

# CANADIANS MARCH INTO GERMANY.

Greeted Respectfully by Comfortable Looking People.

By Fred James, Official Correspondent, Canadian Overseas Ministry, with the Canadian Forces, Germany, December 8th, 1918.

Three days ago—December 5th—troops of the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions marched over the border from Belgium into Germany, the former at a point just east of Petit Thier in Belgium, at the hamlet of Poteau to be exact, and the latter at Bohoe with bands playing and flags flying.

To-night they are nearing the Rhine. The advanced Canadian line runs ahead of Kommarn and Odendorf. By the time this is published our men will be winding their watches on the Rhine, with Headquarters at Bonn.

Lieut.-General Sir Arthur W. Currie, the Canadian Corps Commander, and the Headquarters Staff crossed into Germany yesterday, coming from Vailsalm, a small town in Belgium, incidentally the last place in that country where the German Crown Prince stayed on his gallop towards Holland, where he is now an exile, on his own wise choice.

So far the occupation of Boscheland, as the troops call Germany, has been without any notable incident.

We have been received everywhere with a cold politeness. The inhabitants seem to be surprised that they are treated with consideration and fairness. They give the impression by their attitude, that they almost expect that kind of severity that is really injustice. Naturally they show that we are not welcome visitors, but being such a well-disciplined people they are obeying to the letter what is required of them with tolerably good grace.

In every town and village our troops stay the natives are required by the terms of the Armistice to deliver to a delegated authority every kind of firearm and dangerous weapon. One of the first sights I saw to-day as I came into Schleiden, where Canadian Corps Headquarters is at present, was a uniformed German policeman making a house to house collection of weapons. I met him on a side street with his arms full of swords of a very ancient vintage, heading for the private house where they are being deposited for safe keeping until after peace is signed, when they will be returned to their owners.

The march through Belgium, which began from Mons and the neighbourhood of that city on November 17th, has been a succession of demonstrative welcomes, with the flags of the Allies flying from every house en route and evidence of the solidity and warmth of the entente expressed in a variety of ways.

I have seen only one flag flying since we came into Germany; that was the Belgian standard on a house adjoining a lumber mill about five miles over the border. How it came there is more than I can tell. Either the occupant of the house was a native Belgian, or one of our men had planted the flag there out of a spirit of adventurous patriotism. The route travelled by the Canadians since they came into the enemy's country has not taken them through any large centres, but through a rather sparsely settled, well-wooded and hilly territory, little of it being suitable for agriculture. It looks very much like some parts of Northern Ontario. There is an abundance of fine pine trees everywhere.

In the farmhouses the residents could be seen peeping through the windows. Few

came out to see the procession of the troops that had helped, to shatter their dreams of world domination. Most of the people doff their hats to all officers, and all do to the Union Jack. The greatest deference and respect is shown to the Corps Commander and other Generals.

German money is to be used by all ranks by the Army of occupation, and the value of the mark has been placed at sevenpence or 14 cents. Formerly it was worth one shilling or 24 cents. The storekeepers and other folk who have goods to sell take French money readily, and give change at the rate mentioned. The stores in the villages and towns have very limited stocks. I have seen boots made of a combination of wood and canvas, and in one window there was a display of paper pinafores. Just how the food supply is one cannot make a positive statement. All the people look as if they haven't suffered, for want of nourishing food, and they are quite well dressed.

Corps Headquarters is established in a huge palatial mansion on the edge of the town. It is the home of the cousin of Admiral Von Spes. There is nothing lacking in all that goes to make for elegant comfort in the place. It is richly furnished and has every modern convenience from electric light to hot and cold running water in almost every bedroom. During the Corps Staff residence the pictures of the ex-Kaiser and his most ardent supporters, of the days yet in the lap of yesterday, have been removed from the prominent positions they had in the best rooms, and hidden away where enemy eyes cannot see them.

