplace methods been adhered to. The numerous things of such nature—showing almost a genius for campaigning and organization—are too many to bear fullest mention.

Probably the most unique scheme and one which required real hard work was that pulled off in the City of Toronto, a place of some 800,000 population. In the spring of 1916 the ladies of the Red Cross Society started a "waste conservation." The financial results almost instantly accruing brought them realization that they had a miniature gold mine. For instance, a hundred pounds of newspaper was worth 43 cents. An appeal to all the school children as well as adult householders was made for old magazines, newspaper, bottles, rags, jute bags, books and metals, etc. Everybody helped. The big banker lent his motor car; little Johnny, the day laborer's son, brought a load in his wheelbarrow; girls brought great basketsful by arm power; the children's toy waggons proved as zealous and important carriers as the huger trucks. The Harbor Commission gave a commodious warehouse where a large staff of girls and women work continuously sorting and packing. The first month's proceeds was \$1,619, and those in charge now claim that the year's total business



A Pile of Soldiers' Comforts at Red Cross Depot, Toronto. 379,066 parcels are represented in the heap. All the work was done by women, but, of course, when it came time for a picture the men must needs fill it.



The big Assembling Room of a Canadian Munition Factory, where women are putting together component parts of primers and time fuses.



A little group of Canadian Girl Workers at one of the Canning "Bees."

there are a total of 2,186,000 women between the ages of fifteen and eighty in the Dominion. Of these 1,251,182 are married, 364,821 were occupying paid positions in store, factory or office, etc., previous to the war. There are also some 60,000 rated as belonging to the leisure class.

If you count this total up you will get 1,676,003, or left over 509,997 we know nothing about. That's always the way with statistics; they're the coyest of things. You camp on their trail for days and bag one fact and then another, but when it comes to bringing everything you want into camp, you find they've fooled you nicely. However, in the present case it does not matter. It was sufficient to establish the fact that there were in

Order of St. John's Ambulance Society; The Women's Institutes; Queen Mary's Guild; Imperial Order Daughters of Empire; Women's Emergency Corps; Women's Canadian Club; Secour National. In addition to these are hundreds of others; church congregations, home-sewing circles and similar gatherings, but as all of these work in connection with the Red Cross principally, or some of the other larger organizations, the reports of the main bodies cover most of the work done by Canadian women.

So huge, varied and complicated is the list of things done since the war began by the above-named bodies that many weighty tomes could be filled by even a sketch of their activities; and be it here said, to forever disprove the cavillers who