

## THE BORDEN CABINET—VI. THE MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE.

by H. F. Gadsby.



Col. the Hon. Sam Hughes

THE ambition of Drill Shed Sam is to make Canada a world power. To push this idea along costs us fourteen million dollars a year now, with no guarantee that it won't cost us twice as much next year. Colonel the Honorable Sam's notions of expenditure are growing and two dollars a head for every man, woman and child in Canada is not going to satisfy him for long. He is the most expensive Minister of Militia Canada has had since Confederation. He is, as you might say, very dear to his country.

A little thing like the people's money never stops Colonel the Honorable Sam from doing us proud when Canada's honor is at stake. For instance when Sam and his brigade of lady stenographers went to France to inspect the entente cordiale on the spot and then to Germany to beard the German menace in its lair, they left the staff of sunshine colonels behind in dear old Lunnon with seven thousand dollars to blow in on seeing the sights in taxicabs. Thus a pleasant time was had although the life of the party, Colonel Sam, was in foreign parts,

When General Sir Ian Hamilton came out to Canada to give us some advice that Colonel the Honorable Sam does not intend to take, it was our treat to the extent of a special train costing ten thousand

and dollars and a trip across the continent that cost ten thousand dollars more. All that Canada got out of this transcontinental peacocking was a report from General Sir Ian Hamilton suggesting muster rolls and a lofty sentiment or two about the presence of a Canadian regiment in Cairo stirring the imagination of the Empire. The exchange of pulpits with Cairo would be some stirrer all right. It would, perhaps, stir things up just a little too much. One may fancy just how much the Canadian farmer would be stirred to think that he was paying for a regiment of soldiers while they traipsed round scratching themselves against the Pyramids.

Although the government has no money to throw away on arbitrary nonsense like muster rolls it cheerfully abets Colonel Sam's drill shed policy which not only makes drill sheds but votes. Also it makes money for the friends of the party who get the contracts. So long as Colonel Sam keeps quiet in the House the Government will not say him nay if he builds a row of drill sheds from Cape Breton to Prince Rupert. As a form of closure it comes high, but it is safer than the breaks he might make. Talk is paid for at the rate of twenty-five cents a word in the House of Commons but Colonel the Honorable Sam's silence has to be figured in drill sheds.

Colonel Sam's theory is that a drill shed should be the social, moral, intellectual and spiritual center of every community. In his mind the place where the rudiments of murder are taught is a good substitute for the Bible class, the prayer meeting, the Epworth League, the Y. M. C. A. gymnasium and the I.O.G.T. He argues that nature intended every man, woman and child to be drilled because every man, woman and child has holes in his or her face through which the drilling can be done. Being an old school teacher Colonel Sam hitches up his drill sheds to the system of education, and with Major Leonard's assistance, favors an Honor Course in Wholesale Slaughter in our chief universities. Colonel Sam looks for the day

when the whole thing will dovetail nicely and the public schools will furnish the privates, the High School Cadets the non-coms, and the university graduates the commissioned officers in a Canadian army of a million men, every one of whom can hit the bullseye at five hundred yards.

This simple but comprehensive plan which will eventually set the country back a few billion dollars is largely advocated by the Hughes family which contains four colonels including the Minister of Militia. Indeed Colonel Sam is so keen on drill sheds that he once proposed to tear down the Ottawa Normal School and build a drill shed on the site but that was as far as it got. There are still old fashioned people in Canada who put schools ahead of drill sheds. Colonel Brother Jim is the Toronto end of Colonel Sam's gospel and is doing good work catching 'em young and turning 'em into Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and such. A little older they join Round Table Clubs or become Daughters of the Empire and so the cause advances. Give Colonel the Honorable Sam and Colonel Brother Jim their own way and the whole population will soon be marching and counter marching with red white and blue ribbons in their hair.

When Colonel the Honorable Sam is not travelling abroad like Xerxes, with led colonels, sumpter mules and beautiful stenographers in his train, he is at home preserving a good average. He appears in the Royal box in a red necktie and thus proves he is a democrat. Anon, he blazes in scarlet and gold before the Duke's throne, gathering salutes from soldiers, accustoming the people to the sight of the uniform, and thus he proves he is a supporter of monarchical institutions. He slaps the Scotch-and-soda colonels in the face with one hand by insisting on boozeless banquets and with the other he hands a poke to the parsons by saying that they are more responsible for war than any other class of the community. In short Colonel the Honorable Sam has a Line of Action to fit all occasions. There is a lot of method in his madness.