The centre of the route the Canadians have marched since November 17th has been from Mons through Gosselies, Namur, Ruy, Vailsalm, all in Belgium, to the present halting place—Schleiden. From Mons to Namur the way was through rich farming country. Beyond Namur the central line taken by the Corps was along the banks of the Meuse, a wide navigable river that threads its silvery course through the valleys winding between the rocky and pine sloped heights of the Ardenne Mountains.

Evidence of the Hun occupation is to be seen everywhere in Belgium. The fine big trees that flanked each side of the roads have been cut down by the thousands; Bosche motor lorries and remnants of aeroplanes line the roads at intervals from Mons to Schleiden; nearly all have iron tyres. Most of them have been rendered useless, and it is said that the enemy authorities want those ramshackle and practically worthless vehicles accepted as part of the motor transport demanded by the Allies. Here and there wagons and limbers have been hurled into a ditch, evidently because the horses fell from exhaustion, due principally to lack of food. The bodies of the poor brutes lie sprawled alongside the road, and are providing rations for carrion crows and hawks, etc. There are plenty of signs across Belgium and in Germany, too, that the Bosche army had developed into a force beyond the possibility of repair.

When the enemy army started to head for home little was taken that would hamper speed. When the Canadian Cavalry Brigade arrived at the neighbourhood of Pervez, about fourteen miles north-east of Namur, extra rations were required for men and horses. On a nearby railway track a long German train of supplies was found, made up

of carloads of sugar, potatoes, hay, and a variety of things that were useful.

There have been many difficulties to overcome in the way of getting up supplies, but every day sees an improvement. By the middle of the month it is expected that a leave train will run daily from the Canadian railhead in Germany to the French coast. The trip will, it is estimated, be made in about one day.

The protective screen of cavalry for the Canadian Infantry, Artillery, and other forces of the Corps in Germany, is made up of the Canadian Light Horse Regiments.

The Canadian Y.M.C.A. is keeping up with the advance troops and opening canteens where halts are made, when it is possible to get supplies.

The health and morale of all ranks is up to the usual point—the highest that can be reached—in spite of the long march. But we are in Germany at last, and Canada's boundary line in Europe will soon be 30 kilometres east of the Rhine.

December 12th.

The first crossing of the Rhine at Bonn was made this morning by the British cavalry at present attached to the Canadian Corps. Lieut.-General Currie, with his staff and a bodyguard of a troop of the Canadian Light Horse, crossed the big steel convex-arch bridge in the vanguard of the British cavalrymen.

The crossing was witnessed by comparatively few civilians who seemed quietly interested in the smart appearance of the procession. The entire turn-out was splendidly spick and span for the historic event. At the western end of the bridge General Currie took the salute from units of the brigade while the band of the battalion from Saskatchewan played the popular song tune "Over There" for the march past.

The cavalry to-day take up the outpost line east of the Rhine. I understand that the Canadian Force now along the west bank of the Rhine, between Cologne and Bonn, are crossing the river to-morrow over the bridges at the two cities. I learned to-day that the reports from the Burgomasters of the German towns and villages in which the Canadians have been since crossing the border on December 5th, sent to the Burgomasters at Cologne and Bonn, state that the behaviour of the Canadian troops was excellent; consequently the attitude of the German people along the Rhine was very friendly.

The transport arrangements are now complete, rations and the mail arriving on schedule time daily and the troops are receiving big consignments of Christmas parcels from Canada.

By J. F. B. Livesay, Canadian Correspondent with the Canadian Forces in Germany.

December 10th, 1918.

Canadian soldiers yesterday crossed the Rhine. They were the outposts of the Corps which to-morrow enters Bonn. In a few days' time we proceed to take up our positions on the right bank 18 miles east of the Rhine.

"I enlisted in August, 1914," remarked a sergeant of the Ontario Battalion, as he leaned over the Bridge of Bonn, "and we have been through many things since then—the few of us who are left of the original Company. When the Armistice was signed I wanted to get right home to my wife and  
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