

that these men are soldiers and that the sooner we get them back out of the "jug" the sooner will they be efficient fighting soldiers once again. This question of the review of sentence is considered to be so important that the policy in regard to it is centralized at Canadian military headquarters, and the senior officer at that headquarters, General Montague, gives his personal attention to every one of these reviews and himself signs whatever order is made with respect to them. We find that this is bearing fruit, because any man who demonstrates that he has learnt his lesson, who shows by his actions that he is willing to turn over a new leaf, is given an opportunity to do so. We are getting results. Notwithstanding the long time we have been there, our statistics show that relatively fewer offences are being committed. Between August, 1941, and August, 1942, there was a proportionate reduction of over 20 per cent in the numbers of all offences committed. I have not the later figures, but I do know that a steady decline is being maintained.

The third point with regard to morale affects particularly the people at home and is most important. It is a matter of letters from home. Not only do we want more letters but we want better letters. It is a sad thing to hear of a Canadian soldier who has been in England for two and a half years and who has not received a single letter or a single parcel. It is hard to imagine the feelings of that man as he sees week after week his comrades receiving letters and parcels. It is one of the most damaging things so far as morale is concerned. It is true the people at home are busy, but there is too much of a tendency to put off. It is easy for the family to leave it to mother, but mother is busy too. So that quantity is one of the things we want, and next is quality, and I am not sure that is not even more important.

The boys over there are hungry for news. They want to know what is happening in the home town, what is happening to the family and to the neighbours across the street, or in the town hall or the community hall or whatever it may be, and it is only in letters from home that they can get that information. They are looking for cheerful letters. They like to feel that the people at home, while missing them, are not unhappy. So very often we hear of cases perhaps of a wife who is lonely, who is feeling badly, just pouring out all her complaints in her letters to her husband overseas. It is proper that she should discuss her problems, but to pour out troubles for the sake of filling paper is not a service to anyone. An even worse class of letter, of which unfor-

[Mr. Booth.]

tunately we get too many, is that sent by trouble-makers, an interfering neighbour, perhaps a jealous mother-in-law, who writes and suggests that Mary is not behaving or that she is not looking after the children. There are many such cases where these complaints are true, but there are many more which we have had investigated by reputable authorities here and we have found them to be absolutely without foundation. I mention these matters because they are of real importance to the boys overseas.

It is marvellous that morale is so high after we have been so long in England. Three years of waiting is a severe test. I believe, however, that events have to some extent helped to carry us over the waiting period. When we first went to England everything was new; everything was different; we were training, getting ready for the job. Then came the fall of France, and the Canadian division at that time assumed much greater importance than one would expect its size could warrant. The fact is that the Canadian division was practically the only force that was intact and reasonably well equipped. Britain had been pouring out her troops and weapons overseas; when the boys came back from France they came back with nothing, and the Canadian division assumed the real defence of England—a poor enough force when one considers now what was against it. Fortunately the Royal Air Force, in which there are many, many Canadians, defeated the Luftwaffe, with the result that the probability of invasion during the winter of 1940-41 became remote. We were given a breathing spell. During that winter and the next spring our army was growing; England was busy making replacements for the weapons she had lost, and the situation eased a little. But Britain was still pouring out her troops and supplies to other theatres of war. Therefore the Canadian force, by this time growing, still continued its vital role of guarding the homeland. During that period there was little trouble with the men; they knew they were doing a job, and they were satisfied to do it.

Time went on. The boys were looking for a fight. However, bombing over Britain continued and our men saw the sacrifices, the uncomplaining sacrifices, of the British civilians. What soldier could honestly complain when he saw how much was being suffered by others?

The winter of 1941-42 was a difficult period. The invasion scare was passing and the boys were again becoming a little restless. However, with the spring there was new hope that at last we were going to get into action. There