

This Camp was initiated with the usual Hughes methods. First the select agent of Hughes, McBain by name, who through his friendship with Sir Sam was concerned in various munition contracts with Allied Governments and was mentioned as receiving \$30,000 from Allison out of the fuse contract, sanctioned the purchase of the land, and the work of construction was commenced.

Long before the Camp was ready for occupation, battalions were rushed to it from London, Toronto, Niagara and other Ontario points, and then the trouble started. The soldiers were unanimous in their condemnation of the place, and from the reliable accounts we have received they would appear to be thoroughly justified. The site, which by the way, was turned down by the Liberal government in 1905, is utterly unsuitable for the purpose. It has been appropriately described as a sandy desert filled with pitfalls of black ashes where stumps had been burned out. The land comprising eight square miles, consists of very, very fine sand, covered with a brown top or twitch grass. According to engineers the sand is at least 200 feet deep. When the brown or twitch grass is broken through, which is easily done by the soldiers marching, there is nothing but sand. Stumps from old trees are visible everywhere. Since the place has been taken over it is estimated that over 1,000,000 stumps have been burned, dug or taken up to provide sufficient space for the soldiers to drill. The condition of the ground with the ashes mixed with the fine sand and the soldiers tramping over it can well be imagined. **In short, it is a Canadian Sahara.** The soldiers coming off parade look like miners coming out of a mine after their day's work. When marching they are ankle deep in the sand. In the cooking tents the dishes are covered with dust all the time and the tents which were pure white are now as black as the skin of an elephant. Not only that, but it is seriously asserted that the sand had got into the intricate parts of the Lewis machine gun with the result that they were almost ruined and would have to be sent to the factory to make them fit for active service. In addition to these unfavorable conditions the soldiers on arriving at the Camp found that it was anything but ready for them and they suffered great hardships especially through insufficiency of the water supply.

#### **Sir Sam hooted, hissed and reviled.**

Is it any wonder that under such conditions some of the soldiers revolted when they had to attend a rehearsal and review solely for the glory of Sir Sam. If these conditions that the soldiers had to meet had been forced on them as part of their War duties not a complaint would have been made, but when they found that they had to rehearse and parade in the sand under boiling hot sun and without water bottles, to provide a show to satisfy Sir Sam's egotism, their patience became exhausted and they became articulate with no uncertain sound. Thick skinned as he is, Sir Sam will remember with a blush the incidents of that review as long as he lives. He was booed, hissed and reviled by the soldiers who passed him on parade. Usually at the conclusion of a parade the men are formed into a hollow square and the reviewing officer passes up and down the lines. Sir Sam, however, wisely

refrained from doing that. As soon as the parade was over he went to his private car at the station where he was met by a number of soldiers who hurled at him all the nasty epitaphs they could think of. Sir Sam tried to reason with them, but was promptly told to hie himself to certain unmentionable places, the principle one of which is reputed to be very warm. There possibly could have been no greater humiliation to a public man. He went up to the Camp in a blaze of glory on a special train, consisting of two private cars and a number of Pullmans in which were scores of his select friends to witness the formal opening of the Camp, and he returned humiliated and crest-fallen beyond measure.

#### **No necessity for camp.**

No one except Sir Sam himself and a few of his friends can possibly imagine the reason for establishing this Camp in the face of existing suitable camps. Take, for instance, Valcartier, capable of accommodating at least 50,000 soldiers. Not more than 10,000 or 15,000 have been there since the First Contingent sailed. At the present time Barriefield has not nearly the number of soldiers it had last year. Petawawa is capable of accommodating from 75,000 to 100,000, yet slightly over 5,000 are now there. Niagara Camp, one of the best camp grounds in the country, is accommodating only one-third as many soldiers as were there last year. London Camp, which has been enlarged during the past six months at an expense of over \$70,000 to the Municipal authorities of London, has been absolutely abandoned. In addition there are the military camp grounds at Levis, Que., Three Rivers, Que., Farnham, Que., St. Jean, Que., Rockcliffe, Ont., South March, Ont., and also splendid facilities for housing troops such as we have in Ottawa, Montreal, Sherbrooke, Toronto and other cities throughout Central Canada. This does not take into consideration the military camp grounds in the Maritime Provinces or in Western Canada where some of the finest Artillery, Cavalry and Infantry camp grounds are situated.

Considering the character of the work that has been performed and is now under process at the Camp the expenditure on it will run into the millions before it is completed. We have no hesitation in declaring that it looks like a sheer waste of public money. It is, in our judgment, another instance of the mad extravagance which has characterized the Administration of the Militia Department under Hughes.

To give an idea of the scale upon which the Camp is being constructed we would mention that workmen are engaged in the construction of ten miles of street paving, thirty feet wide, equal to the best paving to be found in any city. There is a water-works system, a pumping station with mains and taps all over the site sufficient to accommodate at least 50,000 soldiers. There are almost innumerable large buildings for the soldiers of the most modern up-to-date character to say nothing of a theatre, stores, shops, station, warehouses, etc. Steps are also being taken to fence the Camp grounds the circumference of which is thirty-two miles.