

the British forces. If there have been slight lapses, as one might expect in such a large force, those lapses have been better advertised than similar occurrences on the part of any other of the British soldiers either in Great Britain or in France. To those of us who are conversant with the situation that has existed in France and England since the signing of the armistice, it has been amusing to read in the press of Great Britain and Canada some of the things which the Canadian soldier has been accused of. I repeat, I believe that the conduct of no other troops of the whole British Empire has been equal to that of the Canadian soldiers. I have no reason whatever to criticise the conduct of the vast majority of them. These men had been away from home for many years and were anxious to get back, and during the waiting time I think we might have expected some slight lapses, and possibly small disorders, occasionally to occur. These lapses, however, have not been any worse, in fact, nor so bad, as those that occurred in other forces. I am not in a position to state all that is in my mind on this matter, because certain information and certain news items with respect to the conduct of other British forces have been withheld from the public, while the occurrences amongst the Canadian soldiers have been very broadly and widely circulated.

Probably hon. members have already been told by the Minister of Militia and Defence of the mode of demobilization. We have two systems, running along side by side, which makes the problem much more difficult than where there is but one system. That, however, has been unavoidable. First of all, the soldiers in Great Britain and France, outside of the Canadian Corps and the Canadian Cavalry Brigade—that is to say, Forestry Corps, Railway Troops and Lines of Communication Units—are being demobilized according to length of service, those with the longest service being demobilized first. They are taken from various camps according to their length of service, and sent to a camp which is divided into wings or areas corresponding to the different military districts in Canada. The men are sorted according to the dispersal areas at which they will be demobilized in Canada, and all their documents and records are prepared before embarkation, so that on arrival at the dispersal station in Canada they are ready for instant demobilization. The result is that when a man reaches the dispersal station in Canada nearest to his home or where he wants to

go, he is at once discharged and returns to civil life.

The second system applies to troops included in the Canadian Corps and Canadian Cavalry Brigade whom it was found more advisable to deal with as units and who were accordingly demobilized and returned to Canada as far as possible in the units with which they fought at the front. Special sections of our camps in England were set apart for these Canadian Corps troops and the system of sorting out and documentation for them was, with certain modifications, the same as I have previously described.

I have referred at some length to the shipping situation. The disappointments and the difficulties of the shipping situation were very real and very trying. References have sometimes been made to the bunching of the ships in Halifax, and I have been asked why that has happened. The answer is very simple. We have to take the ships that are available and if, immediately after a ship has just sailed for Canada with four or five thousand troops on board, we are told that another ship is ready to sail which will cross the Atlantic at about the same speed, we cannot refuse that second ship or she would be used by the Americans. So for that reason the bunching of ships on this side of the Atlantic on occasions has been absolutely unavoidable. There is the further reason that the sailing of a ship is often delayed one or two days, and sometimes one or two weeks. I have known occasions where we were advised that a ship would sail on a certain day, all the papers and records would be prepared for a certain number of men for that ship, and when they were about to embark on the train the day before the ship left, we would get word that the ship could not sail and she might be delayed for a week. Furthermore, ships nowadays are pretty well worn out, and often at the last moment they have to go into dry dock. There have also been a great many strikes at the docks in England. I was told by the captain of the ship I came over on this time that there are about six different organizations, a strike in any one of which would prevent the sailing of a ship.

The House can have some idea of the difficulty with which we had to contend when I say that the nominal roll for a ship carrying from three to five thousand troops involves a tremendous amount of work. I hold in my hand the copy of a nominal roll of a certain sailing, a small one,—the